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**Chairman: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).**

**AGENDA ITEM 13**

**The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council\* (A/4092, A/4093/Rev.1, A/4094, A/C.4/395, A/C.4/L.580, A/C.4/L.581, A/C.4/L.582) (continued)**

**GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (continued)**

1. Mr. QUIJANO (Argentina), introducing the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.582, said that the sponsors had taken careful account of the views expressed by Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons, by Mr. Endeley, the leader of the Opposition, by Malam Abdullahi, the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs, and by the representative of the Administering Authority. The Committee would note that the draft resolution recommended the holding of separate plebiscites in the northern and southern parts of the Territory. The sponsors had felt that, in spite of the views regarding the Northern Cameroons set forth by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, in its report on the British Trust Territory (T/1426 and Add.1<sup>1/</sup>), it was desirable that there should be a clear indication of the wishes of the inhabitants of that zone. Mr. Foncha and Mr. Endeley had expressed different views about qualifications for voting, and paragraph 5 of the draft resolution accordingly expressed the hope that the Administering Authority would seek to promote agreement between the political parties on that question. Paragraph 6 proposed that a United Nations plebiscite commissioner should be appointed by the General Assembly, while paragraph 7 called for a report to be submitted by him to the Trusteeship Council in time for transmission to the General Assembly for its consideration before the end of the fourteenth session.

2. Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon) introduced amendments (A/C.4/L.583) to the five-Power draft resolution

\*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII).

<sup>1/</sup> Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4093/Rev.1).

tion (A/C.4/L.580). The amendments sought, firstly, to replace the seventh preambular paragraph by two paragraphs which referred in greater detail to the undertakings given by Mr. Ahidjo, the Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, in connexion with the by-elections to be held on 12 April 1959 and with the general elections after independence, with a view to banishing any doubts that might still remain on those two subjects; and, secondly, to insert a specific reference in the operative part to the holding of elections after independence.

3. Mr. GRYAZNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that despite the efforts of the colonialist Powers to halt the national liberation movement the subject peoples were steadily advancing towards their goal. That was evidenced by the fact that whereas at the time of the Second World War they had constituted a third of the world's population, they now constituted only 6 per cent. The vast majority of those still under colonial rule were in Africa, 70 per cent of whose territory and 60 per cent of whose population were still under foreign rule. There too, however, the national liberation movement had taken root and was rapidly spreading. It was the duty of the United Nations to encourage that movement and to ensure that independence, when finally attained, would be genuine. In the present instance it should take a decision to reunify in a single, truly independent State the several parts of the Cameroons which had been arbitrarily divided between France and the United Kingdom against the will of the population.

4. The Visiting Mission's conclusion as set forth in its report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434<sup>2/</sup>) to the effect that in view of the imminent accession of the Cameroons under French administration to independence it remained only for the General Assembly to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement on 1 January 1960 was obviously based on conversations with representatives of the Administering Authority rather than on a careful study of whether the latter had fulfilled its obligations under the Charter. The Mission's findings were at variance with the petitioners' statements and even with the facts set forth in its own report, which made it clear that the Administering Authority was seeking to perpetuate the Territory's dependent status. Everyone knew, for example, that the Administering Authority had introduced repressive measures against the population, banned the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) and killed its General Secretary and other fighters for Cameroonian freedom. The so-called regrouped villages to which thousands of Cameroonians had been sent after their homes had been destroyed might better be called concentration camps.

<sup>2/</sup> Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

5. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France), speaking on a point of order, said that there were no concentration camps in the Cameroons under French administration.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that he thought the statement to which the French representative had objected was one the propriety and accuracy of which it was for the Committee itself to judge.

7. Mr. GRYAZNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), continuing his statement, said that it was obvious that the UPC had been banned because it had been the most consistent champion of Cameroonian reunification and independence. The Mission's report acknowledged that the entire population and most of the political parties now supported its twofold aim. The growing strength of the liberation movement in the Cameroons was the best proof that, contrary to the Mission's assertions, the UPC was still very much alive, and the statements made by the majority of the petitioners confirmed that fact. His delegation regarded as unworthy the use by the Mission of such terms as "terrorism" and "banditry" with reference to the activities of the UPC.

8. The ban on the UPC and its affiliates, the inequality of Cameroonians and Europeans in the preparation of the electoral rolls, the prohibition of the holding of meetings without the permission of the authorities and the persecution of petitioners were characteristic features of political life in the Territory. Yet the Trusteeship Council's resolution 1925 (XXIII) and the five-Power resolution now before the Committee (A/C.4/L.580) welcomed the Administering Authority's statement that freedom of the Press, of assembly, of political association and other fundamental freedoms existed in the Territory.

9. The Trusteeship Council should have recommended a full and unconditional amnesty for all prisoners and political exiles. His delegation favoured such an amnesty, which should include guarantees that those released from prison or returning from exile would not be subjected to further persecution and would have the right to take part in the economic and political life of the country. The amnesty law adopted on 14 February 1959<sup>3/</sup> was a limited one. Its most glaring omission was its failure to revoke the decree outlawing the UPC and its affiliates, an omission which enabled the Administering Authority to persecute Cameroonian citizens after 1 January 1959 for their efforts to participate in the political life of the country on the basis of the programme advocated by the illegally proscribed groups. The new law granted an amnesty only to persons sentenced to terms not exceeding twenty years for offences of a political nature; yet it was well known that the Administering Authority had accused many political prisoners of crimes without any evidence whatsoever. Title II of the amnesty law provided only for the commuting rather than for the quashing of sentences of forced labour for life or sentences of death and was based on the presumption of guilt of the persons concerned. Moreover, as it had not yet been made clear when the committee which was to decide on the commutations would be set up or how long it would be in existence the review of such sentences was likely to be long drawn out. It should also be noted that amnestied persons were given no guarantee that

they would be permitted to re-enter Government service.

10. His delegation was in favour of the holding of new elections prior to the attainment of independence for a number of reasons: the Cameroonians had not enjoyed fundamental political freedoms at the time of the previous political elections; their demands for an amnesty on the eve of the elections had not been granted; even the legal political parties had in effect been destroyed, as paragraph 108 of the Visiting Mission's report indicated; and only a small percentage of the electorate had gone to the polls. In any case, it was essential that the people should be consulted by means of an election to ascertain their views on the important questions connected with the attainment of independence. Furthermore, reunification had not been an issue when the present Legislative Assembly had been elected. In the time remaining before 1 January 1960 that question should be settled and elections held for the legislative organ of the reunified State.

11. The Visiting Mission's report showed that the Administering Authority had done very little to fulfil its economic and social obligations under the Charter. The Territory's economy continued to be under-developed, the indigenous inhabitants were engaged in the most primitive form of agriculture and the best lands were occupied by foreign planters. In the entire Cameroons there was not a single modern industrial enterprise operated for the purpose of meeting the needs of the Territory itself. The Mission had also admitted that there were very few hospitals and schools in the Cameroons. There was not a single institution of higher education in the Territory and the number of Cameroonian students in such institutions abroad was negligible. The Administering Authority had staffed the public service with its own officials instead of training Africans for that purpose and the few Cameroonians who had been appointed to administrative posts were surrounded by all-powerful advisers from the metropolitan country.

12. Turning to the question of the Cameroons under British administration, he said that the Visiting Mission's conclusions with regard to the reunification issue were based on the wishes not of the people of that Territory but of the Administering Authority and the small minority of Cameroonians who supported it. The United Kingdom had always treated the Cameroons under its administration as a colony. The result of the association of the Northern Cameroons with the Northern Region of Nigeria was that no Cameroonian governmental bodies existed in that Territory. The explanation for that state of affairs was not that the Northern Region of Nigeria had of its own will lagged slightly behind the other parts of the Federation, as the Visiting Mission stated, but rather that the Administering Authority had deliberately stifled all political activity. That fact was reflected in paragraph 148 of the Mission's report. The Mission admitted in paragraph 1 of its report that the majority of the population in both the north and the south was not fully informed about the fact that they were on the threshold of critical decisions regarding their future. It was difficult to understand how in the circumstances the Mission could report that there was no need for a plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons, particularly since under its terms of reference it was to have expressed its views on the method of consultation to be adopted.

<sup>3/</sup> See A/C.4/395.

13. The Mission's conclusions with regard to the Southern Cameroons were belied by the descriptive paragraphs of its own report, in which it told of receiving many petitions calling for reunification and independence. The petitioners' views had since been confirmed by the results of the elections of 24 January 1959, in which the will of the people had triumphed despite the fact that the main qualifications for the vote had distinguished between British subjects and those who did not possess such status. According to paragraph 168 of the Mission's report the preponderant attitude in the Territory was that the time for determining its future was at hand and should not be delayed, yet in its conclusions the Mission suggested putting off a decision until the next General Assembly. Such a recommendation could have but one purpose: to assist the colonial Powers in perpetuating the artificial division of the Cameroons.

14. The great majority of the petitioners whom the Committee had heard had called for the reunification and genuine independence of the Cameroons. His delegation, basing itself on the demands of those authentic representatives of the Cameroonian people, considered it essential that both Trust Territories should accede to independence on 1 January 1960, for if a different date was set for each the effect would be to strengthen the position of the opponents of reunification. Similarly, a referendum on the question of reunification should be held throughout both Territories, followed by elections to a single constituent assembly. Both those operations should be conducted in an atmosphere of complete freedom. That in turn meant that a full and unconditional amnesty should be granted, that all political exiles should be allowed to return to the country, that the restrictions on political activities should be withdrawn and that full equality for all persons should be established. The referendum and the elections should be supervised by a United Nations commission consisting primarily of representatives of African and other countries which had had to fight against colonialism. The Conventions between France and the Cameroons, which limited the sovereignty of the Cameroonian people, should be abrogated since they had been concluded by two parties which had not been on an equal footing and neither the Cameroonian Assembly nor the Cameroonian people had had an opportunity to consider them. They should automatically lapse on 1 January 1960 regardless of any provisions making them valid for a longer period. Whatever resolution the General Assembly adopted should include a provision to that effect. The foreign troops in the Territory which at the very time of the Mission's visit had opened fire on a peaceful demonstration at Douala, killing and injuring several innocent people, should be withdrawn.

15. In conclusion, he noted that under the guise of economic co-operation as exemplified by the European Economic Community foreign monopolies might try to continue to exploit the economic resources of the Territories, as they had done in the past. Such disguised forms of colonialism were particularly dangerous for economically weak countries like the future State of the Cameroons. The United Nations should therefore assist the Cameroons in developing its economy through the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and other United Nations funds.

16. Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon) observed that it could

not have been expected that everything in the Visiting Mission's reports would be entirely acceptable to all delegations, but all were agreed on the capacity, integrity and sincerity of the members of the Mission. While they might not have had as much time in the Territories, or been able to meet as many of the people of the Cameroons, as they would have wished, it was clear from the reports that they had been able to study the situation thoroughly on the spot and to come to conclusions and form independent judgements on the many questions on which they had reported. It was also noteworthy that their reports had been adopted unanimously. He did not of course claim that the Mission was infallible; the members of the Committee were free to criticize or even wholly to reject the reports. But its members constituted the General Assembly's accredited agents, they had had the advantage of first-hand observation on the spot, and had been in an advantageous position to study the situation. Anyone who disagreed with them should show cogent reasons for doing so.

17. With regard to the situation in the Northern Cameroons under British administration, he had no reason to think that the members of the Visiting Mission were wrong in stating that there was no need to hold a plebiscite in that part of the Territory. Nevertheless it was the view of his delegation that inasmuch as there was no elected body in the area at the present time it would be desirable to hold a plebiscite under United Nations supervision as early in the dry season as possible before the end of the current year. The question to be put to the voters was whether they wished to join the Northern Region of an independent Federation of Nigeria or not. If the answer was in the negative a further plebiscite would have to be held to enable them to decide whether they wished for unification with the Cameroons under French administration or with the Southern Cameroons.

18. With regard to the Southern Cameroons under British administration, the Visiting Mission had recommended the holding of a plebiscite and the Premier of the Southern Cameroons and the leader of the Opposition agreed with that recommendation. There was, however, no agreement between them with regard to the question or questions that should be put to the voters. He would therefore suggest that they should discuss the matter further and try to come to an agreement and that the questions should be finally decided on at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly. Mr. Foncha had expressed the view that if the result of the plebiscite was in favour of reunification with the Cameroons under French administration the United Kingdom Government should agree to continue its trusteeship for a limited period. His delegation would support any resolution on those lines.

19. With regard to the Cameroons under French administration, he observed that some of the large number of petitioners who had been heard by the Committee supported the views of the Government of the Cameroons while others opposed them. His delegation had given the most careful and earnest consideration to all that had been said on both sides. The solution of the problem was by no means easy. The Fourth Committee had the commendable record of having played a major role in hastening the progressive development of dependent territories to political emancipation and eventual sovereign status. The heavy responsibility

involved in such a task was evident and required no elaboration. The members of the Committee should think deeply and carefully and avoid as far as possible being carried away by emotion; the freedom of peoples in Trust Territories could fairly be regarded as something which should be treated with more than usual deliberation.

20. The differences of opinion which had become evident during the past few days were confined within a narrow area and had become crystallized in the two draft resolutions before the Committee (A/C.4/L.580, A/C.4/L.581). The main question on which opinion was divided was whether or not elections under United Nations supervision should be held before the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement and the consequent achievement of independence by the Cameroons under French administration on 1 January 1960. That the Territory would be free on that date was a matter on which there appeared to be no division of opinion either in the Territory itself, or among the petitioners, or in the Committee. Not one of the petitioners had directly or indirectly suggested that the Cameroons was not yet mature enough for independence or that the date of achievement of independence should be postponed.

21. His delegation was glad to reaffirm the policy of the Government of Ceylon, which was to assist subject peoples wherever and whenever possible to reach the goal of independence. The records of the Fourth Committee would show that his delegation had never made a statement or cast a vote which could be interpreted as in any way derogating from that ideal. It was in that spirit and in the application of that policy that his delegation approached the problem before the Committee. It had supported requests to the Administering Authorities to fix target dates for the independence of subject peoples. The Government of the French Republic had informed the United Nations that it would terminate the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons on 1 January 1960. The Ahidjo Government was the legally constituted Government of the Territory. The Legislative Assembly, elected in 1956 by universal suffrage, had in June 1958 requested the French Government to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement, and on 24 October 1958 had adopted a resolution requesting full national independence on 1 January 1960. Mr. Ahidjo in one of his statements (849th meeting) had asked the Committee whether it would be logical to consider that the Assembly which was fit to ask for independence was not fit to receive it. On behalf of his Government and the majority of the people of his country he had reaffirmed his desire and determination to regard the date of 1 January 1960 as fixed. The delegation of Ceylon would hesitate to contribute in any way to a delay or postponement of the achievement of independence by a Territory which it was admitted on all sides was mature enough for such independence and whose Government had been elected by adult suffrage. His delegation would therefore be unable to support any course of action which might have the effect of delaying the Territory's independence. It might be said that no one in the Committee wished to postpone the attainment of independence, and that was true, but the request for elections before independence might produce the unexpected result of postponement.

22. The Visiting Mission was of the unanimous opin-

ion that no case had been made out for the holding of elections before independence. That opinion had been accepted by the Trusteeship Council and recommended to the General Assembly in Trusteeship Council resolution 1925 (XXIII), and he failed to see any good reasons for rejecting it. That was one of the reasons which had led his delegation to the conclusion that no further consultation on the question of independence was necessary.

23. If no further consultation on the question was necessary—and even the petitioners had not expressed a contrary view—his delegation wondered for what purpose elections were sought before independence. Two arguments had been adduced in support of the request for further consultation: firstly, that the Legislative Assembly was not truly representative and, secondly, that the holding of elections did not imply any doubt of the representative character of the Assembly but was intended to enable the people on the eve of independence to decide on the policy that a free Government should carry out. His delegation could not subscribe to either of those views.

24. With regard to the first argument, the Visiting Mission had given facts and figures to substantiate its conclusion that the representative character of the Territory's institutions was beyond question. No democratically elected Government could be regarded as representing anything more than the majority of the people. Why should a special criterion be applied to the Cameroons under French administration? It was true that by the Decree of 13 July 1955 certain political parties had been dissolved, and that the new amnesty law would affect only a new election rather than the one already held. But it was also true that the reason for the dissolution of those parties had not been the holding or disseminating of political views different from those of the Government in power, but the acts of physical violence, amounting in certain cases to murder, which had been committed in the course of political opposition and which in any country would be condemned and punished under the criminal code. Hence the fact that at the time of the election a few organizations had been dissolved would not detract from the representative character of the Government. In fact very few speakers had laid much stress on the argument that the Legislative Assembly was not representative and it would seem that those who at one time might have held that view had found it untenable. Furthermore, when Mr. Ahidjo had introduced his resolution in the Legislative Assembly requesting independence on 1 January 1960 the members of the Opposition, some of whom were among the petitioners, had raised no question of the representative character of the Assembly or its competence to discuss that matter. Since, then, the representative character of the Assembly had not been questioned and it formed the legal Government of the country, it would be an act of derogation of the Government's legal authority for the Committee to impose upon it a condition precedent to independence. The General Assembly might have the right to impose any conditions it wished so long as the Territory was under trusteeship but it would be improper to exercise such a right undemocratically.

25. The contention that the purpose of the election was to enable the people to decide upon the policies which a Government receiving independence should

carry out was not convincing. That matter fell within the purview of the internal domestic affairs of the Cameroons under French administration. Once independence had been achieved elections must necessarily be held as early as possible. The Prime Minister had assured the Committee that full and free elections would be held as soon as practicable after independence, and by that time the amnesty law would have enabled the opposition groups to ventilate their views before the population. It was not the task of the United Nations to intervene in domestic affairs such as the holding of elections in order to enable people to determine the political régime they wanted or the economic or social policy they would like to follow. That was a matter which the legally constituted Government in power at the time of independence was most qualified to decide on and to translate into practice.

26. His delegation considered that on the other hand there was a strong positive argument against the holding of elections before 1960. Much had been said about the need for reconciliation. His delegation believed that the holding of elections before 1 January 1960 would raise acute controversies and would seriously jeopardize any possibility that now existed for an atmosphere of goodwill at the birth of the nation. An acrimonious election campaign based on a clash of personalities was inevitable in the circumstances and might inflame political passions and even lead to a resurgence of violence. Those factors might even result in the postponement of independence. No less an authority than Mr. Nkrumah, the Prime Minister of Ghana, stated in his autobiography that he had been opposed to the holding of a general election before independence because he had feared that an election campaign might be used in some quarters to cause riot, bloodshed and general confusion in the country. The delegation of Ceylon felt similar fears with regard to the possible results of a general election now in the Cameroons.

27. Some delegations and several of the petitioners had suggested that the independence of the Cameroons under French administration would not be real independence unless it was accepted and negotiated by a Government elected before 1 January 1960. Misgivings had been expressed about the Conventions between the Cameroonian Government and the Government of France. Certain delegations had even been perturbed at the possibility of a free Cameroons limiting its sovereignty by a close association with France. His own delegation had had certain misgivings on those points at the beginning of the resumed session, but it had been fully satisfied with the firm, unequivocal and categorical replies given by the Prime Minister of the Cameroons to the Committee at its 849th meeting. The Prime Minister's assurances, together with the French representative's declaration that France would sponsor the admission of a free Cameroons to the United Nations as soon as possible after the attainment of independence, left no doubt with regard to the completeness of the sovereignty that the Cameroons would achieve on 1 January 1960. At the 861st meeting the representative of India had dealt very fully with the question of the Conventions and he therefore would not dwell on that point.

28. For those reasons the delegation of Ceylon did not share the fears entertained in some quarters that

unless prior general elections were held the independence to be achieved on 1 January 1960 would be unreal. In particular, the representative of Iraq had urged that the point at issue was whether or not elections should be held under United Nations supervision. The Visiting Mission had, however, unanimously concluded that no further consultation was necessary before the attainment of independence and a decision in favour of elections under United Nations supervision would be tantamount to an expression of lack of confidence in the Mission's findings.

29. He wished to make it clear that his delegation was not against elections as such, but it was against unnecessary elections. In the case in point there was unanimous agreement on the only substantive question, that of independence. The democratically elected Government of the country must be allowed to decide on the acceptance of independence which had been requested by a parliamentary majority.

30. The Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration had stated several times in the Committee that general elections not only would, but must necessarily, be held after the attainment of independence. The peoples of the Cameroons could then decide the form of constitution they wished to have, the nature of the institutions they considered necessary and the economic and social policies they would like their Government to follow. Those were matters which the Cameroonian people must decide for themselves. It would be both premature and ungracious to attempt to thrust upon the Cameroonian people a situation in which their freedom of choice would be circumscribed by decisions taken by the General Assembly before they had achieved independence.

31. His delegation's concern was that the Cameroonian people should emerge to complete freedom with the least possible delay. There had undoubtedly been difficulties in the past and the Government and people of Ceylon hoped that the people of the Cameroons would soon find internal unity. It believed that the present Government would carry out in good faith the promises made by its Prime Minister, in an effort to achieve that reconciliation which was absolutely essential for the future welfare of his people. He hoped that those sections of the Cameroonian people who had in the past resorted to violence would see the need for more co-operative and less unconstitutional expressions of their needs. His delegation looked forward with pleasure to the time when the Cameroonian nation would take its rightful place as a fully independent and sovereign Member of the United Nations.

32. Mr. UDOVICHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the world-wide significance of present developments in the Cameroons was attested by the fact that the recent All-African People's Conference at Accra and the permanent secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference at Cairo had proclaimed the date of the opening of the General Assembly's resumed session a day of solidarity with the people of the Cameroons. The Ukrainian people, together with the other peoples of the world, had also chosen that day to express its solidarity with the fighters for Cameroonian freedom. The Assembly had now heard not only the representatives of the people of the Territory but also those of the newly liberated African countries, which were better qualified than any others to understand the aspirations of the Came-

roonians. The common theme of all those representatives had been the reunification of the two Territories in a single independent Cameroonian State. The programmes of all the political parties in the Cameroons under French administration and the results of the elections in the Southern Cameroons under British administration had shown that it was the desire of the Cameroonian people as a whole to do away with the artificial frontier which had divided ethnic groups and even families. The Administering Authorities, however, applying the age-old principle of divide and rule, hoped by preventing the reunification of the Cameroons to create dissension between the future States of Nigeria and the Cameroons which they could turn to their own advantage. Even within each Territory the Administering Authorities had tried to pit the inhabitants of one area against those of another and to set party against party. The Prime Minister of Ghana had reminded the recent Conference at Accra that the conquest of Africa by the imperialist Powers had been made possible by the divisions among the African peoples.

33. Although the United Nations already had ample evidence that the Cameroonian people wanted reunification the General Assembly should decide to conduct a plebiscite in both the Northern and Southern Cameroons under British administration in order to give the people an opportunity clearly to express that wish. As the questions of reunification and independence were inextricably linked the plebiscite should be held before 1 January 1960.

34. The major problem in connexion with the accession of the Cameroons to independence was that of normalizing the situation in the two Territories and putting an end to the crisis to which the policies of the Administering Authorities, particularly France, had given rise. The Administering Authorities, disregarding their obligations under the Charter to promote the political, economic and social advancement of the peoples of the Trust Territories and their progressive development towards independence, had sought only to exploit the natural wealth and labour resources of the Territories and to annex them to their respective empires. When the Cameroonian people had expressly declared their desire for independence and reunification in a declaration issued by the UPC in April 1955 the Administering Authorities had tried to silence them by force of arms. The Cameroonian patriots had then been obliged to take up arms to defend themselves. The result had been a full-scale war in which the French Government had brought in regular troops, killed hundreds of Cameroonians, imprisoned thousands of others for their political activities and thrown tens of thousands into concentration camps which it euphemistically called "regrouped villages". Reprisals were still continuing and the General Secretary of the UPC had been killed only six months earlier. The facts showed that it was the colonialists and not the Cameroonian patriots who had been guilty of resorting to force. The Cameroonian people were certainly not the first to rise up in open defiance of force, as the membership of the Committee itself attested. The Administering Authorities, echoed by the Visiting Mission, had tried to prove that the UPC was no longer influential in the Cameroons. Yet history would show that it was the UPC which had first called for reunification and independence and future generations of Cameroonians would remember its leaders as

the champions of freedom. It was strange indeed that the Visiting Mission should have seen fit to refer to those patriots as "terrorists" and "dissident elements".

35. When the French Government had realized that it could not suppress the movement by force of arms it had resorted to trickery, introducing constitutional reforms and conducting elections which were intended to give the impression that it was transferring power to the Cameroonians. The true character of those elections could be seen from the thousands of petitions received by the United Nations attesting that the voters had gone to the polls under the muzzles of French machine-guns and that blood had been shed. As the unhealthy situation created by the Administering Authority still existed it was too early for the Trusteeship Council to speak of pacification and the existence of freedom in the Cameroons. The crisis would not be settled until the decree outlawing the UPC had been revoked, a general amnesty declared and new elections conducted. The recently adopted amnesty law was wholly inadequate, for it did not apply to all political prisoners, did not provide for the revocation of the decree outlawing the UPC and did not make clear when its provisions would go into effect.

36. Another prerequisite for the normalization of conditions in the Territory was the withdrawal of the French troops, but the Administering Authorities' position on that matter was equivocal. In both the Trusteeship Council and the Committee the French representative had said that those troops had been withdrawn from the Sanaga-Maritime Region; at the same time, he had said that French troops would remain in the Territory for an indefinite time to protect its borders. That assertion was patently absurd, since the Territory was bordered on the north, east and south by French Equatorial Africa, on the southwest by the Gulf of Guinea and on the northwest by the Cameroons under British administration, from which it was hardly likely that aggression would come. It might reasonably be asked who had guarded the borders when the French forces had been transferred to the Sanaga-Maritime. That in turn raised the question whether at that time French troops had not actually been deployed in key positions throughout the Territory rather than being limited to the Sanaga-Maritime, as the Administering Authority had maintained. It could only be concluded that France was keeping its troops in the Cameroons for the purpose of integrating the Territory with the French Community and perpetuating its rule over the Cameroonian people.

37. The Assembly elected in December 1956 could not be called representative for those elections had been largely boycotted by the population. Moreover, four seats in the Assembly were still vacant and eight of the deputies were foreigners. It was also incorrect to call it a legislative assembly, for it had been elected as a Territorial Assembly. In democratic countries legislative organs were elected as such by the people. New elections, following on the proclamation of a complete amnesty and open to all political parties, would constitute one of the most important steps towards the restoration of normal conditions. The newly elected Assembly could then consider the problems which would arise in connexion with the attainment of independence. The future Cameroonian Government would doubtless be confronted with a host of problems having

their origin in the long years of colonial rule, and should enjoy the full confidence of the people.

38. The Ukrainian delegation, guided by its Government's consistent policy of support for the interests of dependent peoples, would vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the eight African countries (A/C.4/L.581).

39. Mr. HERRARTE (Guatemala) said that in the course of recent sessions his delegation had expressed its regret that no time-table had been drawn up for co-ordinating the development of the two Trust Territories. Had that been done, many of the difficulties now being encountered in meeting the wishes of the Cameroonian peoples would have been avoided. Even so, the root of the trouble lay in the partitioning of the Cameroons carried out when it had been put under mandate and maintained during the period of trusteeship.

40. It was only fair to say that the Administering Authority in the Cameroons under French administration had carried out its obligations to develop the political, social and economic institutions of the country. That had not been denied by the majority of the petitioners, notwithstanding the fact that many of them belonged to the Opposition. France had several times expressed its wish for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement and had agreed to 1 January 1960 as the date for the independence of the Territory. The position in the Cameroons under British administration had been complicated by its division into two zones, both of which had been administered as parts of Nigeria. The people of both zones, however, wanted independence, although the position had been made more difficult by the two alternatives open to them.

41. The Visiting Mission had carried out its work with impartiality, and full weight should be given to its conclusions. As regards the Cameroons under French administration, it had stated clearly and precisely that no plebiscite was necessary. Under the Statute which had come into force on 1 January 1959 the Territory had been granted full self-government in internal matters, and, in the preamble of the Statute, the French Government had recognized that that was the last stage on the road to independence and termination of the trusteeship. Moreover, with a view to bringing about national reconciliation, the Cameroonian Government had introduced the new amnesty law. While some petitioners had supported the existing Cameroonian Government, others had expressed doubts about the representative character of the Legislative Assembly and had asked for new elections before independence. That Assembly had been freely elected by direct suffrage and had asked for independence on 1 January 1960. In such circumstances, and bearing in mind the fact that the Opposition was represented in the Assembly, there seemed no reason to doubt its representative character or to deny it the right of proclaiming independence. That had also been the opinion expressed by the Visiting Mission in paragraph 141 of its report.

42. Some of the petitioners had claimed that the Legislative Assembly had been elected at a time when repressive measures were in force. But in his view the circumstances had left the Administering Authority with no alternative but to take such measures against persons who, however noble their aims, were breaking the law.

43. His delegation shared the view that no new elections were needed in the Cameroons under French administration before independence. That was a purely internal question, and could not be made a pre-condition for the attainment of independence, which in any case was the general wish of the Cameroonian people. To insist on new elections under United Nations supervision would imply that the people were not ready for independence. Furthermore, Prime Minister Ahidjo had stated that, once independence had been achieved, a constituent assembly would be convened. That assurance should be considered sufficient. The Prime Minister had added that, in view of the fact that there would thus be elections after independence, it seemed pointless to hold additional elections a few months earlier.

44. Mr. Herrarte recalled that at the 858th meeting he had asked Mr. Moumié, the representative of the UPC, whether in the latter's view a Legislative Assembly elected under United Nations supervision before independence could be transformed into a constituent assembly, and Mr. Moumié had replied in the affirmative. In view of that reply it was difficult to understand why so many misgivings had been expressed about the present Legislative Assembly.

45. Mr. Moumié had also stated that he continued to insist that reunification should precede independence or at any rate be brought about on the same date. But that failed to take into account the effects of forty years of separate existence, differing institutions and different languages. Mr. Ahidjo had said that the problem was a practical one and that everything depended on the attitude adopted by his brethren in the Cameroons under British administration. In his delegation's view it was necessary to establish beforehand what were the wishes of the Cameroonians under British administration and what form reunification should take; Mr. Foncha, for example, had spoken of his desire for a federation. The Guatemalan delegation would welcome the settlement of those difficulties and the advent of reunification either before or after the independence of the Cameroons under French administration.

46. His delegation realized that conditions were different in the two zones of the Trust Territory under British administration and that their problem should be dealt with separately. On the one hand, there was a higher degree of autonomy in the Southern Cameroons; on the other hand, opinion in the Northern Cameroons was more favourable towards joining the Federation of Nigeria. The recent elections in the Southern Cameroons could not decide the future of that part of the Territory and a plebiscite was necessary there. The alternatives offered should be integration or reunification, since the Administering Authority had stated that there was little possibility of the Southern Cameroons existing as an independent nation. He felt that there was not sufficient justification for prolonging the period of trusteeship.

47. He regretted having to differ from the Visiting Mission on the subject of the Northern Cameroons. His delegation considered that a plebiscite should also be held there, not only because representative institutions did not exist but because it was a question not merely of terminating the Trusteeship Agreement but of incorporating that part of the Territory into another country.

48. He felt sure that the United Nations would soon be able to welcome the Cameroonian nation as a new Member. France's offer to sponsor its admission into the United Nations was a gesture which did honour to that country.

49. Mr. KAMIL (Federation of Malaya) said that his country, which had become independent only eighteen months previously, naturally took a keen interest in the question before the Committee. During the short period in which it had been a Member of the United Nations, it had always taken an uncompromising stand on every question connected with the freedom and independence of subject peoples.

50. His delegation associated itself with the congratulations addressed to France and to the United Kingdom on the work which they had done in both Territories for the advancement of the inhabitants and to promote their development towards self-government and independence.

51. He would for the moment confine himself to the Cameroons under French administration and say that, after careful study of the Visiting Mission's report and of the various statements made before the Committee, his delegation was convinced that the people of the Territory were ready for complete independence on 1 January 1960 and that no further consultation was needed. His delegation had been greatly impressed by the political and constitutional progress achieved by the Cameroons under French administration, particularly during the three preceding years. At the elections held in December 1956, as the Trusteeship Council had noted at its nineteenth session (A/3595 and Corr.1, p. 126), all opinions had been expressed, and those who were to become the leaders of the majority and of the minority groups had expressed themselves in favour of independence. Subsequent developments had led to the present position in which the Cameroonian authorities had full legislative and judiciary powers. On becoming Prime Minister on 18 February 1958, Mr. Ahidjo had outlined a programme for full internal autonomy and had established a timetable for the independence of the Cameroons, for reunification, and for national reconciliation. The Visiting Mission had reported that the request for independence on 1 January 1960, approved by a large majority in the Legislative Assembly, was supported by the great majority of the population, and that had been borne out by the petitioners' statements. The Visiting Mission had also said that on the whole the existing Legislative Assembly was representative in character. The elections of 1956 had been held on the basis of universal adult suffrage and nearly one million voters in a country of about 3,200,000 inhabitants had gone to the polls. That was a better figure than could be claimed by many other countries, including his own. His delegation agreed with the Visiting Mission that there were insufficient grounds for the holding of fresh elections to the Legislative Assembly as a pre-condition for independence. The existing Legislative Assembly and Government had obtained from France a promise of independence on 1 January 1960 and the Legislative Assembly was sufficiently representative in character to accept independence on behalf of the people of the Cameroons.

52. There was much similarity between the progress made by the Cameroons towards independence and that of his own country, where elections based on

universal adult suffrage had been held in July 1955 and fifty-one out of the fifty-two elected seats had been won by the parties advocating independence. The resulting Government had negotiated with the United Kingdom Government and had obtained complete internal autonomy on almost the same basis as that enjoyed by the Cameroons since 1 January 1959. The United Kingdom Government had subsequently agreed upon 31 August 1957 as the date for Malayan independence. No new election had been held before independence, and the then Federal Legislature had adopted the new Constitution. That had contributed to the stability of the Government and to economic and social progress. His delegation felt that it could not ask the people of the Cameroons to take a course which had not been adopted by the Federation of Malaya.

53. As the representative of Burma had said at the 865th meeting, there was no analogy between events in Togoland under French administration and those in the Cameroons under French administration. New elections in Togoland on the basis of universal adult suffrage had been justified since the then existing Togoland Legislative Assembly had been elected on the basis of a limited franchise, and the part in power had been seeking an objective short of independence. That was not the situation in the Cameroons under French administration; the representatives of the Government of the Cameroons and the Administering Authority had stated that the independence of the Cameroons after 1 January 1960 would be complete and absolute and the representative of France had given an assurance that his Government would sponsor the application of the Government of the Cameroons for admission to membership of the United Nations after independence. Prime Minister Ahidjo had stated that by-elections would be held to fill the vacant seats in the Legislative Assembly, and that there would be general elections after independence. Moreover, Mr. Kemajou, the President of the Legislative Assembly, had said that on the attainment of independence the seats in the Legislative Assembly now occupied by non-Cameroonians would be filled by Cameroonian citizens.

54. His delegation was satisfied that the fundamental freedoms existed in the Territory and that constitutional political opposition was tolerated. To insist on the holding of elections prior to independence as a pre-condition for termination of the Trusteeship Agreement was tantamount to expressing lack of confidence in the existing Government and Legislative Assembly and to calling in question their representative character. Mr. Ahidjo's Government had fulfilled its programme and it was now the task of the Committee and of the General Assembly to make independence a reality, thus enabling Mr. Ahidjo to work for the realization of the other aspiration of the Cameroonian people—reunification.

55. His delegation could not accept the argument that elections should be held prior to independence in order to ensure stability. When a country was on the threshold of independence, national unity and solidarity were of paramount importance and a new election would only lead to a struggle for power and to disunity. It was not the responsibility of the United Nations to decide to which party independence should be handed. What it had to decide was whether the Cameroons under French administration was ready for independence



and it was generally agreed that that was the case. Accordingly, it was the Committee's duty to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement on 1 January 1960 when the Territory became independent.

56. It had also been suggested that failure to hold new elections might lead to the outbreak of violence in the country. Such suggestions merely encouraged extremist elements which commanded no real support among the people. Even if elections were held prior to independence, such persons would still resort to violence if they were defeated at the polls. His delegation was satisfied that the amnesty law was sufficiently broad. As regards reunification, it held that that was a matter

for decision by the Cameroonian people themselves, once they had achieved independence.

57. His country shared the joy of the people of the Cameroons under French administration at their approaching freedom and independence and looked forward to welcoming them to the United Nations in the following year.

58. His delegation hoped to take part at a later stage in the debate on the future of the Cameroons under British administration.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.