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TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Fourth Session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING
(Transcription from sound recording)

Lake Success, New York
Monday, 28 February 1949, at 2.30 p.m.

President:

Sir Alan EUMANS

United Kingdom

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the twenty-seventh meeting of the fourth session of the Trusteeship Council.

EXAMINATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS: CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION
GENERAL DEBATE (documents T/219 and T/242)

The PRESIDENT: As I imagine that the President has been held up on the road I think I had better open the Council and proceed with the question of the examination of the annual reports of the Cameroons and Togoland under French Administration.

Mr. GARREAU (France) (Interpretation from French): I would like at the present stage of the general debate to reply on some points that were raised by my colleagues. I shall be brief.

The representative of Costa Rica has not yet arrived. I wanted to say something on the subject of the commentary he made on the increase in size of the city of Yaounde.

I would like to say that this commentary is accurate and that the French Administration is concerned with this problem. The growth of the city of Yaounde has been almost inevitable. The fact of this increase in the urban population which can be noted elsewhere has taken place in Africa by virtue of that family solidarity that has been noted by several of the accredited representatives.

The creation of an important administrative center has caused an increase in the population inasmuch as the families around native officials increased.

Many of these people have no means of existence except in community with the personage who is invested with administrative functions. Now, to correct this situation, for a city like Yaounde it would be necessary to find other modes of life than commerce or administrative life; that is, we would have to industrialize the city. But this industrialization would only again cause an increase in the population of the city of Yaounde and this again would have a bad effect upon the country.

The authorities, as I say, have been concerned with the problem but have found there is no easy solution. The administration contemplates measures -- it already has taken some measures -- to settle the population as much as possible upon the soil by developing their agricultural knowledge and science.

/It has

It has created agricultural centres or stations so that the population comes to take a greater and greater interest in supporting itself by agriculture and in making such profits in agriculture as to maintain and indeed increase its standard of living.

I have already said that the Administration has gone over this problem with the greatest care several times. It continues to seek the remedies that would palliate the difficulties which this situation has caused and which my colleague from Costa Rica noted.

The representative of Costa Rica also brought up the question that had already been put in connexion with the diet in prisons. As I have said, there has been no discrimination as between black and white, but a mere recognition of the fact that the customary diet of the two peoples is different shows that if two different diets were provided, they were provided in the interest of all the prisoners.

From the point of view of calories contained in the diet there is no difference as between that supplied to Europeans and that supplied to the indigenous population. Now, if it were possible to establish a single diet which will be of equal benefit to both groups, then the Administration would have no objection, but that which has been instituted in prisons at the present time is also to be found in existence in our military organizations where the diet is prepared in accordance with the needs of the various groups that have been incorporated in the French Army.

I recall, for example, that at the beginning of the year 1940 when the Armistice had already been signed and about 30 volunteers arrived at Vichy from the furthest parts of the overseas territories -- some from Rapa -- it was necessary to set up a special kitchen for these people who could not at all get used to the general food supplied to the rest of the French Army.

Now I would like to turn to various remarks made by the Philippine delegation and in particular to the important point that bears upon the French Union.

This question was raised last week in the Sub-committee entrusted, according to the General Assembly Resolution, with the study of the possible effects of the administrative unions upon the Trust Territories, which problem the Trusteeship Council had already noted in connexion with Ruanda-Urundi, Tanganyika and New Guinea under Australian Administration.

/ Previously, during a

Previously, during a meeting of the Council, the representative of Mexico had already asked the question, and I had replied to some of his comments.

In the sub-committee, a vote took place on the subject of whether the problem raised by the French Union should be studied in the Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee was set up by a General Assembly Resolution which had in mind only administrative unions, and, in particular, those that had already been discussed by the Council and by the Fourth Committee.

In this case it is obviously not a question of an administrative union. The administrative unions which the General Assembly Resolution refers to are those between a Trust Territory and a neighbouring territory, but if this vote of the Sub-committee had any grounds, I would tell the Council that the French delegation is not seeking to avoid a thorough discussion of the problem that has been raised first by the Mexican delegation and afterwards by the Philippine delegation.

The French delegation is of the belief that this problem could be studied by the Sub-Committee if the Trusteeship Council deems that the Sub-Committee should do so. In this case however, the Trusteeship Council would have to take a special decision entrusting the Sub-Committee now studying administrative unions to proceed also to study the question of the relations between the Trust Territories and the other territories that constitute the French Union.

We think that it would be of the greatest interest to clear up this matter and to bring the position to a point where all members of the Council might have a clear idea of the relations between the Trust Territory and the French Union.

I would reserve the right to open a more thorough discussion of this point at a later stage. For the time being, I will limit myself to communicating to the Council that my delegation is ready to submit all the necessary documentation and information to the Sub-Committee in question if the Trusteeship Council agrees with that point of view.

Mr. BAER (Iraq); In an effort to avoid repetition and in order to express fully the attitude of my delegation toward the reports under consideration, and our approach to the Trusteeship System, I have thought it expedient and appropriate to reiterate here some of our main convictions relevant to the Reports under consideration as a whole.

/ Others of my remarks

Others of my remarks shall refer to some of the reports and I may reserve particular remarks with reference to the report which is now occupying the attention of the Council. In so doing, my delegation shall have made its general statement with respect to all the reports which the Council has proposed to consider presently. At the same time, I would like to reserve the right of my delegation to make particular statements to the several reports as they are considered by the Council.

I must declare at the outset that we are faced in this Council with some handicaps. One is the need to be acclimatized to the field of the work and the procedure followed, having only recently attended the meetings of this Council, a stage that is always overcome but not until some time later.

The other is the considerable drawback that some of the reports and apparently abundant literature that supplements them, are not made available in the two working languages. We consider this an unnecessary drawback that could and, we believe, should be avoided for the better functioning of this Council.

There is some consolation in the fact that we are not the only delegation so unhappily handicapped, which makes remedy of the present arrangement more pressing. We believe the reports must be made available in the two working languages. I do not intend to detain the Council on this score, but I am taking steps to make it possible that this important subject is considered more fully and given the attention it deserves by this august Council.

We regard the Trusteeship System as the most constructive and dynamic aspect of this organization and we consequently believe the responsibility of this Council to be extremely heavy. We are also mindful of the enormous weight of responsibility that must, of necessity, be borne by the Administering Authorities. They have our sympathy and understanding of the difficulties that beset their efforts. The problems that face us in the Trust Territories are urgent; progress must be achieved in an extremely short time and the people under Trust must be made to look after their own affairs and to take their place among the free and independent nations of the world.

/ It is truly a trust

It is truly a trust of civilization that requires extreme effort on the part of all concerned.

We believe the relevant parts of the United Nations Charter and the aims set out therein, especially in the opening paragraph with the utmost respect and attention they deserve. We take them to mean what they say and imply, and we do not believe that their meaning or implication could be mistaken to mean opposite things. We are confident that we shall not be regarded unrealistic in our approach to the Charter in this respect.

The Charter of the United Nations does not propose that Trust Territories must be transformed beyond recognition, nor does it imply that the people under trust shall forego their traditions, background and time-honoured customs.

We take the Charter to mean that progress and political consciousness must be administered as best fit to preserve the identity and the characteristics of the Territory.

Article 73 of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter emphasizes that all measures for advancement in non-self-governing territories, whether political, economic or educational, must be viewed with particular reference to the local indigenous culture of the peoples concerned.

Therefore, we believe that the Administering Authority must regard this important issue more adequately than has been done hitherto.

We are told that there exists no lingua franca for some of the Territories under discussion. Surely there must exist a vernacular of some sort that could be encouraged, rather than enforce a foreign language which carries in its trail entirely foreign sets of tradition, background and culture, which leads to the bewilderment rather than the consciousness of the majority of the population.

We believe that the enforcement of a language entirely foreign to the peoples under trust, and making it conditional to the holding of office, or even to casting of votes in elections, would jeopardize the eventual choice of the local populations, so that when the time comes for them to make their choice, it shall not be an entirely free choice.

Let this not be construed that we stand against the teaching of a modern foreign language in the Trust Territories. On the contrary, we believe that this may be the channel through which civilization

/and

and progress may be imported and spread.

However, even in the most advanced nations, one can hardly expect all the population to know a second rich and complicated language. Even some of the universities in advanced countries do not insist on the knowledge of a second language.

It is, in our opinion, somewhat arbitrary that the people under trust are by law required to know a foreign language before they can exercise their rights as citizens. Are we not setting somewhat a high standard for people who, by definition, are behind in the march of civilization?

We believe that the knowledge of a secondary language must be second to the development of the local vernacular which preserves the essential characteristics of the indigenous population which is, I repeat, a sacred trust of civilization. We believe that while all the various human cultures are somewhat similar in their aims and objectives variations and additions to these cultures are indeed a source of enrichment to the totality of the human culture as a whole. How could local culture be developed and its individuality brought out when the language through which it thrives is set aside and discouraged?

Some of us who have had occasion to see soldiers from overseas French colonies and dependencies must have been struck with the ingenious system that was devised in the design of their uniforms where the local national dresses of these people were incorporated in modern functional and striking uniforms. That, only the creative genius of France could devise.

If the local culture could be preserved, trimmed, developed and directed on the same basic principle that these uniforms were styled, France and indeed all the Administering Authorities would be doing a great service to the people under their trust and performing a wonderful and admirable achievement.

There are certain groups in the Trust Territories under consideration who refuse Western education when it comes through certain channels which they deem detrimental to their time-honoured traditions and convictions. I refer here in particular to education through missionary schools.

/None of

None of us can blame a group for being sensitive to its own ancient tradition nor could we blame it for its aversion to receiving education through channels which aim at their eventual conversion to other faiths. Surely the Charter of the United Nations ensures for these people their freedom of religion in clear terms which are occasionally quoted and twisted around to mean the opposite view.

We come to the conclusion that it is the responsibility of the Administering Authority not so much to aid and facilitate the spread of new and alien cultures and religions in Territories under their trust, but to develop and foster the local culture and faiths as much as possible, and to ensure their natural growth and development, for we all know that culture and religion are dynamic and are capable of growth and development; maybe essentially the same truth that is valued by a certain civilization could be arrived at through another interesting media, that is more suitable to the indigenous character of the people concerned.

If we urge that no section of the population under trust should be penalized by not accepting education through missionary channels, then dubbed reactionaries who are averse to learning, when independent and purely educational institutions are not provided for them, we are simply bringing out an essential truth which must be recognized by this Council.

Let no one infer from this that we are prejudiced against certain organizations. Nothing is farther from the truth. We have the greatest respect and deference to what they hold sacred. Our only concern is to give a chance to local cultures and faiths and to abide by the terms of the United Nations Charter.

In some of the Territories with which these reports deal there exist groups who belong to the Moslem faith. Why could not these people be provided with schools and educational centers to fit their own particular culture and backgrounds? No: one can reasonably maintain that this is against the Charter. The Administering Authorities must in our opinion make an earnest effort to disseminate education to them. Surely inaction in this respect could not be excused on the score that these groups are averse to learning. Their first religious teaching and indeed the first word in the holy Koran is an injunction to read. But education must come to these people through suitable /channels.

channels.

One report referred to present application of the Maliki communities administered by Moslem Kadis or judges. Where are these Kadis trained? Have the Administering Authorities provided well-ordered training centers for them? Or have an adequate number of them been sent to more advanced cultural and religious centers which derive from the same roots as theirs where they could be adequately trained to administer that particular law which is enforceable in their community? The question here is not so much of a preference of certain education as it is a matter of practical necessity.

If the subsidies from the local revenue of Trust Territories are granted to certain educational institutions which avowedly stand for the dissemination of certain faiths, there can be no objection to establishing by governmental subsidies a college, or colleges, to train these Kadis, or to administer education more suitable and acceptable to these people. And this, naturally, should not entail the conversion of peoples who hold other faiths.

If these people are left without guidance or aid, superstition begins to replace some of the main tenets of the great faith they follow and profess. It shall not be wholly their fault, neither the Administering Authorities concerned shall be entirely blameless, nor the high aim of the Trusteeship System shall have been achieved.

We are even today somewhat vague as to the exact political status of the Cameroons, or Togoland in the French Union. An essential discussion was started during the oral questions on one of these Trust Territories, but it was postponed until the reports are considered. We are looking forward to a fuller discussion on the subject which we consider to be of great importance.

It seems to us that higher education and health conditions in the two Trust Territories referred to above could be improved upon and we are confident that the administration is alive to its responsibility in either of these two fields, particularly with respect to public health where the situation is extremely acute, and the administration has shown in the reports before us its full awareness of the seriousness of the situation.

/s/ trust

We trust that our general, and some of our particular, remarks shall be taken in good spirit, as they are made. We are motivated solely by the interests of the people under trust, and the fulfilment of the heavy task that is placed on our shoulders as members of this Council.

We do not want to leave a false impression that we are oblivious to the enormous constructive steps that have been taken in the Trust Territories under consideration. Credit is due to the Administering Authority for its remarkable effort in the Trust Territories of the Camercons and Togoland, and for the diligence with which it set out to accomplish its task, and particularly for its patience with the comments, remarks and questions made in the Council, which I am sure all emanate from clear and sincere motives.

The PRESIDENT: Before we proceed with the discussion, I should like to make a few remarks on the subject of our timetable. In the first place, we have been asked to set free the members of the Secretariat so that they should be able to leave here at 4 o'clock by bus, and I have further been advised that it would be in the interests of us all, in view of the condition of the roads, that we should get home early.

I propose therefore to adjourn the Council at 3.45.

Last week the President suggested that we should meet on Tuesday morning and on another day later in the week perhaps. In view of that, I suggest that we should adjourn at 3.45 today until 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Mr. NORIEGA (Mexico)(Interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Mexican delegation, I wish to offer my congratulations to the French representative and delegation for the decision that they have taken to the effect that the Sub-Committee that is studying administrative unions be allowed to study the question of the French Union.

The Mexican delegation has, in the case of the French Union, as I explained in the Committee, acted without any kind of prejudice or any kind of prejudgment of the matter. We have done this in the same attitude as that in which we have acted towards other kinds of unions that have been studied.

My delegation considers that it is desirable that this whole field of study be cleared up and defined, so that, if we had to reach a

/decision

decision upon the reports and documentation that we have without going further into the problem, it would be certain that many people would reach ideas that would not correspond to the reality of the situation at all.

I have read books and studies, on colonial problems that give me the impression that the authors had not had enough elements for accurate judgment, that they are constructing on the basis of fantasy, or on the basis of second or third-hand information.

I think that, in the case that we are going to approach of the French Union, as in the case of other unions, the Council is going to have sufficient documentation and information to be able to clear up the matter.

I would like to state that our Committee, since it was divided half-and-half on the subject of whether we should or not study this question, adopted a compromise proposal of the representative of China that the matter be brought to the Trusteeship Council for consultation and that the Trusteeship Council should decide. But fortunately the decision of the French representative has resolved the problem, and puts us in a position where we can begin to study the question of the French Union with the best possible beginning, that is to say, on the basis of understanding and the goodwill of the Administering Authority directly interested.

Mr. GARREAU (France)(Interpretation from French): Since we still have a few minutes, and since there are no volunteers for speaking, I will just reply to a few points in the very interesting statement made by the representative of Iraq.

I would like to return to the question of the teaching of the French language. First, I would like to point out, in the remarks of the representative of Iraq, one point which I think is a misunderstanding. If I understood correctly what my colleague said, he said that the knowledge of a foreign language should not be a condition of the right of being a voter, but such is not the case.

I specified that there was a thirteenth category of person which did not come in the twelve former categories, of whom it was required that they know the French language sufficiently; all the other categories, the most important categories, the twelve first categories of persons liable to request the right to vote, are based on something other than the knowledge of the French language and may be completely
/ignorant

ignorant of the French language and not know anything about it. It was an extra condition given to the electorate in order that certain numbers of the inhabitants of the Cameroons who do not come into the twelve first categories referred to, shall be able to ask to be inscribed on the list of voters.

But this was only a point of detail. What is more important is the fundamental problem of whether it is preferable to teach in a foreign language or, on the contrary, in the local languages. I would not like to return to the long explanations given on this subject in the special case of the Cameroons, but I had pointed out that in the Cameroons we found ourselves in a very special situation, and that is, that there is no language which is spoken in a general way by all the population.

We are faced with a great number of dialects which are not even of the same linguistic origin, and none of these languages is sufficiently developed to serve as a basis for education -- I would not even say complete education, but the most elementary form of education.

This education in the first degree could be given in one or several of the local languages when these languages have been sufficiently developed, but for the time being they are simply idioms, and they are very elementary in their nature, and they do not comply with the requirements of teaching. You notice in the document which has been circulated to us at the request of the representative of the Philippines, part of the memorandum from Dr. Awuma, that he complains about the teaching given by mission schools -- he did not complain directly, but the remark implied such a complaint -- he explained, though I do not have the text before me I recall it sufficiently to summarize it.

/He said in

He said in mission schools, elementary and primary teaching is given in the vernacular, and at the most a few words of English are taught. This teaching lasts two or three years, and if the student wishes to continue his education, then he comes into the secondary school at a certain age, where teaching is still given to him by the missions in the vernacular, and then we add to the first elements of oral English which he had already received the study of written English.

But this is still very insufficient, and then he can only arrive at higher education at the age of 19 or 20, when he still does not know a foreign language, which was English in this case, sufficiently to be able to follow fruitfully such higher teachings. That is the perfectly evident result of teaching given in a language which is not yet ripe for complete education. You cannot give the essential higher teaching in the vernacular, which has still remained at a very elementary stage.

Here I would point out to the representative of Iraq that he is perhaps thinking of other languages, which are not rudimentary languages, but which are languages which can give us a possibility of complete teaching up to higher education, such as the Arabic language. I do not know the Swahili language, but it is possible that it is sufficiently developed to answer to the essential requirements of higher education.

I also said that as far as the territories under French administration are concerned, when we are faced with a language which is sufficiently evolved for complete education, that is, elementary, secondary and higher education is possible, then this teaching is given in this language. That is the case in North Africa, for the Arabic language. It is the case for Cambodian and for the Annamic languages. It is also the case in Madagascar for the Malgache.

But in the Cameroons, as in Equatorial Africa, as in practically all the territories of French West Africa, we are faced with a multitude of dialects which are still in a very elementary stage. This stage is so elementary that we cannot contemplate giving teaching in this language.

That is why, in the Cameroons, we have resorted to the French language.

If the Trusteeship Council wishes to have a policy on this point, then you will have to put in the balance the advantages and the drawbacks of the systems we are faced with. If you wish to teach in the vernacular -- a vernacular which does not exist at present -- then you will have to create this vernacular, and which will you choose among the multitude of dialects in the Cameroons? You would have to choose one,

/adopt it,

adopt it, develop it, create it complete, in fact, in order that it become a language for education such as is necessary at the present time if you wish to form technicians in all the various branches of science in present-day life.

It is a very long task, and I think that the result would be a happy one perhaps. I don't know. But if you place yourself in the practical field, the representative of Mexico the other day said, quite rightly, since there may be a lack of European volunteers, for instance, in the field of medicine, and that it is therefore difficult for the Administration to recruit a sufficient number of doctors, where a great need is felt for such, would it not be appropriate to set up as quickly as possible a group of doctors taken in the indigenous population. The representative of Mexico, I believe, formulated this proposal when he was perfectly justified in doing so.

But the French Administration has sought to constitute as rapidly as possible a group of indigenous doctors, but in order to have these indigenous doctors, you must put them in a position to receive the necessary formation. Therefore they must have a language, which would enable them to arrive quickly enough at the stage of higher education. It is French, in the Cameroons, which will give them this possibility, and no other language is possible.

You cannot conceive of a student of medicine who at the present time wished to study in any vernacular in the Cameroons. It would be quite impossible because such a language does not exist. Then, you must give him an instrument of work which will be a great language of world culture, whether it is French or English or Arabic; but you must give him a language which he can use for higher education, otherwise we would have no doctors.

What does the Council want in this case? Does it wish to set up as soon as possible, in all the Trust Territories, indigenous bodies of technicians, of doctors, of engineers, and so forth, and in this case, you would have to put the students in a position to continue their studies to the higher degrees. Or if you wish to maintain them at an elementary stage, of course you can give them teaching in the vernacular, as is the case in the mission schools.

It is a fact that higher education can be rapidly developed as we have done in our Territories, solely by teaching taken directly in hand by the Administration. Otherwise the missions

/do not have

do not have the necessary means to give to the students the possibility of making the necessary studies in order to form technicians, and therefore, universities or scholarships for universities, should be taken in hand by the Administration.

That is what we have done, and we have arrived at appreciable results. As I have said already, for the two Trust Territories of the Camercons and Togoland, we have more than 300 students in our universities, who, therefore, have been in a position to follow in France the necessary higher education courses. That is solely because they were in a position to learn French at an elementary stage.

If you leave a student in an elementary education taught solely in the vernacular, which is not one of the languages known by a great part of the population, this student is not in a position to pass to secondary education, and he must devote at least two years of his life acquiring this idiom or this essential language, which would be French or English. You are not doing the student a service in this case, and that is why the students in the two French Trust Territories, as in all the French African territories, require French to be given as an essential teaching as early as the elementary schools.

I understand perfectly well the concern of the representative of Iraq. This concern has already been expressed by other members of the Council. That is, that local civilization in all its aspects, and in the aspects of languages amongst others, should not be annihilated by the teaching of a foreign language.

Everything should be done, not only to save the civilization or civilizations of the Territory, in order that the indigenous inhabitants do not lose their racial personality. This has never been lost sight of by the French administration for any of our African territories. On the contrary considerable studies have been carried out in the field of indigenous civilizations, and we have already recalled that we have developed an Institute of Higher African Studies at Dakar, and we are sending the maximum number of students there, in order that they may take a very active part in the work of this Institute, the purpose of which is precisely to save everything that we can save of the old African civilization and to give them a form of rebirth and redevelopment.

/But if you want

But if you want this work of resurrection of indigenous civilizations to be carried on happily, you must set up first of all an intellectual elite, and it will be precisely those among the students whom we send to France to study in our universities who at a later stage will take an interest in the indigenous civilization and will develop it, with complete assistance of the Administration.

You must first of all create instruments of work, otherwise you will not have the workers.

/That is the practical

That is the practical situation as it presents itself at present and the representative of Iraq will understand that I completely agree with his general remarks. That is not in contradiction with the remarks he made but in the practical fields we are convinced that we have adopted the best way to accelerate the individual development of the populations we are entrusted with.

Mr. Liu Chieh (China) took the Chair.

Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) (Interpretation from French): I think that the Council will be unanimous and that it will be indicated in the report that the Council is unanimous to pay tribute to the generous spirit which governs the political reforms carried out by France in the Trust Territories. These political reforms are extremely bold. They have given the population of the Cameroons a very large share in the administration of business in the Territory.

The Council will be unanimous also to pay tribute to the boldness and the generosity with which France has extended to the African Territories the social legislation and the labour code of the metropolitan territory.

We may hope that the new institutions will prove by experience sufficiently fruitful to enable the economic development of the Territory without which the finances would not bear the burden of the administration and of the cultural efforts which France has imposed upon herself, especially in the field of education.

Mr. LIN (China): It is with a sense of inadequacy and a feeling of humility that I, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, am submitting some observations to the Trusteeship Council on the administration of the Cameroons under French trusteeship.

The annual report of that Trust Territory is the first report of a series submitted to the Trusteeship Council. In spite of the excellence of the report, in spite of the frankness and willingness of the special representative in furnishing the Council with supplementary information, the Chinese delegation feels that it does not possess a very clear picture of the Trust Territory, its peoples, its folkways, its customs, its political achievements, its education and culture.

/To be sure.

To be sure, the annual report contains a great many facts and figures; laws, ordinances, regulations, tables and so forth. But these do not tell all. The Chinese delegation, at least, has understood very little of the traditional patterns of culture, the traditional systems of values, the traditional concepts and beliefs and, above all, the process of evolution which is taking place in that Trust Territory, a process which is destined to bring about a radical transvaluation of values.

In other words the Chinese delegation is not yet able to understand fully the present stage of the evolution of that Territory in the light of its historical background and its possible achievements in the foreseeable future.

It is becoming more and more clear that one of the great difficulties confronting the Trusteeship Council in studying the conditions in any Trust Territory and in drawing conclusions and observations thereupon is that of striking a proper balance between what is possible and what is actual.

Unless we believe in a theory that whatever is real is rational we cannot be satisfied with things and conditions as they exist. On the other hand, unless we are naively optimistic -- of course no member of the Council is -- we cannot expect the appearance of a Utopia in the Cameroons or anywhere else.

These general remarks are intended to preface the observations of the Chinese delegation, not only on the Cameroons, but also on other Territories. I shall not repeat them on later occasions.

The Trust Territory under consideration, it seems to the Chinese delegation, has made great strides in political advancement in recent years.

First of all there is the establishment of suffrage. The granting of the right of election which is a basic political right to the people of that Trust Territory is truly a welcome fact. This is the first step towards self-government. At present the electorate is still limited in scope. The total population of that Territory is some 2,800,000 and the total population of 21 years or older in that Territory, according to the special representative, is about 1,400,000. But in the first election the number of qualified voters was only 42,000, each elector representing some 67 inhabitants.

The electorate is divided into two colleges, one college of French citizens to which the principle of universal suffrage applies. The other college is of persons under French administration or trusteeship. It is to be hoped that in due course, the principle of universal suffrage may be universally applied and eventually perhaps the two colleges may also be unified.

/There has been

There has been created a Representative Assembly of 40 members, 16 elected by the first college and 24 by the second. According to the decree of 25 October 1946 the Representative Assembly has been given power to decide upon a considerable number of matters including the initiation of expenditures.

It is to be noted, however, that all the powers given are related to matters of purely local concern. The Assembly has no power to initiate legislation which is the prerogative of the French National Assembly.

No less important, in the opinion of the Chinese delegation, is the fact that the Administration is planning to enlarge the membership of local and regional councils which will include not only chiefs and notables but also representatives of economic and social agencies, such as trade unions, cooperatives, and others.

Although these institutions are not yet formalized and apparently have no statutory powers and the process of reorganization is still under consideration, it is to be hoped that these organs will eventually become real bodies of local government. It is only on a basis of these local institutions that a true democracy can be gradually built in the Territory as a whole.

In general, the Chinese delegation is of the opinion that the Cameroons under French Administration is making rapid progress towards self-government and the Trusteeship Council commends highly the liberal policy of the Administering Authority in promoting political advancement of the Territory.

Our delegation also notes with interest the ten-year plan for social and economic development which will involve a total expenditure of more than 8 billion francs. As the plans were just beginning to operate in the year under review, that is 1947, it is not possible, at the present stage, to appraise the results obtained.

As the years go on the Council will no doubt be informed of the annual progress. In the meantime the Chinese delegation desires to express its good wishes for the success of the social and economic development undertaken and appreciates the endeavour on the part of the Administering Authority to improve economic and social conditions in the Trust Territory.

It is a general phenomenon in African Trust Territories that wages are related to the minimum subsistence level of the inhabitants. This seems to be true of the Cameroons also. Of course in this Territory wages vary according to districts; where the demand for labour is high, wages too often go beyond the minimum rate.

/One interesting

One interesting and somewhat disturbing aspect of this situation is that while wages are usually fixed on a basis of the subsistence level, the workers, it is said, do not desire higher wages as their needs are simple and daily necessities can easily be satisfied. This sounds as though they are satisfied with low wages. My delegation is doubtful of the validity of this argument, for the contrary may also be argued. The needs of the inhabitants are simple because they have no means of acquiring those goods and services which satisfy the higher needs. They have no means of getting better clothes, better houses or of improving health and sanitary conditions.

It will seem that the creation of conscious desires and needs for the higher things of life is relatively easy. The ways and means of satisfying those needs and desires are difficult. If economic and social conditions are to be improved, such improvements will necessarily be, in the first stages anyway, in terms of better clothing, better housing, better health, and so forth, and such improvements require positive action and initiative on the part of the Administering Authority, not only to create greater desires and needs, which is easy, but also to satisfy them, which is somewhat more difficult.

Turning now to the question of land tenure, we note that a general reform of the system of land tenure is now being studied by the French Parliament, and we suggest that the Council invite the Administering Authority to include in its next Annual Report a full account of the existing land situation and the problems arising from it, the nature of the contemplated reform and some account of the discussions in the French Parliament.

The Council will no doubt welcome any measure designed to clarify and safeguard fully the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants in the matter of land tenure.

On the subject of mineral development, we note with interest the establishment of a state corporation, the Bureau of Mines, with power to acquire mining concessions and to undertake all phases of mining operations. The Council might invite the Administering Authority to keep it fully informed of the operations of the Bureau of Mines, including annual figures showing the proportion of mining production under its control and the amount and proportion of revenue derived from it for the benefit of the Territory.

/ The Council might

The Council might also express the hope that a progressive expansion of activities of the Bureau will have the effect of greatly increasing the share of the indigenous inhabitants in the mineral wealth of the Territory.

Our delegation observes further that with the marked flow of capital toward the Territory, the development of new industries is being encouraged. The Council might express the view that the Administering Authority should do everything in its power, by making grants and loans or other forms of assistance, to encourage and enable the indigenous inhabitants to take a full part in industrial development, and to place them upon at least as favourable a basis as enterprises supported by external private capital.

The special representative has mentioned the abolition of the customs union between the Cameroons and French Equatorial Africa on the apparent grounds that "common tariffs might have constituted an obstacle to the independence of their economic policies".

In this connexion the Council might ask for details of the simple Customs Convention by which the union was replaced in 1948, and an account of the differences between the two systems including an explanation of the manner in which the previous obstacle has been overcome.

The Chinese delegation is much interested in the ten-year educational plan on which the special representative, at the request of our delegation, gave a comprehensive account the other day. It is to be expected that in the future Annual Reports the progressive developments of education will be fully covered. The ten-year educational plan seems to be a very encouraging aspect of the Administration.

Finally, I should like to make a few observations on the status of both the Trust Territories under the French Union.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps the representative of China would reserve these for to-morrow.

The Council is adjourned until 11 a.m. to-morrow.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.