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Item 5 of the agenda

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS  
CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Addendum

The Secretariat has prepared the following addendum to document T/L.175, in which are included summaries of petitions concerning the Cameroons under British administration and observations of the Administering Authority which have been received since the preparation of document T/L.175.

I. Petition from the Ex-Servicemen's Union, Victoria (T/PET.4/68)

B. Written observations of the Administering Authority<sup>1/</sup>

Replace paragraph 3 of document T/L.175 with the following:

3. After presenting detailed observations on the petitioners' various complaints with regard to the ex-servicemen's representation, their request for a full-time paid secretary, and for clubs, reading rooms, loans and employment, the Administering Authority concluded that it was satisfied that in the Victoria Division adequate social facilities existed for ex-servicemen if they wished to avail themselves of them; that ample opportunities of employment were open to ex-servicemen in the Victoria Division who desired work suitable to their abilities; and that loan applications for ex-servicemen capable of engaging in business or agriculture had received and would receive most sympathetic consideration. In these circumstances ex-servicemen in the Cameroons did not appear to have any legitimate grievances and there would seem to be nothing to add to the resolution on this subject previously adopted by the Council.

II. Petition from the Bakweri Land Committee (T/PET.4/69 and Add.1)

A. Summary of the petition

After paragraph 8 of document T/L.175 insert the following:

8a. In the letter (T/PET.4/69/Add.1) outlining the resolutions the petitioners make the following points:

(a) In spite of their appreciation for the proposed measures for the alleviation of the land shortage and the social regeneration of the Bakweri people, they resolve not to co-operate until the Administering Authority makes an unequivocal and categorical statement to the effect that the Bakweri people are the sole legal owners of the lands in the Victoria Division in which plantations are now being operated by the Cameroons Development Corporation.

/(b) The Bakweri

(b) The Bakweri lands cannot be justly "owned by the whole Trust Territory" as suggested by the special representative of the Administering Authority, while the rest of the Trust Territory's lands are not being operated in the interest of every member of the Territory.

(c) Although the Administration claims to have bought the lands from the Custodian of Enemy Property for the "natives" as a good gesture, the petitioners contend that the statement that the rents now being paid to the Governor serve to meet the cost of buying the plantations from the Custodian belies the Administering Authority's good intentions. Claiming that such a procedure "would summarily mean that the Bakweri lands have bought themselves back", the petitioners request that the rents be paid to them and not to the Governor, since the lands are not crown lands.

(d) The petitioners further request that all missionary bodies and trading firms be informed that the Bakweri people through the Governor of Nigeria may demand the parcels of land held by them on the payment of compensation as may be determined adequate.

C. Information having a bearing on the subject matter of the petition

Add after paragraph 11 of document T/L.175 the following:

In its 1950 annual report<sup>1/</sup> the Administering Authority gives the background of the Bakweri problem and describes its attempts to carry out the resettlement programme proposed by the Government and endorsed by the Trusteeship Council in its recommendation on the Bakweri land problem.

Observations of individual members of the Trusteeship Council on the Bakweri problem, during the discussions on the annual reports, at the ninth session of the Trusteeship Council, are summarized in paragraphs 51 to 55 of the Conference room paper No. 1 of the Drafting Committee on the Cameroons under British administration. (The United States, China, Belgium, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Special representative of the Administering Authority).

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<sup>1/</sup> Annual Report, 1950, paragraphs 466 - 480.

After paragraph 11 of document T/L.175 add the following:

III. Petitions from Mr. Joseph Ngu (T/PET.4/70) and the French Cameroons Welfare Union (T/PET.4/71 and T/PET.4/71/Add.1) dated 16 June 1951 and 6, 10 and 16 June respectively.

A. Summary of the petitions

The French Cameroons Welfare Union (T/PET.4/71 and Add.1) refers to its previous petition<sup>1/</sup> addressed to the Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa and states that in spite of the assurances given the Council by the special representative that immigrants from the French Cameroons enjoyed equal privileges with the local inhabitants of the British Cameroons, and the Council consequent decision to take no action, the "real political situation" as concerned the immigrants at that time was far from satisfactory. They state that the actual number of the immigrants' representatives in both the Native Authority Councils and the Native Courts of the Victoria Division was not only negligible but was not at all commensurate with the total immigrant population actually resident in that Division, and claim that there has been no change in this situation under the new Nigerian Constitution. The petitioners protest against their exclusion from participation in the new Constitution stating that they are neither entitled to choose their own candidates at the primary or village election nor allowed to vote for the candidates of the local inhabitants. They claim the right to vote on the grounds that they pay head and income taxes and thus are being taxed without representation, that the total adult male population of immigrants living in the Victoria Federated and the Bakweri Clan Native Authority areas compares favourably with that of the native population (total indigenous adult males in these areas in 1949 being 4,494, of whom 3,451 were immigrants and the majority from the French Cameroons) and that the immigrant population is the main stay of the economy of the southern divisions of the Cameroons Province. They therefore request that, in view of the fact that the French Cameroons immigrants are scattered in the Victoria Division, the French Cameroons Welfare Union be constituted a primary electoral unit and that they be allocated seats at the Divisional Electoral Meeting compatible with their numbers.

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1/ T/PET.4/19 - 5/8 and Resolution 172 (VI)

They further complain that they are discriminated against in the question of appointments to the public service of the Cameroons under British administration and that, in spite of the fact that they contribute a considerable part of the revenue from which scholarships for Cameroons youths are financed, their children are discriminated against in the granting of scholarships.

Finally, they protest against the frontier between the two Cameroons stating that it should not be allowed to form a bar to the enjoyment of human rights by the people living on either side of it. They request the Trusteeship Council to conduct a referendum at an early date to ascertain the wishes of the indigenous population with regard to the question of the abolition of the frontier control and the unification of the Cameroons.

Attached to the petition is a letter dated 12 June 1951 from Mr. G. Osborn, District Officer, Victoria Division in which he informs the petitioners that with regard to their request concerning the right to vote in the primary elections, the electoral officer is prepared to accept on the electoral roll the name of any person who can show that he or his father was born in the Victoria Division, a provision which should dispose of the difficulties of a considerable number of persons of French Cameroons origin. With regard to the rest he states that their only recourse is to apply for naturalization as British subjects.

In a cablegram sent on behalf of the French Cameroons immigrants of Kumba (T/PET.4/70) Mr. Joseph Ngu claims that the French Cameroons immigrants, who number several thousand in Kumba Division, strongly protest against their exclusion from voting and from nominating candidates in the forthcoming elections. He states that such action is contrary to the policy outlined to the Trusteeship Council at its sixth session in Geneva and earnestly requests that the Government revise its electoral procedure in the light of its declared policy.

B. Written observations of the Administering Authority

No observations have been received to date.