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THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF THE CAMEROONS
UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER
UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

Statement made by the representative of Haiti at the
860th meeting of the Fourth Committee on 3 March 1959

Note by the Secretariat: The following statement is circulated to
the members of the Fourth Committee in accordance with the decision
taken by the Committee at its 860th meeting.

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The Haitian delegation is proud and honoured to have had the opportunity at this thirteenth session of our General Assembly to pay to Africa, the distant cradle of our race, the tribute of gratitude and loyalty which we owe it. Barely two months ago, my delegation, after actively supporting Guinea's application for membership in our Organization, joined with the delegations of Japan, Iraq and Ghana in recommending to the General Assembly, by a resolution which to our great joy was adopted unanimously, the admission of the new independent Republic of Guinea as a Member of the United Nations. It is only just to say that the brilliant delegation of the Republic of Guinea is now doing honour to our Organization.

Today my delegation is again honoured to submit to the judgement of this Committee, on behalf of the delegations of Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay, the United States, and, of course, on its own behalf, the draft resolution set out in document A/C.4/L.580 which empowers the Cameroons under French administration to accede to full independence on 1 January 1960 and which will cancel on that day the Trusteeship Agreement approved by the General Assembly on 13 December 1946, in accordance with Article 76 (b) of the United Nations Charter.

It might not be amiss to remind the members of this Committee that all the sponsors of this draft resolution have the honour of sitting in the Trusteeship Council, and that in this capacity they submitted to the Council, after it had finished examining the question of the Cameroons under French administration, a resolution which, adopted on 17 February of this year almost unanimously except for one negative vote and one abstention, contains the basic recommendations which the Trusteeship Council though it useful to make to the General Assembly. It is for this reason, if I may be permitted to make a brief analysis of our draft resolution, that it mentions in its first preambular paragraph the General Assembly resolution of 5 December 1958 requesting the Trusteeship Council to examine, at its twenty-third session, the reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Cameroons under French and British administration and to transmit them, with its observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly to enable the Assembly to take, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System.

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The observations and recommendations which the General Assembly requested in its resolution were embodied in the report which the President of the Trusteeship Council himself submitted to the Fourth Committee. This Committee has also had the opportunity of examining the report of the Visiting Mission to the Cameroons under French administration and the observations of the Administering Authority. Mr. Jacquinet, Minister of State, and our distinguished colleague, Mr. Kosciuszko-Morizet, speaking for the Administering Authority, and the Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration have made important statements to this Committee which, in the view of my delegation constitute solemn commitments. Because of their importance and their effect on the immediate future of the Cameroons, both before and after its independence, we thought it our duty to mention these statements in our draft.

In connexion with the problem of national reconciliation, with the Committee's permission I should like, on my own behalf and on behalf of my own delegation, to reassure our charming and distinguished colleague of Liberia who yesterday saw, quite wrongly, in our draft, which she called premature, an affront to **her person**, since she thought that it would frustrate her efforts to achieve a reconciliation between the Cameroonian positions. When we consider the effective contribution of Miss Brooks to the work of our Committee, together with that personal charm to which our colleagues are constantly paying a tribute, we not only have no wish to affront her but always feel tempted to congratulate her, as our Chairman did recently on behalf of the Committee. I hope that my distinguished colleague will therefore permit me to praise her for her efforts, especially as the delegation of Haiti is also aware of its responsibilities towards the Cameroonian people and is working and will continue to work to achieve this reconciliation which it considers indispensable for the future of the Cameroons. Out of discretion I shall not say more, except that I am less pessimistic than Miss Brooks.

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The problem of national reconciliation in the Cameroons, which arose out of tragic conflicts that need not be recalled on this occasion, was until recently a source of doubt and anxiety. In the Trusteeship Council this doubt and anxiety was often manifested in different ways. But at present this problem assumes a different aspect, because now it is up to the Cameroonians, up to all of them and them alone, on the eve of achieving that independence to which they all contributed in different ways and for which, irrespective of their position, they all prayed, it is up to the Cameroonians alone to find the proper solution to this problem in keeping with world public opinion and the welfare, progress and future of their country.

It is because of this indispensable unity of all Cameroonians that our draft notes with satisfaction the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of the Amnesty Law of 14 February 1959 and the assurances given by the Prime Minister of the Cameroons that his Government welcomed the return of all Cameroonians who in recent years had left the country and invited them to re-enter normal life without fear of reprisal. This normal political life, as I recently stated in the Trusteeship Council, implies the free activity of democratic institutions. It also implies scrupulous and unconditional respect for fundamental human rights - the social, economic, civil and political rights without which no modern society can evolve and progress. The Committee will therefore understand why our draft takes special note of the assurance given by the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government that the Territory enjoys freedom of the Press, of assembly and of political association, as well as other fundamental freedoms.

The Committee is well aware of the circumstances which, at the last elections, were at least partly responsible for the invalidation of votes in the Sanaga-Maritime area. The four seats in the Legislative Assembly allocated to this region are still vacant because the election results were challenged. The draft resolution, without prejudice to any subsequent decisions which may be taken by the Cameroonian Government, notes the official statement that elections will be held in this region in April next.

The present Cameroonian Assembly adopted a resolution on 24 October 1958 calling for independence, thus giving expression to the aspirations of the people. The Visiting Mission which we sent out (I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's respect for the members of this Mission with their sense of duty, competence and integrity) drew attention in the conclusions of its report to the unanimously expressed desire of the people of the Cameroons for independence; it was so clear that the Mission felt there was no need to hold a referendum on this issue. The Administering Authority and the representatives of the Cameroonian Government have told us that the entire population of the Cameroons desires independence and is ready for it. All the petitioners whom we have heard, even though some of them disagree with their Government's views on other matters which they consider of vital importance, share this unanimous desire. How could our draft resolution fail to take into account this unanimous desire for independence?

Lastly, as the representative of France has rightly pointed out, there are no degrees of independence. The universality of the United Nations means that its doors are open to all independent, peace-loving peoples which accept the obligations contained in the Charter. We have been particularly happy to note, in this connexion, the unequivocal declarations of the Prime Minister of the Cameroons, and the assurance by the French representative that his Government will sponsor the application which will be made by the independent Cameroons, on 1 January 1960, for admission to membership in the United Nations.

It is in the light of all these considerations that our draft resolution states, in its only operative paragraph, that since, in agreement with the Administering Authority, the Cameroons under French administration will become independent on 1 January 1960, the Trusteeship Agreement approved by the General Assembly on 13 December 1946 shall cease to be in force in accordance with Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations. These are the broad lines of the draft resolution which I, on behalf of the delegations mentioned earlier, have the honour to submit to the Committee for its consideration and approval.

Permit me, in conclusion, to convey to the Administering Authority my delegation's deep and sincere appreciation of the splendid work it has just completed in the Cameroons, which it has led to independence despite many difficulties. When it brings to a successful conclusion the heavy task which was laid upon it by the United Nations and which, as my distinguished colleague from Guinea said yesterday, is not yet entirely accomplished, France will have deserved well of the Organization.

Permit me also to communicate to my Cameroonian friends, to my Cameroonian brothers, the joy felt by my delegation, which has unceasingly striven at their side for a liberated Cameroons, an independent Cameroons, a unified Cameroons. May they allow the Haitian representative, using his prerogative of seniority, to urge them to show tolerance and unity, to take over their own interests, to settle their family disputes themselves, without an arbitrator and without witnesses, so that, when the glorious sun of Cameroonian independence dawns upon them all on 1 January 1960, it may find them with ranks closed, exalted by the great task which lies before them.
