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THE FUTURE OF TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Statement made by the representative of France at the 782nd meeting
of the Fourth Committee on 3 November 1958

Note: In accordance with the decision taken by the Fourth Committee at its 783rd meeting, the text of the following statement is circulated to members of the Committee for information.

Mr. President,

This time last year, the General Assembly took a decision on the future of Togoland under French administration by adopting, at our request, resolution 1182 by 50 votes to 1, with 29 abstentions. Looking back, we may truly say that that resolution marks an epoch in the history of Togoland and its relations with France and the United Nations.

You will remember that the resolution provided for:

1. The transfer by the Administering Authority of all powers to the Togoland Government except defence, diplomacy and currency.
2. Early elections enabling the Togoland Legislative Assembly to be renewed by universal suffrage and, at the invitation of the Government of Togoland, the supervision of the elections by a Commissioner and a team of United Nations observers.
3. An expression of the wishes of the new Togoland Assembly concerning the new Statute and the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.
4. A decision of the General Assembly - the present General Assembly - concerning that termination, in the light of the report of the Trusteeship Council on these various points.

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On 13 October 1958 I had the honour, on behalf of the French Government, to report to the Council that the measures provided for by the General Assembly had been carried out in their entirety.

I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee, with its very full agenda, by repeating what I stated at some length before the Council three weeks ago, and of which you have been informed through the documents available to you.

I. AUTONOMY

I wish merely to recall that by February 1958, only three months after the adoption of resolution 1182, the scheduled transfers of powers had been effected. The new Statute of the Republic of Togoland, promulgated on 22 February 1958, marked the complete attainment of internal autonomy. The young State exercised all powers except external relations, monetary policy and defence. Three days later, nine Conventions, solemnly signed at Lomé, determined the manner in which these three fields of responsibility were to be applied.

II. THE ELECTIONS

The second item of the programme drawn up last year was the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies by elections supervised by the United Nations. A Commissioner-Ambassador Dorsinville - had been elected for this purpose by the General Assembly and I wish once again to pay tribute before this Committee to the ability, loyalty and impartiality with which he undertook his delicate task.

If the elections of 27 April 1958, the results of which have not been contested by anyone, have created a Chamber of Deputies which, in the language of Mr. Dorsinville's report, "is truly entitled to speak for the people of Togoland" this is also largely due, and I quote:

"To the great effort made by the Togoland Government, particularly in the last days before the ballot, to the efforts of the political parties, which conducted an active propaganda campaign and, last but by no means least, to the discipline shown by the people during the electoral period".

I have already emphasized that France, even when its advice was asked for and its influence solicited, took care not to interfere in the preparation and

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organization of these elections, and the High Commissioner representing France at Lomé did no more than serve as a witness and impartial arbiter.

Elections by universal adult suffrage of both sexes, a poll of 317,000 out of an electorate of 490,000 registered voters and a population of about 1 million inhabitants - these factors alone enable us to appreciate the value of Mr. Dorsinville's conclusion:

"The Administering Authority and the United Nations may well take pride in having helped to bring about the progress which made this outcome possible."

Acting on the outcome of the election, Mr. Spenale, the High Commissioner of the French Republic, called on Mr. Sylvanus Olympio, the leader of the new majority, to form a new Government, and I am happy to have Mr. Olympio here with me, together with Mr. Santos, the Minister of Justice, and Deputy Akakopo. It is not one of the lesser achievements on which our delegation prides itself to thus bring new proof of what we have often affirmed from this rostrum: that France has always deemed it its duty to respect and to assist, regardless of opinions or persons, any Government properly and democratically constituted in the territories for which it is responsible.

III. THE OPTION OF THE PEOPLE OF TOGOLAND

It was still necessary to learn the wishes of the people of Togoland. In September 1958, Mr. Sylvanus Olympio, accompanied by Mr. Santos and Mr. Savi de Tové, President of the Chamber of Deputies, went to Paris. He was received by General de Gaulle and by Mr. Cornut-Gentille, Minister for Overseas France, who has asked me to express to you his regret at being unable to come personally before this Committee, as he had intended. Talks took place, and having participated in them, I can testify, as Mr. Olympio himself has done, that they were marked by mutual trust and understanding. The outcome was a joint communiqué by which the French Government informed the Togoland Government that it had noted that Togoland had opted for independence. On my return to New York, I transmitted the official text of that document to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It was immediately brought to the attention of the Trusteeship Council (document T/1410) which unanimously expressed its appreciation of the work

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of the United Nations Commissioner and his staff, accepted the conclusion of his report that "the new Chamber is truly entitled to speak for the people of Togoland", took note of Togoland's choice of independence and of the joint French-Togoland communiqué and, lastly, recommended to the General Assembly that it take a decision, in agreement with the Administering Authority and taking into account the wishes of the Togolese authorities, concerning the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement in 1960 upon the attainment of independence by the Territory.

This resolution states in unmistakable terms that France has carried out its obligations. It recommends to the Assembly that it carry out its own, that is, in accordance with the last paragraph of last year's resolution, to take a decision concerning the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. We have explained that the termination of the Trusteeship was to coincide with the proclamation of independence.

That is precisely the purpose of these debates.

The unanimity in the Trusteeship Council - an occurrence which is by no means frequent when an administering authority is involved - is in itself significant.

However, I do not wish to ignore the fact that one or two delegations, while voting in favour of the resolution, made comments which expressed some lingering doubt, some suspicion of our intentions and of the reality of our agreement with the Togoland Government.

Why not be frank in these matters? I understand that the insinuation was made - very discreetly - that the French-Togoland communiqué was still insufficient, that no formal wish had been expressed by the Togoland Assembly, that Mr. Olympio, who enjoys the confidence of that Assembly, had perhaps hesitated to have that body ratify the option for independence in 1960, which we informed him we had noted. Moreover, what were those new modifications to the Statute, whose revision we had announced, modifications which were being considered by the Togoland Chamber of Deputies and which, according to the communiqué, were to mark the final stage in the development of Togoland's institutions before independence?

What mental reservations were being harboured by the administering Power?

Prejudices may be persistent, but the good faith and patience of France are even more so.

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In order to place the full facts before the Committee, in order to dispel the doubts of certain delegations, if genuine doubts still persist, I have transmitted three documents to the Secretariat:

1. The resolution of the Togoland Chamber of Deputies concerning the new Statute of Togoland and the Proclamation of Independence,
2. The draft motion requesting the French Government to amend the Statute of Togoland and the text of the draft Statute,
3. The verbatim record of the debates in the Togoland Chamber of Deputies at its meetings of Thursday, 23 October, Friday, 24 October and Monday, 27 October 1958.

I have confined myself to a factual statement before this Committee, because the facts seem to me to speak so clearly for themselves. Should the occasion arise, I reserve the right to clarify any further points if I find it necessary to do so.

To comment on and analyse these facts, I would only need to quote Mr. Sylvanus Olympio's admirable address to his Parliament. But he is beside me, and I understand his pride in being able to explain, himself, at this meeting, the position of his Government and the wishes of his country.

I do not think there is any need to introduce him to the Fourth Committee.

May I ask you to hear Mr. Sylvanus Olympio, Prime Minister of the Togoland Government.
