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Chairman: Mr. Rodolfo MUNOZ (Argentina).

Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/2150 and Add. 1) (*continued*)

[Item 12]*

HEARING OF PETITIONERS FROM THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (*continued*)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Um Nyobé, representative of the Union des populations du Cameroun, and Mr. Okala, representative of the Parti socialiste Camerounais, took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) asked Mr. Um Nyobé whether he had requested an oral hearing in order to support a written petition submitted to the Trusteeship Council and, if so, which petition.

2. Mr. UM NYOBE (Union des populations du Cameroun) pointed out that under the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council petitioners were entitled to request oral hearings even if no petition had previously been submitted to the Council. His party had asked for an oral hearing on the unification of the Cameroons, their independence, and revision of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons under French administration. He felt that such a request was quite in order since the Union des populations du Cameroun had raised those three questions when the first United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa had been in the Cameroons, in 1949.

3. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) pointed out that the Trusteeship Council's rules of procedure did not apply to the Fourth Committee. In any event it seemed clear that the petitioner had not asked to make a statement in support of a petition already submitted to the Council.

4. Mr. UM NYOBE (Union des populations du Cameroun) wished, before submitting his party's case, to make a few remarks in reply to those who had objected to his being heard by the Fourth Committee.

5. First, he considered that the Territorial Assembly had shown prejudice with regard to him in its motion

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

of 24 October 1952, even before the Union des populations du Cameroun had entrusted him with his mission, and that it had thus betrayed the fact that it was actuated by a spirit of personal revenge. The objections of the Territorial Assembly were based on three premises: that the Union des populations du Cameroun did not represent the inhabitants of the country, since it had obtained no seats at the last elections; that the granting of a hearing by the Fourth Committee to the representative of the Union des populations du Cameroun might enhance that party's prestige; that the Union des populations du Cameroun had infringed the rules of procedure by appealing direct to the Fourth Committee instead of through the Administering Authority and the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1952.

6. The Union des populations du Cameroun was the only party that represented all the peoples of the Cameroons. Furthermore, he was speaking in the name of the Union des syndicats confédérés du Cameroun, which had 15,000 members, the Solidarité Babimbi, with 60,000 members, the Association Camerounaise des anciens combattants, the Association des étudiants camerounais de France, the Union démocratique des femmes du Cameroun and the nationalist movement in the Cameroons under British administration, the Kamerun United National Congress.

7. The various communications received by the United Nations Secretariat proved that he was indeed the mouthpiece of the Union des populations du Cameroun, which represented a large proportion of the population, as was shown by the following facts. The party had organized a public meeting at Douala on 1 November 1952, in order to demonstrate its strength. The meeting had been arbitrarily prohibited by the French authorities and the police had occupied the hall. His fare to New York had been paid by public subscription, as described in an article in the magazine *Paris-Match*.

8. Turning to the subjects on which he had asked to be heard by the Fourth Committee, he said that he would not dwell on the question of the unification of the Cameroons, which was similar to that already dealt with in the debate on Togoland. Before the 1914-1918 war, the Cameroons had been administered by the Germans. In 1916 a Franco-British condominium had

been set up. Subsequently France and the United Kingdom had concluded an agreement: part of the country had been occupied by France and part by the United Kingdom. The League of Nations had ratified the agreement between the two Powers. During the period of the mandate the Cameroons had been administered like a colony. That injustice still continued, although the people of the Cameroons had hoped that it would disappear with the establishment of the Trusteeship System.

9. It was desirable that the Cameroons should be united. In the first place, the division of the country was artificial. The existence of two administrations did not justify the establishment of a frontier. The customs officials interfered with communications between the two parts of the country, and their presence was the only evidence that the division existed. Secondly, the division was arbitrary. It was the consequence of the state of war that had existed from 1914 to 1918 and was injurious to the country, which was colonized and divided. Thirdly, the division benefited no one but the French and United Kingdom Governments, which hoped to exercise permanent domination over the Cameroons under cover of the Trusteeship System, for the country would never achieve independence while it was divided into two parts. Finally, the division was prejudicial to the people of the Cameroons.

10. The French representative had said in the Trusteeship Council that it was impossible to speak of a national consciousness in the Cameroons, since that would presuppose a common origin, common traditions, culture and interests, and the memory of ordeals endured together as well as a minimum of common geographical historical and economic factors, all of which were lacking in the Cameroons.

11. In fact, however, the Cameroonians had a common origin: they were members of one people. They did possess common traditions, culture and interests. An attempt had been made to impose an Anglo-French pseudo-culture on them, but colonial domination prevented the cultural development of the colonial peoples.

12. With regard to "ordeals endured together", the Cameroons had suffered and still suffered from forced labour and from the *indigénat* system. They could remember the 1914-1918 war, in which they had suffered both physically and financially. They also remembered the part they had played in the most recent war, the war against Hitler; the victory of 1945 had been their own victory, for the liberation of their country from the colonial yoke. The colonial system itself was an ordeal that the Cameroonians would never forget.

13. As regards the geographical factor, that was at the basis of the unification movement. The people of the Cameroons knew that the frontier of their country was not the line marked by the Administering Authorities' customs posts. Common economic interests existed also and were at the basis of the desire to see normal economic relations established between the two Territories. The historical factor, too, existed, but it was stifled by the oppression of the colonial régime.

14. The opponents of unification also adduced economic and financial reasons. They argued that unification would disrupt the country's economy and would lead to smuggling and hence to a reduction in the

revenue. On the contrary, however, if unification were achieved under a single Cameroonian administration, the general budget for the Cameroons would benefit by receipts derived from the real frontiers of the country: those with Nigeria, Gabon and Chad.

15. Another argument that had been put forward by those opposed to unification was that the peoples of the Trust Territories under French and British administration would be unable to live in amity. The fact was that the people of the Cameroons under British administration whose property and families were in the Territory under French administration wished for closer relations with their brothers. That argument was unsound; the people were members of one family and social harmony could be established.

16. Neither did the linguistic argument against unification hold good. In the Territory under French administration both French and English were taught. The Cameroonians desired that to be done in the Territory under British administration also.

17. Unification was the indispensable prerequisite of Cameroonian independence. If one part of the Cameroons became independent within the British Commonwealth and the other part within the French Union, there could be no unification except through war, as had happened in Korea since 1950. The role of the United Nations, however, was to maintain and consolidate peace. The Cameroons could be unified peacefully. The Cameroons must not follow the same road as Tunisia, Indo-China and Togoland. The United Nation could not remain deaf to the appeal of the Cameroonians.

18. There had been a number of public demonstrations in favour of unification. In August 1951 there had been a great meeting of the Cameroonians, in which the Union des populations du Cameroun and the Assemblée traditionnelle du peuple Douala had taken part, for the purpose of protesting against infringements of the franchise, demanding unification and the establishment of an indigenous government, and in general combatting any measures of annexation. From 14 to 17 December 1951 the question of unification had again been raised by a congress at Kumba. On 22 August the Union des populations du Cameroun and the Kamerun United National Congress had held a meeting at Tiko with a view to submitting claims to the 1952 Visiting Mission. From 28 to 30 September a congress at Eséka had discussed the question of unification and drawn up a petition which was signed by all those taking part in the congress and submitted to the people for approval. On 13 October 1952 the workers had held a large meeting, called by the Union des syndicats confédérés du Cameroun, at which the question of the unification of the Cameroons had been raised, as it had been in many petitions submitted to the Visiting Mission. The people of the Cameroons were confident that the United Nations would solve the crucial problem of unification.

19. The speaker then turned to the question of the relations between the Cameroons and the French Union. Under article 60 of the French Constitution, the Union was composed of the French Republic, which comprised metropolitan France and the overseas departments and territories, and the associated territories and states. Since the status of the associated territories had

not been defined in the Constitution, the Cameroons had been skilfully assimilated with the overseas territories and thus incorporated in the French Republic. Moreover, according to article 61 of the French Constitution, the position of each associated state depended on the act of defining its relationship with France. However, no act had been promulgated to define the relationship of the Cameroons with France. The Trusteeship Agreement merely governed the relationship between the Administering Authority and the United Nations. The existing Territorial Assembly was not competent to negotiate an act defining the relations between the Cameroons and France. The Cameroons had no government or parliament capable of negotiating such an act. That did not mean that the Union des populations du Cameroun wished for no relations with the French Union, but it did consider the claim that the Cameroonians wanted self-government within the French Union to be a kind of political trickery.

20. The speaker reviewed the reasons given to justify the integration of the Cameroons in the French empire. To take first the political sphere, it was alleged that the Cameroons were amply represented in the French parliamentary assemblies. In fact, out of 624 deputies in the French National Assembly, only three were elected by the indigenous inhabitants of the Cameroons. Out of 320 members of the Council of the Republic, only two were elected by the indigenous inhabitants of the Cameroons. The latter were represented by three councillors in the Assembly of the French Union. It was hard to see what advantages the Trust Territories could derive from the French parliamentary assemblies in those circumstances. Moreover, it was asserted that the democratic principles of France were unreservedly applied in the Cameroons, whereas in over six years of legislation only two acts had been passed for the benefit of the overseas territories. The Act abolishing forced labour had been passed before the establishment of the French Union. The Act adopted on 23 November 1952 had introduced a labour code. That code had not been promulgated until the workers in French West Africa had gone out on strike. Mr. Aujoulat, the Secretary of State for Overseas France had stated that France was forced by the international situation to keep its promises. But although the Cameroonians had succeeded in getting the labour code voted, other difficulties were to be anticipated. There was documentary evidence that the French Government intended to obstruct the application of the code. The Act of 6 February 1952 renewing the local assemblies had not changed the situation in any way. No act had yet been passed organizing those assemblies. The Act on elections to the legislature and the Lamine Gueye Act on the reorganization of the civil service concerned not only the overseas territories but also metropolitan France.

21. With reference to the regional councils, the expected reforms had not taken place. A plan for the establishment of mixed communes (*communes mixtes*) had been laid before the Territorial Assembly. No plan existed for the establishment of rural municipalities (*communes rurales*), which alone would enable the people to take a positive part in managing their country's affairs. He quoted a passage from an article by Mr. Pierre Chauleur in the paper *Marchés coloniaux du monde* for 17 May 1952, according to which the

deputies from the Cameroons, who voted on the military budget for metropolitan France, were not even entitled to appoint the municipal councillors for their own villages.

22. As he had already said, there were five elected Cameroonians out of over 900 members of the French parliamentary assemblies. In the Territorial Assembly there were eighteen councillors to represent 12,000 French inhabitants of the Cameroons and thirty-two to represent 3 million Cameroonians. Forty-four councillors were obedient to the Administration. No useful decisions could be taken by the Assembly in the interests of the people of the Cameroons.

23. Reverting to the Territorial Assembly's motion of 24 October 1952, Mr. Um Nyobé thought it surprising that the fifty elected members of that Assembly had refused him the right to speak, considering that they had been free to speak during the election campaign. That Assembly was not representative of the Cameroons; it had not been regularly elected; proceedings, which were still pending, had been instituted to nullify the elections; and it had no power to initiate the measures needed by the Cameroons. The people had no part in the government of their country.

24. He admitted that there had been economic and social progress, but asked who had benefited thereby. The people concerned had no say in the matter where the country's resources were concerned. For example, the indigenous inhabitants had no effective voice in the Chamber of Commerce with regard to questions of imports, exports and credit because the representatives of the non-indigenous inhabitants were in the majority.

25. The Cameroonians wanted the Trusteeship Agreement to be revised. They asked for the deletion of the phrase, in article 4 of the Trusteeship Agreement, which laid down that the Cameroons should be administered "as an integral part of French territory". By that phrase the Cameroons were included in the French colonial empire. There was therefore a danger that leaders of the nationalist movement or persons fighting for the independence of their country might some day be affected by article 80 of the French Criminal Code, although the Cameroons were covered by the International Trusteeship System. Article 80 of the Code provided penalties for any person convicted of trying to cause any territory or part of a territory over which France exercised sovereignty to secede from the Republic.

26. While expressing confidence in the Administering Authorities, Mr. Um Nyobé wondered what France had done to underline the status of the Cameroons as a Trust Territory. The representatives of the United Kingdom and France systematically voted against any measures designed to help the advancement of the Trust Territories. If the representative of a country voted in the United Nations against a resolution, it was not likely that that country would implement that resolution in an area under its administration.

27. The people represented by Mr. Um Nyobé asked that the Trusteeship Agreement should be altered in accordance with the suggestion he had made, but they did not ask the United Nations to take action without the agreement of the Government concerned. The

Trusteeship Agreement was a contract and was therefore subject to change.

28. Moreover, a time-limit for the trusteeship should be fixed. General Assembly resolution 558 (VI), of 18 January 1952, invited the Administering Authorities to submit information in respect of the period of time in which it was expected that the Trust Territories would attain independence. He asked the United Nations to press the Administering Authority to implement that resolution. The former Italian colonies had been granted a time-limit for the attainment of their independence. The same right should be given to the Cameroons.

29. In conclusion, Mr. Um Nyobé appealed, first, for the immediate unification of the Cameroons; secondly, for the establishment of a government council and a legislative assembly; thirdly, for the modification of the Trusteeship Agreement by the deletion of the phrase according to which the Cameroons was administered as an integral part of French territory, in order to avert any danger of annexation; and, finally, for the setting of a time-limit for the granting of independence to the people of the Cameroons.

30. Mr. OKALA (Parti socialiste du Cameroun), speaking as the representative of the political and trade-union movements of the indigenous and immigrant peoples of the Cameroons under French administration, said that those whom he represented were anxious only to facilitate the working of the existing régime.

31. He wished first, however, to reply to some of the points raised by Mr. Um Nyobé, who had contended that the Territorial Assembly had abused its powers in opposing his appearance before the United Nations. Mr. Um Nyobé seemed to believe that the chosen representatives of the peoples of the Cameroons were not entitled to speak on their behalf; that attitude was a clear indication of his adoption of the communist philosophy, which had been rejected by the peoples of the Territory. Mr. Um Nyobé had said that the Territory had been administered simply as a French colony, although he was in an excellent position to know that France had refused the request for the annexation of the Territory to the French colonial empire and that there was no reason to fear assimilation. The fact that there were no *commune de plein exercice* in the Cameroons under French administration was the fault of the Cameroonians themselves, who had opposed the French proposal to set up such a *commune* at Douala, because they were afraid that the indigenous inhabitants would be placed in a permanent minority in elections.

32. The country had developed rapidly with the encouragement of the Administering Authority. Civic spirit had developed widely, giving rise to national consciousness, as might be seen from the chapter entitled "Political Advancement" of the Administering Authority's report to the Trusteeship Council for 1951.¹ In those circumstances, France might well acknowledge the necessity of certain reforms, both to mark the achievement of a stage in the development of the political maturity of the Cameroonians and to show its willingness to preserve the country's identity as a Territory associated with the French Union.

¹ See *Rapport annuel du Gouvernement français à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration du Cameroun placé sous la tutelle de la France, année 1951.*

33. The peoples of the Cameroons, who had originally been brought together forcibly in a community based on authority, had gradually become a community based on consent, thanks to the democratic institutions which had been given them. The intellectual and political leaders of the country were giving impetus to those institutions and were entering the Administration. It was essential that those best qualified should in future be enabled to participate in the management of public affairs. In spite of the persistence of the tribal spirit and the lack of a common vernacular, the institutions and leaders had brought about an increasingly marked national consciousness; the leaders had no objection to using French as an official language.

34. Political advancement was indisputable; from the economic point of view, however, the Cameroonians were meeting with many difficulties in taking an effective part in the life of the country. The Administering Authority should reserve retail trade for the indigenous inhabitants. Generally speaking, experiments in setting up co-operatives had not been conclusive, although that method alone could guarantee full economic development for the indigenous population.

35. In so far as social matters were concerned, supplementary classes, *collèges*, *lycées*, village clinics, hospitals, etc., had been set up since 1946. As regards public education, however, only 143,934 of the 450,000 children of school age had been able to benefit from the education provided: 30,000 attended the official schools, 113,639 were in private schools and 255 students had scholarships in France, 84 of them in technical education, 106 in secondary schools and 65 in higher education. The education of girls was still at a rudimentary stage. The United Nations should set up a university in the Cameroons and meanwhile should grant scholarships enabling the holders to establish friendly relations in various countries.

36. In view of the existing situation and to prevent the masses from being victimized by inexperienced leaders, there could be no question of anything more than expansion of the powers of the Territorial Assembly and the setting up of an executive council through which the Cameroonians could take an effective part in local administration. The people lacked political experience, economic and financial power, practice and technical knowledge; there were not enough universities, technical schools, factories, engineers or doctors; in fact, equipment and skills were lacking. Nevertheless, even at the present stage of their development, the Cameroonians should be trusted and enabled to participate in the political life both of the French Republic and of the Territorial Assembly, which they hoped would become a legislative assembly dealing with all problems which had no bearing on the foreign policy of France or the French Union. For those ends, he proposed certain measures.

37. First, he advocated expansion of the Territorial Assembly's powers with regard to external administration, the possibility of maintaining it in permanent session, parliamentary immunity and an adequate salary for its members. If the elected person was employed by the State or other employer, it was desirable that he should be seconded or resign from his post in order to devote himself wholly to his new duties. Of the fifty members of the existing Assembly, seventeen were

European and indigenous officials and ten were indigenous chiefs; society was thus at the mercy of governmental authority. It was also essential to ensure that an elected person should not be in a position where he was required to give orders to, or criticize, his superior. It was also difficult for the Assembly to give thorough attention in thirty days to documentation which might include up to 300 files.

38. As regards representation, one white man was now considered to be the equivalent of 100,000 black men; that was contrary to the spirit of the Charter, according to which the interests of the indigenous inhabitants were paramount. The system of a double electoral college should therefore be abolished immediately, and not when the Territory "had attained a sufficient degree of development, provided that the experience of the single electoral college in Togoland under French administration was favourable", as had been stated by the special representative of the Administering Authority in the Trusteeship Council (A/2150, p. 167); that would merely be playing with words and would lead to the obviously false assumption that only agitation could bring results. He therefore called for the establishment of a local council of government, with executive powers, which would give the Cameroonians participating in its work an opportunity to learn the art of government; if that were not done, they would be unable to manage the affairs of the country democratically when the time came. In the existing circumstances, all the key posts in the administration were held by Europeans. When responsible posts had been entrusted to indigenous inhabitants, however, the experiment had removed all doubt as to their capability. The reform would consist in giving effect to a statement in the report of the Trusteeship Council (A/2150, p. 173) on measures to be taken "to ensure the participation of the indigenous population in the legislative, executive and judicial organs of the Trust Territory". Such an organ would provide its Cameroonians with excellent training.

39. Also, the role of the indigenous chiefs in indigenous tribal society should be clearly defined; according to custom, the chief should be the representative of his people and the guardian of traditions. The structure of the *chefferies* could not be abolished without a social upheaval. Chiefs should no longer be "completely under the supervision of Administration officials" (A/2150, p. 173), but should provide the link between tribal custom and democracy. They should receive remuneration and be given facilities to enable them to fulfil their obligations. Taxes levied by the indigenous administration would serve to pay the traditional chiefs and to equip and modernize the country and towns. The funds would be distributed among the regions and sub-divisions, would be administered by the regional councils and would be used to improve housing conditions.

40. As regards immigration, he hoped that entry into the Territory would be free, except for sufficient control to guarantee the moral and professional qualifications of the immigrants; control should be exercised by a commission on which the Cameroonians would be generously represented.

41. It would be advisable for the indigenous inhabitants to take part in the preparation of trade agreements

to be concluded by the Territory, to ensure that only commodities really necessary for local needs would be imported.

42. The extension of the powers of the Assembly and the establishment of a council of government would make it possible to decentralize the powers of the metropolitan Department of Overseas France, which would thenceforward play a merely supervisory part. The High Commissioner, whose powers would be strengthened, would then become the chief representative of the Republic. The Assembly, the council of government and the High Commissioner should have sovereign powers with regard to public service in the Cameroons. The Cameroonians wished to have effective control over the administrative staff of the Territory, to have sovereign rights to organize and reorganize that staff and to ensure that deserving officials would be given posts of authority and responsibility and scholarships to the *Ecole nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer* as observers, to acquaint themselves with French methods of government. Those scholarships, which would be for a period of one year, should be automatic for clerks and some outstanding officials of the civil and financial services. As regards the training of African doctors, he called for the repeal of the Decree of 1949, under which only holders of the *baccalauréat* were admitted to the medical faculty; such a change would enable Cameroonian doctors to obtain a university doctor's degree on the same footing as foreign doctors, since the State diploma could be obtained only by pupils of local and metropolitan *lycées*. Male nurses who had finished their probation period should be allowed to attend courses in France (at the Institut Pasteur or in large hospitals) in order to improve their knowledge. Finally, he asked that trade unions should have readier access to the Administering Authority, that the right to strike should be respected when the strike had no political implications, that workers should be represented at the International Labour Organisation and that the position of ex-servicemen should be improved, particularly by enabling them to participate in the various conferences where their interests were discussed.

43. With regard to the question of unification, there was no desire among the masses for the unification of the Cameroons; the problem was raised by politicians only. In so far as the Cameroons under French administration was concerned, self-government and independence would result, in due course, from the common language, the road system and the work of the Territorial Assembly and, from the council of government if it were created. He believed that a similar evolution was taking place in the Cameroons under British administration. The need to know two languages and to standardize the two administrative methods that had hitherto been used would give rise to delays in the accomplishment of complete unification. Moreover, the rate of development in one Territory might be swifter than that in the other and would have to be adjusted to it. The problem of unification did not arise for the time being. Furthermore, double trusteeship could not fail to arouse competition between the two Administering Authorities, to the advantage of the peoples concerned. On the other hand, the administrative frontier should not be an obstacle to the free movement of persons and African goods. He asked that, for the

time being, the two Administering Authorities should be invited to continue recent regulations facilitating movement between the two Cameroons and even to improve them further, while bearing in mind that the revenue from duties was necessary to the budget, in order to finance the administrative services.

44. In conclusion, he said that it would be premature to speak of the independence of the Cameroons in the immediate future. Independence presupposed enjoyment of all the powers of a free state, political maturity, trained civil servants, well-trying machinery, economic, industrial and agricultural equipment, an established constitution, a recognized currency, an army etc. To speak of independence before the Cameroons were established as a nation would be clearly Utopian and would lead to regression among the masses, which would return to their tribal life and would be deprived of the necessary leadership. There would be danger to internal peace and stagnation of development. The peoples of the Cameroons under French administration trusted the United Nations and the Administering Authority to grant them independence at the right time. Meanwhile, it was important to eliminate the obstacles which had survived from out-dated colonial policies. In that connexion, the Cameroonians asked that the Administering Authority should continue the development programme, largely financed by France, which was one of the surest guarantees of the development of the Cameroons towards self-government. The implementation of that programme should be intensified.

45. As a member of the French parliament, he wished to stress that the French Administration exercised no dictatorial power in the Cameroons; it was an extension of an executive power directed by a parliament in which the Territory was represented. The Cameroons intended to speed up its development as far as possible and to ensure the harmonious development of the country's affairs in the most favourable conditions; at the same time, it wished to maintain the best possible relations with France and the French Union, to which he paid a tribute in the name of the political groups and associations which he represented.

46. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil) and Mr. PEON DEL VALLE (Mexico) proposed that the texts of the two statements should be distributed as Fourth Committee documents.²

It was so decided.

47. Mr. PEACHEY (Australia) said that during its stay in the Cameroons under French administration the 1952 Visiting Mission had held three meetings with representatives of the Union des populations du Cameroun. The Mission, in consultation with, and sometimes at the suggestion of, the Administering Authority, had amended its itinerary in order to give the various branches of that organization every opportunity to make its wishes known to the Mission. The Mission had heard full oral statements by representatives and had also received many written communications both from the Central Committee of the Union des populations du

² Mr. Okala's statement was subsequently distributed as document A/C.4/226. The complete text of Mr. Um Nyobé's statement, only part of which had been delivered orally to the Committee was subsequently distributed as document A/C.4/226/Add.1.

Cameroun and its local branches throughout the Territory.

48. Early in 1953, the Visiting Mission would prepare its report on the Cameroons under French administration, which would be addressed to the Trusteeship Council. In giving its conclusions on the organization's requests, the Mission would take into consideration all the views so far placed before it by groups and individuals in the Territory, as well as any other views that might subsequently come to its attention.

49. The Mission had received ninety-two protests, including one from the Territorial Assembly, against the granting of an oral hearing by the Fourth Committee to Mr. Um Nyobé. Most of them had stated that that representative could not speak on behalf of the Cameroons.

50. In the view of the Australian delegation, oral hearings should, at least in the first instance, take place in the Trusteeship Council and not the Fourth Committee. It would therefore not participate in the questioning of the petitioners, but reserved its position with regard to participation in any general debate arising out of the statements.

51. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) said that the Committee, by granting oral hearings without sufficient reflection, had established a precedent which might have serious consequences. The decision to do so had been based on a misconception of the right of petition. Quite apart from the question whether the Committee's procedure had been correct and from that of the rights of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, the Committee was faced with a highly anomalous situation. One of the petitioners had expounded his views concerning the unification of the two Trust Territories of the Cameroons; the other petitioner had given a completely different picture, although he had not repudiated the idea of independence. With the exception of the Trusteeship Council's report (A/2150 and Add.1), the Fourth Committee had no data on which to base a judgment on the political situation in the Cameroons. The report of the Visiting Mission, which would be the best source of information, had not yet been circulated even to the Trusteeship Council and would not be available to the Fourth Committee until the eighth session of the General Assembly.

52. The delegation of the Dominican Republic had always championed the Committee's right to grant oral hearings to petitioners, but it wished to safeguard certain other rights and principles, and especially to strengthen the jurisdiction of the Trusteeship Council. The Committee would be acting in defiance of all established procedure if it were to by-pass the Trusteeship Council, the Standing Committee on Petitions and the whole machinery for studying the annual reports of the Administering Authorities and the reports of visiting missions.

53. He had been careful not to emit any judgment with regard to the substance of the petitioners' statements and would take no part in the questioning of the petitioners.

54. Mr. McINNIS (Canada) said that the considerations mentioned by the representative of the Dominican Republic had been of great concern to his delegation

from the beginning of the session. He entirely agreed with that representative that there was an urgent need to regularize the Committee's procedure in the matter of oral hearings.

55. He did not dispute the Committee's right to grant hearings and receive petitions, or to discuss them thoroughly, but the Committee had many other rights and interests and only a limited time in which to pursue them. The only solution would be to establish an order of priority and to leave secondary matters for consideration at a later stage. A third of the Committee's time during the current session had been spent in delving into minutiae of local politics. That seemed to show a lack of proportion unworthy of the Committee. Some means should be found of exercising greater selectivity.

56. There was a further danger: the sessions of the General Assembly could not be prolonged merely be-

cause one of its Committees placed items on its agenda without being sure that it would have time to deal with them adequately. It might well happen that for various reasons petitioners to whom a hearing had been granted would be unable to arrive before the date at which the Assembly was due to adjourn. That would be unfair to the petitioners and would impair the prestige of the United Nations. He hoped that steps would be taken to avoid such a contingency, if not at the current session then at the beginning of the ensuing one.

57. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUEZ (Brazil) said that if the representative of the Dominican Republic were to put his ideas in the form of a motion, he would be obliged to vote against it.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.