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TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 16 February 1959, at 3 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,
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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)

Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom): When I spoke to the Trusteeship Council the other day, I asked for its indulgence in allowing me not to make a full statement at that time about the future of the Cameroons under British administration. I said that I thought I should wait until the results of last week's meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly were known. We received a report during the weekend of the results of that meeting. I am therefore now in a position to proceed with my statement.

I shall deal first with the Southern Cameroons and then with the Northern part of the Trust Territory.

I should like to start off what I have to say about the Southern Cameroons by quoting part of paragraph 196 of the Visiting Mission's report:

"In the light of the conditions suggested by the two parties under which they would accept the election results as deciding the future of the Territory, the Mission considered that the most probable consequence which might follow from the elections on 24 January was a further consultation of the people through a plebiscite on their future. In these circumstances the Mission decided that after the receipt of the results of the elections and of other relevant information concerning them it might be necessary for it to formulate further observations concerning a possible plebiscite."

(T/1426, paragraph 196)

As all members of the Trusteeship Council know, the elections were duly held on 24 January. The Kamerun National Democratic Party won fourteen of the twenty-six seats; the Kamerun National Congress and the Kamerun People's Party -- a coalition which fought the elections as a coalition and which had formed the Government before the elections -- won twelve seats. I think that I should now quote what the Visiting Mission has to say about the result of the elections in the supplementary report which it has submitted.

"The Mission was informed further that the average poll was 70 per cent of the registered electors. It is difficult to indicate with accuracy the percentage of votes cast for candidates supporting the two main political trends, since the Kumba North-West seat was won without opposition and the positions of the independent candidates are not known." -- that is, on the future of the Territory. "For an approximate indication, however, the Kumba seat might be calculated as being worth to the KNC/KPP 70 per cent of the 9,550 registered electors there -- i.e. as 6,685 votes. On this basis a total of 58,069 votes, or 40.4 per cent, might be said to have been cast in favour of candidates pledged to support association with the Federation of Nigeria, and 75,326 votes, or 52.3 per cent, in favour of candidates supporting 'secession' from Nigeria. The remaining 7.3 per cent of the votes were cast for independent candidates." (T/1426/Add.1, para. 212)

The Mission goes on to say later:

"It should also be said -- and the Mission's own observations in the Territory bore this out -- that personal likes and dislikes towards candidates and issues of a purely local character, undoubtedly had a bearing on the polling." (Ibid.)

As the members of the Council well know, Mr. Foncha was appointed Premier of the Southern Cameroons and has formed a Government. He is the leader of the KNDP. Furthermore, last week, a meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was held. It began on 11 February. Two motions were introduced into the House by the Government Party, and I should like to read out to the Council the terms of these motions. The first reads as follows:

"That this honourable House prays Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps to fulfil the will of the people of the Southern Cameroons as indicated by the results of the last general elections in which the KNDP, the secessionist party, polled more than half the total number of votes cast, and thus implement the policy of this Government which strongly advocates secession of the Southern Cameroons from the Federation of Nigeria before she attains independence in 1960 and to continue under a modified form of the Trusteeship Agreement for some time during which the possibilities of reunification with any section of the British and French sectors can be explored."

The second motion introduced by the Government Party reads as follows:

"That in view of the fact that a plebiscite is likely to be the means of determining whether or not the Southern Cameroons should secede from the Federation of Nigeria, this Honourable House humbly prays His Excellency The Governor General to postpone the registration of voters in the Southern Cameroons for the forthcoming general elections to the House of Representatives until it becomes clear whether or not the Southern Cameroons will continue to send representatives to that House."

I should like also to read out to the Council the terms of an amendment to the first of these resolutions which was moved by the opposition parties which previously formed the Government of the Southern Cameroons. This amendment was the kind of amendment which substitutes something completely different for the motion as it originally stood. And the whole motion, if it had been amended, would have read as follows:

"That this Honourable House mandates the Premier and Leader of the opposition in this House to represent to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization the opinion of this House that there can be no better future for the Southern Cameroons than in its continued association with Nigeria and to request the United Nations to explore other and more effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons about their future relationship with the Federation of Nigeria in view of the fact that the last general elections cannot be accepted as a decisive indication of the wishes of the people." The result of the debate which has been reported to me by telegramme is that the two Government motions were carried by 14 votes to 12.

At this stage I think I should just refer the Council to the conclusion reached by the Visiting Mission in its supplementary report. I am going to read from paragraph 218 of the supplementary report:

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"In the light of the foregoing, the Mission has come to the conclusion that the results of the elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. If general agreement should develop in the newly-elected House of Assembly concerning the future of the Southern Cameroons a formal popular consultation may prove to be unnecessary; but if no such agreement emerges, it may only be through a consultation at some appropriate future date, probably a plebiscite, that it will be possible to resolve the basic issues. In that event, the Mission considers that the conditions for such a consultation, including its timing and the question or questions to be put to the people, will have to be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority in consultation and as far as possible in agreement with the political parties in the Southern Cameroons."

(T/1426/Add.1)

I have given the Council the result of the debate in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly last week, and I have also referred to the recommendation of the Visiting Mission.

I should now like to make some observations on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation. First of all, I think from the voting in the House of Assembly -- 14 for and 12 against, which reflects the Party composition of the House of Assembly -- that it is clear conclusion that no "general agreement" has developed in this House of Assembly, to use the words from the Visiting Mission's report.

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I have received only a telegraphic report of the proceedings, but I understand that both parties have made it clear that they accept that a plebiscite is required in order to determine their future. The Administering Authority on whose behalf I speak also takes this view and agrees with the Visiting Mission that the results of the recent elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. Therefore, we agree with the Visiting Mission also that the conditions for such consultation, including its timing and the questions to be put, should be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority. In doing so, the General Assembly and the Administering Authority will no doubt wish to take into account the views of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature.

I believe that the Trusteeship Council will agree, as we do, with the view that the recent elections cannot, in the light of their results, be regarded as decisive, and also that since no general agreement as to the future has emerged in the newly elected legislature, a plebiscite will be necessary. I think also that the Council will agree that the General Assembly should be asked to authorize such a plebiscite in agreement with the Administering Authority. The conditions under which the plebiscite should be held, including the questions to be put and the timing of such a plebiscite, should be settled by the General Assembly in consultation with the Administering Authority, after the views of the leaders of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature have been heard.

Obviously the most difficult questions confronting the United Nations are the questions of timing and the choices to be put to the people. I do not think that the Council would wish me, in respect of these particular matters, to anticipate the views which will be expressed to the Fourth Committee by the political leaders from the Southern Cameroons. I believe that both Mr. Foncha, the Premier, and Dr. Endeley, the leader of the opposition, will be coming here and they will express their views and those of the parties they represent to the General Assembly. I think it is right and proper that it should be they rather than I who should put forward these views. I do not propose, therefore, on this occasion to go into these particular matters.

I have made it clear that we believe that a consultation by plebiscite will be necessary and that this view is accepted by the political parties. I do not think

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that on this occasion it would proper or appropriate for me to go into the questions of timing and choices. I wish to emphasize this point particularly: this is not an issue between an Administering Authority and a local legislature or political party; it is a question between the two sections of political opinion in the Territory. The concern of the United Kingdom as Administering Authority is that the people should have a full and fair opportunity in the Southern Cameroons of expressing their views. We are concerned with that. It is for them to say what their views are. Therefore, I have made it clear today what I think this Council might conclude on this matter.

I should like to turn now to an essentially different problem, that of the Northern Cameroons, which is also dealt with in great detail in the report of the Visiting Mission. I shall begin by recalling the statement which I made in the Fourth Committee about the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration. I spoke at considerable length on this subject on 15 November last. I said, among other things, that how the consultation of the people of the British Cameroons about their future should be organized was a matter in the first instance for the Visiting Mission to advise on and for the Trusteeship Council to consider. I said at the time that subject to the views which the Visiting Mission might express and the Trusteeship Council might form in the light of their report, it was the belief of the United Kingdom Government that the consultation should take the form of a plebiscite under United Nations supervision.

I made it quite clear, which I think anyone would agree from a reading of my statement, that as far as the United Kingdom Government was concerned, we were quite ready to agree that there should be a plebiscite in the Northern part of the Territory. I am sure that the same view has been held by the authorities in Nigeria, who are obviously closely concerned in this matter.

We envisaged that this plebiscite would take place subject to the views which the Visiting Mission might express in both parts of the Territory, both the Northern and the Southern parts, and I expressed the view in my statement that the best and fairest arrangement would be for the votes in the two parts of the Territory to be counted separately. Although here again, I was most careful to point out that this also was a matter for the Visiting Mission to advise on in the first instance and for the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly to consider subsequently. In fact, I made it perfectly clear at the time that

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the views which I provisionally expressed then regarding the method of consultation were entirely subject to the findings of the Visiting Mission. If members of the Council will look at paragraph 173 of the report of the Visiting Mission, they will see that the Mission itself made the same point.

The Mission deals in paragraphs 166 to 169 of its report with the question of the relations of the Northern and Southern parts of the Trust Territory in regard to the consultation to take place, and they come to the very definite conclusion that the wishes of the Northern and Southern peoples of the Territory should be determined separately. They point out in paragraph 168 that the distinction to be drawn between the Northern and Southern parts of the Territory and their people is a fact which cannot be eliminated without doing violence to the wishes of all known opinion in the North.

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It seems to my delegation that this view cannot fail to be accepted. Given, therefore, this conclusion that the north and south must be dealt with separately, the Mission then had to consider what form the consultation should take in each of the two sections of the Territory. The Mission considered this question in the knowledge that the Administering Authority would be prepared to agree to a plebiscite in each section if, in the opinion of the Mission, this was necessary and if the General Assembly decided thereafter to authorize one. The Mission was not, of course, in any way bound by its terms of reference to recommend any particular form of consultation, nor necessarily to recommend the same form of consultation for each section of the Territory. Here I should like to refer the Council to paragraphs 171 to 173 of the report. The Mission remarked in paragraph 171:

"There appeared to be a wide-spread notion among the regional Governments, the political parties and apparently the public at large that a plebiscite was to be a United Nations requirement." (T/1426, page 79)

Perhaps, reading between the lines, I detect -- I hope I am not being unjust -- a slight feeling on the part of the Mission that the Administering Authority may conceivably have erred in lending currency to such an idea that the United Nations would itself insist on a consultation. But what has the Visiting Mission to say on this point? Here I should like to quote paragraph 172:

"The Mission was not wholly prepared for this, because there was nothing in its terms of reference, nor in the memorandum of the Administering Authority, which had committed either the United Nations or the Administering Authority to the idea that a plebiscite or other special kind of consultation had already been judged necessary or appropriate to the circumstances of the Trust Territory. The Mission therefore approached its task in the Trust Territory with the understanding that the necessity or otherwise for a plebiscite was an entirely open question, to which it was one of its principal functions to suggest an answer." (Ibid.)

The Mission goes on to refer to the debates which took place in the Fourth Committee at that time and to a statement which I made on 15 November -- to which I have already referred. It talks about:

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"the announcement made on 15 November by the representative of the Administering Authority that subject to the views of the Mission and the Trusteeship Council it intended to ask the General Assembly at its next session to agree to a consultation in the form of a plebiscite."

(T/1426, page 79)

Can there be any suggestion there between the lines that perhaps the representative of the Administering Authority was being a little premature in making this remark, even if it was made subject to the views of the Mission itself? I do not know, but I certainly entirely agree with the view expressed by the Mission in this part of its report that it was entirely open to it to suggest what form a consultation should take; and not only that but whether it was necessary for a consultation to be held at all.

Now I feel that, even at the risk of being a little tedious, I must quote or at any rate refer to some of the opinions of substance which the Mission expressed in this part of its report. I should like to preface this by making it very clear that we, as the Administering Authority, are impartial in this matter. We are not concerned to press one solution or another but we are concerned to do the right thing in the interests of the people.

On the subject of the views of the people of the northern section of the Cameroons under British administration as to their future, the Mission has a good deal to say, and I should like to refer the Council to some of these passages. The first one to which I want to refer is paragraph 150, in which the Mission refers to the views expressed in the past by "the Emirs and their traditional advisers". In paragraph 151 -- and I think this is important -- the Mission goes on to say:

"The Mission found the Emirs saying the same thing today, but now they speak with the support of many other voices. They themselves are surrounded by councils widely representative of groups within the community. There are elected councils in the districts; there are elected Cameroonians sitting in the regional and federal legislatures; there are political parties, for and against the Government, with active organizers and spokesmen; and there is an immeasurably larger number than ten years ago of men who are ready to

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express an opinion. Almost without exception all who spoke to the Mission conceived of no other future for the Northern Cameroons than as a part of the Northern Region and thus, in 1960, as part of the independent Federation of Nigeria." (T/1426, page 72)

In paragraph 152 it states:

"There is only one body which can be said to be in any sense representative of the Northern Cameroons as a whole. This is the Consultative Committee whose composition and functions, as described earlier, entitle it in the Mission's opinion to speak the minds of the people with all the authority that can be expected in the present circumstances of public opinion and expression." (Ibid.)

If I might just refer the Council to the composition of this body, this is shown in paragraph 178 of the report. It consists of:

"the elected Minister for the Northern Cameroons as chairman, the Lamido of Adamawa, the Emir of Dikwa, all the other elected members from the Northern Cameroons in the regional and federal legislatures, and six special members chosen by their local councils to represent the more remote southern areas." (Ibid., page 81)

The Mission says in paragraph 152:

"At Mubi, in the Mission's presence, the Consultative Committee debated and adopted unanimously a resolution in which, considering that the Northern Cameroons had a common culture, tradition, language and administration with the Northern Region of Nigeria, it reaffirmed that the wish of the people under trusteeship was to remain with the Northern Region when Nigeria received its independence in 1960." (Ibid., page 72)

In paragraph 153 the Mission goes on to say:

"In discussing the subject further with the Mission, members of the Committee from the Adamawa parts of the Trust Territory, from the Gwoza District in the Dikwa Emirate, from the Benue portion of the Trust Territory and from the Mambilla plateau, all supported that position. Nor did any of the representatives consider that the Northern Cameroons should be united with the Southern Cameroons." (Ibid.)

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Then in paragraph 154 the Mission says that five of the elected members of the Committee, in a separate memorandum, expressed various views, including this:

"They made it clear that neither they, nor in their opinion the people who had elected them, desired or expected any change in the relationship with Nigeria." (T/1426, page 73)

Again, going to paragraph 157, it states:

"Among all of the District and Village Heads and the members of the District Council whom the Mission met -- and it believes that every district in the Northern Cameroons was represented before it in this way -- the feeling was the same. They were all of the opinion that the inhabitants of the Northern Trust Territory would oppose any proposal of separation from Nigeria and that the areas concerned belonged properly, in fact, to the Provinces with which they were administered and should therefore remain a part of the Northern Region of Nigeria." (Ibid.)

But let us refer also to the opposition parties. These are dealt with in paragraph 149, where, after referring to various views about internal questions which were expressed to the Mission by opposition parties, the Mission writes as follows:

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"For the Mission's purpose, moreover, the most important aspect of the dissenting views, expressed either through the opposition political parties or through local groups and individuals unconnected with the parties, is that they relate to matters of internal policy and administrative method, and do not call into question the continued association of the Northern Cameroons with the Northern Region of Nigeria." (T/1426, p. 71)

There are other passages in the same sense. If I may turn to the Mission's comments on the determination of the future of the Trust Territory, starting from page 77 of the English text of the report, I should like to quote first from paragraph 175:

"The Visiting Mission found the great majority of the northern governmental and traditional leaders, political party spokesmen, representatives of District Councils and other persons with views on the matter in a state of mind which could better be described as resignation to the virtual imposition of a plebiscite than as a positive acceptance of it. This was not because they had any fear about the result; on the contrary they had no doubt of a practically unanimous vote in favour of the Northern Cameroons becoming part of Nigeria." (Ibid., p. 80)

The Council will remember the passage I quoted earlier to the effect that the Mission had found the people in a state of mind that the United Nations itself was likely to require a plebiscite. That passage from paragraph 175 should be read in connexion with the statement which I have just mentioned.

Again, let us look at what is said in paragraph 178 of the report where it refers to the Consultative Committee, which I had described earlier, having:

"unanimously adopted a resolution reaffirming the desire of the people of the Northern Cameroons to belong to the Northern Region of Nigeria when the latter attained independence in 1960, its members with equal unanimity informed the Mission that they would accept a plebiscite if it should be considered necessary - but that they did not so consider it." (Ibid., p. 81)

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It is stated in paragraph 179:

"These representatives expressed the opinion, which was echoed many times before the Mission by people of the Northern Cameroons everywhere it went between Yola and Bama, that the future of the Northern Cameroons as an integral part of Northern Nigeria was in no sense an issue on which opinion was divided. They emphasized that the wishes of the people had been made known on innumerable occasions through their elected as well as their traditional representatives, and that a plebiscite could have no result except to confirm those wishes once more." (Ibid., p. 82)

I should like to quote the conclusion which the Mission itself recorded in paragraph 181:

"The Mission has come to the conclusion, on the basis of the facts and opinions known to it -- which include the consideration of historical and political development which it has set forth in the first part of this report -- that there is no difference of opinion on the principal question of the future of the Northern Cameroons which would require or justify the holding of a formal consultation on the subject. It believes it to be manifestly the opinion of the northern population as a whole, as far as it can be expressed at present and in the foreseeable future, that they should become permanently a part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria when the latter attains independence. The Mission accordingly recommends that, if the General Assembly accepts such a union as the basis for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, no further consultation need be held." (Ibid., p. 83)

I must apologize for quoting so extensively from the Mission's report, but it seemed to me to be necessary to draw the attention of the Council to these particular passages.

Now, I should like to make a very few observations as the representative of the Administering Authority. We, of course, have carefully considered the report of the Visiting Mission on this point, and the conclusion which it has reached. I am bound to say that we cannot fail to find the arguments of the Mission convincing. We find them very convincing. I believe, myself, that this will be the general view of the Council, and in fact, that the Council would not find it easy to contest the view that there is no difference of opinion among the people of

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the Northern Cameroons about the future, and that there is a general wish that
it should lie with the Northern Region of Nigeria as part of an independent
federation. I think, therefore, that the Council will wish to go along with the
Mission's views and to recommend them to the General Assembly for appropriate
action.

But before I finish I want again to make our position -- the position of the United Kingdom -- absolutely clear in this matter so that there is no possibility of misunderstanding. We should have been perfectly ready to see a plebiscite held in the North had this been shown to be necessary. But we cannot ignore the views expressed by the Visiting Mission. Since the Mission says that the plebiscite is neither necessary nor justified, and has produced what seemed to us convincing arguments in support of this case, and since the Mission has in fact satisfied itself as to the manifest opinion of the population as a whole concerning their future, I hardly think that the Council will wish to see the people of the Northern Cameroons burdened gratuitously with all the paraphernalia of a more formal consultation.

The Minister for Northern Cameroonian Affairs in the Northern Regional Government of Nigeria is coming to the United Nations, and will no doubt speak and make a statement to the Fourth Committee on this subject. The Minister in question is Mallam Abdullahi Dan Buram Jada. The General Assembly will be able to hear from him the views on this question and on the extent to which, for them, the objectives of the Trusteeship System will be achieved by obtaining independence as part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria.

I wish to say for the Northern section of the Trust Territory, just as I did for the Southern section, this is not an issue in which the Administering Authority is concerned one way or the other. It is an issue on which the views of the people must be considered as most important. We have an experienced and impartial Visiting Mission which has gone to the Trust Territory and has reported that there is no difference of opinion among the people as to their future. I am sure that this Council will wish, in its recommendations to the General Assembly, to give full weight to the views which the Mission has expressed.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council has heard the very important statement just made by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the future of the Cameroons under British administration. Are Council members ready immediately to open the discussion?

The Chair would take the liberty of recalling that we have a target date for our work. The General Assembly will open on 20 February to take up the work concerning the future of the two Cameroons. It would be advisable for the Council between now and Friday of this week to have ready a report for submission to the General Assembly. If no one wishes to take the floor at this moment, I will have to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

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Trusteeship Council
23rd Session, 18th Meeting (PM)

Press Release TR/1468
16 February 1959

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 1

The Trusteeship Council this afternoon continued consideration of the question of the future of the Cameroons under British administration and the Cameroons under French administration.

It heard a statement by the representative of the United Kingdom concerning the future of the British Cameroons.

SIR ANDREW COHEN (United Kingdom) recalled that he had stated in the Council on 10 February that it would be premature for him to make a statement on the British Cameroons until after the results of the recent meetings of the new House of Assembly of the southern Cameroons were known.

As members were aware, he said, elections to the House of Assembly in the southern Cameroons were held on 24 January. The KNDP (Kamerun National Democratic Party) won 14 of the 16 seats, and the KNC (Kamerun National Congress) and the KPP (Kamerun People's Party) which ran as a coalition and which were the former parties in power, won 12 seats.

[The KNC-KPP coalition favored continued association with the Federation of Nigeria while the KNDP advocated severance of political ties with Nigeria and ultimate unification with the French Cameroons.]

John Foncha, leader of the KNDP, the former opposition party, he said, was appointed Premier of the southern Cameroons and he had formed a government. The new House of Assembly began its meetings on 11 February, he stated.

According to a report which he received over the weekend, two motions sponsored by the government party were carried by a vote of 14 to 12, Sir ANDREW said. These motions, in brief, asked that immediate steps be taken to implement the policy for secession from Nigeria and for continuing the territory under a modified trusteeship for some time, during which possibilities for reunification with any French or British sectors could be entertained. The motions also asked that, since a plebiscite was likely to be held to determine whether the southern Cameroons should secede, the registration of voters for the forthcoming federal elections be postponed.

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SIR ANDREW then turned to the report of the visiting mission to the British Cameroons and in particular quoted the mission's conclusions that the results of the 24 January elections "cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the southern Cameroons is concerned."

The mission, he continued, further stated in its report that, if general agreement should develop in the newly-elected House of Assembly concerning the future of the southern Cameroons "a formal popular consultation may prove to be unnecessary, but if no such agreement emerges, it may only be through a consultation at some appropriate future date, probably a plebiscite, that it will be possible to resolve the basic issues."

Sir ANDREW then made several observations on behalf of the administering authority. It was clear, he said, that the voting in the House of Assembly -- 14 votes to 12 -- reflected party lines, and that no general agreement concerning the future of the southern Cameroons had developed in the House of Assembly.

Both parties, Sir ANDREW continued, accepted the idea that a plebiscite was required to determine the future of the southern Cameroons.

The administering authority, he added, shared this view. It also agreed with the conclusions of the visiting mission that the results of the 24 January elections could not be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the southern Cameroons was concerned.

The administering authority, Sir ANDREW declared, also agreed with the visiting mission that the conditions for such a plebiscite, including its timing and the choice of the question or questions to be put to the people, would have to be determined by the UN General Assembly and the administering authority. In this, they undoubtedly would take into account the wishes of the political parties in the southern Cameroons, he believed.

(END OF TAKE 1)

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Trusteeship Council
23rd Session, 18th Meeting (PM)

Press Release TR/1468
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TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL -- TAKE 2

SIR ANDREW COHEN (United Kingdom) went on to say that he felt the Trusteeship Council would agree that a plebiscite would be necessary, and that the General Assembly should be asked to authorize such a plebiscite in agreement with the administering authority after the views of the political parties in the southern Cameroons have been heard.

On the most important questions -- the timing of the plebiscite and the choice of the questions to be put -- Sir ANDREW said the Council no doubt would not expect him to anticipate the views of the political parties which would be expressed by their leaders before the Assembly's Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee.

He believed that John Foncha, Premier of the southern Cameroons, and E.M.L. Endeley, former Premier and the leader of the present opposition coalition, would attend the resumed General Assembly session and would express the views of their parties.

Sir ANDREW made clear that the future of the territory was not at issue between the administering authority and local opinion; rather, it was an issue between two political sections of the territory. The administering authority therefore believed that the people of the southern Cameroons should have full opportunity to express their views.

Sir ANDREW then took up the question of the future of the northern section of the British Cameroons.

Quoting from the report of the visiting mission, Sir ANDREW noted the mission's opinion that the wishes of the people of the northern and southern sections of the trust territory should be determined separately.

The mission, he went on, believed it to be "manifestly" the opinion of the northern population as a whole that they should become permanently a part of the northern region of the Federation of Nigeria when the latter attains independence.

(more)

The mission went on to state, Sir ANDREW continued, that there was no difference of opinion on the question of the future of the northern Cameroons which would require or justify the holding of a formal consultation with the people. The mission accordingly recommended that if the General Assembly accepts such a union as a basis for terminating the trusteeship agreement, no further consultation was required.

Speaking for the administering authority, Sir ANDREW said he found the visiting mission's views convincing. He believed this would be the general view of the Trusteeship Council, and that the Council would make such a recommendation to the General Assembly.

Sir ANDREW made clear that the administering authority had been prepared to have a plebiscite in the northern section if this were considered necessary, but the views of the visiting mission -- that a plebiscite was neither necessary nor justified there -- could not be ignored.

Abdullahi Dan Buram Jada, Minister for Northern Cameroonian Affairs, he said, "would come here to make a statement before the Fourth Committee."

The President, MAX H. DORSINVILLE (Haiti), asked if any member was ready to speak on the question.

There were no speakers, and the Council adjourned until 10:30 a.m. tomorrow, 17 February.

(END OF TAKE 2 AND PRESS RELEASE TR/1468)