

## TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Twenty-third Session

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Thursday, 12 February 1959,  
at 10.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

## CONTENTS

## Page

Question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII)) (continued)

Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, on the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (continued)

Cameroons under French administration (continued)

Questions concerning the Trust Territory and replies of the representative and special representatives of the Administering Authority (concluded). . . . . 89

General debate. . . . . 90

**President: Mr. Max H. DORSINVILLE (Haiti).**

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Burma, China, France, Haiti, India, Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization.

**Question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (General Assembly resolution 1282 (XIII)) (continued)**

[Agenda item 17]

**Reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, on the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration (T/1426 and Add.1, T/1427, T/1434) (continued)**

[Agenda item 6]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gerig (United States of America) and Mr. Salomon (Haiti), members of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, and Mr. Betayenné and Mr. Pinon, special representatives of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration, took places at the Council table.

Cameroons under French administration (continued)

**QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY AND REPLIES OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AND SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY (concluded)**

1. Mr. SEARS (United States of America) said that his delegation intended to support the findings of the Visiting Mission and would vote for the termination of the trusteeship régime in the Cameroons under French administration on 1 January 1960, so that the Cameroons might become independent on that date. He asked Mr. Betayenné what, in his opinion, the reaction of the people of the Cameroons would be if the General Assembly were to ask for a postponement of the date of independence beyond 1 January 1960.

2. Mr. BETAYENNE (Special Representative) said that the termination of the trusteeship régime had been requested by the Cameroonian Government in full agreement with the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons. The Visiting Mission had had an opportunity to note that the people in all the regions of the Cameroons under French administration were eagerly awaiting the date of 1 January 1960. The population would not agree to a postponement of the date and would itself proclaim its independence on 1 January 1960.

3. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that the special representative had said (954th meeting) there had never been any regrouping of villages in the Sanaga-Maritime and that the inhabitants had erected stockades around their villages to defend themselves against attacks by the partisans. However, paragraphs 68 and 101 of the report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427) showed that villages had been regrouped and that other villages had been destroyed. He would like to know the grounds on which the Visiting Mission based its findings, which were at variance with the statements made by the special representative.

4. Mr. GERIG (United States of America), Chairman of the Visiting Mission, said that the Mission had visited several villages which had been moved from the interior of the forests nearer to the roads. At the request of the inhabitants, stockades had been erected around the new villages to protect them. The Mission had also been informed that the people concerned would now prefer to return to the villages which they had occupied, although apparently it was more in their interests that they should remain near the roads.

5. Mr. BETAYENNE (Special Representative) said that some people had been regrouped but that that did not mean that the villages which they had previously occupied had been destroyed. The people in question, fearing that they would be attacked by *maquisards*, had left their villages and hamlets, which were scattered far and wide in the forest, to regroup themselves near urban centres and roads. They had been provided with the necessary materials, and those were the villages which the Visiting Mission had described in its report.

No arbitrary measure had been imposed upon the people; they had merely been provided with the means to defend themselves. As regards the villages which they had previously occupied, the huts were built of makeshift materials and if they were left empty for two or three seasons they were no longer fit for occupation. The villagers who had been grouped in villages which they had themselves built were free to return to the villages from which they had come and they were given every opportunity to rebuild them.

6. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked who had destroyed the villages and removed the 15,000 inhabitants from the sparsely populated area where they had been living before to areas where they settled in larger groups.

7. Mr. GERIG (United States of America), Chairman of the Visiting Mission, said that the villages in question had been in the centre of the disturbed area. He could not say with any certainty who had taken part in their destruction, but a great many people had been attacked at that time and the authorities had advised them to regroup near roads, where stockades could be erected around groups of huts for their protection. Now that calm had been restored, many villagers preferred to go back to the villages from which they had come.

8. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he did not find the explanations of the mass transfer of inhabitants from the Sanaga-Maritime very satisfactory.

9. Mr. BETAYENNE (Special Representative) asserted that the people had not been regrouped against their wishes, but that measures had been taken to protect those living in the disturbed areas at their own request.

10. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the Visiting Mission confirmed that the huts had been destroyed by the authorities administering the Territory. In reaching the conclusion that the transfer of people from the Sanaga-Maritime had been unwarranted, his delegation was relying on the information provided by the Mission.

11. Mr. BETAYENNE (Special Representative) thought it was for the Visiting Mission to say whether the representative of the Soviet Union had interpreted the conclusions in its report correctly or not. It was however the people themselves who had deliberately requested the local authorities to protect them and had abandoned their villages, which had previously been under constant attack and had been burnt and looted by the rebels who were in the forests. Subsequently, the abandoned huts had been destroyed by bad weather.

12. Mr. GERIG (United States of America), Chairman of the Visiting Mission, asked the representative of the Soviet Union which passages in the Mission's report seemed to him to indicate that it was the Administration which had destroyed the huts.

13. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the end of paragraph 101 provided the answer to that question. Further, the special representative had said that the villages from which the people had been transferred had been attacked. But it was known that before the transfer of population the huts had not been damaged, which meant that they had been destroyed subsequently, and those who wished to return to their villages should be helped to do so. The

end of the paragraph showed clearly that the villages had not been destroyed by bad weather but "to prevent their use by the rebels". Obviously, the rebels would not have destroyed the villages themselves. It was therefore logical to conclude that it was the authorities which had destroyed them in their campaign against the rebels.

14. Mr. GERIG (United States of America), Chairman of the Visiting Mission, thought that the wording of paragraph 101 was quite clear; the Mission had placed on record what it had learned and it had not known exactly how the villages had been destroyed.

15. Mr. BETAYENNE (Special Representative) pointed out that, when the people had left, they had often taken away the solid parts of their huts, such as doors and windows—so that they could build new huts. On the other hand, it was absolutely true that the rebels had often used an abandoned village as an organizational centre. When in such cases the centre had been discovered by the security forces, it had had to be destroyed. It was only necessary to read some passages from the Visiting Mission's report, such as those in paragraph 31 of annex I, to be convinced that there really had been disturbances in the area and that the population had been justified in asking the authorities to protect them.

16. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew the Council's attention to paragraph 100 of the Mission's report which showed that the losses suffered by the rebels were much higher. As regards the destruction of the villages, the position was quite clear: the special representative could not give a definite answer and the Visiting Mission could not give a clear explanation of its conclusions. The special representative had at first said that the villages had been destroyed by bad weather; the Visiting Mission, on the other hand, maintained that they had been destroyed "to prevent their use by the rebels".

The members of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, withdrew.

#### GENERAL DEBATE

17. Mr. SEARS (United States of America) said that his delegation was convinced that the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration would become an independent nation on 1 January 1960. The democratically constituted Government of the Cameroons and the French Government were agreed on that point. Nothing should therefore be allowed to delay the realization of the Cameroonian people's desires.

18. The Visiting Mission had reached the unanimous opinion that the Cameroonian people desired independence and were entitled to it without further delay. His delegation supported the Mission's conclusions and did not think it necessary to consult the population again before the termination of trusteeship. It would be incongruous if the United Nations were to call into question any popularly expressed desire for freedom and any such action would be an affront to all the African peoples who were advancing towards independence. Fortunately, the United Nations had demonstrated time and again that it supported peoples who sought their freedom.

19. After independence, the Cameroonians would be able to hold elections as often as they liked, but there was no need to ask them to repeat their clearly ex-

pressed wishes before they became independent. The Cameroonian Government had just decided to arrange for elections to a constituent assembly shortly after the achievement of independence. It had already announced its intention to hold by-elections in the four circonscriptions where disturbances had occurred.

20. The proposed procedure was absolutely in keeping with the tradition of the United Nations, which had

always given encouragement to peoples moving towards the goal of independence. His delegation would support any draft resolution along those lines. It had no doubt about the good will of the Members of the United Nations towards the Cameroonian Government, which, it hoped, would be represented in the Organization in the not-too-distant future.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.