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PETITION FROM Mr. ANDRE NOULAPON CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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Dschang, 12 February 1958

NOULAPON André
Planter at Dschang
(Cameroons)

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York, U.S.A.

Sir,

Ever since that new expression "Africanization of the civil service" was coined we have noted that the public services, with a frequency and regularity never before seen in the Dschang Subdivision, are committing the whole gamut of infractions: falsification of documents, swindling, etc.... Everything is being done to make life difficult, if not impossible, for the poor peasant. To improve their own lot our African civil servants are "feathering their own nests", taking large sums of money from everyone who requests a service which is legally his due. Every illegal means of attaining that end is resorted to: deliberate delay in issuing documents or in distributing such documents to the official concerned, false documents, extortionate tax demands.

In addition to this burning desire for material gain, our African civil servants are totally lacking in conscientiousness. For them the post to which they have been appointed is synonymous with idleness. Supervision is a thing of the past, they say, and their time can be devoted to excursions, prolonged siestas and the hatching of new plans for stealing money, while the people wait in vain for the services to which they are entitled. This is what has been observed lately in the Dschang Subdivision, where one of these African civil servants

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(who is legal adviser to the Chief Subdivisional Officer) spends three quarters of his time chasing after women, exaggerates or rather increases for his own benefit all the taxes which he is entitled to collect and has two weights and two measures in his court room, always deciding in favour of the person who offers the most money. That is the case at the Boys' School at Dschang, where the Headmaster takes money from new pupils before accepting them in his establishment and uses the word "co-operative" as an excuse to rob the children.

This is a high-minded and idealistic experiment which has failed. Most of the officials are still young people.

We make a brotherly appeal to our African civil servants, the first to assume the management of our affairs, to turn over a new leaf. Your first steps have been misguided. To be in charge of an office does not mean to be or to try to be richer than anyone else. You have been killing us by inches but beware, for there are plenty of grounds for complaint! Your professional responsibility, far from decreasing, increases when you are given an executive position. You think that we are feather-brained and for that reason you have blithely treated us with utter contempt and done us great harm.

The protector nation which has initiated this "Africans govern yourselves" experiment should appoint more worthy people to manage our affairs. The Dschang Subdivision has always been neglected in every way and the Government, to make matters worse, always sends us scoundrels, persons whose vulgarity and insensitiveness do us the utmost harm. It is time to punish their errors rather than to call us racists when we make well-founded complaints.

Sir, the facts described here are true and we beg you to use your good offices with both the protector nation and the Cameroonian Government to persuade them to appoint honest and hard-working Africans to Dschang, for until now we have had none but profiteers who suck the blood of the poor Bamiléké.

(Signed) A. Noulapom

Secretariat of the United Nations
President of the French Republic
President of the Assembly of the French Union
High Commissioner at Yaoundé
United States Consul at Yaoundé
