

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

## AGENDA ITEM 13

### Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822, A/C.4/387, A/C.4/388) (continued)

#### THE FUTURE OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (continued)

1. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) said that he had listened with mixed feelings to the statements made by the French representative<sup>1/</sup>, by Mr. Ahidjo, Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration,<sup>2/</sup> by the United Kingdom representative<sup>3/</sup> and by the petitioners<sup>4/</sup>; on the one hand he was happy to see the dawn of a new sovereign and independent State in West Africa, on the other he was only too well aware of the difficulties still to be surmounted, the legacy of the stormy past.

2. The delegation of Haiti had consistently advocated an amnesty for all those who had taken part in the incidents of May 1955. That page should have been turned long since. It was true that certain measures of clemency had been extended, but they had been accompanied by so many restrictions that they had failed to win over public opinion as they might otherwise have done. At the 800th meeting of the Committee the Prime Minister of the Cameroons had made a statement which had confirmed the hope of the Haitian delegation that a gesture would be made which could lead to a general reconciliation, given goodwill on all sides: he had said that jurisdictional powers, including the power of granting an amnesty, would be transferred to the Cameroonian Parliament on 1 January 1959 and that he was sure it would then examine the provisions of a broader amnesty in a spirit of pacification and reconciliation.

3. Another question that caused considerable concern to some members of the Committee was that of elections; indeed, many arguments could be adduced in favour of fresh elections in the Cameroons. Nevertheless, he recalled that at the 768th meeting of the Trusteeship Council, held during the nineteenth session, he had expressed his delegation's satisfaction that the

<sup>1/</sup> 774th meeting.

<sup>2/</sup> 794th and 800th meetings.

<sup>3/</sup> 803rd meeting.

<sup>4/</sup> 775th, 776th, 779th, 780th, 792nd, 807th and 808th meetings.

Territorial Assembly had been expanded and re-elected by direct universal suffrage and that the people had been fully aware of the fact that their representatives would be called upon to discuss the new statute. He further recalled that at the 628th meeting of the Fourth Committee, during the eleventh session of the General Assembly, he had drawn attention to a report in *Le Monde* of 28 December 1956 that the Minister for Overseas France had told the Council of Ministers that, although Cameroonian public opinion challenged the claim of certain political parties to speak on its behalf, it was nevertheless unanimously nationalist. He had added that that statement was a turning point and that it confirmed the opinion upheld by the Haitian delegation at the Trusteeship Council's eighteenth session (727th meeting) in connexion with a hearing granted by the Council to the representatives of the Traditional Assembly of the Douala People.

4. He had recalled those facts in order to explain why his delegation did not look at the situation in the Cameroons in that same light as it had that of Togoland before 27 April 1958. While unfortunately the number of voters in the recent elections in the Cameroons under French administration had been very small in certain regions, the elections had been held by universal suffrage, unlike those to the former Legislative Assembly of Togoland. The Cameroonian Government which had been formed as a result of the elections of December 1956 had never possessed the monolithic character of the former Togoland Government. The Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons was composed of various groups and the Government was a coalition. Lastly, the final objective was not full internal self-government together with the termination of the trusteeship, but independence.

5. The new Statute for the Cameroons under French administration provided for the transfer of all internal legislative, administrative and jurisdictional powers to the Cameroonian Government with a view to ensuring full internal self-government, so that the Territory would be on the same footing as Togoland between 1 January 1959 and the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960. The United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, would report whether that was in fact the case and would be able to dispel or confirm any doubts which might be felt in that connexion. The delegation of Haiti was convinced that the Cameroonian Government would achieve independence.

6. Since Nigeria was to become independent on 1 October 1960, and in view of the date set for the popular consultation in the Cameroons under French administration, the delegation of Haiti felt that the consultation in the Cameroons under British administration should take place between October and December 1959 rather than in 1960, despite the arguments put forward by the United Kingdom representative. He entirely agreed with that representative that the prob-

lem should be examined in an orderly manner, first by the Trusteeship Council and later by the General Assembly, but he did not agree about the date of the General Assembly session. In his opinion the Visiting Mission should be asked to submit its report to the Trusteeship Council as early as possible, so that the Council could consider it without delay and draw up a special report, which would be examined by the General Assembly not at its fourteenth regular session but at a special session which might be held between the two regular sessions of the Trusteeship Council.

7. His delegation did not agree with the proposal in the least paragraph of the memorandum of the French Government (A/C.4/388), which would constitute a delegation of powers by the General Assembly to the Trusteeship Council. One of the measures to be studied related to a question submitted by the Cameroonian Government for the consideration of the General Assembly and was linked with another question which, according to the United Kingdom Government's programme, should be debated by the General Assembly at its fourteenth session. The first concerned the reunification of the Cameroons, the other a plebiscite at the time of the attainment of independence by Nigeria.

8. It seemed to him that a special effort should be made by the two Administering Authorities to coordinate operations in order to contribute to the solution of a difficult problem. Both Administering Authorities rightly maintained that the views and recommendations of the Visiting Mission should be examined first of all by the Trusteeship Council. Their proposals, however, were at variance; France wished the Trusteeship Council to make arrangements which the United Kingdom considered should be made by the General Assembly. France thought that the General Assembly at its fourteenth session should merely initial the birth certificate of the independent Cameroons, whereas the United Kingdom view was that the General Assembly would put the finishing touches to a piece of machinery which had not yet been perfected.

9. The delegation of Haiti held that the authority of the General Assembly should be maintained in all cases, as it had been in the case of Togoland, but that in the general interest there should be no delay and that a special session of the General Assembly might be convened to examine the special report of the Trusteeship Council and decide what steps should be taken.

10. His delegation considered that there would be no point in discussing the details on the future operations to be carried out until the report of the Visiting Mission was available. It had been sorry to hear doubts expressed in advance with regard to the value of the Visiting Mission's report. He deplored the unfairness of such an attitude, not only because a member of his delegation was a member of the Mission but because the Mission was a body appointed by the United Nations composed of honourable men and it was entitled to expect that its work should be examined and judged according to its merits. His delegation awaited its report with interest and judgement should be reserved until the report had been studied.

11. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) expressed his appreciation of the informative material the French and United Kingdom delegations had given in their statements. The French delegation's announcement

that the Cameroons under French administration would accede to independence on 1 January 1960, its subsequent memorandum and the two statements by Mr. Ahidjo had been most useful to the Committee, while the United Kingdom representative had made a special effort to provide the Committee at the outset with a clear exposition of the views of his Government, which was essential to the proper consideration of the question. In particular he thanked the United Kingdom representative for having been willing to give the Committee extensive information regarding Nigeria despite the fact that the Charter did not call for information on political advancement in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Such information, as he himself had pointed out at the time of the plebiscite in the former Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration, was vital in cases where there was a close association between a Trust Territory and a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

12. He had regarded the mission entrusted to him in connexion with the plebiscite in Togoland under British administration as both a grave responsibility and a high honour. While his delegation would never hesitate to accept a responsibility it thought that such honours should be fairly distributed and it therefore suggested that in future similar missions should be headed in each case by a member of a different delegation. That would ensure that the valuable experience gained would be the collective experience of the General Assembly rather than of any single delegation.

13. The Committee's discussion would, he thought, be facilitated if the Secretariat could provide it with a large wall map showing in bold outline the major elements of which the problem was composed. One such element was the imminent emergence in the north of a great independent State with an entirely African population, heretofore a Non-Self-Governing Territory. A second element was the prospect of the establishment in the south of another great independent African State in place of what had formerly been a Trust Territory under French administration. Between those States lay a third element, namely, two small, densely populated areas which lacked the means to exist as an independent State and whose inhabitants had expressed no desire for independence. In the circumstances it was clear that what was called for was a popular consultation under United Nations supervision to ascertain whether the inhabitants wished to join an independent Nigeria or an independent Cameroons. Finally there was a fourth element: the two Administering Authorities.

14. The situation was far more complicated than his rough outline might suggest. First of all there were many Cameroonians who would not agree that the two prospective States were on an equal footing in relation to the Cameroons under British administration. They advocated what they called not unification but reunification, an issue which had likewise been an important element in the Togoland question and which had resulted from the action taken by the European States during the nineteenth century in imposing their several zones of influence. In so doing the Europeans had broken up the natural tribal entities then existing but had at the same time inculcated in the Africans the modern concept of statehood. Hence it was understandable that, however artificial the frontiers originally laid down by the Europeans might have been, the Afri-

cans had resented the imposition three or four decades later of still further geographical divisions. The period after the First World War had also given rise to the concept of self-determination, expressed successively through the Mandates and Trusteeship System. It was that development which had made it possible for petitioners to come before the United Nations and present the case for rectification of the injustice done by the Europeans in dividing the African peoples. Nevertheless the United Nations, while recognizing the legitimacy of that claim, was not legally or morally in a position to do otherwise than to offer the inhabitants of the Cameroons under British administration a free choice of association with one or the other of the two prospective new States. Before all else, it must abide by the principle of self-determination: for it, the most important aspect of a Territory was not its geography but its people, and its destiny must be decided by their freely expressed will. Hence if the majority were to vote in favour of integration with Nigeria—a country with which, through no fault of either the Cameroonians or the Nigerians, the Territory had been closely associated for forty years—the United Nations would have to regard that choice as no less legitimate than a vote for reunification with the Cameroons under French administration.

15. His own experience in the case of the plebiscite in Togoland under British administration had convinced him of the importance of reducing the choice put to the voters to the simplest terms possible. While paragraphs 6 to 14 of his report on the Togoland plebiscite (A/3173) had shown that in the case of that Territory the issues had been such that they could not have been presented in a simple form, he had pointed out in paragraph 7 that the questions put to the voters had been so complicated that persons with a higher education in any country of the world would not readily have seized them unless the full background of the matter had been made available to them. He would like to suggest that in any future consultation of a similar nature the questions should be sufficiently simple to be comprehensible even to minors. The fact that both Nigeria and the Cameroons under French administration were to become independent in the same year should help to simplify the issue in the present instance.

16. With regard to the complaint made by some delegations that the United Kingdom was openly in favour of integration with Nigeria, he could only say that he himself had taken it for granted that the Administering Authorities would not be impartial in the matter. He had already had occasion to observe the extent to which Governments engaged in leading a people towards independence identified themselves with the views of their wards. Hence it was to be expected that the United Kingdom would share the wish of the Nigerians that the Cameroons under British administration should join with them in forming an independent State. Although he had not yet heard such an expression of views from the French representative he presumed that France would like to see the Territory join the Cameroons under French administration. It would be entirely unrealistic to expect the United Kingdom and France to be impartial and it was precisely that fact which, more than any other, made it imperative that the United Nations should play a part in bringing the problem to a satisfactory solution. In paragraph 111 of its special report (T/1206 and Add.1) the United Nations Visiting

Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration, 1955, had suggested that, in view of the preference expressed by the Administering Authority and the Gold Coast Government for the integration of Togoland under British administration with the Gold Coast, the United Nations should supervise the plebiscite, for in so doing it would create confidence among all political parties and sections of the people and reassure world opinion as to the absolute fairness of the plebiscite.

17. It was possible, of course, that the people of the Territory might not wish to accept either of the two major alternatives but might prefer to remain under trusteeship for a few more years; in that event it could only be hoped that the United Kingdom would not refuse to provide the necessary resources. It was fortunate that in the present case, unlike that of Togoland, there would be choice between association with one or another of two fully independent States, both of which had made it unmistakably clear that they would be glad to be joined by the Cameroons under British administration. Nigeria had even gone so far as to specify the form which such integration would take and he was sure the French delegation would provide similar information in due course. He therefore hoped that it would prove possible to limit the choice to integration with Nigeria or unification with the Cameroons under French administration. The order in which those two alternatives would be put was a question to be decided by a vote of the General Assembly.

18. The remaining problems would not be difficult to solve. The simple methods used in organizing and carrying out the plebiscite in Togoland under British administration might well be applied. It need not take so long as the four and a half months required in the case of the Togoland plebiscite but it would not be advisable to cut the time too drastically. Secrecy of the ballot should, of course, be compulsory. He thought that the use of indelible ink to which the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Elections in Togoland under French Administration had had recourse was to be recommended. It was for the Assembly to decide by vote whether the plebiscite should be supervised by a commissioner or a commission.

19. The future of the Cameroons under British administration could not, however, be decided without being synchronized with developments in the Cameroons under French administration. Mr. Ahidjo had said that as the Cameroons under French administration was to become independent on 1 January 1960 the population of the Cameroons under British administration should be consulted before that date; the United Kingdom representative, on the other hand, had said that that would not be possible. While the French delegation had made it clear that it contemplated a consultation under United Nations supervision to determine the will of the people of the Cameroons under its administration, it had not yet stated what form such a consultation should take. Some delegations seemed to expect that it would take the form of a referendum in which the people would be asked whether or not they wanted independence and whether or not they wanted reunification of the Cameroons. While he was aware that no such proposal had been formally submitted he wished to state categorically that he would not be able to vote

in favour of a referendum in which such questions were asked for he did not think that such an important consultation, carried out as it would be under United Nations auspices, should be made the occasion for asking a question the answer to which was already perfectly obvious. His delegation could not conceive of a situation in which it would be necessary to ask a dependent people whether or not it wanted independence. It had been his own experience to encounter in African territories chiefs who had stated that they did not want independence imposed on them, but he had observed in those same Territories that the overwhelming majority of the population wanted independence. Similarly, there was no point in asking the population of the Cameroons under French administration whether or not they wanted reunification, for the Government, the Opposition, the petitioners and all political parties had expressed themselves in favour of that objective. If the question were put to the inhabitants of that Territory it might then be requested that the inhabitants of Nigeria should be consulted on whether or not they wanted the Cameroons under British administration to become part of Nigeria. In both cases the people and the representative bodies of the future independent States had already answered the question.

20. Whatever form the consultation of the people of the Cameroons under French administration was to take it was imperative that their desires with regard to their future should be ascertained before they acceded to independence. In that connexion he could only repeat what he had said earlier in the session with regard to Togoland under French administration: namely, that it was to be hoped that general elections supervised by the United Nations as a preliminary step towards accession to independence would become a general rule of the Trusteeship System. He hoped that other delegations would frankly express their views on that point.

21. The Committee should bear in mind the possibility that the elections to be held in the Cameroons under British administration in 1959 could be made to serve as a plebiscite, which could be held under United Nations supervision and on the basis of the type of question he had suggested. Such a plebiscite could be arranged to coincide with a general election in the Cameroons under French administration.

22. He appealed to each representative to be conscious of the responsibility which he would bear when the question came to the vote. Every plebiscite that had ever been held had aroused deep feeling and seldom had it been possible to establish a frontier line after a plebiscite without causing harm to someone. He wished to record his appreciation of the attitude of the Government of Ghana, which had voluntarily provided to the Commission on Human Rights a full and convincing explanation of the events which had occurred in Togoland under British administration after the plebiscite of 1956. The Committee had the right to assure itself that it was taking part in something which was crystal clear. What he had said in connexion with plebiscites was also true with regard to the harmony which should prevail in a country when independence was granted. The bloody history of the Spanish-American countries was due to the fact that at the time they had achieved independence it had been impossible to ensure that the Governments of the new

States would be in fully representative hands. No one had tried to deny that there had been disturbances in the Territories with which the Committee was now dealing. If the United Nations and the Administering Authority agreed to a plebiscite the result of which might be that the Cameroons under British administration became part of an independent State of the Cameroons, they were entitled to an assurance that it would be joining a State in which harmony, peace and progress prevailed. His delegation held that the French Government and Mr. Ahidjo's Government were gradually achieving that end. If the Committee could take any steps to complete the process, and thus produce a reasonable guarantee that an independent State of the Cameroons would not be a prey to violence, it should frankly discuss the possibility of so doing. His delegation was ready to do anything possible to assist in achieving that end.

23. The CHAIRMAN said he felt sure that the Secretariat would do its best to provide the large maps for which the Mexican representative had asked.

24. Mr. Usman SASTROAMIDJOJO (Indonesia) observed that it was disheartening to note that conditions in the Cameroons under French administration were still marked by disorders, as had been reported by the petitioners during the past week. In the light of the promising constitutional developments which had been announced by the French representative and the Prime Minister of the Cameroons, the disturbed situation in the Territory inevitably gave rise to the question whether certain significant political and psychological factors might have been to some extent overlooked. Obviously the internal difficulties facing the future independent State of the Cameroons would not automatically vanish with the granting of independence. For independence to be of lasting value it must not be limited to a favoured minority. The orderly attainment of independence was obviously contingent on the capability of the present Cameroonian Government to overcome the internal difficulties which prevailed.

25. The Prime Minister of the Cameroons had explained at the 800th meeting how the question of an amnesty would be dealt with by his Government and had stated that no political conditions would be attached and that there would be full freedom to form political associations or parties in the Cameroons. The Indonesian delegation was unable to understand why the amnesty law was still discriminatory in its application if the system which conditioned it was democratic in nature. That apparent inconsistency on the part of the Cameroonian Government would reflect seriously on the form of government to be arrived at when independence was achieved. It might also reflect on the future tendencies of the present Cameroonian Government in its internal policy. The question naturally arose whether the discriminatory application of the amnesty might have been inspired by the fear that a more universal application of the law would have brought to power the so-called extremists and political agitators who, as history had shown, often turned out to be the true representatives of the people.

26. During the debate in the Committee on the Cameroons under French administration at the twelfth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had espoused the view (730th meeting) that the disturbances were merely symptoms of a deep-seated conflict between the people of the Territory and the Administering



Authority concerning the fundamental principle of the right of the indigenous population to choose for themselves the form of government which in their opinion would enable them to attain the objectives of Article 76 of the Charter. In view of the early date at which independence was to be achieved, it was particularly urgent that all aspects of the demands of the entire population should be given proper consideration. Realizing the very complicated issues involved in the situation, his delegation had, at the twelfth session, abstained in the vote in the Committee on the relevant draft resolution (A/C.4/L.512/Rev.3) as a whole, because paragraph 5 of that text did not include the word "entire" before the word "situation"; it had, however, supported the resolution in plenary session, in a spirit of conciliation and in the light of the terms of paragraph 5 of the text adopted resolution 1211 (XII).

27. Although the Committee had been assured by the French representative and the Prime Minister of the Cameroons that the Territory was already advancing towards the attainment of the objectives of Article 76 of the Charter, it was by no means clear how that progress was to be achieved. The statement of the Prime Minister of the Cameroons had not been very reassuring and the Indonesian delegation wondered whether there had been agreement between the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government regarding the transfer to the Cameroonians, within one year, of the residual powers of defence, foreign affairs and currency.

28. He realized that it was not for the United Nations to decide on the political structure or future of the Cameroons under French administration, but it was certainly competent to ensure that the people of Trust Territories exercised the right of free choice with regard to their future. The formal introduction of political reforms should always be accompanied by the approval of the United Nations as the second party to the Trusteeship Agreement. Hence before approving a possible termination of the Trusteeship Agreement concerning the Cameroons under French administration the United Nations must be informed of the constitutional reforms to be introduced in the Territory and must make certain that they would not preclude the attainment of the objectives of Article 76 and that they represented the true wishes of the people.

29. His delegation felt that perhaps more importance was being attached to the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement than to the creation of conditions conducive to the attainment of independence. Nevertheless, it noted that proper reference had been made to the resolution of 24 October 1958 adopted by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration, which reaffirmed its attachment to the principle of the unification of the two Cameroons and urged that all steps should be taken to ensure that the peoples concerned might in complete freedom express their will concerning such reunification on or before 1 January 1960. The Prime Minister had declared that the people of the Cameroons under British administration should be consulted about their future status and their wish to join their neighbours, and had added that his Government would be ready to accept the responsibilities of independence and reunification.

30. His delegation considered that the General Assembly should take immediate steps towards the establishment of a truly constituent assembly encom-

passing all the political elements in the Cameroons under French administration, to enable the Cameroonian Government to deal with the problems of unification and independence if they should be submitted for the consideration of the assembly after the two Territories had been consulted.

31. The United Kingdom representative had stressed that what was being done in the Cameroons under British administration was in the best interests of the population and that the problems of independence were being constantly watched by public opinion in the United Kingdom and France. His delegation welcomed the assurance that the people of the Cameroons under British administration would be consulted on whether they wished to remain under trusteeship or to be associated with the neighbouring Territory of the Cameroons under French administration. In that connexion he recalled the statement made by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Colonies at the Nigeria Constitutional Conference held in London in May and June 1957, to the effect that there could be no question of obliging the Cameroons to remain part of an independent Nigeria contrary to its own wishes and that before Nigeria was independent the people of the Northern and Southern Sections of the Cameroons would have the opportunity to state what their wishes were for their future. Despite the technical difficulties pointed out by the United Kingdom representative, his delegation maintained that the peoples of both Trust Territories should be consulted with regard to their future before Nigeria and the Cameroons under French administration attained independence. It urged that the peoples of both countries should be consulted simultaneously, firstly because the Administering Authority for the Cameroons under British administration recognized that the Trust Territory might wish to remain a Trust Territory even after Nigeria had become independent, and secondly because the present Government of the Cameroons under French administration and the Government of France had made known their willingness to consult the peoples of the Cameroons under French administration on their relationship with the Cameroons under British administration before the former became independent in 1960.

32. His delegation would support any draft resolution embodying the ideas he had expressed.

33. Mr. VELA (Guatemala) said that many factors, including recent developments, made it difficult to reach an opinion about the problem of the two Trust Territories of the Cameroons, a problem which was further complicated by the related question of their reunification. If a calendar of events had been submitted beforehand to the General Assembly by the Administering Authorities, it would have been possible for the General Assembly to give due consideration to the steps necessary to ensure the political, economic and social development of the two Territories, and the Committee would not have found itself hard pressed as the result of a rapid succession of events, each of them governed by fixed dates. In the case of Togoland under French administration, it had been possible to review the problems involved in good time, with the happy results which were familiar to the Committee.

34. The grievances of the petitioners were very much the same as they had been at the previous session. That led him to wonder whether the Administering Authorities and the United Nations had done everything

possible to bring about a change and so to enable the peoples of the Territories to look forward to the future and to their new responsibilities in a calmer atmosphere and with a greater sense of solidarity. His delegation regretted that a broad and unconditional amnesty for political offenders had not been proclaimed; that would have made it possible for the political parties dissolved in 1955 to resume their activities, subject only to due observance of the law. The Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration had referred to the events of 1955 and to subsequent incidents, but had rejected charges of repression when the armed forces had had to intervene to restore order. It had been encouraging to hear him repeat, at the 800th meeting, his promise of a *de facto* amnesty and say that everyone was free to establish a political association or a political party in the Cameroons, provided that he abided by the democratic system and observed the law. In stating that he had no desire to have shock brigades, para-military bodies and an inhuman ideology revived in the Cameroons, the Prime Minister seemed to share the views of those who feared that new African States which had so recently ceased to be under colonial domination might come under the influence of foreign interests alien to the legitimate aspirations of their peoples. It was indeed unfortunate that the new States should achieve independence in times of such international tension. He hoped that an assurance would be given that the final steps leading to the termination of the trusteeship would be taken in a democratic way and that liberty and equality would be guaranteed to all political parties.

35. He would anxiously await the impartial report of the Visiting Mission, which should be considered as a matter of urgency at the next session of the Trusteeship Council or at a special session. If the members of the Visiting Mission felt that their time had been too short to allow of a proper consideration of the whole Cameroonian problem, the suggestion that a special United Nations commission might be sent should be taken into account.

36. It had been said that the Union des populations du Cameroun was supported by only 5 per cent of the population of the Cameroons under French administration and that One Kamerun had only secured 3 per cent of the votes. That surely implied that the authorities concerned had little to fear from a resumption of activities by those parties, moreover their aspirations were the same as those set out in the resolution adopted by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration on 24 October 1958. He merely mentioned those facts in order to stress one advantage, from the point of view of democracy, of giving greater opportunities to minorities.

37. The Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, the Legislative Assembly of that Territory and the petitioners themselves had expressed the desire that the people of the Cameroons under British administration should be asked, by means of a referendum to be held under the supervision of the United Nations before 1 January 1960, whether they wished to join the Cameroons under French administration. The Cameroons under British administration had, however, been divided into two areas attached to different administrative regions of Nigeria. Such action subordinated the desires or

interests of the inhabitants to the practical needs of administration and gradually, though perhaps unintentionally, impelled them in the direction of integration with a neighbouring country. During the twelfth session at the 721st meeting of the Committee, the United Kingdom representative had said that there could be no question of obliging the Cameroonians to remain part of an independent Nigeria contrary to their own wishes and that they would have to say freely what their wishes were as to their own future. The United Kingdom representative had added that many of the best friends of the Cameroons did not foresee a destiny more likely to promote its happiness and prosperity than continued association with Nigeria. The petitioners had voiced two misgivings; firstly, that the United Kingdom would take advantage of the earlier grant of independence to the Cameroons under French administration to integrate the Territory under its own administration with Nigeria; secondly, about the type of future association with France that was envisaged. The Administering Authorities seemed to suggest that conditions were different in the two Cameroons, but that surely referred more to the type of administration than to the peoples themselves, and it might well not be the view of the inhabitants. With regard to future association with France, he had understood the petitioners to suggest that no decision should be reached on that question until the trusteeship had been brought to an end and a plebiscite held.

38. There was no co-ordination in the programmes laid down for the two Cameroons; not only did the dates not coincide but the Committee had learned from the United Kingdom representative's statement at the 803rd meeting that his Government could not see its way to holding a plebiscite before 1 January 1960. The Guatemalan delegation had always envisaged the possibility of a consultation of the inhabitants being held simultaneously in both Territories, under the supervision of the United Nations, and had considered that after the reunification of the Cameroons new general elections should be held, also under United Nations supervision and by universal suffrage, in order to set up a representative Government of the whole Cameroonian nation.

39. The General Assembly was being asked to decide at the present session on the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement in the Cameroons under French administration, although the actual event would not take place before 1 January 1960. His delegation felt, however, that it would be better to wait until the fourteenth session, when the report of the Visiting Mission would be available. Even if there was some exaggeration in the statements made about conditions in the Cameroons, it was obvious that the situation had not yet returned to normal. That was all the more unfortunate in view of the terms of General Assembly resolutions 1067 (XI) and 1211 (XII), and he hoped that every effort would be made to restore normal conditions.

40. The General Assembly should give due weight to the wishes expressed for the reunification of the Cameroons and he hoped that a method would be found of ascertaining the will of the peoples of the two Territories. His delegation would support any draft resolutions which were based on the principle enshrined in the Charter, that the interests of the inhabitants of the Territories were paramount.

Mr. Rodzinski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

41. Mr. EDMONDS (New Zealand) agreed with the view that no decision should be taken in connexion with either of the Trust Territories that might prejudice the report of the Visiting Mission, the observations of the Administering Authorities on that report and the recommendations which would be made by the Trusteeship Council. The Visiting Mission had a special mandate to examine the best methods for consulting the populations of both Trust Territories and it could be expected to produce an impartial and constructive report on conditions in the Territories and the aspirations of their inhabitants. His delegation would oppose any draft resolution which in any way prejudged the report of the Visiting Mission.

42. It had been suggested that a special session of the General Assembly should be held in 1959 to deal with the two Trust Territories of the Cameroons. There was, however, nothing in the programme suggested by the Administering Authorities to make such a course necessary. It would seem eminently reasonable to delay holding any consultation in the Cameroons under British administration on the question of unification until the legal, political and economic implications were made clear to its inhabitants. But the Visiting Mission's views on that subject should be most useful.

43. The Visiting Mission had been asked also for its opinion on the procedure to be adopted to ascertain the views of the people of the Cameroons under French administration concerning their future on the termination of trusteeship. So far, all views from that Territory seemed to be in agreement; the inhabitants de-

sired full independence and the reunification of the two Cameroons.

44. U ON SEIN (Burma) said that after a prolonged period of stagnation, the Cameroons under French administration had entered upon a new phase which held out promise for the future. The awakening of the inhabitants had led to a corresponding awakening on the part of the Administering Authorities to the realities of a changing world. He regretted the failure of the Administering Authorities to institute a liberal policy prior to the emergence of militant political parties, for reforms instituted in good time could often divert revolutionary tendencies. His delegation was concerned at the tension still prevailing in the Cameroons under French administration and considered that a general amnesty should be declared.

45. The Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration had spoken in favour of unification and had said that the peoples of both Territories should be consulted about their future. It was a complex problem, involving Nigeria—the independence of which he welcomed—as well as the two Trust Territories. The points of view of those who desired the unification of the Cameroons and of those who wished for integration with Nigeria were equally worthy of respect, but only the Cameroonians themselves could take the decision. The consultation should be held in such a way as to ensure freedom for the expression of all shades of political opinion in the two Trust Territories and a true reflection of the views held there. The report of the Visiting Mission should be carefully considered before any decision was taken.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.