



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.4/95
16 March 1953

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PETITION FROM THE BAKWERI YOUTH ASSOCIATION CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of Somaliland, an undated communication from the Bakweri Youth Association concerning the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration.

COPY

BAKWERI YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Supplementary Memorandum submitted to the Second Visiting
Mission of the Trusteeship Council^{1/}

Subject:- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

In the Memorandum presented to the Chairman of the Visiting Mission of the Trusteeship Council at Buea on Saturday, 22nd November 1952, at the Native Court Hall, it was stressed that further evidence would be given elaborating on the reasons underlying the demand of the Bakweri people for the total abolition of the Man O War Bay Training Centre. One of those reasons was the avoidable deaths that have occurred on the Cameroons Mountain.

The Association is presenting the case of

FRANCIS EKEMA

ONE OF THE Man O War Bay students, who died on 15th April, 1952. The circumstances leading to his untimely death are embodied in the attached copy of the INQUISITION. The three relevant aspects of this matter which the Association wishes to bring to the notice of the Mission are as follows:-

A. The Training of Francis Ekema:

The following facts emerge:-

- 1) The late Francis Ekema was admitted into the course without a medical examination to determine his physical fitness for the rigorous training involved - an oversight which led to his premature death.

1/ Note by the Secretariat: The present memorandum was received by the Secretary-General after the Visiting Mission had completed its work; the previous memorandum referred to in the first paragraph was considered by the Mission to be intended for its own information.

- 2) The deceased, no doubt finding himself unable to proceed with the training, offered to resign from the course but this was refused by the Man O War Bay authorities without investigation. This reflects the attitude of those in charge towards African students whose interests they are supposed to safeguard.
- 3) On the fatal day in question, according to medical evidence before the Inquest, Francis Ekema's stomach was found during the post mortem examination to be empty "save for a little bile stained fluid".. This again exposes the so-called care and attention given to the trainees.

B. The Inquisition

It will be observed on the last page of the Inquisition that the Coroner received a request for representation at the Inquest after it had been held. The truth is that

- 1) The intention to hold the inquest was not publicised, nor were the relatives of the deceased informed. Thus it was impracticable for any arrangements to be made for the services of a Counsel or for the calling of material witnesses - a state of affairs which indicates quite clearly the cavalier fashion in which matters of public importance are treated in this part of the Trust Territory.
- 2) In an effort to cover up the extent to which the death of this young man has been due to carelessness on the part of those concerned, it is significant to note from the Inquisition that not a single African was permitted to give evidence in spite of the fact that the two Africans present - The Guide and the Instructor - not to mention the 25 other students of the course - were persons intimately connected with this tragedy.

- 3) The Police statement that there were "bruises on the body" of Francis Ekema is consistent with the reports that the body was dragged along the side of the mountain when it was discovered that the boy had "lost the will to continue".
- 4) Requests for a re-opening of the Inquest have not been acceded to.

C. Compensation

Having regard

- (a) to the circumstances in which Francis Ekema left for this course, i.e. as a nominee of the Cameroons Development Corporation;
- (b) to the fact that he offered without success to resign from the course and that such resignation would have been construed, however wrongly, by his employers as a deliberate act of disobedience resulting in disciplinary action being taken; and
- (c) to the wretched state in which his widow and child and other dependents have been left uncared for,

This Association wishes to place the case for a Compensation or an ex-gratia award before the Mission in the hope that the matter will be given the most sympathetic consideration.

D. Conclusion

As this Supplementary Memorandum is presented at the request of the Chairman of the UNO Visiting Mission to the Cameroons as a result of there being no time for the Mission to hear oral evidence here at Buea, it is desired to stress that this is only one of the reasons which have led the Bakweri people to spurn the Man O War Bay Training Scheme whose existence the 1st Visiting Mission to the Cameroons had, with optimism, referred to in their report as a potential scheme for the regeneration of the Bakweri people. This memorandum should therefore be read in conjunction with the relevant section dealing with Community Development in the Association's main petition of 22nd November 1952.

The Coroners' Ordinance, 1944

THE INQUISITION

An inquisition taken at VICTORIA in the district of CAMEROONS in Nigeria, the 17th day of APRIL 1952, before MR. H.W.N. BETUEL on the view of the body of one EKEMA FRANCIS then and there lying dead.

Now I, Mr. H.W.N. Betual charged to enquire when, where, how and after what manner the said EKEMA FRANCIS came to his death say that the following particulars have been disclosed:-

1. Name of deceased EKEMA FRANCIS
2. Residence and occupation CLERK, C.D.C. BUEA
3. Means of identity MR. FULLER
4. Where found, when, and under what circumstances
EXPOSURE TO COLD, MOUNT CAMEROONS
5. Date of death 15:4:52
6. Cause of death EXPOSURE TO COLD
7. Offence (if any) to which death attributable
EXPOSURE TO COLD

And I, the said Mr. H.W.N. BETUAL do say that my verdict is DEATH AS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO COLD.

In witness whereof I have to this inquisition set my hand the 17th day of APRIL 1952.

(Signed) HERBERT BETUAL
Coroner

VICTORIA
Station

COPY

NIGERIA POLICE

CAMEROONS Province

Police Report in cases of Sudden Death, for
the information of the Coroner:

Name of deceased (if known) FRANCIS EKEMA

Sex MALE

Description DARK COMPLEXION

Where found and when EUEA MCUNTAIN

Probable cause of death COLD

Remarks BRUISES ON BODY

Station EUEA

16th April 1952

R ROLLO

Signature and Rank of Police Officer
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

COPY

FORM B

CORONERS ORDINANCE (Chapter 41)

Death Report to Coroner
Particulars of deceased
etc.

1. Name, sex and approximate age of deceased FRANCIS EKEMA (m) 26 years.
2. Nationality or Tribe BONJONGO - BAKWERI- BUEA
3. Occupation CLERK - C.D.C.
4. Date, hour and place of death 15.4.52, 1400 hours, BUEA MOUNTAIN
5. Supposed cause of death EXPOSURE TO COLD
6. Person who found body or gave first information of death MR. FULLER
7. Date and hour first information received by Police 15/4/52 1630 hours
8. Circumstances of death and names of persons who can give information thereof EXPOSURE TO COLD
9. Name of authority making first investigation P/cs 7740 Mr. J. AJOH and 7678 Mr. JOHN GOBINA
10. Date and time of investigation 15.4.52
11. Describe where and how body found BUEA MOUNTAIN, on the ground.
12. Marks of violence (if any) -
13. Circumstances of suspicion (if any) -
14. Date and hour when report sent to coroner 16/4/52

Having made full inquiries I have the honour to report that:-

- (a) there are no suspicion circumstances surrounding the death nor are there any marks of violence on the body;
- (b) In my opinion an inquest ought to be held;
- (c) the body has been viewed by me and buried at
I am satisfied that the body viewed by me was the body of
FRANCIS EKEMA (m)
- (d) the body has been sent by me to GENERAL HOSPITAL - VICTORIA
- (e) the following persons have been arrested (or are about to be arrested)
.. in connection with the death on the charges stated hereunder:-

Station BUEA

R. ROLLO A.S.P.
Authority

I order that an inquest be opened at on the day of, 19.....
(or I do not consider that an inquest is necessary or desirable)

Date 16/4/52

R.R. HAMMOND
for Coroner BUEA

COPY

Report of Medical Practitioner

1. Date and Hour of receipt of corpse at Mortuary 16.4.52 4 p.m.
2. Condition of corpse on arrival FRESH
3. Mode in which packed: WRAPPED IN BLANKETS
4. Date and hour of holding examination 16.4.52 5.30 p.m.
5. Name of deceased (if known): FRANCIS EKEMA
6. By whom identified: ROSA NGOMBA (AUNT)
7. Approx. age 20 years
8. Sex MALE
9. Probable date of death 15.4.52

Medical Report:-

On external examination: Rigor Mortis was still present. There were no signs of external injury or violence.

On internal examination: The blood generally throughout the body had the extremely arterial - that is bright red colour - peculiar to exposure of bodies to low temperatures.

Also all the internal organs showed extreme congestion which again is seen in exposure. (The lungs - liver - kidneys - spleen intestines - brain etc. were all suffused with blood) (on the other hand the superficial structures were practically bloodless - skin and subcutaneous fatty tissues).

The right plenal cavity showed old adhesions and fluid was present in same. Hilar glands were removed for expert examination.

The heart was congested with fluid in the pericardium.

Mesenteric glands were also removed for examination.

The stomach was empty save for a little bile stained fluid.

Death in my opinion was due to exposure and cardiac failure due to same.

R.A. STRUDWICK
Medical Officer

The Coroner Victoria
17.4.52

COPY

1st Deponent s/s on Bible in English.

RICHARD HAROLD STRUDWICK. - Male - European - Medical Officer stationed at Victoria. On 16/4/52 in accordance with a Coroner's Order, I performed a post-mortem examination on a body, identified to me as that of FRANCIS EKEMA, by Rosa Ngomba, who purported to be his aunt. On external examination, rigor mortis was still present, there were no signs of external injury or violence. On internal examination, blood generally throughout the body had an extreme arterial appearance, i.e. the blood in the arteries and the veins were of the same colour typical of a live body exposed to a low temperature, below 15° centigrade. The internal organs showed extreme congestion, which again suggested exposure to cold weather. The skin and subcutaneous features were practically drained of blood again strongly suggesting exposure to cold. The deceased's pleural cavity showed old adhesions and fluid, his right lung may have been tubercular previously. I took specimens of the glands from the lung and sent them to Lagos to be analysed. Stomach was empty save for a little fluid, which suggested that the deceased had not eaten for at least 4 hours before his death. The heart showed signs of congestion and there was fluid in the pericardium i.e. the membrane around the heart which suggested to me the blood had been forced from the outer tissues into the deeper organs which could have been caused by the cold.

There was plenty of oxygen in the blood but it was not available for the tissues because of the low temperature. Also at a height of 10,000 ft. the oxygen tension in the atmosphere is much lower causing a greater strain on the heart. The condition of the heart perse was quite normal. The cause of death in my opinion was exposure to cold with cardiac failure resulting. Dampness and lack of oxygen following the exposure to cold.

R.H. STRUDWICK
17/4/52

Mr. W. Galabe
Sworn Interpreter

Taken before me at Victoria this 17th day of April 1952.

HERBERT BETUAL
Coroner.

2nd Deponent s/s on Bible in English.

CARL MICHAEL WILSON - Male - European - Chief Medical Officer, Cameroons Development Corporation - stationed at Bota - Tiko - I examine most of the students of the Man of War Bay training School on arrival to see if they are fit for strenuous work, i.e. for the exercises they do. I examine them to see if they are reasonably fit. I understand 2 students were late in arriving and were not among the students I examined. I did not examine FRANCIS EKEMA he was one of the late students. I did examine HYACINTH NNAJI. I test their hearts, have a general test, especially for sleeping sickness. I listen to their lungs. I feel their spleen and liver to see that they are not too enlarged, and if they tell me anything I follow it up. I do not remember anything about HYACINTH NNAJI except that I gave him the same examination as I gave the others.

My last examination of students was about 2 or 3 weeks ago.

C. WILSON

Mr. W. Galabe
Sworn Interpreter

Taken before me at Victoria this 17th day of April 1952.

HERBERT BETUAL
Coroner.

3rd Deponent s/s on Bible in English.

ALEXANDER DICKSON - Male - European - Administrative Officer in Charge Community Development - lives at Man of War Bay. Principal of Man of War Bay Community Development Training Centre. It is for the training of selected persons in leadership in community development. They are all young men between roughly the ages of 20 - 30, they come from all over Nigeria, among them was HYACINTH NNAJI and FRANCIS EKEMA. On arrival the students are medically examined since this year but FRANCIS EKEMA was not examined because, I think, he arrived late. The course is physically strenuous, it is intentionally so, that fact is explained in advance to the organisation sending the candidate and the candidate himself. This was the 7th expedition to the Cameroons Mountain from Man of War Bay, half the students were on this expedition, the other half were to go up yesterday, 27, whole of students about 54. Three senior service officers

accompanied the students up the mountain, also the Senior African Instructor this was his 7th expedition, we also had our chief African mountain guide which was a higher proportion of senior experienced staff to that number of students than we had ever had before. All the 3 Senior Officers who went up are officers in whom I have the greatest confidence. Mr. Fuller, our Chief Instructor has come from the Outward Bound Training School in Britain, he has had much experience of mountain climbing especially with groups of young men. Mr. Wright has been with us for all the courses this year, Mr. Ashworth who has come from Okigwe where he was A.D.O. has had experience in Britain of this sort of training. I also have the fullest confidence in our African staff who went up.

On Tuesday afternoon at 4.30 p.m. I received a message, that 2 men were sick and help was needed. I immediately left Man of War Bay and drove to Buea, collected the Dispenser and a stretcher bearer party. We reached Hut No. 2 at 1.30 a.m. yesterday, Wednesday, the Dispenser said the 2 men were dead. Our staff and students had just ceased doing artificial respiration, they told us they had been working on it for 12 hours. We came down yesterday morning with the bodies. We feed our students. We take them up the mountain to develop in them qualities of leadership. After the students have been with us for a while, I know them individually. HYACINTH was a man of normal physique. EKEMA was below normal. Some students are less strong than others. Neither of the 2 men reported they were ill before climbing the mountains.

A.G. DICKSON

Mr. W. Galabe
Sworn Interpreter

Taken before me at Victoria this 17th day of April 1952.

HERBERT BETUAL
Coroner.

4th Deponent s/s on Bible in English.

GEORGE WILLIAM FULLER - Male - European - Chief Instructor Man of War Bay Training Centre. On 15/4/52, I took 27 students to climb Mount Cameroons. We reached Hut No. 2 by 5 p.m. We started the climb from Upper Farm at 10 a.m., we went to Upper Farm by lorry. Hut 2 is approximately 10,000 ft. We slept

the night at Hut 2, everyone was fully equipped. The next morning we had breakfast at about 6.30 a.m. The breakfast of the students consisted of garri, yam and hot tea, some did eat some corned beef. All the students were then assembled, one man was found unfit to make the climb and left behind. Climbing instructions were issued. As on the previous day the slowest climbers in the front, each man was paired off with a friend to help, the pace was set by the slowest member, and no one was allowed to fall behind, the guide and the African Instructor were put at the Front of the party, Mr. K. Wright, a European was in the centre of the column and Mr. Ashworth and myself brought up the rear. There was a slight drizzle as we started climbing. The party climbed steadily bunched together for about 1,000 feet we then encountered heavier rain in gusts, at this point 3 of the students began to lag. Mr. Ashworth and myself encouraged them to continue, 2 of them responded to the encouragement and went ahead. The deceased EKEMA found it getting more difficult so Mr. Ashworth and myself stayed with him to help him along. At about 1,000 feet from the summit at Hut No. 3 he sat down and refused to go either up or down, we lifted him on his feet to help him down the mountain, he began to shout hysterically leave me alone, I will die on this spot, I instructed Mr. Ashworth to go up the mountain and bring the rest of the party down. I lifted him over my shoulders in a firm-man's lift and tried to carry him down the mountain, the incline was so steep that the going was slow and I probably only carried him for 300 or 400 feet when I found the going too heavy, there was little shelter, so I covered him with my body and did what little massage I could to his hands and around his heart.

At this stage, he was conscious and muttering away to himself. I stayed with him until the first 2 students of the descending party arrived, one was Okene, Section Leader of No. 2 Section, the other Fattedass. I gave them instructions to remain with him and went down to Hut 2 to get carriers, blankets and hot drinks. Arriving at Hut 2, I sent 4 carriers up immediately and told the boys there to prepare soup, warm the blankets and make hot tea, by this time, some of the climbers had returned to the hut, they said they were too cold to help Ekema whom they saw on the way down, they were given a hot stew and warmed in front of the fire and I instructed them to do the same to the other students as they came down. The meal being prepared and the blankets ready, 2 personal

boys were sent up the mountain to help the party returning. I took 4 blankets, a flask of tea in a rucksack and again started climbing the mountain. I reached the deceased Ekema at about 1,000 feet from No. 2 hut. He was being carried down by John the guide and 3 carriers. They told me EKEMA had been given some hot tea. We reached Hut 2 on the descent at about 2 p.m. We massaged him with warm towels, covered him with blankets and began artificial respiration. We placed hot stones and towels under his armpits and between his legs, organised the Northern students into relays of help with artificial respiration. I then dictated a letter to the A.D.O. at Buea at about 2.18 p.m. and sent it down with the guide asking for stretchers and carriers and medical help setting out our position at the time, stressing that the situation was desperate and the illness was due to acute exposure. We continued the treatment long after there was any hope. At about 1.30 a.m. Mr. Dickson, the Principal, arrived with a nurse and some policemen, the nurse said it was useless to continue with the artificial respiration.

I have had experience of climbing. If EKEMA could have kept moving he would not have suffered so much from exposure, he seemed to lose the will to continue and gave up the fight.

G.W. FULLER

Mr. W. Galabe
Sworn Interpreter

Taken before me at Victoria this 17th day of April 1952.

HERBERT BETUAL
Coroner

17/4/52.

VERDICT:-

Death as a result of exposure to cold.

HERBERT BETUEL
Coroner

For Rider. See Rider in the Inquest of Hyacinth Mhaji with which this inquest is connected.

HERBERT BETUEL
Coroner
18/4/52.

Addendum.

This Inquisition was held as soon as it was practicable. After a verdict had been returned, a request was received by the Secretary-General of the Bakweri Land Committee for the Committee, the Native Authority and the relatives of the deceased to be represented at the Inquest. Had this request been received earlier, the Coroner, no doubt, would have endeavoured to meet this request, but it was received after the Inquisition had been determined.

The Coroner regrets that he did not have the assistance of Counsel, but is satisfied that the cause of death and the relevant circumstances surrounding it were adequately probed and that there was sufficient evidence before him to warrant the Verdict arrived at.

HERBERT BETUEL
Coroner
21/4/52

Certified true Copy

(sgd) Herbert Betuel

Acting Chief Magistrate
ex officio.
