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**GENERAL
 ASSEMBLY**
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**FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1144th
 MEETING**

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Chairman: Mr. Adnan M. PACHACHI (Iraq).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ortiz de Rozas (Argentina), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 13

**Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/4404)
 (*continued*)**

THE FUTURE OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION (A/4695, A/4699, A/4726, A/4727, A/C.4/448, A/C.4/479, A/C.4/481, A/C.4/482) (*continued*)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Chief Martin and Mr. Samuel Endeley, representatives of the Bakweri Molongo, Mr. E. M. L. Endeley, representative of the Cameroons People's National Convention (CPNC), Mr. F. Ajebe Sone, representative of the CPNC, Bakossi Mwane-Ngoe, Chief Bokwe Sakwe, representative of the CPNC, Balondo Mokanya, Mr. N. N. Mbile, representative of the CPNC, Kumba Division, Mr. Samuel Ando Seh, representative of the CPNC, Nkambe Division, Mr. Oumarou Michika and Mr. Samuel Samwe, representatives of the Kamerun Freedom Party (KFP), Mr. J. N. Foncha, representative of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), Mr. Ibrahim Abba and Mr. Muhammadu Iya, representatives of the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party (NKDP), Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah, representative of One Kamerun (OK), Mrs. Marie N'Gapeth, representative of the Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises (UDEFEC), and Mr. Bebey-Eyidi, Mr. Manga Mado, Mr. Mayi Matip, Mr. Tetang and Malam Yero, Deputies to the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun, took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. NTUMAZAH (One Kamerun) said that the question of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration was more complex than it had ever been as a result of the conflict of interests which went beyond the bounds of the Territory itself and of the intervention of a country which not only had never been a party to the Trusteeship Agreement but had not even been an independent State at the time when that Agreement had been signed. In addition, the United Nations, contrary to the principles which it professed, had authorized discrimination when the plebiscite had been organized in the Trust Territory.

2. Despite the arguments adduced by Nigeria, it was an undoubted fact that a State of Cameroons had existed; unified Cameroons would in no circumstances

be part of the French Community or of the Commonwealth. Cameroons was just as much a State as Nigeria, the two States having come into existence as the result of an agreement signed at Berlin in 1885 by two colonial Powers, Germany and the United Kingdom. The argument that Northern and Southern Cameroons did not belong to the same ethnic group was not valid nor founded on fact. Moreover, even if that argument could be sustained, it would turn against Nigeria itself. Even if it was true that the Cameroons, like other African countries, was no more than a geographical expression, the fact remained that it was a historical reality, since for nearly a century the people had had to live together and become a nation. The United States of America, Canada, Switzerland and the United Kingdom had been built up in the same way.

3. He appealed to the Committee to show the objectivity that should be characteristic of the United Nations when considering the problems it had to solve. He quoted article 1 of the Trusteeship Agreement and observed that nothing in that article gave either the Administering Authority or the United Nations the right to establish new boundaries for the Territory. Two resolutions had indeed been adopted whereby the Cameroons had been divided into two parts but no resolution had been passed which amended the boundaries fixed by the Trusteeship Agreement. Whatever happened, the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration had to remain a single Trust Territory. The frequently used expressions "Northern Cameroons" and "Southern Cameroons" were geographically meaningless. It was true that Article 83 of the Charter did refer to strategic areas, but it seemed evident that it did not apply to the Trust Territory since, if it did, the question would not have come before the Committee.

4. He endorsed the views expressed by Mr. Ibrahim Abba at the Committee's 1081st, 1096th, 1142nd and 1143rd meetings, and drew attention to paragraphs 420 to 422 and 425 of the report of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner (A/4727). He suggested that the Committee should recognize that the results of the plebiscite had to be considered together or else that it should recommend that a fresh plebiscite be held in the Northern Cameroons.

5. In voting for union with the Republic of Cameroun, he and his supporters had endorsed the *communiqué* issued by Mr. Ahidjo and Mr. Foncha and published in the *Southern Cameroons Gazette* of 27 January 1961, which had recommended among other things that, in the event of the people voting in favour of unification with the Republic of Cameroun, a conference should be held attended by representatives of the Republic of the Cameroun, the Northern and Southern Cameroons, the Administering Authority and possibly the United Nations. In his view the time had come to hold such a conference, at which representatives of the

Administering Authority and the United Nations should be present in order to ensure that the unified Cameroons should not become part of the French Union. He hoped that the United Nations and the United Kingdom would use their good offices to ensure that the people of Southern Cameroons would not become the victims of an integration that would be a mockery. If the United Kingdom was prepared to leave the Territory forthwith, the other colonial Power concerned should also withdraw its troops, for a vote to join the Republic of Cameroun did not indicate a preference for the French Community over the Commonwealth.

6. He appealed to the United Nations not to relinquish its authority over the Cameroons without first having given effect to the following proposals: that all civil and political liberties should be restored, thus enabling all shades of political opinion to be represented at the proposed conference; that all foreign troops should be withdrawn; that all political prisoners, whether convicted, detained or exiled should be released in order to permit them to participate in the said conference; that existing institutions should be abolished; that a constitution for the unified Cameroons should be drawn up at the proposed conference and submitted to the people for its approval by means of a referendum; that a government should be formed in which all major parties would be represented and whose duty it would be to act as a caretaker administration and to conduct elections throughout the Cameroons for a constituent assembly; and that that government should be dissolved immediately after the elections and as soon as a legal government had been set up.

7. Basing himself on those proposals, he appealed to the representatives of CPNC to change their attitude and not to continue to insist on a partitioning of the Cameroons but rather to work with him in building a Cameroonian nation. For the same reasons he also appealed to Mr. Foncha. It was only in a democratic atmosphere that the Cameroons could free itself from the shackles of tribalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. He had been glad to hear the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroun condemn British imperialism; he had only been sorry that the Minister had not also condemned French imperialism.

8. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Deputy to the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun) reminded the Committee that he was speaking before it for the third time. Believing as he did that the United Nations, through its resolutions and recommendations and the position it had taken had directly or indirectly played a decisive part in the emancipation of dependent peoples, he earnestly hoped that the United Nations would find a solution to the question of the plebiscite in the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration that would be in accordance with truth and justice. He belonged to the opposition in the Republic of Cameroun, but he supported the Government in the question of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons because, so far as the international community was concerned, the aspirations of the Cameroonians could be expressed in two words: reunification and independence. When the results of the plebiscite held in the Northern Cameroons had become known, it had been an opposition Deputy who had tabled a motion before the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun proposing that the matter be brought before the United Nations and that the plebiscite should be annulled. That motion had been unanimously adopted by the Parliament of Came-

roun, for the simple reason that the nation was unanimous where reunification was concerned.

9. It was important to emphasize, as Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons had done, that the protest made by the Republic of Cameroun did not in any way constitute a territorial claim. If the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons had been carried out with all the safeguards for which the United Nations had provided, the Republic of Cameroun would have accepted the results in a democratic spirit. The facts, however, were quite different.

10. The fairness of the plebiscite could only have been ensured by the application of General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV), which largely reproduced the terms of resolution 1352 (XIV) concerning the Southern Cameroons, paragraph 4 of which recommended that steps should be taken "to implement the separation of the administration of the Southern Cameroons from that of the Federation of Nigeria not later than 1 October 1960". However, while the separation essential for a free expression of the people's wishes had been implemented in the Southern Cameroons, the necessary action had not been taken in the northern part of the Territory where, despite the appointment of a few senior officials, 90 per cent of the officials at the time of the plebiscite had been Nigerian citizens and had naturally done all they could to help their country to win. That had been particularly evident in the preparation of the electoral rolls, and it was significant that whereas only persons who had been born in the Southern Cameroons or whose fathers or mothers had been born in the Southern Cameroons could take part in the plebiscite in the south, ordinary residence had been accepted as a sufficient qualification in the north. He was surprised that the United Nations had not felt it necessary to ensure that effect was given to resolution 1473 (XIV) before the plebiscite was held. It was clear from paragraph 395 of the report of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner (A/4727) that the Commissioner had not been asked to ascertain that the process of administrative separation had been carried out, but had obtained information on the matter on his own initiative. The crucial importance of administrative separation was shown by the fact that in the Southern Cameroons, where separation had been effected, Nigerian officials had been unable to play any part in the preparation or conduct of the plebiscite. The Plebiscite Commissioner and his staff had discharged their duties in good faith, but a bias had been present from the start and there had been various irregularities in the conduct of the plebiscite itself. A distinction should be drawn between the principle of United Nations supervision, which the petitioner unreservedly supported, and the situation in which supervision was exercised. In the case of the Northern Cameroons, neutrality should have been ensured by the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV).

11. In order to remedy the situation, the Committee should consider the annulment of the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons; action to ensure an effective administrative separation between that part of the Territory and Nigeria; and the organization of a further plebiscite under United Nations supervision.

12. In the circumstances nothing would be gained by heated debate. There was no reason to place imperialism or colonialism as practised by the United Kingdom on trial and he trusted that the United Kingdom representative would not oppose his proposals. Nigeria,

with which the Camerounians had always lived on good terms, had no real interest in jeopardizing the increasingly important role it was playing and was destined to play in Africa. Some people in the Northern Region were talking of reconquest and wanted to resuscitate the ancient Fulani Empire. That would pose a threat not only to the northern part of the Republic of Cameroun, but also to many other African States with Fulani populations, and he refused to believe that the Nigerian Government was encouraging such expansionist ambitions.

13. African unity, of which he was a convinced supporter, could only be achieved in the context of respect for the individuality of each of the sovereign States concerned and through the avoidance or elimination of sources of friction and conflict. The issue was not to opt for or against Nigeria or Cameroun, but to adopt a democratic solution that would provide the best possible basis for a decision between two sister countries.

14. He would remind the Committee that, while two opposite arguments had been put forward, the fact remained that because of disturbances, political difficulties and a deterioration in its economic situation, his country had been unable since February-March 1959 to achieve the national union which was essential to it. The problem of reunification had become a focus of agreement in February 1961 and for the two succeeding months the Republic of Cameroun had experienced national harmony in the expectation that the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons would be annulled and a further consultation organized. The United Nations should grasp the opportunity that had been presented to it to help the Camerounian people to attain national unity and consolidate the country's internal stability.

15. Mr. MAYI MATIP (Deputy to the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun), representing the Parliamentary Group of the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC), said that the representative of the Republic of Cameroun and the petitioners who favoured the annulment of the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons had already adduced evidence that would show the Committee that the principles of the Charter, United Nations resolutions and the provisions of the Trusteeship Agreement had not been respected and that the irregularities committed at the people's expense were an incontestable negation of their right of self-determination.

16. In the Republic of Cameroun, there had been a spontaneous and unanimous national reaction when the gerrymandered results of the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons had been made known. He hoped that the United Kingdom, whose respect for the law was well known, would agree to rectify the errors which had been committed and that Nigeria would follow its example.

17. Since its foundation in 1948, the UPC, which had formulated a national programme, had been struggling primarily for the reunification and the independence of Cameroun. While independence might seem to have been attained, it would remain illusory until reunification had also been achieved, not under a feudal régime, but through a merger of the two parts of the Territory and the re-establishment of the legitimate boundaries of the national territory under a democratic and unitary régime. That was not a territorial claim, but an issue affecting the right of peoples and of justice. The results of the plebiscite of 11 and 12 February 1961 in the

Northern Cameroons were not in accordance with the law and the UPC therefore earnestly called for the annulment of the plebiscite.

18. Since reunification and independence could only be guaranteed in the context of a positive, unambiguous and honest neutralism, the UPC also advocated such neutralism, and was working to achieve it, in the interest of national unity, free of any foreign interference. In that regard, he thought that tribal unity should be subordinated to national unity and disapproved of those who sought to sabotage reunification in the interests of any tribal group. Through national unity, it would be possible to achieve African unity and thus peaceful coexistence.

19. The UPC noted that if the votes in favour of one or the other alternative in the two parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons were added together, reunification would be a fact. However, gerrymandering had taken place in the Northern Cameroons and the UPC could not recognize the validity of the voting in that part of the Territory. He therefore asked for the institution of an autonomous assembly and government in the northern part of the Territory and the organization of a new plebiscite in which there would be no Nigerian officials.

20. As far as the Southern Cameroons was concerned, he thought that the choice between a federal régime and a unitary régime should be made after a round-table conference at which all national parties would be represented. He disapproved of Mr. Endeley's position, which had dangerous implications both for democracy and for national unity.

21. Mr. AJEBE SONE (Cameroons People's National Convention, Bakossi Mwane-Ngoe) said that he represented the Bakossi tribal union of Kumba Division in the Southern Cameroons, which comprised 31,000 people. By a resolution of 4 March 1961, the Mwane-Ngoe Union had requested the United Nations to make all appropriate arrangements so that the Bakossi areas might be administered with those of other kindred tribes which had voted solidly for federation with Nigeria. On behalf of the people who had sent him, he asked the Committee to give serious consideration to the following facts.

22. Firstly, the Territory that was referred to as Cameroons was an artificial creation consisting of numerous tribes, where tribal loyalties had a tremendous influence on both local and national elections and on the plebiscite.

23. Secondly, the Bakossi, who possessed the most fertile land, had had to receive on their territory a constant flow of immigrants from the grasslands; problems of land usage had arisen and had become good material for the political campaigns; the Bakossi knew that the immigrants, who had been promised parts of the Bakossi lands if they voted for the second alternative, would vote for reunification.

24. Thirdly, as was proved by two documents from the Republic of Cameroun which he submitted to the Fourth Committee,¹ the plebiscite had not been free of external influence: many of the persons coming from the Bamiléké grassfields had taken advantage of the similarity of their names and language and had falsely claimed to be natives of the grassland divisions of the Southern Cameroons; moreover, many persons

¹ Not issued as Committee document.

from the Republic of Cameroun had falsely claimed to have been born in the Southern Cameroons. Those persons had been recognized by the inhabitants of the grasslands as being qualified to vote and the Plebiscite Regulations, by placing the burden of proof on the objector, had made the raising of a great number of objections a practical impossibility.

25. Those facts confirmed the truth that, during the plebiscite, tribal prejudices had played a larger role than a clear knowledge of the issues at stake.

26. The Bakossi tribe was opposed to unification with the Republic of Cameroun for four main reasons: there was no constitutional guarantee safeguarding the Southern Cameroons, which would remain a minority, from domination by other tribal groups; past experience showed that the Bamiléké who had been welcomed by the Bakossi would try, for their own advantage, to deprive the Bakossi of their natural rights over their own lands; terrorism in the Republic of Cameroun was based on the fact that some tribes were sworn enemies of the representatives of other tribes in the Republic and that situation had given rise to executions, proof of which might be found in a document which he was submitting to the Committee; and lastly, reunification, which implied uniformity in all fields, would, because of the continued existence of minority groups, necessarily provoke violent eruptions which would render the progress already made sterile.

27. Mrs. N'GAPETH (Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises) said that the organization she represented, which had been established in August 1952 for the protection of women's rights in the social and cultural fields and of Cameroonian family life and children, had also striven for the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. Since 1955 it had numbered more than 5,000 members. Its activities, which had been suspended in the days of colonialist repression, had been resumed as a result of a decision taken on 25 February 1960 by the President of the Republic of Cameroun.

28. She had come before the Fourth Committee to give voice to the indignant protests of the Cameroonian women against the moral trickery that had been practised by the Administering Authority in connexion with the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons, which should have enabled the people to recover their national unity. After trusteeship had been instituted in the Territory, the United Kingdom Government had divided the western part of the former Cameroons into two parts, apparently for administrative reasons, attaching the two parts to two different regions of Nigeria. The real intention of the United Kingdom had been to annex the western part of the Cameroons completely, and illegally, to Nigeria, although the United Nations Charter formally guaranteed respect for the status of the Trust Territories. After the Southern Cameroons had attained self-government, the Northern Cameroons had been placed under more direct administration by Nigeria and had been subjected to the latter's policy of annexation. The 1959 plebiscite had shown that the inhabitants of the Territory had been opposed to those attempts at integration; but that had not deterred the Administering Authority from appointing or retaining Nigerian officials even after Nigeria had become independent, in defiance of General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV) recommending that the Administering Authority should initiate without delay the separation of the administration of the Northern Cameroons from

that of Nigeria. Numbers of indigenous chiefs who were in favour of the reunification of the two Cameroons had been replaced by servile chiefs who had been won over to the Nigerian and British policy of integration with Nigeria. Thus despite the resolutions to which it had subscribed, the United Kingdom had not been willing, where the Northern Cameroons were concerned, to respect the fundamental principle of the Trusteeship System, namely that of promoting the progressive development of the peoples concerned towards self-government.

29. Despite the negative vote cast by the people in the 1959 plebiscite, General Assembly resolution 1473 (XIV) had called for a further plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons, though it had admittedly prescribed various safeguards in the form of preliminary measures. The fact that those preliminary measures had not been applied had falsified the result of the plebiscite, which had been held under the authority of an Administration that had been both judge and party. The decisions and recommendations of the United Nations had been either disregarded or violated. If the idea that the Administering Authority had deliberately flouted those decisions and recommendations was to be discounted, it might legitimately be asked why, assuming that the fact that the inhabitants were still illiterate after forty years under its administration had placed the United Kingdom in an awkward position, it had been possible for the United Kingdom to train Nigerian officials but no indigenous Cameroonian officials.

30. However that might be, all Cameroonian women were convinced that the result of the plebiscite had been obtained by force, through the use of the traditional colonialist methods of fabricating votes.

31. The reason for that state of affairs was, first and foremost, that the organization of the plebiscite had been in the hands of Nigerian officials, who had been retained in their positions by the agents of the Administering Authority. In order to swell the numbers of those advocating integration, they had entered vast numbers of Nigerians on the registers of electors and at the same time had excluded, as far as possible, Cameroonians belonging to other parts of the Cameroons. At Dikwa, for example, the number of registrations had risen from 39,155 in 1959 to 104,026 in February 1961—an increase which could not be explained simply by the fact that women were now registered. It was the same authorities that had been in charge of the distribution of voting cards. A private group had pointed out that, a week before the plebiscite, a number of voting cards belonging to supporters of reunification had not been distributed. The Nigerian police, who had been instructed to ensure that no one had access to the United Nations officials, had been told to make a rule of removing, or even arresting, anyone who tried to draw attention to irregularities. That being so, she saw nothing to be surprised at in the fact that the Plebiscite Commissioner and his assistants had been unaware that anything untoward was going on. The Commissioner had himself admitted, however, that he had had numbers of persons released.

32. Anti-democratic measures bearing on the holding of meetings during the campaign and on the movement of persons, had been introduced. Nigerian police had engaged in acts of intimidation, especially against women voters, who were voting for the first time. Nigerian officials had been in charge of more than 200 of the 372 polling stations and improper influence had

been exercised to induce the electorate, the majority of whom were illiterate, to vote in favour of integration.

33. Despite the large number of polling stations for an electorate of some 250,000 persons, the voting had gone on for two days. She found it hard to understand why the ballot boxes had been entrusted to the presiding officers for a whole night and why the counting, which had been done by the wives of English officials, had taken three days. She protested most vigorously against the fact that one of the two voting days had been allocated to men and the other to women and would like to know why such intolerable discrimination, based on sex and explicitly condemned in the Charter, had been introduced. She doubted whether it could be explained on grounds of religion.

34. The entire Cameroonian people rightly called for the reunification of its territory. The Cameroonians, and particularly the women, had always had confidence in the United Nations, and hoped that it would not allow a further subject of dispute to arise in the heart of Africa. Their cause was just, and the very reason for the existence of the United Nations was the defence of just causes. The only way of enabling the Cameroonian people to exercise their right of self-determination was to annul the results of the plebiscite of 11 and 12 February 1961 outright, and to hold a referendum under United Nations supervision but free of any control by Nigerian officials.

35. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom), referring to some of the petitioner's remarks, pointed out that the United Kingdom had consistently promoted women's rights. So far as the female vote in the Cameroons plebiscite was concerned, the Administering Authority had merely complied with the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions. The fact that a very large number of women had voted simply meant that a very large number of them had registered. Moreover, the statement that one day had been set apart for the men to vote and another for the women was completely untrue; although, as the Plebiscite Commissioner had stated in paragraph 587 of this report, "there were a few stations where men voted on the first and women on the second day", that had been arranged in order to comply with a wish expressed by the population. It was absolutely wrong to say that there had been any discrimination, or any desire to make a distinction, based on sex.

36. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) noted that the United Kingdom representative had confirmed what the petitioner had said. The Administering Authority should surely have administered the Cameroons according to British law; yet neither in the United Kingdom nor in Nigeria did elections go on for two days. In every country in the world, elections were held on one day only and the counting was done on the spot, immediately after the closing of the polls and in the presence of all the voters. That procedure was far preferable to the risk involved in taking the ballot boxes to a counting centre.

37. Mr. CASTON (United Kingdom) explained that one of the objectives of the Plebiscite Administrator in the Northern Cameroons had been to enable the greatest possible number of people to register and to vote. There could be no complaint about the high percentage of voters who had gone to the polls; on the contrary, it should be regarded as a good advertisement for democracy.

38. The decision to allow the voting to go on for two days had been made only after consultation with the Plebiscite Commissioner, and with his consent; that point was dealt with in paragraphs 554, 555 and 556 of the report. The sole purpose of that decision had been to enable all the inhabitants to express their views democratically as to their future.

39. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) said that he took note of that statement. However, the Plebiscite Commissioner had said in his report that he had received the Plebiscite Regulations only after the Administering Authority had made its decision. Not being authorized to call for the annulment of those Regulations, and in face of an accomplished fact, all the Commissioner could do was to accept the situation.

40. He regretted that Mr. Caston had not replied to his remarks regarding the duration of the poll. In the Republic of Cameroun, where geographical conditions were the same as in the Trust Territory, no elections had lasted as long as two days. Furthermore, how did it come about that the percentage increase in the number of registered voters, as compared with November 1959, had been much higher in some plebiscite districts than in others?

41. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) said that he wished to correct a misunderstanding: it was true that in paragraph 352 of his report he had recorded his expression of the hope that the draft of the Plebiscite Regulations would be transmitted to him in good time; but the Regulations in question had related only to registrations, and not to the actual voting. In the case of the Voting Regulations, he had been able to discuss their implementation with the Plebiscite Administrator, particularly in regard to the duration of the poll. The reports of the United Nations observers, and his own observations, had indicated that the inhabitants of certain villages had expressed a wish for the voting to last two days, so that they would not be obliged to leave those villages entirely empty for a whole day. But the main reason why he had accepted that solution was that there had not been enough Cameroonians capable of acting as polling agents; either the voting had to last two days in certain districts, and in that case 300 people, mostly Cameroonians, were sufficient to direct operations; or it had to take place in one day, in which event 600 people, including about 200 Nigerians, had to be recruited. He had approved the first solution, which seemed to him the more satisfactory.

42. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) proposed that the Plebiscite Commissioner's statement be published verbatim as a working paper.

*It was so decided.*²

43. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) said that the Plebiscite Commissioner, not having had the initiative in the arrangements, had thought he was acting rightly in agreeing to the voting being spread over two days. But the risks were thereby increased; whereas it had been proved in other countries, in other popular votes, that in a polling station for 700 voters the voting could be completed in six hours. His delegation therefore made the most explicit reservations as to the correctness of the step taken, especially as the same people had presided at the polling stations for the two days in question and the average number of voters per station had not been more than 1,000.

² See A/C.4/485.

44. Mr. BALIMA (Upper Volta) recalled that, when elections had been held in the Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast in 1947, the polling had taken place in one day for an area of more than 500,000 square kilometres.
45. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) observed that in his country polling sometimes lasted for a week. But he would like an assurance from the Plebiscite Commissioner that the secrecy of the polling-booth had been ensured.
46. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) replied that, according to the reports of the observers and from his personal observation, the secrecy of the vote had been duly safeguarded.
47. Replying to a question from Miss BROOKS (Liberia), Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) said that at the end of the first polling day the ballot boxes had been put in a locked room after all the formalities prescribed by the Plebiscite Regulations had been completed. The boxes had been placed in the care of special polling agents, and representatives of the various political parties had been permitted to spend the whole night near the place where the boxes were kept; many such representatives had availed themselves of that permission.
48. Replying to a question from Mr. OKALA (Cameroun), Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) said that the United Nations had had a total of fourteen observers in the Northern Cameroons; with that staff—much the same in size as that with which he had had to supervise the November 1959 plebiscite—he had been able to observe operations effectively.
49. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) said that he had never questioned the Plebiscite Commissioner's capacity to supervise the plebiscite operations effectively. However, conditions in February 1961 had not been the same as those of November 1959. The 1959 plebiscite had been a surprise for everyone, for Nigeria as well as for Cameroun; the General Assembly ought, therefore, to have equipped itself with more safeguards. A staff of fourteen observers was clearly too small to supervise 378 polling stations, for a period of five minutes was quite enough to enable a major electoral fraud to be committed. He asked how long it would have taken for all the observers to make the rounds of all the polling stations.
50. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) pointed out that the United Nations observers had not been the only ones to supervise the polling; the representatives of the different political parties had also been there. If irregularities had been claimed, those representatives would not have hesitated to ask for a United Nations observer to go to the polling station concerned. The observers had in fact effectively watched the voting in 236 out of 378 polling stations in the Northern Cameroons, and had detected no irregularity.
51. Mr. ZULOAGA (Venezuela) asked Mr. Bebey-Eyidi whether, in view of the Cameroun representative's statement that the 1959 plebiscite had resulted in a surprise for everybody, the members of the opposition in the Cameroun National Assembly had, before that date, given up all hope of the Northern Cameroons being joined to the Republic of Cameroun.
52. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI said that the 1959 plebiscite had been all the more of a surprise in that Cameroun, which had then been a French Trust Territory, had made no preparations whatever in regard to it. It had been thought that, after forty years of administration by Nigeria, there was little chance of the reunification idea winning acceptance, especially since the statements made by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, and by the Administering Authority had suggested that the inhabitants of the Northern Cameroons had resolved to unite with Nigeria. The results of the plebiscite had come as a pleasant surprise, which had gone to support the contention that, despite forty years of separation, the Northern Cameroons continued to feel the need for reunification with the Republic of Cameroun.
53. Mr. RAKOTOMALALA (Madagascar) wondered what value could be placed on the statements of petitioners who possibly represented only tribes or associations consisting of a maximum of 300 persons. Could their declarations be placed on the same footing as, for example, the statements of Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons, or of Mr. Mayi Matip, former opposition leader in the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun?
54. The CHAIRMAN informed the representative of Madagascar that he could find some of the information he was seeking in the list of petitioners published by the Secretariat or in the actual requests for hearings. But questions relating to the composition or strength of the parties or organizations represented by the petitioners should be addressed to the persons concerned.
55. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) asked the Plebiscite Commissioner whether the observers had only had to visit the polling stations or whether they had had to stay there and observe the operations from beginning to end.
56. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) replied that in the latter case 378 observers would have been necessary. Such a thing had never happened in the previous referenda held in Trust Territories. Nevertheless, in all the polling stations which they visited, the observers had asked the representatives of the parties whether they were satisfied with the way in which the voting was proceeding, and they had received no complaints. The number of observers in the Northern Cameroons had been more or less the same as that of the observers appointed for the previous plebiscites, and it was proportionate to the number of observers appointed for the Southern Cameroons. But it was important to note that representatives of all the parties had been present in all the polling stations, and that all of them had expressed themselves as satisfied; the Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroun had personally expressed to him his satisfaction with the conduct of the operations.
57. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) said he would not dispute the statements made by the Vice-President of the National Assembly; the latter, however, could not be everywhere and his statements thus applied only to the polling station which he himself has seen and in which all possible safeguards had been taken. If the operation had followed a similar pattern everywhere else, the Republic of Cameroun would have had no reason to express dissatisfaction with the conduct of the plebiscite. In point of fact, however, in other districts, the presiding officers had kept the ballot boxes and the materials for sealing the boxes at their homes between the first and second day of the plebiscite. Thereafter,

the ballot boxes had been delivered to the counting centres and had been kept under lock and key by the Nigerian police.

58. Mr. Abdoh had acknowledged that the observers had only visited the polling stations; obviously, the ballot boxes could not have been stuffed in their presence.

59. In an interview with Mr. Abdoh at Douala three days after the plebiscite, he had informed the Commissioner that he had sent the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroun to Mubi to lodge a written protest on behalf of the Republic, for inclusion in the minutes of the plebiscite operation, concerning the fact that the counting had not yet begun; the United Kingdom authorities had informed that official that there were no minutes of the plebiscite operation. Thus, the Government of the Republic of Cameroun had lodged a protest even before it had known the results of the plebiscite; the earliest returns had been received on 17 February, five days after the close of polling. Furthermore, contrary to the Plebiscite Regulations, the ballot boxes had been sealed before delivery to the polling stations and prior to the start of the polling, and had not been sealed in full view of the public. He did not question the good faith of the observers, but he was obliged to point out that their good faith had been abused.

60. Mr. KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET (France) noted that the Government of the Republic of Cameroun had challenged the regularity of the voting before the results were known. That was a very important point which should be formally recorded in the summary record.

61. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would take the necessary action.

62. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) said he had had an interview with Mr. Okala on 16 February, but since it had related to a conversation between the Plebiscite Administrator and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he would prefer to hear a summary of that conversation from the representative of the Administering Authority, before replying to Mr. Okala's statement.

63. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said he understood the Plebiscite Commissioner's dilemma: the Commissioner had not had enough observers and had had to choose between spreading the voting over two days or using Nigerian observers. He asked whether the Commissioner had not felt the same misgivings about the ballot boxes being kept for two days before the start of the counting. Would it not have been simpler if the counting had taken place at the close of each voting day in each polling station?

64. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) was afraid there had been a misunderstanding: the observers had been recruited only among United Nations staff and not among the Nigerians. If there had been only one day of voting it would have been difficult to ensure that there was a Cameroonian presiding officer and a Cameroonian assistant in each polling station; the Administering Authority had thought that the number of polling stations, and consequently the number of presiding officers, should be doubled, which would have necessitated the recruitment of Nigerians. He himself had taken the view that it would be dangerous to increase the number of Nigerian presiding officers of polling stations in view of the allegations that had already been made against

them. In order to minimize suspicion, he had preferred to spread the voting over two days, thus making it possible to have Cameroonian presiding officers in almost all the polling stations, except in the Mambilla district where twenty-five Nigerians had been recruited in the absence of qualified Cameroonian personnel.

65. The organization and conduct of the plebiscite had been entrusted to the Administering Authority. The United Nations Commissioner's functions had been confined to supervising the operation and giving advice on the measures to be taken: it had not been part of his duties to decide whether the counting should be carried out in each polling station or in counting centres. However, if his advice had been asked, he would have advocated the use of centres, since United Nations observers could supervise the counting in six centres, but not in 378 polling stations.

66. Mr. KANE (Senegal) asked whether Mrs. N'Gapeth's statement that the wives of United Kingdom officials had taken part in the counting was true.

67. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) explained that the wives of some United Kingdom nationals who held technical positions in the Forestry and Veterinary Departments, for example, and who were therefore deemed to have no bias in favour of one or other of the alternatives at issue in the plebiscite had been permitted to take part in the counting. It had been impossible to recruit Cameroonians instead, since 97 per cent of the people were illiterate. In any event, the United Nations observers had been present at all stages of the counting operation. Given confidence in the United Nations observers, there were no grounds for questioning the correctness of the counting.

68. Mr. KANE (Senegal) said he had not been expressing doubts about the counting but had merely asked for information. He might wish to raise the matter again when he had had time to read the Plebiscite Commissioner's report in greater detail.

69. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) took note of the Plebiscite Commissioner's statement that he had been responsible only for the supervision of the arrangements worked out by the Administering Authority and had not been in a position to intervene in the conduct of the operation. He appreciated the objectivity the Plebiscite Commissioner had shown in placing the matter in its true perspective. He also drew attention to the figure cited by the Plebiscite Commissioner, which showed the high percentage of illiterates in the Territory after forty-four years of trusteeship, and said he would revert to that point at a later date. Lastly, while the Plebiscite Commissioner had in fact had an opportunity to propose changes in the Regulations, such changes could have been made only after the text had been officially published by the Administering Authority.

70. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) said that the Administering Authority had consulted him whenever necessary during the various stages of the plebiscite.

71. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) hoped that the Committee would not lose sight of the question of the Commissioner's journey to Douala. He would like to hear the observations of the Administering Authority, so that the Plebiscite Commissioner could give a reply on that point.

72. Mr. CASTON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation would provide the Committee at its next meeting with a written record of the meeting between the Administrator and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cameroun.³

73. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) thought that there was no need for a long statement. The main point to be elucidated was whether or not the Administrator of Mubi had told the Camerounian representative, who had wished to record his Government's reservations even before any results of the voting had been announced, that there were no minutes of the plebiscite operation.

74. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner), replying to a request for information from Mr. PIRCOLOSSOU (Chad), explained that all party representatives had been entitled to accompany the ballot boxes to the counting centres; it had been reported that in some cases they had slept outside the buildings where the ballot boxes had been stored, as was stated in paragraph 589 of the report.

75. Similarly, polling agents had been entitled to observe the polling at all the polling stations; in that connexion he referred to paragraph 577 of the report. The Administrator had advised all parties of that right. In some cases, they had taken advantage of it, in others they had not, doubtless because they were not interested in the results in the area concerned. In any event, all the party representatives had been Cameroonians and not Nigerians.

76. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) wished it to be clearly understood that those representatives were inhabitants of the Northern Cameroons under United Kingdom administration and not persons from the Republic of Cameroun, which had not been authorized to send representatives to the northern part of the Trust Territory. He paid a tribute, in that connexion, to the Plebiscite Commissioner who, at his request, had obtained permission from the Administering Authority for his country to send at least six observers. However, despite the written instructions submitted to him, the United Kingdom Ambassador at Yaoundé had been reluctant to approve three of the six observers proposed by the Republic of Cameroun on the grounds that the indigenous authorities would ill-treat them. The six observers who were finally sent did not remain for long because they had had to return to the Republic of Cameroun forty-eight hours before the polling. Thanks again to the strenuous efforts of the United Nations Commissioner, six deputies of the Republic of Cameroun, including two petitioners, Malam Yero and Mr. Tekang, had been able to enter the Trust Territory as journalists.

77. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) thanked the Camerounian representative for having rightly recognized that the United Nations staff had carried out its task with due objectivity and impartiality. He confirmed that the party representatives had been Cameroonians living in the northern part of the Territory under United Kingdom administration. He also confirmed that, after consultation with the Administering Authority, six Press representatives—and not observers, which only the United Nations was entitled to send—had come to the Northern Cameroons from the Republic of Cameroun.

78. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) said that, to the best of his knowledge, the Administering Authority had proposed that the Republic of Cameroun and Nigeria should be asked to send observers. The Plebiscite Commissioner had refused because he had felt that only the United Nations was entitled to have observers. As a result of the acceptance of an alternative proposal made by the Administrator, six members of Parliament of the Republic of Cameroun as well as photographers and radio-reporters from Nigeria had been able to observe the polling. Nationals of the Republic of Cameroun had admittedly not been able to do so, but twenty-one deputies of the Camerounian Parliament had travelled in the Territory during the campaign preceding the plebiscite. Lastly, he did not believe that the United Kingdom had prevented three persons proposed by the Camerounian Government from entering the Territory. The Ambassador at Yaoundé had expressed certain reservations regarding one of the persons but had withdrawn them as it had proved to be a question of mistaken identity.

79. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) admitted that the Administrator had intended to ask the Republic of Cameroun to send official observers to the Northern Cameroons and that he himself had objected because, in his view, the General Assembly had meant those duties to be exercised exclusively by United Nations staff. He had considered that the presence of official observers might have injected a degree of outside political influence which was to be avoided at all costs. In that connexion he referred to paragraph 511 of his report.

80. He had agreed that the two Governments should each send six Press representatives to witness the polling and counting of the ballots, as was stated in paragraph 512 of the report. The six Press representatives sent by the Republic of Cameroun had been able to witness the operations and to make sure that there were no irregularities.

81. Mr. OKALA (Cameroun) challenged the United Kingdom representative's statement. The Administrator had made his proposal to invite observers only after his country had protested that it was unrepresented, whereas Nigeria had a cinema unit permanently in the Territory. Thanks to the intervention of the Plebiscite Commissioner, the Republic of Cameroun had obtained permission also to send a cinema unit into the Territory. Again, following complaints by the Republic of Cameroun and thanks to the Plebiscite Commissioner's efforts, the members of the NKDP who had been arrested on returning from a congress had been released—some of them after the plebiscite—and three United Kingdom judges had been temporarily seconded to the Territory because the local judges had been delivering arbitrary judgements.

82. The Administrator of Mubi had, admittedly, agreed to the appointment of a liaison officer by the Republic of Cameroun, but he had forbidden the people to give him an enthusiastic welcome. Despite his orders, 5,000 people had assembled to welcome him on his arrival at Mubi.

83. Lastly, it was only after the Republic of Cameroun had pointed out that it was at a disadvantage compared with Nigeria because all the territorial officials were Nigerians that, thanks to the action taken by the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, it had obtained permission from the Administrator to send six representa-

³ See A/C.4/486.

tives into the country. One of the persons proposed, however, had not met with the approval of the United Kingdom Ambassador at Yaoundé. Such facilities as his country had obtained had been due to the efforts of the Plebiscite Commissioner, to whom it wished to pay a tribute.

84. Mr. ABDOH (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) thanked Mr. Okala but did not believe that he had taken action to request the sending of six Press representatives. His action had been concerned solely with the problem of information centres, as could be seen in paragraphs 503 *et seq.* of the report. He had

asked the Administrator to prevail upon the Government of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria to close the information centre at Mubi during the period before the plebiscite. As the Nigerian Government had not agreed to do so, he had insisted that the centre should desist from any political activity and that the Republic of Cameroun should be invited to establish a similar information centre. The Administrator had agreed and he had been glad to learn that the Republic of Cameroun had taken advantage of that opportunity.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.