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Agenda item 5

PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF WESTERN SAMOA

Draft Report of the Standing Committee on Petitions

Chairman: Mr. Michel de CAMARET (France)

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Note by the Secretariat: In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of material which has been already circulated in mimeographed form, the present draft report contains only the material to be added to that contained in the Secretariat working paper (T/C.2/L.257) and the draft resolutions. The original material should be considered as forming part of the draft, except where otherwise indicated.]

1. At its 394th and meetings on 18 and July 1956, the Standing Committee on Petitions, composed of the representatives of Belgium, Burma, China, France, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, examined the petitions concerning the Trust Territory of Western Samoa which are listed in the preceding table of contents.
2. Sir Leslie Munro and Mr. T. Smith (New Zealand) participated in the examination as the representative and the special representative respectively of the Administering Authority concerned. Sir Alan Burns also participated in the discussion of T/PET.1/7 as representative of the United Kingdom.
3. The Standing Committee submits herewith to the Council its report on these petitions and recommends, in accordance with rule 90, paragraph 6, of the Council's rules of procedure, that the Council decide that no special information is required concerning the action taken on resolution .....

I. Petition from the members of the Council of State, non-official members of the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly and members of the Fono of Faipule (T/PET.1/7)

11. The petition was examined and discussed at the 394th and meetings of the Standing Committee (documents T/C.2/SR.394 and ).
12. The representative of New Zealand read to the members of the Standing Committee the text of the observations (T/OBS.1/5) of the Administering Authority.
13. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom viewed with the utmost sympathy the concern of the inhabitants of Western Samoa as expressed in their present petition. They did not, however, believe that the people of Samoa need have any cause for anxiety. Referring to a procedural aspect of this matter, he said that some members might feel that, as the petition did not relate directly to the affairs of the Trust Territory of Western Samoa, it was therefore not a proper subject for the Trusteeship Council to consider. Nevertheless, to the extent that the petition was concerned with the possible effects of the proposed nuclear tests on the Trust Territory his delegation did not object to its being considered by the Council.
14. He stated that the United Kingdom Government had given full weight to the anxiety which existed about the indefinite continuance of tests of nuclear weapons without control and without limitation, and were prepared to discuss methods of regulating and limiting test explosions which took account of their position and that of other Powers. They had, however, decided that it was necessary, in the interests of defence, to manufacture thermo-nuclear weapons and the holding of tests was an essential part of the process of providing the United Kingdom with such weapons. The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had already held such tests and Her Majesty's Government had decided to carry out a limited number of nuclear test explosions in the megaton range. These tests would take place far from any inhabited islands and would be so arranged as to avoid danger to persons or property. Every possible safety precaution would be taken, in the light of the knowledge and of experience gained from the tests of other countries; in any case, the tests would be high air bursts which would not involve heavy fall-out or cause a tidal wave. The distance of Western Samoa from the operational area ensured that there would be no danger to its inhabitants.

15. The representative of the United Kingdom stated with regard to the petitioners' reference to the prevailing north-east trade winds, it was of course a fact that meteorological conditions were of primary importance in determining the exact timing of the test in order to ensure the safety of the operation; the petitioners would therefore be assured that the utmost precautions would be taken.

16. At its meeting, the Committee approved by votes to with abstentions draft resolution I, annexed to the present report, which it recommends that the Council adopt.

I. Petition from the members of the Council of State, non-official members of the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly and members of the Fono of Faipule (T/PET.1/7)

The Trusteeship Council,

Having examined the petition from the members of the Council of State, non-official members of the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly and members of the Fono of Faipule concerning Western Samoa in consultation with New Zealand as the Administering Authority concerned (T/PET.1/7, T/OBS.1/5, T/L. ),

Noting that these tests are being carried out by the United Kingdom with assistance from the Administering Authority and that they are not being carried out on territory administered by the New Zealand Government,

Noting further the declaration of the United Kingdom Government that the tests will take place far from any inhabited islands and will be so arranged as to avoid danger to persons or property,

Noting also the assurances given by the United Kingdom Government that the tests will be high air bursts which will not involve heavy fall-out or cause a tidal wave and that all possible safety precautions will be taken,

Draws the attention of the petitioners to the observations of the Administering Authority and the assurances given by the United Kingdom Government that all necessary precautions will be taken by the United Kingdom Government to guard against possible dangers to persons or property.

II. Petition from Mr. Bartholemew Frost (T/PET.1/8)

7. The petition was examined and discussed at the 394th and meetings  
of the Standing Committee (documents T/C.2/SR.394 and ).
8. At its meeting, the Committee approved by votes to  
with abstentions draft resolution II, annexed to the present report,  
which it recommends that the Council adopt.

II. Petition from Mr. Bartholemew Frost (T/PET.1/8)

The Trusteeship Council,

Having examined the petition from Mr. Bartholemew Frost concerning Western  
Samoa in consultation with New Zealand as the Administering Authority concerned  
(T/PET.1/8, T/OBS.1/4, T/L. ).

1. Draws the attention of the petitioner to the observations of the Administering  
Authority; and
2. Further draws his attention to the fact that the case can be settled by  
mutual agreement or, failing that, by a judicial decision of a competent court.

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