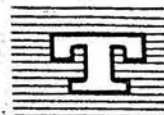


UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



PROVISIONAL
T/PV.956
12 February 1959
ENGLISH



Twenty-third Session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 12 February 1959, at 2.30 p.m.

President:

Mr. DORSINVILLE

(Haiti)

Question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons
under British administration and the Cameroons under French
administration: (continued)

(a) General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII) [17]

(b) Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to
Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958 (T/1426 and Add.1,
1427, 1434) [6]

Note: The Official Record of this meeting, i.e., the summary record,
will appear in provisional mimeographed form under the symbol
T/SR.956 and will be subject to representatives' corrections.
It will appear in final form in a printed volume.

AGENDA ITEMS 6 and 17

QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION: (continued)

- (a) GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1282 (XIII)
- (b) REPORTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO TRUST TERRITORIES IN WEST AFRICA, 1958 (T/1426 and Add.1, 1427, 1434)

General debate (continued)

Mr. EIMONDS (New Zealand): For the second time in five months members of this Council are called upon to take part in a debate connected with the termination of an agreement for a Trust Territory. Both these Territories are in West Africa, both are administered by France. The Council's consideration last October of the Togoland question led soon afterwards to the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution providing for the termination of the agreement for that Territory on the date in 1960 when Togoland becomes independent. A similar consummation of the Council's consideration of the question of the Cameroons under French administration seems devoutly to be wished.

If the Council's deliberations on this item have been brief this is no reflection on the importance which members attach to the matter before them. It is because the Council has been greatly assisted by the report of a Visiting Mission, the experience, integrity and intelligence of whose members is beyond question. This report is unanimous: it is also comprehensive, clear and, to my delegation, convincing.

(Mr. Edmonds, New Zealand)

The Mission has admirably discharged the functions given to it by the Trusteeship Council at the twenty-second session and the ninth special session. The Chairman and members of the Mission and the members of its secretariat deserve the thanks and congratulations of this body and the General Assembly.

In its report, the Mission pays a tribute to the administrative, economic, social and educational development which has been made by the Territory in the last thirteen years. The Administering Authority's efforts in these fields deserve warm commendation. Both financial and technical assistance appear to have been given on a substantial, even a lavish, scale and made good use of by the territorial authorities. The Territory now faces certain financial difficulties, but the Mission notes that it:

"has every reason to believe from its discussions with the authorities concerned that France will consider with sympathy requests for financial or technical assistance" (T/1427, paragraph 47)

from the Cameroons. This attitude on the part of the Administering Authority also merits commendation.

But the interests of both the Visiting Mission and the members of the Trusteeship Council are inevitably concentrated on the political and constitutional development of a Territory whose legally constituted representatives request independence on 1 January 1960, with the consequential termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. This request, which is endorsed by the Administering Authority is, in the Visiting Mission's opinion, supported by the great majority of the population of the Territory.

In a statement on the Cameroons made in the Fourth Committee on 26 November 1958, my delegation said that no member of that Committee would wish to raise artificial or unnecessary obstacles to the attainment of self-government or independence by any Trust Territory. We are even more certain that this is the attitude of the members of the Trusteeship Council. It would be invidious -- indeed, unthinkable -- for this Council or the General Assembly to make it more difficult for Trust Territories to become independent than it is for those Non-Self-Governing Territories which do not enjoy the benefits of International Trusteeship. The rate at which Territories of the latter type have in recent years attained -- and are still attaining -- independence and membership of this Organization has been most impressive. Some of these countries are in Africa,

(Mr. Edmonds, New Zealand)

as is the Cameroons; some have experienced internal dissensions still not wholly resolved. Today, they are respected Members of the United Nations waiting eagerly to welcome a new African Members.

The members of this Council must, of course, satisfy themselves that the final objective of the Trusteeship System -- that is, self-government or independence -- has been attained by the Trust Territory before they recommend the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. On this point, we have the evidence furnished by the Visiting Mission, in accordance with its terms of reference, and supported by the further details supplied by the representative of France and the special representatives. The Mission considers that "the independence which the Cameroons will enjoy on the termination of trusteeship will be full and complete" (T/1427, paragraph 134). No doubt the attainment of this full and complete independence will be accompanied by an application for membership of the United Nations, which will be supported by every member of this Council.

The Mission adds that:

"the manner in which the Legislative Assembly and the Government have exercised the powers transferred to them ... encourage the Mission to believe, with the Administering Authority, that the Cameroonians have the capacity to assume the responsibilities of independence." (Ibid.)

This information is most gratifying. My delegation believes that an Assembly and Government capable of assuming the responsibilities of sovereign independence must be regarded as capable of planning and implementing a "policy of reconciliation" such as that recommended by the Mission. The details of the amnesty bill at present being discussed by the Legislative Assembly and the answers on allied matters given by the special representatives confirm this belief.

(Mr. Edmonds, New Zealand)

The main question before the Council, therefore, would seem to have a single simple answer. Here is a Trust Territory with a social and economic structure which, we are advised, is capable of supporting full independence and a Government and legislature capable of assuming its responsibilities. The legislature and the Government seek independence by 1 January 1960; this request is supported by the people of the Territory and by the Administering Authority. The Visiting Mission considers the legislature representative in character and sees no reason why fresh general elections should be a precondition of the attainment of independence. The Territorial Government, at the suggestion of the Mission, has, however, agreed to hold by-elections in the Sanaga Maritime after passing a new amnesty law. All members of the Council will no doubt welcome the Mission's report that rebellion in Sanaga Maritime is virtually ended and that many of the surviving rebels, who have surrendered in large numbers, are co-operating loyally with the Cameroons Government. They will also welcome the observations of the Mission, and the assurances of the special representatives from the Territory with regard to political liberty and personal rights in the Cameroons.

If the question of independence for the French Cameroons poses few problems, what of the question of unification of the Cameroons under French administration with its neighbouring territory under British administration? The Mission notes that opinion in the former Territory is unanimously in favour of reunification. No consultation on the question seems necessary, at least at this stage. Certainly it appears that the people of the Cameroons under French administration would not wish the reunification issue to impede or delay in any way their progress towards achieving independence by the date on which they have set their hearts.

My delegation hopes, therefore, that it will prove possible for this Council to adopt unanimously a resolution along the lines suggested by the Visiting Mission in paragraph 172 of its report -- a resolution recommending that the General Assembly should make the necessary provisions for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons under French administration upon that Territory's attainment of independence on 1 January 1960.

(Mr. Edmonds, New Zealand)

In conclusion, my delegation would like once again to thank the Chairman and members of the Mission and their secretariat and also the special representatives from the Trust Territory of the Cameroons. We should like also to congratulate the Administering Authority and the Government and people of the Territory. My own country in the South Pacific is the width of the world from West Africa but for many years it has watched with interest, sympathy and deep feelings of friendship the development of trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories in Africa, as elsewhere, and their progress towards independence. We deem it an honour that there should have been a New Zealand nominee on this historic mission to the Cameroons.

Mr. VITELLI (Italy): My statement will be a short one. In the opinion of my delegation the question of the future of the Cameroons under French administration, such as it appears to us in the light of its constitutional, political, economic and social progress, leaves no room for doubt in our minds that this Council, and at a subsequent stage the General Assembly, should endorse the request of the Administering Authority and of the Cameroonian people to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement at the date on which the Territory will attain full independence, that is, on 1 January 1960.

In this connexion we have carefully studied the report of the Visiting Mission, and we have listened very attentively to the statement made in this Council by the representative of France. So much ground has been covered by the report of the Visiting Mission and so thorough have been its investigations that in our opinion there is very little room left for speculation.

Their recommendations are so clear that we think it would be wise for this Council to endorse them wholeheartedly. We wish to congratulate Mr. Gerig, the Mission's Chairman, and his colleagues for the good job they have done. But I would also like to add that if there could have been any misgivings in some quarters as to certain aspects of the situation in the Territory, they have been effectively dispelled by the authoritative information supplied in the report under consideration. Some delegations have dwelt at length on the question of

general reconciliation which, of course, was bound to attract the attention of this Council. It can hardly be denied that the new country of the Cameroons would initiate its independent life under bad omens if "the legacy of uneasiness in the minds of many of the political leaders and people in general" -- to quote from the report -- were not to be left behind.

It augurs well that ample assurances have been given to the Visiting Mission by the Prime Minister that the Government of the Cameroons was preparing a bill which would provide for a broad amnesty.

We have also heard what the special representatives had to say on this matter.

We think, therefore, that the Government of the Cameroons has given evidence of great political wisdom in taking appropriate measures to solve this very important problem.

As pointed out at the beginning of my statement, my delegation is also satisfied that the Territory is ready to acquire independence on the date of 1 January 1960. By ready we mean that the representative organs of the country have locally interpreted the will of the people. On the other hand, a new statute entered into force on 1 January 1959 which, by granting the Cameroons a very large degree of self-government, has marked the last stage before the termination of trusteeship. In conclusion, we are of the opinion that on the evidence of past and recent developments in the Territory and of the will of the people, such as also ascertained by the Visiting Mission, there should be but one conclusion, that we go along with the report of the Visiting Mission and the recommendations therein.

Finally, as to the course that the Visiting Mission has found it advisable to take in the matter of unification, it seems to my delegation that as long as the Governments concerned will proceed in accordance with the will of the people, no objections can be raised. In any event, it also seems to us that neither the independence of the Cameroons under French administration nor the termination of the Trusteeship hinge upon this specific problem.

(Mr. Vitelli, Italy)

May I, to conclude, seize this opportunity to extend our most cordial congratulations to the Administering Authority for the excellent and responsible work done in compliance with the Trusteeship Agreement. We have here further evidence of the ability of France to contribute substantially to the solution of one of the most important problems which we in the West have been confronted with: the resurgence of Africa. As representatives of a country which has a similar responsibility in that continent we salute our French friends and wish well to the new nation of the Cameroons.

Mr. KELLY (Australia): In resolution 1282 (XIII), the General Assembly requested this Council to examine the reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories in West Africa in 1958 and to transmit those reports, with the Council's observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959, so as to enable the Assembly, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, to take the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System in the two Territories, namely, the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under British administration.

In its deliberations so far, the Council has, particularly in view of the intimations made to it by the representatives of France and the United Kingdom, proceeded, in my delegation's opinion correctly, to accord priority of consideration to the future of the Cameroons under French administration and to the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to that Territory. It is difficult to see how this Council could have acted otherwise.

As Administering Authority of the Territory under consideration, France has formally assured the Council and the General Assembly of its conviction that the Cameroons under French administration is ready for and should attain independence on 1 January 1960, and that on that date the relevant Trusteeship Agreement should cease to be in force.

The report of the United Nations Visiting Mission, to whose Chairman and members my delegation would wish to pay a most grateful tribute, amply confirms -- although in the opinion of my delegation no confirmation was in fact necessary -- the weighty and authoritative assurance of the Administering Authority.

It is unnecessary for me to traverse all the unanimous conclusions reached by the Visiting Mission, whose sensitive, highly skilled and widely experienced members were drawn from States as diverse as Haiti, India, New Zealand and the United States of America. However, the Visiting Mission has made one highly significant recommendation, namely, that the Trusteeship Council should propose that the General Assembly adopt in 1959 a resolution providing for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement relating to the Cameroons under French administration on the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960.

(Mr. Kelly, Australia)

In general terms, the General Assembly, and, in specific terms, the Administering Authority, have unmistakably invited us to consider this proposal of the Visiting Mission now at the earliest possible opportunity during the present twenty-third session.

Moreover, it is clear that the majority, and I would hope all of the members of this Council, concur in the Administering Authority's considered judgement that in taking up the Visiting Mission's proposal we should do so in the confident expectation that, and with no other intention than, the General Assembly will be able to adopt at its forthcoming resumed session a resolution providing for the termination of Trusteeship on 1 January 1960.

None of us can have any doubt that in this matter the Administering Authority is acting not only in the light of its own mature judgement, but in the light of its certain knowledge of the wishes expressed by the democratically elected legislature of the Cameroons and its responsible and democratic executive. It is not for us to abrogate, to diminish, to whittle down the all but formally completed independence that the Cameroons now enjoys. It is not for us to obstruct, should any State choose to obstruct, the determination of France to accord, and the determination of the Cameroonian people to enjoy, complete independence in point of reality and in point of form on 1 January 1960.

Australia will accordingly do all in its power to convey to the Cameroonian people the assurance of which at this moment they stand most in need, the assurance that they may at the earliest possible moment proceed to plan for independence and for the termination of Trusteeship on New Year's Day 1960.

The Australian delegation will accordingly support the principle of any draft resolution designed to enable the General Assembly at its resumed session to give the Cameroonian people and Government an assurance to this end.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I have no further speakers on my list to speak in the general debate this afternoon.

(The President)

I believe that it is my duty to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the necessity of considering our procedure. We are still engaged in the general debate on the Cameroons under French administration, and so far no draft resolution has been submitted to the Council. Since there is not much time left between now and 20 February, I believe that we should consider the necessity of working more rapidly. We have examined the report of the Visiting Mission, we have listened to the important statements that have been made and we are now engaged in the general discussion. I feel that all the members of the Council have full knowledge of the elements of the question before us and that a decision can be taken very soon. I should therefore like to ask whether any members of the Council intend to submit a draft resolution at an early date?

Mr. SEARS (United States of America): My delegation is working with the delegation of India and others on a draft resolution which we feel will command a good deal of support in the Council. This draft may be completed at the end of this afternoon or perhaps tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

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Twenty-third Session

FEB 16 1959

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 13 February 1959, at 11 a.m.

President:

Mr. DORSINVILLE

(Haiti)

Question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons
under British administration and the Cameroons under French
administration: (continued)

- (a) General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII) [17]
- (b) Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to
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AGENDA ITEMS 6 and 17

QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION: (continued)

(a) GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1282 (XIII)

(b) REPORTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO TRUST TERRITORIES IN WEST AFRICA, 1958 (T/1426 and Add.1, 1427, 1434)

General debate (continued)

Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The goal which occupied the thoughts and aspirations of the Cameroonian people for many decades is near at hand. That goal is independence. There is hardly any other delegation that would feel a greater joy than the delegation of the Soviet Union when we see one or the other Territories freed from colonial oppression and attains independence. We rejoice today because of the speedy attainment of independence by the Cameroonian Territory. It is well known that the delegation of the Soviet Union has consistently and invariably supported the quick attainment of this objective at all sessions of the Trusteeship Council and of the General Assembly.

Now, on the basis of the social development and the heroic struggle of the Cameroonian people, attainment of independence has been placed on the agenda, since the Administering Authority has seen that no military forces could stop this demand of an entire people. It is particularly important not to allow any mistakes or distortions which could in one way or another complicate the life and the future development of this independent State. One aspect of particular significance at this moment is connected with another most important problem which was never separated by the majority of the Cameroons from independence, namely, the unification of the Cameroons which was separated by force four decades ago as a result of imperialistic partitions at the end of World War I.

(Mr. Lobanov, USSR)

Having this problem before us, we cannot fail to express deep regret that the future of the Cameroons is being considered by the Council separately, for each one of its two parts. Such an approach basically complicates the correct consideration of a number of most important questions, and even involves dangers of distortion of the perspectives for the solution of the question as a whole. There are, however, numerous other obstacles which prevent the taking of a definite position at this moment on many important aspects of the problem because we do not have at our disposal exhaustive information which may become available in the very near future. Therefore, the delegation of the Soviet Union felt it necessary to postpone its full statement until the General Assembly meets next week, and we hope that it will consider the Cameroonian question in all its aspects. Nevertheless, we believe it indispensable, even at this stage, to make some preliminary remarks.

The Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration attains independence in conditions of extreme internal tension, for which the Administering Authority is responsible. This situation of crisis is characterized by the lack of basic freedoms, by the prohibition of political organizations of the people, by the continuous repressions, as a result of which part of the progressive population is either exiled or had to go underground or is in jail. The results of these repressions are massive movings and displacements, and manhunts which are being conducted by armed patrols of the French army. Much time has elapsed since an organized national movement began which put forward the slogan of unification and independence of the Cameroonian people. In all these years the Administering Authority spent its time struggling against this movement, always alleging that this slogan did not express the aspirations of the people. Now, after many years which were spent in inhuman oppression directed against the UPC, we have seen the report of the Visiting Mission that all have joined the movement for independence, which was indeed the slogan of the UPC, and even the Administering Authority, which yesterday described it as a slogan of a terroristic group, has also subscribed to this very slogan.

(Mr. Lobanov, USSR)

When that same democratic movement suggests an easy and clear plan to solve the crisis, the Administering Authority and after it the Visiting Mission too, exert every effort to show that no such democratic movement -- the UPC -- exists any longer on the Trust Territory. Despite all its unfriendly feelings for such a movement, the Visiting Mission, however, expressed terrible accusations in fact against the Administering Authority, which had been using inhuman oppression and even physically destroying the most progressive part of the Cameroonian society. In paragraph 54 of this report, the Visiting Mission states that the UPC -- and here it differs from all other national movements:

" ... possessed a strongly centralized organization and a well-defined programme, including in particular the independence and unification of the two Cameroons, and which had a wide appeal in the South." (T/1427, para.54)

Furthermore, we find in their report a detailed description of the horrible measures which had as their objective the destruction of the UPC. After the banning of this party and of two other organizations connected with it, a whole arsenal of destructive means was launched against them, including military forces, provocation and slander. For instance, on many occasions military operations were conducted to find and eradicate the supporters of the UPC.

What is the cost of all these efforts? It resulted in the massive movement of the inhabitants of the Sanaga-Maritime, displacement in concentration camps and stockades, the destruction of many villages, and so on. All this, of course, in a very restricted description, is to be found in paragraphs 68, 90 and 91 of the Visiting Mission's report. Finally, the Visiting Mission states that as a result of the military and police measures the UPC actually no longer exists. In other words, it reports the eradication of a popular movement which had numerous supporters and which put forward the slogan of the struggle for unification and independence.

As we read the report of the Visiting Mission, the following question automatically arises: What strength, what belief in its cause, did this movement have when it did not waver in the face of such heavy sufferings which were inflicted for so many years by the Administering Authorities upon thousands of heroes of that movement?

(Mr. Lobanov, USSR)

Only a party closely connected to the people could stand such pressure. No matter how often it is asserted that this movement no longer exists, it is impossible to believe it. It lives and it will live as long as the people it represents lives, from which it draws its strength. The measures of oppression and eradication which were undertaken by the Administering Authority inflicted wounds on the democratic parties of the Cameroons. One of the heaviest sacrifices of the UPC was the tragic loss of the most popular and beloved leader of the people, Ruben Um Nyobé.

The Visiting Mission found many grounds to ~~condemn the UPC~~, directly or indirectly, for deeds which were not actually effected by that organization, but it did not have the feeling of courage and objectivity to condemn the killing of the General-Secretary of the UPC, Ruben Um Nyobé, by the Administering Authority. The death of this man is considered as a national loss to the Cameroons even by those who have taken no part in the movement.

As regards the destruction of the UPC, the Visiting Mission itself does not quite believe it, because otherwise how can we assess the conclusion to be found in paragraph III of the report to the effect that a certain number of supporters of the UPC have not given up the party's programme and that they will be able to constitute an active political movement. They have not given up the programme of the party. This programme of the UPC is being supported more strongly now than it ever was by the whole of the Cameroonian people. In these conditions, how can one speak of an eradication of this party and, if that is so, then how is it possible to solve questions pertaining to the future of the Territory without that party? This should not be allowed.

Therefore, the very first problem of the Trusteeship Council and of the United Nations is to seek means to normalize conditions in the Territory. The first of those measures is doubtless a broad and unconditional amnesty. The Visiting Mission has brought forth many arguments in favour of such an amnesty. It clearly states that it had to listen to many petitions for amnesty, and that it had occasion to read demands for amnesty on all the streets and all the corners of the towns in the Southern Cameroons. The Visiting Mission came to the conclusion that a broad amnesty would be a very wise measure.

(Mr. Lobanov, USSR)

Naturally, an unconditional amnesty can only be appropriate because attempts to offer restrictive half-measures did not bring about any positive results and in fact it even makes the crisis deeper. The incomplete measures taken thus far have been described, however, as a broad and general amnesty, while the Visiting Mission describes them as an actually restricted amnesty. It is not coincidental that in the course of the whole period of time that elapsed since the law of 17 February 1958, only fifteen demands for amnesty were filed.

The said law described as a general amnesty that which was granted by the authorities, despite the fact that the Administering Authority itself stated that this law concerned only two or perhaps three dozen persons who could use it to their benefit. The interpretation of the Administering Authority is anecdotic in a way. Apparently, in April 1958, the High Commissioner took measures to grant a pardon to all those who were not guilty of crimes. What is then the final result of the so-called amnesty? It is the pardon of the innocent. However, since all those who suffered because of the repressions of the Administering Authority are being accused of alleged crimes, the results of the amnesty emerge in the shape of twenty petitions for a pardon. But how indeed can one speak of a pardon of the innocent? In similar cases, it would be more appropriate to speak of compensation for damages inflicted. It is not surprising that such an amnesty could have been used only by twenty or thirty people while thousands of persons are still in jail and, as stated by the Visiting Mission, the crimes of these people are described as efforts to reconstitute the banned party.

We have dealt in detail with the question of amnesty not only because it is the cornerstone of all measures aiming at normalizing conditions in the Territory but also because of the many testimonials which lead us to apprehend that in this case, too, when the new amnesty is prepared the old approach will not be abandoned. One of such testimonials which naturally causes concern is found in paragraph 153 of the Visiting Mission's report. Here there is a clear statement to the effect that apparently a pardon is again planned for those who did not commit any crimes, while others would be judged by independent tribunals. In practice, such an amnesty would indeed mean further judicial repressions and, of course, would not lead to the purpose desired by all.

It is well known that the proclamation of the law of 17 February was accompanied by judicial and military repressions. This must not take place when the new amnesty is introduced, because the law itself must contain a guarantee against repressions. Normalization of the situation in the Territory is unthinkable unless democratic freedoms are secured -- the right freely to express political opinions, the recalling of the decrees banning parties and the return of political exiles and deported persons. Only after this deep crisis is thus overcome -- a crisis into which the Territory was thrown because of the actions of the Administering Authority -- only after the satisfaction of the demands of the progressive elements who desire to restore peace and stability can measures be taken to promote unification and independence. One of these measures should be simultaneous elections in both Territories for legislative organs which should proclaim the independent Cameroonian State not later than 1 January 1960.

Such is the logical and clear plan which is supported by the progressive organizations of the Cameroons and, we believe, by the majority of the Cameroons people, who indeed support the slogan of unification and independence which was originally proclaimed by the UPC.

In the statements of the Administering Authority and the report of the Visiting Mission, we do not see any intention or wish on the part of the Administering Authority to take these demands into account. The impression is created that, as happened previously, they persistently do not wish to hear the voice of reason. How indeed can one understand the position taken by the Administering Authority and also by the Visiting Mission in the matter of elections in the Territory. Any possibility of conducting such elections

is being ruled out in the most categorical form on the ground that the elections which took place on 23 December 1956 had taken place in a normal way. It may be possible to allege this in some other meeting, but certainly not in the United Nations where the conditions under which the elections of 1956 took place are so well known. Who indeed can ignore that these elections took place under conditions of military repression and mass terrorism? The Visiting Mission itself had to note that in densely populated areas participation in the elections amounted to only 20 or 30 per cent of the registered voters. In such an important region as the Sanaga-Maritime, the whole of the population practically boycotted the elections.

One can only regret the fact that the Visiting Mission did not find it possible to deal more carefully with such a most important matter. Otherwise, it could have corrected considerably the statistics of the Administering Authority, in which the Mission believed so strongly that it based its most radical conclusions on these statistics. The Visiting Mission could at least have taken into account the well-known cases of falsification which took place in all electoral regions.

Finally, how can one ignore the fact that the elections took place against the opinion expressed by the United Nations and without any control by it? How, then, can one really take into account the categorical recommendation that new elections in the Territory should be ruled out? It would be appropriate to ask those who put forward such categorical decisions the following questions: What do you intend to do about the unification of the Territory? Or are you ruling out that possibility as well? Is it possible that in that case, too, elections are to be ruled out? Or maybe the position you have taken was based on a preconceived exclusion of unification? Such preconception, however, would not be true to reality. Doubtless there are very similar positions to it -- there are efforts aimed at complicating the fulfilment of the wishes of the Cameroons people.

We must not forget that in the last decade there were many cases where artificial sources of strife were created which to this day are poisoning the existence of many countries which have attained independence. Very recently, a well known public leader pointed to this fact, and it created a very strong impression indeed. Would it not be more reasonable, after this reminder and other

historic experience, before taking any categorical decisions, to investigate the will of the people concerned with regard to such a decision?

One of the delegations here raised this question: How would the people of the Cameroons assess the possibility of delaying the attainment of independence? In our view, this question contains some very surprising elements. We do not know what may be the grounds for it. Perhaps by this question there has been indirectly uncovered the plan of colonizers. In that case, it would be best to disclose this plan for general discussion.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Soviet Union feels it necessary to express a warning. Under conditions of the rising national liberation movements, the colonizers begin to understand that mere force is not sufficient and cannot be relied on. Therefore, they take all measures to split the national liberation movements and to create strife among them. We consistently find such tactics in the Cameroons. One can hardly doubt the purposes of these manoeuvres and who is to gain through them. We hope that the national forces in the Cameroons will see this clearly and will not be weakened by strife among brothers.

Mr. YANG (China): We are now engaged, as the first phase of our consideration of the item before us, in a serious discussion of the question of the future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration.

By General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5 December 1958, the Council was requested

"... to examine, as early as possible during its twenty-third session, the reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission of Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, and to transmit the same, with its observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959, to enable the Assembly, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, to take the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System in the two Territories." (A/RES/1282 (XIII))

The Council is, therefore, duty bound, by virtue of this request, first, to examine the reports, and then, after having examined them, to transmit to the General Assembly its observations and recommendations on the question of the future of the two Trust Territories. But, for the present moment, our discussion is confined to the Cameroons under French administration. In this connexion may I say, perhaps parenthetically, that, having regard to the objectives of the Trusteeship System, it is only proper that the Council should follow the procedure which it is now following.

The Council has before it the Visiting Mission's report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434). A statement was made on 10 February by the Chairman of the Visiting Mission when the report was formally presented to the Council. Moreover, the Council had the benefit of the Administering Authority's observations on the reports when it heard a lucid exposé by the representative of France on the same day. The Council, on its part, has carefully examined the report in the sense that a lively discussion has taken place, with many representatives posing questions to the representative of France and the special representatives.

We are indeed very fortunate that, in the course of this discussion, we have received generous and invaluable assistance from Mr. Benjamin Gerig,

Chairman of the Visiting Mission, who has kindly placed his rich experience and inexhaustible knowledge of the Territory at the disposal of the Council. To Mr. Gerig, and to his three distinguished colleagues, I should like to express our deep appreciation of the excellent reports which they have submitted to the Council on the two Trust Territories in West Africa. The Council is indeed indebted to them. The high quality of these reports cannot be fully appreciated unless, at the same time, we also appreciate the impartiality, the deep sense of responsibility and the moral courage with which the four members of the Visiting Mission moulded into shape their findings, conclusions and recommendations. The findings are thorough, the conclusions and recommendations are clear-cut and to the point. I am convinced that the report on the Cameroons under French administration, while enhancing on the one hand the prestige of the United Nations in the eyes of the Cameroonian people, will go down in the annals of the United Nations, on the other hand, as a significant contribution to facilitating the accession, for the first time, by a Trust Territory to national independence.

But, having examined this report, what is the Council going to do next? The answer is simple. In the view of my delegation, the Council can do no less than make its own observations and recommendations in the light of its examination of the report and transmit them to the General Assembly for its consideration. In the few remarks that will ensue, I propose, in the name of my delegation, to make a modest contribution to the fulfillment of the obligations that have been imposed on this Council both by the Charter and by General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII).

It gives me great satisfaction and pleasure to participate, on behalf of my delegation, in this important debate involving, as it does, the birth on 1 January 1960 of a new State. As members of the Council are aware, I was twice appointed a member of the Visiting Mission to the Cameroons. I first visited the Territory in 1952. My second trip took place in 1955. On each occasion I was one of the two members who were able to visit areas reserved only for what the local authorities called "energetic missionaries". The Cameroons is indeed a beautiful country and, under French administration, it is beautiful in many respects thanks to African vivacity, accentuated by an instinctive vigour, coupled with the French love of nature and beauty. I hope, therefore, that it will not

(Mr. Yang, China)

be considered as an over-statement if I say that I have deep appreciation of the Cameroons and its people. Nothing can give me greater satisfaction than to see the Cameroons under French administration evolve peacefully and progressively towards the goal of independence.

My delegation has studied the report with great care. If we did not put many questions to the special representatives, it was not because we lacked interest, but rather because the report had answered meticulously all the questions that we could possibly think of. In this connexion my delegation was also grateful to the representative of France for having restated all the issues involved and for having referred us to the relevant paragraphs in the Visiting Mission's report for effective answers relating to these issues.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that, under the new Statute, the Territory has achieved full autonomy in its internal affairs since 1 January 1959. It is most gratifying to note, from paragraph 134 of the Visiting Mission's report, that

"The terms of the new statute and the clarifying provisions in its preamble afford no grounds for doubt that the independence which the Cameroons will enjoy on the termination of trusteeship will be full and complete." (T/1427, page 65)

The Mission's conclusion was the following:

"... the request that the Territory should become independent on 1 January 1960, which was approved in the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons by a large majority, is also supported by the great majority of the population. It therefore considers that it is not necessary to consult the population on this subject before the termination of trusteeship." (Ibid.)

One important issue related to the request for independence is, of course, that of the representative character of the present Legislative Assembly, which initiated this request, and of the holding of new general elections under United Nations supervision before the termination of Trusteeship. On this issue, the evidence which was at the disposal of the Visiting Mission is, in the view of my delegation, conclusive. In this connexion, naturally, my delegation attaches the greatest importance to paragraph 141 of the Visiting Mission's report.

(Mr. Yang, China)

Paragraph 141 reads:

"The Mission is of the opinion that on the whole the present Legislative Assembly is representative in character. There are certainly insufficient grounds, in the Mission's view, for the holding of new general elections under United Nations supervision before the termination of trusteeship. Furthermore, it sees no reason why fresh elections to the Legislative Assembly should be a precondition of the attainment of independence. It must be remembered that it was the present Legislative Assembly and Government which demanded and obtained from France the commitment to grant independence on 1 January 1960. It would be ironic if their representative character were to be called in question."

(T/1427, para. 141)

Nevertheless, the Mission made two important suggestions: one relating to the holding of by-elections in the four districts where disturbances had occurred, and the other relating to the adoption of a policy of conciliation. My delegation is therefore glad to know that the Cameroons Government has given an assurance that the by-elections will be held before the attainment of independence and that further liberal measures -- including broad amnesty measures -- will soon be instituted and implemented.

In the circumstances, I am happy to say that I have been authorized by the leader of my delegation, Mr. Tingfu F. Tsiang, to state that my delegation will wholeheartedly support the Visiting Mission's conclusions and recommendations on the question of the future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, and in particular the recommendation in paragraph 172 that the Trusteeship Council should propose to the General Assembly that it should "adopt a resolution providing for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement relating to the Cameroons on its attainment of independence on 1 January 1960".

In this Council, we have often heard that good government is no substitute for self-government and that a target date should be fixed for self-government or independence. But here we have the Cameroons under French administration, which has already achieved self-government and is now requesting independence. Are we going to reject that request?

(Mr. Yang, China)

So far as my delegation is concerned, we are prepared to vote for any draft resolution designed to give our blessings to the accession by the Cameroons under French administration to national independence on 1 January 1960.

Before concluding, I should like to congratulate France for the excellent work it has done to prepare the Trust Territory for full independence. This work has been done, if I may say so, in the best traditions of France. I should also like to congratulate the people of the Cameroons and their leaders for what they have achieved under the guidance of France and for the fact that, by 1 January 1960, the Cameroons will be an independent and sovereign State. My delegation is prepared, at the appropriate time in 1960, to welcome the new State of the Cameroons to the United Nations.

Finally, I should like to thank Mr. Pinon and Mr. Betayene for the kindness and ability with which they have assisted the Council in its consideration of the item now before it.

Miss TENZER (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Certainly, it is not very often that the Trusteeship Council has before it a problem so clear and so easy to solve as that which it has been considering during the past few days under a resolution adopted last December by the General Assembly. Thanks to the excellent report which has been submitted to us by the Visiting Mission on the Cameroons under French administration and which clearly answers the various questions that we might still wished to have put, it will be easy for the Council to adopt recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly.

Everyone in the Cameroons is getting ready to celebrate, on 1 January 1960, the Territory's accession to independence: the final aim of the Trusteeship System. This choice by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons -- a democratically elected assembly -- is, according to the Visiting Mission, actively supported by the great majority of the population. The Statute which entered into force on 1 January 1959 laid the groundwork for independence and can leave no doubt as to the total independence which will be enjoyed in the Cameroons at the termination of trusteeship. The Territory's economic and social development, the way in which the Legislative Assembly and Government of the Cameroons are exercising the powers transferred to them, guarantee that the Cameroonians are capable of assuming the responsibility of independence.

(Miss Tenzer, Belgium)

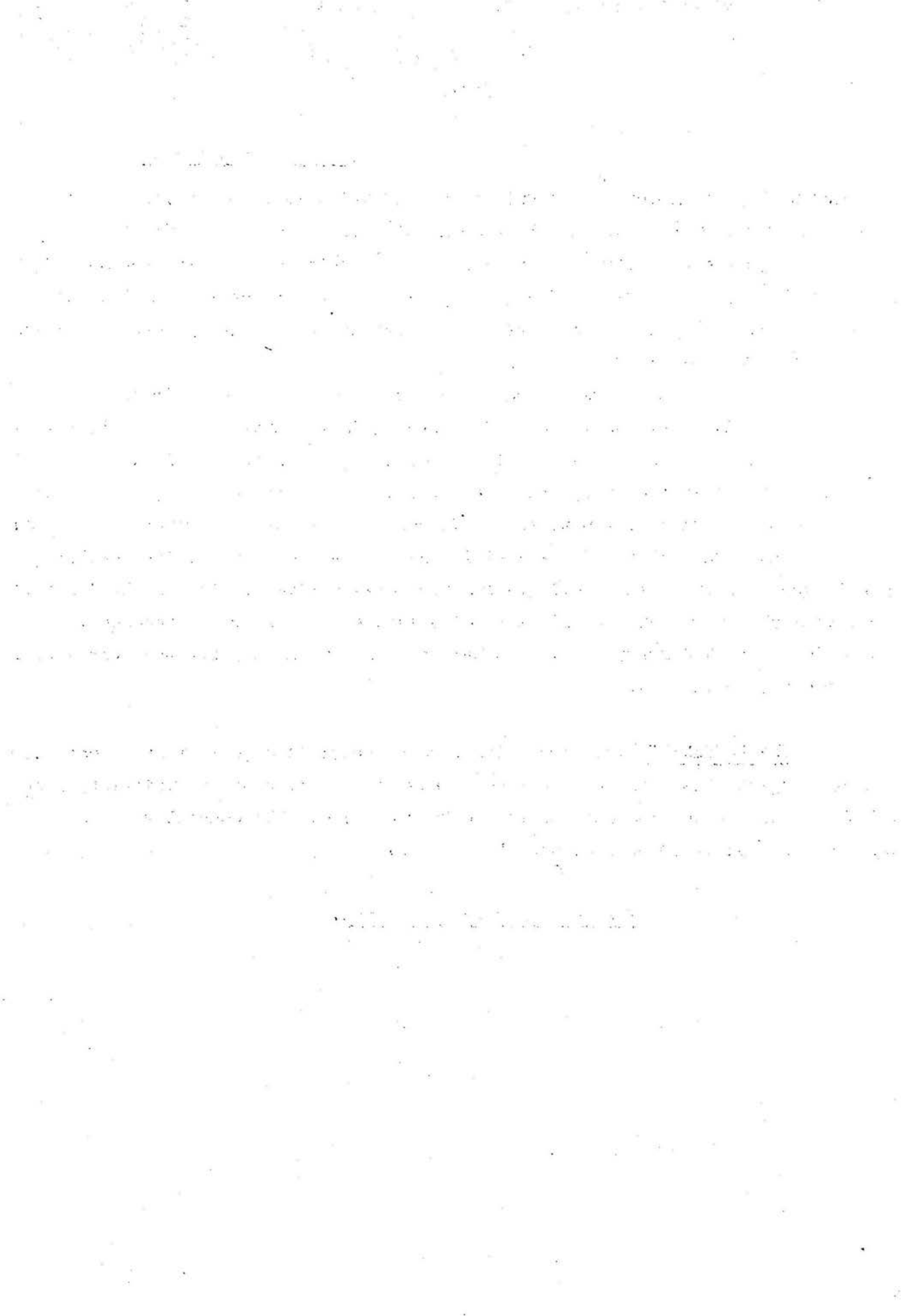
Certainly, no Member of the United Nations which knows the worth of that Government would wish to assume the responsibilities of disappointing the Cameroonian people by delaying, even for one day, this long-awaited event. After some hard blows, the Territory now finally has achieved peace -- and this state of affairs will be even further strengthened by the broad amnesty measures which the Legislative Assembly will soon adopt.

Furthermore, we have just learned that the Government of Mr. Ahidjo contemplates holding by-elections in Sanaga-Maritime. Thus, we already have an affirmative reply to the two suggestions made by the Visiting Mission.

What more could one wish, and what obstacle could one validly place in the way of the termination of trusteeship? It was not without a thorough study of the situation that the members of the Visiting Mission -- in whom the Trusteeship Council quite rightly placed all its confidence -- arrived at the conclusion that the Trusteeship Agreement should be terminated when the Cameroons acceded to independence, on 1 January 1960. The Belgian delegation supports that conclusion without any reservations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): It appears that no one else wishes to speak this morning. That seems also to be the case for this afternoon, and the afternoon meeting must therefore be cancelled. The Council will meet twice on Monday: at 10.30 a.m. and at 2.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.



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United Nations, N.Y. 23rd Session, 16th Meeting (AM)

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Trusteeship Council

Press Release TR/1466

23rd Session, 16th Meeting (AM)

13 February 1959

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 1

The Trusteeship Council this morning continued general debate on the future of the Cameroons under French administration. Before it is the report (Doc. T/1427) of the Council's visiting mission which made a first-hand study of the situation in the territory last fall.

IVAN I. LOBANOV (USSR), the first speaker today, said the objective of independence -- for which Cameroonians had struggled -- was now close to realization. His delegation felt great joy in seeing another territory freed of "colonial" rule. The USSR, he said, had consistently supported the quick attainment of independence by dependent peoples.

In the Cameroons, he said, the administering authority has seen that no military force could stop the demands of a whole people.

Of particular significance at present, he continued, was another problem which the Cameroonian people had never treated separately in their struggle for independence. This, he said, was the question of reunifying the two Cameroons which were forcibly separated after World War I.

Mr. LOBANOV regretted that the Council was considering the Cameroons question in separate parts. Such an approach, he said, complicated the "correct" consideration of the question as a whole.

There were also, he said, numerous other obstacles which prevented the taking of a definite decision now. Information on these matters, now lacking, might be available in the future, he said.

The USSR, Mr. LOBANOV went on, felt that in these circumstances it was necessary to postpone a full statement on the question until the reconvening of the General Assembly in a week's time. He hoped that the Assembly would consider the question in all its aspects.

For the present, however, he said, it was necessary for his delegation to make some preliminary remarks. First, he referred to what he termed the "extreme internal tension" in the territory, for which he asserted the administering authority was responsible.

(more)

There was a lack of basic freedoms in the Cameroons, he said. Because of the prohibition of political parties, a part of the population had been exiled, had been forced to go underground, or had been jailed, he stated. "Massive manhunts" by military patrols also were still continuing.

Much time had elapsed since the "national movement" began, Mr. LOBANOV continued. During all these years, the administering authority had fought against the movement, he said. The administering authority always maintained that the slogan of the Union des Populations du Cameroun, calling for freedom and independence, did not represent the will of the population, he added. However, according to the visiting mission, this slogan had now been adopted by all sections of the population.

However, the administering authority, as well as the United Nations, he said, had tried to show that the UPC movement no longer existed in the territory. Despite the "unfriendly feelings" against the UPC, headed, the visiting mission's report did describe the "horrible measures" used to eradicate and destroy the movement by military forces, provocation and slander.

The visiting mission's report itself, the Soviet representative said, stated that, as a result of the military measures taken by the administering authority, the UPC movement had ceased to be an effective force.

No matter how often it was asserted that the movement had ended, he said, he found it hard to believe as long as the people still supported that movement.

The visiting mission's report, Mr. LOBANOV added, described the high cost of the repression of the movement, which included the loss of the "beloved leader" of the UPC, Ruben Um Nyobe. The mission, he said, found grounds to condemn the UPC for deeds for which it should not be held responsible. However, the mission lacked the "courage or objectivity" to condemn the death of Mr. Um Nyobe, an event considered by all as a "national loss," he said.

Mr. LOBANOV declared that the UPC movement was now being supported more strongly than ever by the whole of the population. Therefore, how could it be said that the movement had been eradicated? And how could the future of the Cameroons be settled without the participation of the UPC?

Measures to normalize the situation were needed, he stated. The visiting mission noted that demands for a broad amnesty were heard from every section in the territory, and it believed that the adoption of such a measure would be a wise step.

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Trusteeship Council
23rd Session, 16th Meeting (AM)

Press Release TR/1466
13 February 1959

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 2

Continuing, Mr. LOBANOV (USSR) declared that what the territory needed was an unconditional amnesty, not a restricted amnesty. Only about 15 to 20 persons had applied under the 1958 amnesty law, he said, while thousands of people were still in jail.

A broad, unconditional amnesty, he said, was the cornerstone of all measures for normalizing the situation in the Cameroons.

Mr. LOBANOV stated that a decision on the future of the Cameroons could be made only after the "crisis" in the Cameroons, resulting from the action of the administering authority, had been resolved and satisfaction had been given to the "progressive elements" which he said stood for peace and freedom.

The USSR, he went on, supported the demand for the holding of simultaneous elections in both Cameroons, a step advocated by the "progressive elements" which he believed was supported by all Cameroonians.

The administering authority, however, he said, had persistently refused to hear the "voice of reason." The elections held in the French Cameroons in 1956 took place in an atmosphere of "military repression," Mr. LOBANOV stated. Only 20 to 30 per cent of the registered voters took part, he said, while practically the whole population of the Sanaga-Maritime region boycotted the elections.

The USSR, he declared, felt it necessary to issue a warning that, under the present conditions of the rising liberation movement, the use of force would not suffice to keep down this movement. The administering authority, he charged, had sought to split national movements and to create dissension among them. This, he said, was the situation in the Cameroons. He asked what could be the real motive behind this effort.

(more)

HSI-KUN YANG (China), the next speaker, said the Council was duty-bound under the General Assembly's resolution to examine the visiting mission's reports and to transmit its observations and recommendations on the future of the two trust territories.

He praised the reports on the two territories, stating that the visiting mission's conclusions and recommendations were clear-cut and to the point. Turning to the French Cameroons, he said this report was a significant contribution in facilitating the accession of the territory to independence. The Council, he reiterated, could do no less than to transmit its recommendations to the Assembly in this regard.

Mr. YANG pointed out that he had twice been a member of earlier visiting missions to the Cameroons, and that nothing gave him more pleasure than to see the territory peacefully and progressively reach the goal of independence.

Stressing certain conclusions in the report, the representative of China noted "with satisfaction" that, under the new statute, the French Cameroons had been given full autonomy and that the people had the capacity to assume the responsibilities of independence (paragraph 134 of Doc. T/1427).

Important issues relating to independence concerned the representative character of the present Legislative Assembly and the question of holding elections under UN supervision before the termination of trusteeship, Mr. YANG recalled. The visiting mission recommendations on these matters were "conclusive," he felt.

Mr. YANG went on to express satisfaction over the statements by the Cameroonian government that, before the time of independence, by-elections would be held in the region where disturbances had occurred and that further "broad" amnesty measures would be instituted.

His delegation, he said, would "wholeheartedly" support the visiting mission's conclusions and recommendations on the future of the French Cameroons.

(END OF TAKE 2)

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23rd Session
16th Meeting (AM)

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TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 3

There had been many comments in the Trusteeship Council in the past to the effect that good government was no substitute for self-government and that target dates were not the same as the granting of independence, Mr. YANG (China) continued. In the case of the French Cameroons, where self-government was a fact and where the people requested independence, was the Council going to reject this request? he asked.

China, he said, was ready to vote for any resolution which would give a "blessing" to the territory's achievement of independence on 1 January. He congratulated France for its "excellent work" and also the people and leaders of the territory for their part in the birth of a new state. At the appropriate time in 1960, his delegation would be ready to welcome the new state into the UN.

Miss MARTHE TENZER (Belgium), the last speaker today, said that the Council did not often have a case where a decision was so easy as in this one.

The Legislative Assembly had been democratically elected and was fully supported by the Cameroonian people, she said. Furthermore, the "autonomous" statute now in force made it "very clear" that the Cameroons would achieve complete independence at the end of the trusteeship regime. There were guarantees that the Cameroons would be able to assume the responsibilities of independence, she stated.

No UN member, she felt, would like to shoulder the responsibility for disappointing the Cameroonian people by "trying to delay even for one day this longed-for independence."

The present Cameroonian government had given assurances with regard to measures for broad amnesty and the holding of partial elections, Miss TENZER continued. These were given in reply to the visiting mission's conclusions. "What more could you want?" she asked.

Indeed, she added, the visiting mission had placed "all its trust" in the fulfillment of the requirements for independence. Belgium fully supported this conclusion, she stated.

Since no further speakers were inscribed to speak today, the Council President, MAX H. DORSINVILLE (Haiti), cancelled the scheduled afternoon meeting. The general debate on the French Cameroons will be resumed at 10:30 a.m. Monday, 16 February.

(END OF TAKE 3 AND PRESS RELEASE TR/1466)