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Twenty-first Session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 26 February 1958, at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. ARENALES CATALAN

(Guatemala)

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of the Cameroons
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Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e., the summary record, will appear in provisional mimeographed form under the symbol T/SR.869 and will be subject to representatives' corrections. It will appear in final form in a printed volume.

AGENDA ITEMS 4d and 5

EXAMINATION OF CONDITIONS IN THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION: (continued)

- (a) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR 1956 (T/1351, 1354, 1363; T/L.813)
- (b) PETITIONS RAISING GENERAL QUESTIONS (T/1357, T/L.813; T/PET.4 and 5/11; T/PET.4 and 5/L.15, 16, 17 and Add.1 and 2; T/COM.4 and 5/L.2; T/PET.5/L.416, 417, 430 to 432, 434 to 451)

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Deniau, special representative for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French Administration, took a place at the Trusteeship Council table.

Social and educational advancement (continued)

loan U KYAW MIN (Burma): My first question is in the social field. I should like to draw the attention of the special representative to the last two sentences of paragraph 78 of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat. It is stated there that during the 1955-1956 financial year the Crédit du Cameroun granted 448 loans totalling 205,641,000 francs. What is the procedure for the administration of these loans? How are they administered, and how are they recovered? Further, I should like to know whether any interest is charged on these loans.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) (interpretation from French): These are the figures for the financial year 1955-1956. In reply to a question by the representative of China, I indicated that for 1957 these figures had gone up to more than 300 million francs. As to the manner in which these loans are administered, conditions are laid down in the regulations of the Crédit du Cameroun, which is not a private organization, but a State organization managed by an administrative board, 50 per cent of whose members are Cameroonians appointed by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons. The presiding officer is chosen by the members of the administrative board. These are officials with special knowledge of credit matters.

(Mr. Deniau, Special Representative)

The loans are granted by the administrative board on the basis of a dossier which is submitted by the applicant. This dossier should state the reasons why the loan is requested -- for example, to build a house, or to buy or improve land. Some deposit is usually indicated by the applicant. As a rule, the applicant has a title to the land, and a mortgage might be taken by the Crédit du Cameroun if necessary; or it could be used as a simple guarantee. The Crédit du Cameroun examines the application and accepts or rejects it. A part of the loan is recovered each year. In principle, there is a certain limit regarding the loans so that very large ones are not granted to the detriment of the numerous applicants for small loans. Interest has been established at the rate of 4.7 per cent per year.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I wonder if the special representative could throw some light on the manner in which these loans are recovered.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) (interpretation from French): It depends whether it is a short-term or a long-term loan. That is to say, the individual must make time payments, so to speak. I cannot give any precise information because the terms vary according to the nature of the loan and of the guarantee or deposit made by the applicant.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I asked those questions because I wished to know whether the indigenous inhabitants with lower incomes had access to these loans.

My next question has, I think, been dealt with in some detail by many representatives who have already put questions to the special representative. I would invite the special representative's attention to paragraph 72 of the Secretariat working paper, where it is stated that:

"The number of collective labour disputes fell from fifty in 1954 to 25 in 1955 and six in 1956..." (T/L.813. paragraph 72).

Could the special representative tell me what accounted for these decreases between 1954 and 1956?

Mr. DEMIAU (Special Representative) (interpretation from French): In the first place, I should like to emphasize that this progress continued in 1957, since there were only two strikes, involving less than two hundred workers. I think that the decrease in the number of strikes is due, on the one hand, to the periodic increases in salary and, on the other hand, to collective agreements negotiated between the unions and the employers, which have settled the majority, if not all, of the possible points of dispute in so precise a way that there cannot be any difficulties of interpretation. Furthermore, the arbitration procedure introduced in the Decree of 20 May 1955, on which I spoke at some length this morning, has made it possible to settle almost all the labour disputes before they have reached the stage of a strike. I believe that those are the principal reasons for this development noted in 1955 and 1956 -- a development which continued in 1957.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I was not referring particularly to the decrease in the number of strikes, which, I believe, has been explained by the special representative as being attributable to the new arbitration procedure. I was not quite clear as to why the number of labour disputes -- not strikes -- had decreased. I thought that perhaps the level of wages and the conditions of the workers had improved.

My last question in the social field relates to ~~juvenile delinquency~~. My delegation has read with some interest the information provided in section II of Chapter V of the annual report regarding the progress made by the Administration

(U Kyaw Min, Burma)

in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents at the Borstal in Bétamba. As the Council knows, juvenile delinquency is becoming one of the most pressing social problems in many countries, especially in those countries which have reached, as it were, a high degree of all-round development. If I am not mistaken, juvenile delinquency as a social phenomenon does not appear in any serious proportions in the less developed countries, where family ties and traditional customs, among other factors, remain strong.

My delegation, therefore, was rather perturbed to hear last year that the Borstal at Bétamba was in the process of being expanded. This, of course, could suggest many things. Hence, in an effort to find out whether this problem has reached alarming proportions or not, I should like to put the following questions to the special representative. First, what is the general position of juvenile delinquency in the Territory? Secondly, have the authorities concerned taken any steps to uncover the etiology or causes of juvenile delinquency? Thirdly, if the possible causes have been detected, have any measures been taken or are any measures contemplated for its prevention?

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative)(interpretation from French): I should like first to revert very briefly to the preceding question put by the representative of Burma, because I am afraid that my answer was not clear enough. The interpretation of the representative of Burma is perfectly correct. *Labour Dept.*
The decrease in the number of strikes is not in itself a sufficient indication of the improvement in the labour situation. However, the number of labour disputes which did not involve strikes has also considerably decreased. In 1957, there were only four disputes, involving only 155 workers. As the representative of Burma supposed, the reason for this progress is to be found in the regular increases in salary and in the implementation of collective labour agreements, which have set down in a very complete way the working conditions and salaries of the various enterprises. This is a sign of a general improvement in the field of labour.

I shall turn now to the last question put by the representative of Burma, concerning juvenile delinquency. The problem of juvenile delinquency arises

(Mr. Deniau, Special Representative)

essentially in the towns, particularly in Douala. The majority of cases concerning minors are heard by the judges of Douala. In the other parts of the Territory, the children still live in the tribal structure. These tribal and family ties are sufficiently strong so that the few misdeeds which the minors commit are punished within the framework of family and custom.

As the Council is aware, the population of Douala is for the most part detribalized. These people have left their villages and are cut off from their usual family ties. Among these detribalized persons there are a certain number of adolescents -- even children sometimes -- who live with a relative, do not have much to do and do not want to go to school. These adolescents are responsible for the majority of juvenile delinquency problems in the Territory. The figures concerning juvenile delinquency may be found in the table on page 297 of the annual report, where it is indicated that 241 persons who were less than 18 years old were sentenced during 1956 and that, of this number, 162 were convicted of theft.

(Mr. Deniau,
Special Representative)

There is a rather complete system at Douala, which allows us to investigate the causes of juvenile delinquency. We consider each case separately and we follow through on it until the individual has left the rehabilitation centre. The reception centre at Douala is run by a Canadian missionary society. When the youths are caught, they are sent to the reception centre rather than to prison. They receive some education at the centre and they are observed to see which ones are really habitual delinquents and which have just happened to commit an offence. At the reception centre there is a social assistant who is a specialist in this work and who looks into the family of the juvenile offender. When the case comes before the judge, he has a complete file on it.

In many cases, these juvenile offenders are sent to a special modern prison -- it really is not a prison but rather a type of rehabilitation school -- where there is no excessive supervision or vigilance and where they receive a technical as well as general education. They engage in growing some crops and also participate in various sports. There are very few attempts at escape from that school. The young offenders remain there until their case has been decided by the judge. The system which is now in operation is very complete. However, the roots of the evil, namely the existence in Douala of a large population without any roots in the native villages and without any solid place in the social structure at Douala, cannot be attacked by any measure which would allow us to reduce juvenile delinquency to any great degree.

I would add that all youthful offenders who can be rehabilitated and sent to school are indeed sent to school.

We are also interested in students who are sometimes found wandering around town as vagabonds.

My reply has been rather lengthy, but the question put by the representative of Burma relates to a very serious problem which has been of great concern to the authorities in the Cameroons.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I should like to put one subsidiary question; whether the expansion of the centre at Bétamba was necessitated by an increase in juvenile crime.

(Mr. Deniau,
Special Representative)

provide that a large share of the salaries of teachers are taken over by the budget of the Cameroons.

There are the so-called mission schools, which often teach in the vernacular and which teaching reading, writing and give a course in religion. In the South there are the catéchisme schools; in the North there are the coraniques schools. These schools are not inspected by the public authorities.

The authorized schools and the so-called recognized schools are inspected at regular intervals, the same as the public schools. However, the inspections are less frequent than for the public schools. The recognized schools which receive subsidies are inspected regularly.

scholarships

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I have a very minor question in the educational field, and it relates also in a way to the questions I have just put. Could the special representative tell me: What is the number of ~~students who have been sent abroad on scholarships~~ who have graduated or who are the products of private schools and public schools? Could he furnish me with the respective figures?

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative)(interpretation from French): I am afraid that I do not have that information. It is true that these scholarships are issued not because of the origin of the applicant but because of his qualifications. The proportion may vary. I cannot, therefore, reply specifically to this question.

At this point, I should like to supply some information which was asked for this morning but which I could not give at that time. The representative of Syria had asked me what the number of certified alcoholics was; I did not have that figure at that time, but I do now.

Alcoholism appears under the heading, D.80. There were 474 cases of alcoholism that were treated in the Territory. I should like to remind you that the total population is slightly over two million.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I think that we now will grant an oral hearing, that was decided upon at the previous meeting, to a gentleman from the Cameroons, Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell. This decision may be found in the documents of the Trusteeship Council.

At the invitation of the President, Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell, took a place at the petitioners' table.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Mr. President, first of all, may I express my gratitude for having been granted this hearing.

I do not claim to express any given political idea. What I wish to say is said on my own responsibility. ~~I have not been given a mandate, especially by my Cameroonian countrymen, to state what I have to say.~~ I have only one qualification in appearing as a petitioner before you, and that is that I was elected in 1945 as a deputy of the Cameroons to the French National Assembly.

(Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell)

The purpose of my statement is merely to give you a summary of what is happening in the Cameroons. I do not propose to engage in polemics; I hope, on the contrary, that that which I am about to say, which is not much, will give you an idea of the general situation.

You have heard for some time already of two problems that have arisen in the Cameroons, whether it should be under French Trusteeship or under British Trusteeship. Much has been said at the present time of the unification of the Cameroons and of its independence. As regards independence, I do not have much to say, and I shall speak about it later. Now, however, I should like to speak on the problem of unification.

Many of you already know that the French Cameroons and the British Cameroons are under Trusteeship. I should like first of all to refer to the texts of the Trusteeship Agreements. First of all, there are the Trusteeship Agreements for the two Territories. Article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons under British Administration states:

"The Administering Authority shall promote the development of free political institutions suited to the Territory. To this end the Administering Authority shall assure to the inhabitants of the Territory a progressively increasing share in the administrative and other services of the Territory; shall develop the participation of the inhabitants of the Territory in advisory and legislative bodies and in the government of the Territory, both central and local, as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Territory and its people; and shall take all other appropriate measures with a view to the political advancement of the inhabitants of the Territory in accordance with Article 76 b. of the United Nations Charter."

(Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell)

I shall now read the same article in the Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, which is article 5. It says approximately the same thing:

"The Administering Authority shall take measures to ensure the local inhabitants a share in the administration of the Territory by the development of representative democratic bodies, and, in due course, to arrange appropriate measures to enable the inhabitants freely to express an opinion on their political regime and ensure the attainment of the objectives prescribed in Article 76 of the Charter."

I should now like to read Article 76 of the Charter:

"The basic objectives of the trusteeship system, in accordance with the Purposes of the United Nations laid down in Article 1 of the present Charter, shall be:

(b) to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement;"

(Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell)

Thus, both in the Trusteeship Agreement for the British zone and in the Trusteeship Agreement for the French zone there is a reference to Article 76 b. It speaks of the unification of the Cameroons. And you may ask me: Why do you come here? Why do you come here to talk about that? Why do you not raise this question in the Cameroons? I cannot do so, for the simple reason that I am not a member of the local Legislative Assembly in the Cameroons. Then you may ask why I do not raise this question in Paris at the National Assembly of which I am a member. I cannot do so because the only place where I might meet both the French delegation and the British delegation is here.

The two problems, in my humble view, are of concern to the Cameroons, in the first place and in the last place because you, the world organization of the United Nations, are propounding the principle of the right of self-determination of peoples. Therefore, first of all, I would like to address myself both to the French and the British delegations in order to glean their views. We in the Cameroons have the right to speak up. The Cameroons, as you know -- and why lie about it -- has never been a nation. It is only through chance, because of the peace treaties, that such country came into existence. The clans, the tribes, which used to fight among each other, have now become a people of the Cameroons. And I think this is a contribution of old Europe, since in olden days we used to fight among ourselves from morning until night.

The representative of the United Kingdom must have ideas regarding this problem of the unification of the two Cameroons. You must have, Mr. Representative of the United Kingdom, more reasons for believing that the Cameroons under British administration will either decide to be voluntarily reattached to Nigeria or continue under the Trusteeship regime. But are you quite sure that this is the case? Let us assume that the British Cameroons would say, "We want neither one nor the other; we do not want to be attached to Nigeria, nor do we want to continue Trusteeship", what would your reaction be then?

As a Cameroonian from Douala, from the coastal area, I know more or less what is happening in our area, and I know what is happening on your side of the border, Sir. There are certain facts of an ethnical nature; there are certain facts of a dialectical nature which plead in favour of my own thesis, namely,

that the Cameroonians, whatever side they belong to, speak up freely. I will quote as an example the very small tribe of the Doualas, and they are not more than 30,000 in all. On the other hand, you have the people of Victoria, the Sao and the Bakweri. They read the Bible in the Douala language. In the Catholic churches and in the Protestant temples the sermons are read in the Douala language. Now let us go a little bit towards the north, towards the Bamiléké area. One dialect prevails, and it so happens that the Bamiléké on the British side and the Bamiléké on the French side have the same dialect, with very small differences.

Now let us go further north. I know that problem fairly intimately too because I also have family links in the north. There you have people of the same blood. I would be glad if you would allow me to address myself to the representative of the United Kingdom: If the Cameroons under British Trusteeship spoke up in favour of annexation by Nigeria, a question would never arise; but I am not quite certain that this would be the case. That is why I am taking the liberty of suggesting here in the Council that you organize a referendum and that you might even name a date for such a referendum. There is a Visiting Mission which periodically visits the Territory on behalf of the United Nations to glean information on the spot, on both sides of the border. Would you deem it inconvenient if the referendum were held democratically at the time of the next visit of the Visiting Mission in the two Territories?

I was humbly putting a question to the representative of the United Kingdom.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The petitioner may continue making his statement and may even put rhetorical questions to members of the Council. Council members will have an occasion later to address questions to the petitioner which they deem necessary and adequate. They can reply if they wish.

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): It may be that the petitioner's question to me is not a rhetorical one. I can only say this because I do not want to appear to be unwilling to answer any question even if it is out of order. I do not think that we are discussing the Territory of the British Cameroons at the

(Sir Andrew Cohen,
United Kingdom)

moment, and if I might address a question to the petitioner, it is whether he has read the records of what I said on this subject, because I think that this will show him the answer that I am prepared to give at the present time.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before calling upon the petitioner again, I should like to point out that the petitioner, under the resolutions of the General Assembly, and particularly resolution 1211 (XII), is in order when he refers to conditions in both Cameroons, especially with regard to the problem of unification. With regard to the matter of the question, the President has taken no decision.

I will now call upon the petitioner once again.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I will therefore proceed. Here you have the broad principles that underlie my petition. I will try to be as close to the point as I can and I will therefore pass on to the problem of independence. Once again I would like to say that my statement commits only myself; it is my own responsibility; I am speaking for myself.

We know full well that at the present time no people is really independent. Whoever you take in the world, we are all interdependent. But I think that I am interpreting the views of my fellow Cameroonians when I say that what they want is sovereignty, Cameroonian sovereignty. I think, as I already said in 1952 in this very room, as one of the members of the French delegation at that time, that it is up to the Cameroonians alone; it is they who will have the last say under the very text which you yourselves, gentlemen, drafted, with a lot of generosity, with a lot of care. It is up to the Cameroonians alone to decide what that sovereignty will be and how it will come. You have, of course, this word "sovereignty" which is supposed to be translated into this magic word "independence".

(Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell)

If the Cameroons through their representatives at a given time express the wish to achieve such sovereignty, I am convinced that France will not deny this request. It is not for anybody, not even for me as an elected representative of the Territory, to express myself in favour or against it. It is the Cameroonians themselves who must state their views on this subject. This may come sooner than we think and France, I believe, will not deny such independence. When we acquire independence, we will, as all people who go through these various experiences, have a few unfortunate mishaps. We will have a few broken limbs, a few broken skulls, a few twisted ankles, but that will be our own responsibility. We will at least have a sovereign State, a sovereign Government, and that is already three-quarters of the way.

Then there is the last stage. It is up to the Cameroonians alone to attain this stage with the help of the Administering Authorities, France and the United Kingdom. ~~At that time, we will place the case before the Council and I hope that it will be easily able to solve it.~~

I have finished my statement.

Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): We have listened with the greatest attention to the statement just made by the petitioner from the Cameroons. Since its substance touches very closely upon some of the problems which the delegation of Guatemala raised in its statement in the general debate relating to the Cameroons under British administration, we should like to take advantage of this occasion to address certain questions to the petitioner.

Prince Manga Bell mentioned two problems relating to the future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration and the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration -- unification and independence. With regard to unification, he asserted that it was for the population of the two Territories to take a decision freely as to the future of their Territories. This immediately gives rise to the problem of the consultations which must be held in both Territories so as to sound out public opinion. My delegation suggested not only at the present session of the Council but also during the meetings of the Fourth Committee at the twelfth session of

(Mr. Rolz Bennett, Guatemala)

the General Assembly that both Administering Authorities should hold continuous permanent consultations so as to conduct a consultation of the population simultaneously in both Territories.

I should like to ask the petitioner whether he feels that it would be possible for the consultations of the population in both Cameroons to be held at one and the same time. In his opinion, would this be possible?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): In my belief, yes. I think that you have already envisaged how such public consultations can be held.

With your permission, Mr. President, I should like to reply to the representative of the United Kingdom. I think I should first answer him. He asked me whether I had read his statement. Well, please believe me, I have not only read it, but I have studied it. In fact, most of the time that I have been here I have spent studying page after page of all that was said in the Council. And I think that in politics, as he knows full well, there can be surprises, unpleasant surprises.

We have a tremendous chance of reaching the end purposes of the Trusteeship System without shedding a drop of blood. I would not like to go into experiences which we have undergone. We do not know about the future. I hope that the thesis of the representative of the United Kingdom will prevail, but I am not sure that it will. He says that either the Cameroons will speak up in favour of its integration with Nigeria, to which his country has promised independence, if I am not mistaken, next year, or it will continue under the Trusteeship System. But for how long? After all, every trusteeship must have an end.

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): I can only ask the petitioner whether, after all his study, he has correctly understood what I have said. What I have said is this: that in due time my delegation will make proposals to the United Nations on this subject about the future. If he thinks that I have already said what form any consultation will take, I must tell him that he is mistaken, and his last remark suggested to me that he might be mistaken in this respect.

Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): To my question the petitioner replied that in his ~~opinion the consultation of the people could be held simultaneously in both Cameroons.~~ In the light of that reply, I should like to ask him whether he personally or certain groups of public opinion in the Cameroons have ~~already thought of the preparatory steps which would be indispensable if such a simultaneous consultation were to be held in both Territories.~~

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I think that one must prepare public opinion by informing the populations that at such and such a date they will be consulted as to a given point.

Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): Since presumably this consultation of the people would have to be held in close co-operation with the United Nations, I should like to ask the petitioner what steps he thinks would have to be taken so that the co-operation of the United Nations in this consultation would be fully effective.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): In the history of overseas territories, you have a precedent. That precedent is the problem of the Ewes. I hope the representative of the United Kingdom will forgive me for mentioning it; he knows the problem even better than I. Well, you have that precedent. The populations of Togoland were consulted in regard to this question of the Ewes. There was a referendum, and it is well known under what conditions this referendum was held.

If the representative of the United Kingdom and the representative of France could reach an agreement and accede to the desire of the Cameroonians, I think that the problem of consultation is not something that should be feared. It suffices to take the necessary measures from the political point of view. In my humble submission, this can be done. This has been done elsewhere, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): The petitioner has told us that he speaks on his own behalf. However, I should like to ask him whether recently there have been in the Territory any manifestations of public opinion and any manifestations in representative governmental organs which would indicate that the problem of unification is increasing, first of all, in the French Cameroons and whether any similar feeling in the British Cameroons has come to his notice.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French):

I think that I will not be exaggerating if I say that I know the state of public opinion in the French-administered Territory. Moreover, we are close neighbours to the people of British-administered Cameroons, where some of us Doualese have very large plantations and therefore have to visit that other zone from time to time. I would hasten to say that I hope the representative of the United Kingdom will not think that I am engaging in disloyal practices on the other side when I go there.

It is up to you to take your decisions. I do not know whether you will change your policy. But the problem of the referendum seems to me to be a problem of major urgency in both zones.

Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): For the moment, I should like to give other members of the Council an opportunity to put questions to the petitioner. However, I should like to reserve my delegation's right to ask further questions.

Mr. TOMEH (Syria): I am sure that we are all aware that the question of the unity of the Cameroons has already been raised -- and, to the best of my recollection, it was raised in connexion with the discussion of the British Cameroons by the representative of Haiti. When the representative of the United Kingdom was replying and arguing against unity, he referred to the matter of the different dialects and different tribes. This matter has also been referred to by the petitioner here. To the best of my understanding, he said that there are various languages and that there are various ethnic tribes, but nevertheless he affirmed the existence of manifestations in favour of unity among the Cameroonians. Now, I have three questions, one of which has already been put by the representative of Guatemala.

First, what is the basis of this feeling of unity among the Cameroonians?

Secondly, how strong is it between the French and the British Cameroons?

Thirdly, do the Cameroonians believe that independence is a necessary and sufficient condition for the realization of union?

Prince Alexandre DOUAIA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): The relations between the inhabitants of the British Cameroons and the French Cameroons are excellent. Relations are fine. I would repeat to the representative of the United Kingdom that the relations between the British Cameroons and the French Cameroons are excellent. We are fine neighbours.

The first question was: where are these affinities? Well, there are certain ethnic affinities. I have cited names of tribes that the members of the Council perhaps do not even know: the Douala tribe, a very small tribe among the 3.5 million inhabitants of the French Cameroons; on the other side, the Bakweri and the Sao, toward Victoria, and so forth. I apologize for repeating this, but I have been asked to give the information.

The Bible appears in the Douala language, and the sermons in the Catholic churches and also in the Protestant churches are given in the Douala language. If one goes a bit further north, toward the Bamiléké and the Bamoun, one finds that, although they are divided by some small dialects, they have a common ethnic background. This cannot be denied. When you go to the Cameroons, you find that on both sides the manner of dancing, the social life, even the manner of building their houses are exactly the same. But there is a big difference between the people in the North and the people in the Bamiléké and Bamoun country and in the jungle country. That strikes one immediately. I do not wish to insist on this and repeat myself over and over again.

Mr. TOMEH (Syria): My second question is, do they believe that independence is absolutely necessary for the realization of unity?

Prince Alexandre DCUALA MANGA BELL: (interpretation from French): You asked me whether independence is absolutely necessary for unity. Well, one is the same as the other; everyone has his own interpretation of this. I have my personal opinion of what independence is and I explained it a little while ago. If you will allow me, sir, what do you think independence is -- could you tell us that?

Mr. TOMEH (Syria): I assure the petitioner that I am really on his side. My last question concerned independence. Do the people in the Cameroons feel that they are being given proper opportunities for independence and self-rule?

Prince Alexandre DCUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): That is for the Cameroonians to say. I have no political mandate here; I think it is for them to take a decision. I have no right to commit the future of my country. The situation, after all, can develop and I am certain that when the moment comes the Cameroons will achieve independence, and in my opinion that means sovereignty. It would mean that the Cameroons would have a Chief of State, whereas now, as a Trust Territory, it is the High Commissioner who at present plays such a role. If we had our own Chief of State he might then designate someone to be Prime Minister. In the course of history there have been many countries which were independent but were nevertheless linked to others, for instance Austria, which although independent was nevertheless tied to the Hapsburg family.

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): My intervention may be a point of order; it arises from what the representative of Syria has just said about a statement which I made at the end of the debate on the Cameroons under British Administration. I understood him to say just now that I spoke against the unification of the Cameroons. I urge the representative of Syria to study my very carefully worded speech. I was not doing anything of that kind, except to a very limited degree which I will describe.

(Sir Andrew Cohen,
United Kingdom)

It will be remembered that we were told that we were dismembering the unity of the Trust Territory and that the boundaries had been drawn without regard to the interests of the population. I was trying to deal with those matters factually, and was explaining our obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement and the way in which the boundaries had been drawn in 1919 or about that time. I admit, on looking at my speech, that I did ask who could doubt that in the case of the northern part of the Territory under British Administration the best arrangement would be for them to continue as part of Nigeria, which is in fact what the people of that area have always unanimously said they wanted, but if the representative of Syria will look at the area where there is a question of what will happen in the future, namely the southern part of the Territory, he will find that there was no suggestion of a final judgement in anything I said either one way or the other. I explained the problem, I said there were different views, and I said the people would have a free choice in the future. I just wanted to put this right, because it is a rather important point. However, I quite understand that in these complicated matters one does not always give the impression one wants to give.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The clarification of the representative of the United Kingdom will figure in the record. He did not actually bring up a point of order and therefore the Chair is not called upon to take any decision.

Mr. MITRA (India): My delegation has listened with great interest to the statement made by the distinguished petitioner and we certainly feel that he is very sincere and holds quite definite views about many subjects. We have been very interested in some of the replies he has given to the representative of Syria and so the first question I would like to put to him is this. Does he personally -- I quite understand that he has no responsibility, no mandate, excepting to himself -- feel that the Statute now in force in the French Cameroons is a satisfactory step towards that sovereignty which he desires for the Cameroons?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I should be lacking in frankness if I tried to deny that it exists. We have a Statute, which was discussed lengthily at the Palais Bourbon, but that is an internal matter which concerns France and ourselves. Whether one agrees with it or not, the Statute has been adopted; it has been applied; there is a Cameroonian Government. Obviously, this is a great step ahead towards independence; in my opinion it is also a step towards sovereignty. One can interpret it as one pleases, but it remains true that democratic procedures have been respected. One can be in favour or otherwise of any given Cameroonian Government, but the fact is there, it is up to the electors to open their eyes and see what is happening and then choose men capable of leading the country towards the future which they desire, namely independence and sovereignty.

Mr. MITRA (India): I thank the petitioner, if only for the one phrase to the effect that this is a tremendous step towards independence. That is precisely the answer which I wanted; I wanted to know what his feelings were on the subject, and I think he has made them quite clear. Could he now give any indication of what further steps, are, in his opinion, necessary before the Cameroons Government and people can enjoy that independence and sovereignty of which he has spoken?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): In my belief, it is the duty of those who represent the Territory in the Cameroonian Chamber of Deputies, it is the duty of the Government to get in touch with those representatives, and of those representatives to get in touch with the electors, to learn what the Cameroons wants.

(Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell)

The problem, as I see it, is simple indeed. It is sufficient for the Cameroonians to say: Starting from such and such a date, we demand sovereignty and independence. Then France holds a referendum, and after that I think that we shall have independence. I am not a prophet -- I do not say that this will happen on Thursday or Friday or Saturday, but it certainly will happen and happen automatically.

Mr. MITRA (India): We have been very much interested in the difference which has been pointed out by the petitioner between sovereignty, on the one hand, and independence, on the other. I am not quite clear as to exactly what he means by sovereignty as distinct from independence. Perhaps he could explain this a little further.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Willingly. The word "sovereignty" speaks for itself. I think that the British Commonwealth of Nations is a case in point. India is a State; it is not only a sovereign State, but an independent State, and yet it is a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, is it not?

Mr. MITRA (India): If I may correct the petitioner, the proper phrase is not the British Commonwealth, but the Commonwealth of Nations.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I am sorry. However, I believe that India has not disrupted its relations with the United Kingdom. I realize that there is much which I still have to learn, but I am certainly benefiting from this meeting.

Mr. MITRA (India): My last question also concerns the question of sovereignty. I am interested in the analogy which he has drawn with the Commonwealth of Nations. As he is aware, the relationship between the Commonwealth countries is one which is not defined by a written law of any kind, but depends on consultations on a basis of free and equal sovereignty. Is this the sort of relationship which the petitioner would like to see for the Cameroons?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Yes; I, personally, would like this, but again I hasten to say that it is not up to me, or any other politician, to claim it. I think that the country will have to decide democratically what it wishes.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): I should just like to say that we are glad to see the petitioner here. Some years ago I paid a private visit to his country and I received the greatest hospitality.

First of all, in the opinion of the petitioner, are the people of the Northern British Cameroons ethnically more identified with Nigeria than with the French Cameroons?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Since I am from the North myself, I have good reason to know its history, even though it is not discussed in public. The people of that country are made up largely of so-called Peuls. The populations of both the British and the French areas speak Peul. I think that there are close ethnic links between them. I am acquainted with the problem, and I was quite certain that you were going to put the question to me -- in fact, I foresaw it. I appreciate the statement of the representative of the United Kingdom. He, of course, has his own views on the subject, but nevertheless he must admit that each is entitled to his own opinion.

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): What really matters is the opinion which the people express when they are consulted.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Yes, exactly; that is quite right.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): My second question is this. If consultations are held at the same time in both the British and the French Cameroons, what, in the opinion of the petitioner, would be the effect if one side voted for unification and the other did not?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I suppose that we should have to bow to the opinion of the majority.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): That is neither a good nor a fair answer because he knows perfectly well that there is a conflict there.

My last question is the following. During a popular consultation or plebiscite, is it possible, in the opinion of the petitioner, to put more than two questions before the voters? In other words, could the people be asked at the same time whether they wanted to continue under Trusteeship, or to become independent, or to join the British Cameroons?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I would say that this depends exclusively on those who are consulted. If, mathematically speaking, the consultation results in so many votes for such and such idea and so many for another idea, one can only make a mathematical equation, and that is that.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I believe that the petitioner has not fully understood the question of the representative of the United States. Perhaps Mr. Sears would repeat it.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): I asked this question because I have thought about it many times. For example, I can see no reason why the people of the French Cameroons should not be given an opportunity at some stage to express their view as to whether or not they desire unification of both sides of the border, but how that can be arranged is what I do not understand. In other words, as each voter enters the ballot booth, can he be presented with three ideas: does he wish to continue under Trusteeship? Does he wish to be independent? Or does he wish to join the British Cameroons?

I would go one step further. In the case of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration, a voter was asked whether he wished to join the Gold Coast or to remain under Trusteeship. No means could be found at that time whereby the Ewes would have a chance to say whether they wished to remain under Trusteeship so that they could vote, at a later stage, to join with the French Ewes, and then later with the new State of Ghana.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I see absolutely no difficulty in putting this question to the inhabitants of the British Cameroons. Personally, I can see no inconvenience in putting the questions in the order indicated by the United States representative -- that is, do you wish to continue to live under the Trusteeship System, or do you wish to be integrated. But I, for my part, should like to put a question to the Council: What will happen if the reply is in the negative? After all, no one can foretell events. This is a question which I take the liberty of addressing to the Trusteeship Council. In politics, anything is possible; one never knows.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Council will take note of the question just raised by the petitioner.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): I thank the petitioner for his comments. I shall read them carefully in the verbatim record, because I am still in somewhat of a quandary. I know that in my own State, for example, the voter is very rarely confronted with more than one choice. The voter comes to the polls without any previous study of the matter and he usually wants to know whether he is voting for one man or another man. Sometimes, in the case of voting concerning a liquor licence, there is a choice among three possibilities, and the greatest confusion results; it is almost impossible to count the votes.

In any case, I thank the petitioner and I repeat that I shall certainly study his comments with great interest.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I, myself, shall rely on the wisdom of the Council.

Mr. CLAEYS BOUUAERT (Belgium) (interpretation from French): I should first like to tell Prince Douala Manga Bell how happy I am to see him here. I had the pleasure of meeting him in the Cameroons in 1949, and I have the happiest memories of the hospitality which he showed us. I should like to put a question to him which somewhat develops the idea of a popular consultation which he has brought up.

(Mr. Claeys Bouuaert, Belgium)

I must admit that I do not see what precise conclusions could be drawn from such a popular consultation. In my opinion, no positive results will be obtained from a referendum involving the two Territories of the Cameroons. The people of the two Territories would, I presume, be asked whether they desired unification. In view, however, of the difference in population figures, even an overwhelming majority in favour of unification would not mean very much. What would count would be the proportion of votes in favour of unification obtained in the Cameroons under British administration. And even in that Territory account would have to be taken of the regional division of votes, for all of us know the geographical conditions of the British Cameroons; we know that it is divided into separate zones which are not even adjacent.

We also know that there is a separate Trusteeship Agreement for each of these two Territories, that there have been two Administering Authorities for thirty years now, and that the political problems of the two Territories are different for historical reasons. Finally, we know -- and I would invite the petitioner to reread the verbatim records of our discussions here -- that the highest authorities of the United Kingdom Government have proclaimed that there is no question of integrating the populations of the British Cameroons in an independent State of Nigeria against their will and that the aspirations of the populations will be ascertained in advance, by appropriate democratic methods.

From this consultation of the people in the Cameroons under British administration -- which will probably take place in the not too distant future -- it will be possible, in my opinion, to determine whether those people wish to continue their association with Nigeria or whether, somewhat reversing the course of their recent history, they wish to renew their ancient ties with the Trust Territory to which they are attached by ethnic considerations.

This is the question which I wish to put to the petitioner: Does he not believe that, in fact, this consultation will give the answer which he proposes to obtain through the referendum he has suggested?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): It is true that there is a considerable imbalance. There are 1,200,000 or 1,300,000 inhabitants in the British Cameroons as compared with about 3,500,000 inhabitants in the French Cameroons. The figures speak for themselves. Personally, I ask only one thing: to have the correct information. I have confidence. I am not seeking in any way to obtain votes. I want -- I think we all want -- to see things clearly. I see absolutely no difficulty in putting the question to the inhabitants of the Cameroons under British administration.

Mr. CLAEYS BOUUAERT (Belgium) (interpretation from French): I wish to thank the petitioner for that reply.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I have only one question to put to the petitioner. Before putting it, I wish to state that I do so with the best of intentions and in good faith; I hope that my colleagues from France will not misunderstand my motives.

The question is as follows: What, in the opinion of the petitioner, is the effect on the Territory's future of the association of the French Cameroons with the French Union? To what extent does the petitioner think that this association has prejudiced -- or should I say influenced -- the future of the Territory? Finally, what future, in the petitioner's opinion, does France envisage for the Territory? In other words, does the petitioner think that the various political and economic measures that France has instituted during the period in which it has functioned as the guardian of the Territory are designed to perpetuate the Territory's association with the French Union, even after the Territory has obtained its independence; or does he feel that these measures and their cumulative effect on the Territory would still enable the Territory to withdraw from the French Union after the attainment of independence, without necessarily having to face hardships?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): My reply will be brief. It is up to the Cameroons to make that decision. Whether the French authorities have this view or that view on the subject is not so important; the important thing is what the Cameroons have to say about it.

U KYAW MIN (Burma): I am, of course, aware that the Cameroonians can say at the time of the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement what future they want for their own country. However, my question was whether, in the personal opinion of the petitioner, the measures which France has instituted in the Territory in the political and economic fields might jeopardize or influence the choice of the inhabitants of the Territory as to their future. Also, whether any hardships or economic difficulties, for example, would be faced by the Territory if it decided to withdraw from the French Union when the time comes for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Here I find myself in the case of the ass of Buridan: on the one side, some water, and on the other side, some hay. Does not the representative of Burma consider his question to be a banana peel for me to slip on? However, I appreciate the interest which he takes in the development of my country.

I am not alone in deciding the issue. However, I feel that I may slip or even fall, but I shall try to hang on.

Does the representative of Burma know how much FIDES has invested in the Cameroons; that is to say the citizen who pays his tax without knowing it? The majority of citizens who pay their taxes does not know its geography and the money just goes. You may have had the occasion to go to the Cameroons. I am not always in agreement with the French administration -- far from it. We have certainly had rather difficult quarrels inter parientes, but that does not prevent me from stating the truth that the Cameroons has a great advantage which I would like to see many other countries enjoy. Does my reply satisfy the representative of Burma?

U KYAW HIN (Burma): I have no further questions and I wish only to thank the petitioner for the opinions he has offered. My delegation will note his statements as reflecting the personal opinions of the petitioner.

Mr. KELLY (Australia): I should like to express my gratitude to the petitioner for the views that he has communicated to the Council. I myself was particularly intrigued with the completely mature approach that he made to the concept of independence and to the stress he placed on practical sovereignty. This word "sovereignty" does not occur in Article 76 of the Charter. Instead there are two expressions to which I direct his attention. Article 76 b of the Charter speaks of progressive development towards self-government or independence. I should like to ask the petitioner whether in his view a full measure of self-government would be an expression of sovereignty.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I would say yes to the representative of Australia; that is to say there would be a government having at its head not only a prime minister but also a chief of state. Of what does sovereignty consist? I do not have to explain that. I believe that is something which goes without saying -- it is implied in the word "sovereignty".

The representative of Australia has referred to Article 76 of the Charter which speaks of self-government or independence. When one is self-governing, that is a step forward. I believe that sovereignty and independence follow automatically. I have no hesitation in saying -- and I think I am also committing my compatriots -- that we shall have independence without fail one day. We will have it sooner or later. I have said that our progress may not always be smooth. There may be accidents the same as those which might take place at home or in training horses. But since independence has been promised, since this magic word "independence" has been advanced -- and by whom? by you gentlemen, it has been pronounced in the General Assembly -- if so many words and so much ink have been used by the United Nations, by the Trusteeship Council and by France, you can be sure that it will come to us.

Mr. KELLY (Australia): I would simply recall to the petitioner that the Charter speaks of two goals of political development as worthy of a self-respecting people: the goal of self-government and the goal of independence. There may in fact be a difference of substance or a difference of form. But I now wish to turn to another question.

It would seem to me from what I heard in the Fourth Committee last year and from what I heard more recently here in this Council, that the demand for the unification of the two Cameroons is based on the judgement that the peoples of the two Cameroons have a very great deal in common, so much in common that they ought perhaps to form one State. I heard the petitioner speak of the Douala people and their language as existing on either side of the frontier. But there are many frontiers in the world in which you will find the same language spoken. Can the petitioner briefly state the major considerations which led him to believe that the two Cameroons ought to be unified? He has spoken of the differences between the North of the Cameroons and the South, on the French and on the British side. What are the major factors making for union which ought to be brought to our attention?

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL: There are reasons of an economic nature. For the time being, things are going somewhat better. However, at one time there was a clear boundary line and customs duties were paid on both sides. Now things have improved. Agreements have been made between the two Administering Authorities. Cameroonians on both sides of the border are constantly going back and forth. Our relations prove that there is a definite ethnic entity which exists here.

Mr. KELLY (Australia): I should like to ask the petitioner whether there exists in the French Cameroons any aspirations towards association or unity with Nigeria?

Prince Alexandre DOUAIA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): Are you talking of the French zone? This is the first time I ever heard of it. If this is so, this is the first time I have ever heard of it.

Mr. KELLY (Australia): The question I wanted to put to the petitioner is whether there exists in the French Cameroons any aspirations towards unity with Nigeria.

Prince Alexandre DOUAIA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): You see what a jump they would have to make in order to reach Nigeria; they would have to hop and skip over the British Cameroons. I think this should be a tribute to the United Kingdom Government, notwithstanding all that is happening in the British Cameroons because that is not the object of my Cameroons -- notwithstanding all that is happening here. All those who have travelled in our country see that there are such achievements in our area that simply do not stand comparison with what is happening in the British zone or even in Nigeria; Why should they want to link up with Nigeria?

Mr. KIANG (China): Before I put this question to the petitioner, I should like to ask the representative of the United Kingdom to forgive me if the question which I put to him should give rise to any misunderstanding. What I really want to do is to get the reaction of the petitioner.

When my friend, the representative of the United States, put his last question to the petitioner, I must say that I waited very anxiously for the reaction from the petitioner. But somehow, I was very much disappointed; he did not answer the question at all. I think I may help him by stating the same question in a very different way. My question is as follows: When the Cameroons under British administration is to be consulted on the question of its future, should the questions to be put to the British Cameroons be limited to

(Mr. Kiang, China)

whether they want to join Nigeria or whether they want to remain under a Trusteeship regime, excluding the question whether they want to join the French Cameroons? Would the petitioner consider the consultation on such a basis to be unjust and unfair?

Prince Alexandre DOUAJA MANCA BELL (interpretation from French):

Perhaps I expressed myself poorly, but I think that here I rely on the wisdom of the Council. If you wish to test public opinion in the British zone, why not do so? I see no drawback there, but the case is to the contrary. I do not know whether I have answered your question.

Mr. KIANG (China): I should very much like to pursue the question, but as it is quite late I think I had better drop it altogether.

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): May I, first of all, assure the petitioner that I am neither the cross-examining counsel for the defence or the prosecution. All I want to say is this; how very much I and my delegation have enjoyed this period of hearing the petitioner and the replies to questions.

I do want to make one other remark. There have been a number of questions about the method which should be used when the time comes for the people of the Cameroons under British administration to be consulted about their future. I should like to recall, particularly to the petitioner, what I myself said on this subject when we were discussing this Territory. I said, first of all, that the appropriate time for discussing this subject would be later. When that time comes the Administering Authority will submit proposals regarding the future of the Territory. Then, in answer to some remarks which had been made by the representative of Guatemala, I agreed with him that we should do this as soon as we are in a position to do so.

I have heard all that has passed here today and, as far as I am concerned, I suggest the petitioner should realize that we will take very seriously indeed this question of ensuring that the people of the Territory of the Cameroons under British administration will have the full opportunity of expressing themselves freely on their future. I am not prepared to say now how best this can be done, but at some later stage I shall be prepared to say this. I would only say

(Sir Andrew Cohen, United Kingdom)

what I said to my friend from Guatemala the other day, that the question is an extremely complex one, and I hope that before it is discussed au fond the Council will be prepared to wait to hear what I shall, at some stage, have to tell it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): As no other member of the Council wishes to put questions to the petitioner, I shall call on him.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): May I express my sincere conviction that Her Majesty's Government will follow the traditional rules of British fair play. What I put forward here was merely a suggestion. I want to make a correction. I did indeed read very carefully the statement of the United Kingdom representative. He said that the population would express itself quite freely. I read that and remember it very well. I never doubted it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): As no other member of the Council wishes to put questions to the petitioner, I believe that we can take it that we have concluded this stage of the examination of conditions in the Territory.

On behalf of the Council, I believe that I can thank the petitioner, Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell, for the courtesy with which he has replied to the questions put by the members of the Council, and I should like to express our gratitude to him for the information which he has furnished to us.

Prince Alexandre DOUALA MANGA BELL (interpretation from French): I thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council.

Prince Alexandre Douala Manga Bell withdrew.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The President feels that perhaps we would be accelerating our work best if the Council were not to meet tomorrow morning, thus giving delegations an opportunity to make a special effort to prepare their speeches. We will hear the statement of the representative of the United Kingdom at tomorrow afternoon's meeting which will be held at 2 p.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

1912

Dear Mr. [Name],
I have received your letter of the 10th inst. and am glad to hear that you are well. I am well at present and hope these few lines will find you all the same. I have not much news to write at present. I am still in the same place and doing the same work. I have not much time to write at present. I must close for this time. Write soon. I am, dear Mr. [Name], your truly,
[Name]

Yours truly,
[Name]

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Public Information
Press and Publications Division
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media--not an official record)

Trusteeship Council
21st Session
22nd Meeting (PM)

Press Release TR/1357
26 February 1958

27 FEB 1958

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 1

The Trusteeship Council this afternoon continued the questioning of Xavier Deniau, the French special representative, on social and educational conditions in the Cameroons under French administration.

Answering a question by U KYAW MIN (Burma), the special representative explained the housing loans extended by the Credit du Cameroun. (A Secretariat working paper states that in 1955-56 the Credit du Cameroun granted 448 loans totaling 205,641,000 francs.) The special representative said the number of loans granted by the agency, a state institution, had shown a further increase in 1957.

To another question by the representative of Burma, Mr. DENIAU said the principal reasons for the decrease in the number of labor strikes were the regular rises in wages and the implementation of collective labor agreements covering all possible points likely to lead to dispute.

As for juvenile delinquency, the special representative said the problem existed in Douala because large populations without roots lived in the city whereas in rural areas the population lived in tribal societies. When a young offender was caught red-handed, Mr. DENIAU said, he was not sent to jail; rather he was sent to a rehabilitation center run by a Canadian missionary society. The problem, he said, was viewed with grave concern by the authorities.

The Burmese representative noted that there were more students in private schools than in public schools. He wondered whether this was due to the higher standards of the private schools.

Mr. DENIAU said there were more private than public schools in the territory, and all schools were "cramped."

Answering a question asked of him at an earlier meeting, the special representative said the total number of alcoholic cases cared for in the territory was 474. He reminded the Council that the territory had a population of more than 2 million.

With the questioning of the special representative concluded, the Council then heard Alexandre Douala Manga Bell, a petitioner from the French Cameroons, whose request for a hearing had been previously granted.

(more)

The petitioner told the Council that he was not expressing any particular political idea. Neither had he been specifically empowered by the Cameroonian people to address the Council. Since 1945, he said, he had been an elected deputy of the Cameroons to the French National Assembly.

The purpose of his statement, Mr. MANGA BELL said, was to give the Council, as his personal view, a summary picture of what was happening in the Cameroons.

Two problems, the petitioner said, existed in the Cameroons, both in the part administered by Britain and in that administered by France. They were unification of the two Cameroons and independence.

After reviewing the provisions of the respective trusteeship agreements for the two Cameroons, he declared that it was the United Nations which advocated the principle of self-determination. In his view, it was for the people of the Cameroons to express their wish regarding their future.

He said he wished to ascertain from the British and French delegations their views on this matter. Addressing himself to the United Kingdom delegate, he asked whether the United Kingdom would be prepared to hold a popular consultation in the British Cameroons before the integration of the territory with Nigeria.

The President, EMILIO ARENALES CATALAN (Guatemala), pointed out that the Council's normal procedure was for the petitioner to make his entire statement. There then followed a period during which Council members could question the petitioner.

Sir ANDREW COHEN (United Kingdom) said the Council was not now discussing the Cameroons under British administration. As for the petitioner's specific question, he wondered whether the petitioner had read the Council's records on what he, Sir Andrew, had said on that particular matter.

The PRESIDENT pointed out that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly last fall after the hearing of Cameroonian petitioners by the Fourth Committee referred to both Cameroons.

Continuing his statement, the petitioner said that what the Cameroonian people wanted was Cameroonian sovereignty. At a given time, when Cameroonian representatives expressed the wish to achieve their sovereignty, he was certain France would not deny it to them. This time might come sooner than people thought, he said.

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Trusteeship Council
21st Session
22nd Meeting (PM)

Press Release TR/1357
26 February 1958

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 2

The Council then began the questioning of the petitioner from the French Cameroons, Alexandre Douala Manga Bell.

Answering a question by JOSE ROLZ (Guatemala), Mr. MANGA BELL thought it would be possible to hold a popular consultation simultaneously in both Cameroons. The petitioner also told the United Kingdom representative that he had carefully read the records of the Council's proceedings.

Sir ANDREW called attention to his earlier statement that, when the appropriate time came, United Kingdom would make proposals to the United Nations regarding the future of the Cameroons under British administration.

GEORGES TOMEH (Syria) asked what the basis was for the feeling of unity among the Cameroonians in the two territories. He also asked whether the Cameroonians believed independence to be a prerequisite for realizing their goal of unity.

The petitioner said the relations between the Cameroonians of both territories "are excellent." There were ethnic affinities between them. The names of the various tribal groups themselves were a clear indication of this, he said.

A. K. MITRA (India) noted that the petitioner had first used the term "sovereignty" and then the term "independence." He asked what distinction the petitioner made between the two territories.

The petitioner said the meaning of sovereignty was self-evident, just as was the meaning of independence. India, he said, was independent and yet it was a member of the British Commonwealth.

Mr. MITRA said the relations of India in the Commonwealth of Nations were based on free consultations and not on a written agreement. He asked whether this was the type of relationship which the Cameroons had in mind.

The petitioner replied yes, in his personal view. The question was for the people to decide in a democratic manner.

(more)

MASON SEARS (United States) asked what would happen if a consultation was held simultaneously in both Cameroons and the people of one territory voted for unification whereas the people of the other territory did not.

The petitioner said he supposed that the minority would have to bow to the opinion of the majority.

U KYAW MIN (Burma) asked how, in the opinion of the petitioner, the association of the French Cameroons with the French Union would affect the future of the territory. To what extent, in his opinion, had this association influenced the future of the territory and what future did France envisage for the territory?

The petitioner said his reply was very simple. The question was for the Cameroonians to decide, he said.

The hearing of the petitioner was declared concluded after he had replied to other questions asked by the representatives of Belgium, Australia and China.

The Council will begin the general debate on conditions in the Cameroons under French administration at 2 p.m. tomorrow, 27 February.

(END OF TAKE 2 AND OF PRESS RELEASE TR/1357)