REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO TRUST TERRITORIES IN WEST AFRICA (1952) ON THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Observations of the Administering Authority

Note by the Secretary-General: The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to members of the Trusteeship Council the observations of the Administering Authority on the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa (1952) on the Cameroons under British Administration (T/1042). These observations were communicated to the Secretary-General by a letter dated 27 July 1953.
The Administering Authority is happy to welcome a second Visiting Mission Report on this Territory, giving a careful and balanced picture of conditions, which will be of great value to the local administration and public.

The following are comments on certain individual paragraphs of the Report:

**General Considerations**

**Paragraph 31**

The statement that the 176 mile stretch of road alone from Buea to Mambè has about 450 bridges is an exaggeration. It is, in fact, the 280 mile stretch from Victoria to Bamenda that has about 450 bridges and major culverts. Nevertheless the corrected figure itself sufficiently indicates the serious obstacles existing in the way of road construction.

**Paragraph 38**

The first comprehensive census of the population of the Territory for more than twenty years has just been completed and it appears that the figures, when published, are likely to show a noticeable increase over those previously accepted.

**Chapter I. Political Advancement**

**A. Constitutional Arrangements**

**Paragraphs 42-54**

Since the Visiting Mission prepared its Report, differences within the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the party from which the Eastern Region's Government was formed, have caused a split in which the Government bench has broken away and become a minority, known as the National Independence Party. The Nigerian Constitution provides that a Regional House can only dismiss Ministers by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of its entire membership taken in secret ballot, which, in this case, has not been achieved. The Opposition majority have however been able to block all Government business and have voted down a Government motion to reappoint a
Cameroons Minister who had earlier resigned. On the advice of his Executive Council, therefore, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Region has used his power to dissolve the House and fresh elections are to take place in which the inhabitants of the Trust Territory are being urged to participate to the fullest extent. In addition to these developments, various differences have arisen in the Central Government, leading to the resignation of a number of Ministers and to demands for constitutional revision. Her Majesty's Government accordingly propose to discuss with representatives of all the Regions in Nigeria, including the Cameroons, both in what respects and by what methods the Constitution should be revised. There has already been a preliminary discussion with representatives from the Cameroons, who were received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in June. The revision will, of course, be carried out with full regard to the responsibilities placed upon the Administering Authority by Article 76(B) of the United Nations Charter, and by the Trusteeship Agreement.

Paragraph 55

Women in the Southern Cameroons already have suffrage identical to that of men. The extension of suffrage to women in the Northern Cameroons at this stage would, however, be opposed by a large majority of the local population.

B. Administrative Structure

Paragraph 60

The question of the powers and functions of the Commissioner of the Cameroons is very much bound up with the provisions affecting the Trust Territory in any revised Nigerian constitution. In this connexion the Administering Authority draws attention to its observations on paragraphs 71-74 of the Mission's Report.

Paragraph 63

The Administering Authority notes with appreciation the comments of the Visiting Mission on the work of the local administrative officers. The question of maintaining an adequate staff in the Cameroons is a matter of constant concern to the Nigerian Government.
C. Political Groups

Paragraph 66

The recent developments affecting the N.C.N.C. and the Eastern House of Assembly are outlined in the Administering Authority’s observations on paragraphs 42-54 of the Mission’s Report. Since the split in that party, nine of the thirteen Cameroons members in the Eastern House, including Dr. Endeley, at present Nigerian Minister of Labour, have broken away from the N.C.N.C. and have expressed themselves in favour of separate Regional status. In this they are supported by the Kamerun United National Congress and the Cameroons National Federation, which have now amalgamated under the name of the Kamerun National Congress. The remaining four Cameroons members continued to vote with the N.C.N.C. until the Eastern House was dissolved, since which event their attitude appears to have been expressed by a new organization known as the Kamerun People’s Party, whose manifesto demands separate Regional status (but without making any mention of the Northern Cameroons) and advocates a continuing association with Nigerian political parties. These developments appear to show that specifically Cameroonian political organizations will be supported by the majority of the people in the South, but it is nevertheless too early to say whether "Cameroons consciousness" extends to the people of the North.

D. General Political Problems

(a) Separate Regional status

Paragraphs 71-74

Since the Mission presented its Report, a petition asking for separate Regional status for the British Cameroons has been drawn up by an "All-Cameroons Conference" held at Mamfe in May and presented personally in June to the Secretary of State for the Colonies by Dr. Endeley (as explained in comments on paragraphs 42-54 above). While, as the Council is aware, there are formidable financial, geographical and administrative difficulties in the way of arranging for separate Regional status for the Cameroons, the request for it will be fully considered during the forthcoming revision of the Nigerian Constitution, and an assurance to this effect was given to Dr. Endeley. The observations of the Visiting Mission on this matter will be borne in mind by the Administering Authority.
(b) Question of Unification

Paragraphs 75-80

The Administering Authority confirms the appreciation offered by the Visiting Mission. It is interesting to note that, at the present time, while Southern Cameroons political organizations are applying themselves to the forthcoming elections and revision of the Constitution the unification question had tended to fade into the background.

(c) Frontier Relations between the Cameroons under British and French Administration

Paragraphs 84-85

It has now been agreed that a simple laissez-passer issued by the British Cameroons authorities at a nominal charge and valid for three years will be accepted by the French authorities.

Paragraphs 86-89

The principle of the maximum relaxation of controls has already been agreed between the two Administrations concerned and the measures noted by the Visiting Mission have been put into effect. Since the Mission's visit there has been a conference on this subject between the High Commissioner of the French Cameroons and the Commissioner of the British Cameroons, following which discussions are now proceeding between officials of the two Administrations who are concerned with police, traffic, customs and trade matters to settle the details of further measures of relaxation already agreed in principle.

E. Local Government

(b) Bamenda Province

Paragraph 101

This proposal will need careful examination, and the inhabitants of the villages concerned must be consulted. The United Kingdom Special Representative will inform the Council at its 13th Session of the progress which has been made.
Paragraph 102

With regard to the "inter-tribal jealousies and malice" referred to by the Fon of Bali, the Administering Authority draws attention to its observations on paragraph 251 of the Mission's Report which describes the encouraging reception given to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the rights of occupancy of disputed land in this area and which indicates that friction may now abate. A separate seat for the Bali people in the Eastern House of Assembly would, in any case, be impracticable, but they will of course have full opportunity to express their views at the forthcoming primary elections.

(f) Man-O'War Bay Scheme

Paragraph 114

The measures suggested in the last sentence have already been adopted under the supervision of a committee of management.

G. Judicial Organization

Paragraph 121

A Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Governor has completed an examination of the Native Court system in the Cameroons and produced a report, with recommendations for reform, which at present awaits publication. When published it will be made available to the Council.

Chapter II. Economic Advancement

A. General

Paragraph 124

Regarding coffee growing in the Bamenda Province, see comments on paragraph 173 below.
B. The Five-Year-Plan

Paragraph 127

The main expenditure on road development in the Trust Territory is now from the Cameroons Development Fund, referred to in paragraph 202 of the Report. Expenditure from this source began in 1951-52 with actual expenditure of £59,000; the estimated expenditure for 1952-53 was £297,000.

C. Land Tenure

Paragraph 132

It may be of interest to note that the holders of the 3,823 acres in the hands of individuals are all indigenous British protected persons.

Paragraph 135

With reference to the last sentence, prior consultation with the local population before the grant of any certificate of occupancy is the rule.

D. Cameroons Development Corporation

(a) Staff and Labour

Paragraph 137

Chief J. Manga Williams was at one time a member of the Eastern House of Assembly but did not belong to the last House. Regarding Cameroons representation in the membership of the Corporation it is necessary to observe that, while the aim of the Administration is to increase it at the fastest practicable speed, the over-riding consideration must be commercial efficiency which calls for the inclusion among the members of an adequate number of persons experienced in administration and international trade.

Paragraph 138

The Corporation is pressing on with a policy of Africanization and in June there were five African members of the senior Service.
(b) **Plantations**

**Paragraph 139**

The system whereby Cameroons bananas were sold under contract to the United Kingdom Ministry of Food has now ended, and the export and marketing of the fruit is in the hands of Messrs. Elders and Fyffes.

(e) **Labour Conditions**

**Paragraph 157**

In addition to being eligible in the same way as Nigeria for Government scholarships for training in the United Kingdom, officials and members of this trade union can take advantage of the scholarship schemes organized by the Cameroon Development Corporation. In its claim, however, for representation "at all levels" of the Corporation "especially on the Board of Management" the union appears to be confusing the generally recognized desirability of developing joint consultation between workers and management at all levels with the idea that trade union representatives should be appointed to exercise managerial functions. In making appointments to public corporations the Nigerian Government takes into account the United Kingdom practice whereby the membership of such Boards includes someone chosen for personal experience of trade unionism and workers' problems. Such a member however serves not as a representative of a trade union (and particularly not as a representative of the trade union operating in the undertaking in question) but in a personal capacity. It will be remembered that Dr. Endeley, who is a member of the Board of the Corporation, was at one time General President of the CDC, Workers' Union. With regard to the final claim of the union, notable efforts are being made by the Corporation in the training of African employees.

(i) **Likamba Estate**

**Paragraph 164**

The presence of Messrs. Elders and Fyffes, a commercial concern whose profits must of course go to their shareholders, is of great indirect benefit to the Territory: furthermore the firm contributes heavily directly to the revenue of
the Territory by the payment of Companies Tax at the rate of 9/- in the pound and customs duties on its imports and exports. The Likomba Estates Workers' Union is, like others, periodically visited by an experienced Trades Union Officer, provided by Government, for advice and training and Government scholarships are available to its personnel. The attraction of more shipping and commercial concerns to the Territory is a matter outside the powers of the Administration. Regarding working conditions on the plantations a thorough social and economic enquiry is now being carried out by a team of experts provided by the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University College, Ibadan.

(j) General

Paragraph 165

The matters raised will have the attention of the Administration and the Corporation. It should perhaps be observed that the profits of the Corporation are spent entirely for the benefit of the local indigenous inhabitants.

E. Agriculture and Forestry

Paragraph 169

The coffee hulling mill of the Bakossi Co-operative Produce Marketing Union, financed by a loan from the Eastern Regional Development Board has now come into operation and is providing a considerable new source of income for the inhabitants of the isolated Bakossi area.

Paragraph 173

Regarding the expansion of coffee production in the Bamenda Province the Santa Coffee Estate, established during 1952, deserves mention. This estate, financed and operated by the Eastern Region Production Development Board, comprises 1,200 acres, with eight miles of road, and has a potential productive capacity of some million pounds of coffee a year. It will also process coffee for local peasant producers who, it is hoped, will rapidly increase in numbers and efficiency under the guidance of the expert staff of the Estate.
Paragraph 175

An annual agricultural exhibition has also been initiated at Bamenda.

Paragraph 178

In connexion with the co-operation of educational institutions in encouraging improved agricultural methods the Bambui Rural Education Centre, referred to in the comment on paragraph 291, is of interest.

Paragraph 181

While there is a clear need for timber in Bamenda Province the Administering Authority does not consider the creation of further reserves, with the consequent deprivation of grazing lands to the population, to be the best solution. Very considerable progress in afforestation has been made in recent years as a result of encouraging the people to plant trees on their own lands, and this policy will be intensively maintained.

F. Erosion

Paragraph 185

The Administration considers that the most appropriate way of securing compulsory regulations for combating erosion is by the indoctrination of Native Authorities, a task which is being tackled by Administrative Officers in suitable areas.

I. Public Finance

(b) Budgets

Paragraph 201

The estimated revenue figures for 1950-51 are itemized in Tables 15 B and C, page 232, of the 1951 Report by Her Majesty's Government on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Trusteeship. The main sources of revenue were Companies Tax - including CDC - £750,000 and Customs Duties £229,000. Licences and Fees yielded £51,000. The Companies Tax paid by the Cameroons Development Corporation amounted
to £244,130. Taking into consideration the Customs revenue derived from its operations the Corporation appears to produce about a quarter of the annual revenue of the Territory.

(c) The Cameroons Development Fund

Paragraph 202

The Fund has now received a further payment of £47,000 in respect of the estimated revenue surplus for 1951-52.

Paragraph 203

The allocation of Corporation profits is already made in consultation with a conference of the elected representatives of both the Northern and Southern Cameroons sitting together. Arrangements have been made for consultation with the same body concerning expenditure from the Cameroons Development Fund, and the central and regional Government estimates relating to the Trust Territory. The objects to which Government funds, Marketing and Production Development Board funds and Corporation profits are intended to be applied differ one from the other and there is no intention of merging their identities in a single special fund.

J. Transportation

Paragraph 209

Work has now begun on a road passing through the Tikon-Ndoro-Kentu area to link up with the Bamenda Province road system. This will provide the first direct road communication between the Northern and Southern Cameroons.

L. Trade and Commerce, Co-operatives

(a) Marketing Boards

Paragraph 230

The allocation of funds for development by the Marketing Boards has to be considered in relation to the contribution made by the Cameroons to the production of the commodities handled by the Boards.
(b) Co-operatives

Paragraph 232

The operations of the Bakweri Co-operative Farmers' Union appear to be justifying the Mission's optimism, a specially encouraging feature being that the fruit shipped by the Union has been found to be of such satisfactory quality that considerable bonuses have accrued to the Union.

Chapter III. Social Advancement

A. Labour

Paragraph 238

The many difficult social problems arising from the concentration of this large labour force are now under thorough examination by experts brought together by the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research. The inquiry, besides covering every aspect of plantation life and the impact of it upon neighbouring communities, will extend to examination of the effect on indigenous communities of the absence of young men at the plantations. The results of this complicated inquiry can scarcely be expected to be available within less than two years. When they are available the Administration and the Corporation will be in a position to concert planned measures to avert any evils that might arise from the plantation system. Meanwhile ad hoc measures, such as the provision of more married quarters for labourers and the reinforcement of the Corporation's Welfare Service, are being taken to combat obvious difficulties.

D. The Bali-Widekum Disorders

Paragraph 250

Out of the fine of £10,000 levied on the Widekum Clans concerned in the disorders £1,000 has been retained by Government and £9,000 applied in compensation to the Balis.
Paragraph 251

The Report of the Commission, and the final decisions of Government upon its findings, have now been published and will be made available to the Council. The main features of the decision are

(i) that the Balis are indisputably in rightful occupation of all the land in dispute.

(ii) that administrative inquiry, in consultation with the people shall determine whether any boundary adjustments are necessary to accommodate Widekum communities, and if any such adjustments result in the Balis being deprived of land, due compensation will be paid to them by Government.

The decision has been favourably received by both parties. The Resident, Bamenda Province, has been appointed by the Governor to conduct the administrative inquiry. Both parties have appointed representative committees to assist him.

F. Prisons, Crime

Paragraph 265

The congratulations of the Visiting Mission have been passed on to the person concerned.

Chapter IV. Educational Advancement

A. General

Paragraph 269

No fees are charged in schools provided by Messrs. Elders and Fyffes or by the Cameroons Development Corporation; the latter also pays the school fees of its employees' children where they attend schools other than its own. In addition, Missions very often remit school fees in cases of need.
Paragraph 273

Any large-scale advance in education in the Territory depends upon success in mobilizing the support of the people. While popular demand for education is growing, it is still limited to certain localities and classes; in the Northern part of the Territory in particular indifference and dislike of school remains a serious obstacle. A most encouraging sign, however, is that in the Cameroons and Bamenda Provinces a few communities have agreed to the imposition of an education rate.

C. Secondary and Technical Education

Paragraph 294

In this connexion the Bambui Rural Education Centre, recently opened near the Bambui Government Farm in the Bamenda Province, is worthy of mention. At this Centre school teachers receive instruction in agricultural matters in order that they may more efficiently disseminate interest in improved methods after their return to the schools in which they teach.