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PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Observations of the French Government
as Administering Authority

Note by the Secretariat: These observations refer to the following petitions:

<u>Section:</u>	<u>Page:</u>
1. Petition from the <u>Union des Populations du Cameroun</u> (T/PET.5/369)	2
Petition from the Bureau of the <u>Union des Populations du</u> <u>Cameroun</u> (T/PET.5/391)	2
Petition from the <u>Union des Syndicats et Confédérés du Cameroun</u> (T/PET.5/427)	2
2. Petition from Mr. Jean Mambou (T/PET.5/381 and Add.1-3)	2
Petition from Mr. Jean Mbogue (T/PET.5/382)	2
3. Petition from the Central Committee of the <u>Union des</u> <u>Populations du Cameroun</u> of Nkongkouala (T/PET.5/385)	4
Petition from Mr. Oscar Diallo Mbinack (T/PET.5/393)	4
Petition from the Babimbi Branch of the <u>Union</u> <u>démocratique des Femmes Camerounaise</u> (T/PET.4/409 and Add.1)	4
Petition from the Mandjap I Central Committee of the <u>Union des Populations du Cameroun</u> (T/PET.5/419)	4
4. Petition from the <u>Syndicat des Petits Planteurs</u> at Mandjap (T/PET.5/386)	6
5. Petition from the men of Ndogbianga Canton (T/PET.5/392)	7

1. Petition from the Union des Populations du Cameroun (T/PET.5/369)
Petition from the Bureau of the Union des Populations du Cameroun
(T/PET.5/391)
Petition from the Union des Syndicats Confédérés du Cameroun (T/PET.5/427)

The petitioners complain about various incidents and sentences which have already been commented upon by the Administering Authority:

- (1) in connexion with the incidents which occurred at Maroua, in reply to petitions T/PET.5/337, 350 and 358^{1/}
- (2) in connexion with the incidents which occurred at Douala, in reply to petition T/PET.5/367^{2/}
- (3) in connexion with the incidents which occurred at Ombessa, in reply to petition T/PET.5/366^{3/}
- (4) in connexion with Mr. MATHIMBE's imprisonment, in reply to petition T/PET.5/355^{4/}
- (5) in connexion with Mr. FOZOO's imprisonment, in reply to petition T/PET.5/344.^{5/}

2. Petition from Mr. Jean Mambou (T/PET.5/381 and Add.1-3)
Petition from Mr. Jean Mbogue (T/PET.5/382)

The petitioners complain about the measures taken on 20 November 1954 in the market at Bansa.

The Administering Authority submitted observations concerning the market fees in the Bamiléké region in connexion with petition T/PET.5/327.^{6/} It pointed

Notes by the Secretariat:

- 1/ See document T/OBS.5/60.
- 2/ See document T/OBS.5/52.
- 3/ See document T/OBS.5/60.
- 4/ See document T/OBS.5/51.
- 5/ See document T/OBS.5/47.
- 6/ See document T/OBS.5/51.

out that measures to maintain law and order had been put into force in September 1954 in connexion with some markets, in order to prevent agitators who objected to the levying of the fees from creating a disturbance. These measures were abolished at the end of September, the people having realized that the levying of the fees was in their own interest and affected only the largest tradesmen. It should be pointed out that the greater part of the market-planning programme has been carried out and is already helping to increase attendance at the markets.

During the month of October 1954 the political agitators adopted different tactics, which consisted of turning the market places into planted fields, so as to make it a physical impossibility to hold markets or to go on with the work of constructing stands for the tradesmen. This idea was carried out in the case of the Bangou market on 14 October and the Bansoale market on 18 October. The following day the people themselves destroyed the plantations, which had been laid out by groups of young men who had come in lorries from Nkongsamba and Douala. On 12 November three individuals who tried to persuade the tradesmen at Bansoa market not to pay the market fees and fiercely criticized the customary chief were roughly handled by the people. On 19 November about forty young men arrived at Bansoa on the eve of the market day, having come in lorries from Douala. On 20 November, after having asked the tradesmen to leave their stands, this group of agitators went off to a secret market three kilometres away which had been hastily set up a few days previously. The villagers put up a lively resistance to this group. The police were warned by the people and arrested five particularly excited individuals, not without some resistance from them. These five were tried on 30 November by the magistrate with extended powers at Dschang and received the following sentences for rebellion and violence and for assault and battery against the police:

Mr. NGUIFFO Pierre)	two months' imprisonment
Mr. OUEMBE TALONG)	1 month's imprisonment
Mr. PENKA David)	
Mr. MKENMEGNI Jean)	twenty days' imprisonment.
Mr. MANGOUA Gabriel)	

No appeal has so far been lodged against these sentences.

The Administering Authority categorically denies that this incident caused the death of anyone or that anyone was injured.

The Administering Authority points out that the police who went into action did not number sixty-four men but consisted of one police squad, i.e. thirty men.

In its reply to petition T/PET.5/313, the Administering Authority submitted its observations on the complaints made by the petitioner against Mr. CHENDJOU.^{1/} In the absence of further particulars, the Administering Authority assumes that Mr. LAGARDE's name is mentioned after that of Mr. CHENDJOU because he too is a Counsellor for the Bamiléké region in the Territorial Assembly. Mr. LAGARDE is an official and does not own any land in the Cameroons.

The Administering Authority submitted its observations with regard to the quarry at Bansoa in its reply to petition T/PET.5/313.

3. Petition from the Central Committee of the Union des Populations du Cameroun of Nkongkouala (T/PET.5/385)

Petition from Mr. Oscar Diallo Mbinack (T/PET.5/393)

Petition from the Babimbi Branch of the Union démocratique des Femmes Camerounaises (T/PET.4/409 and Add.1)

Petition from the Mandjap I Central Committee of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (T/PET.5/419)

Petitions are constantly being submitted with regard to the situation in the Babimbi Subdivision (Sanaga Maritime). The Administering Authority recently submitted observations on the subject once again, in reply to petition T/PET.5/335^{2/}

Reference to the ferry accident at Sackbayémé was made in reply to petition T/PET.5/322.^{3/} Since then funds have been allocated for the installation of a new ferry.

1/ Note by the Secretariat: See document T/OBS.5/49.

2/ Note by the Secretariat: See document T/OBS.5/56

3/ Note by the Secretariat: See document T/OBS.5/49

With regard to the issue of permits to purchase firearms, the Administering Authority's policy has already been explained to the Trusteeship Council, especially with regard to the Sanaga Maritime region, in reply to petitions T/PET.5/123 and 151.^{1/}

The Administering Authority is unaware of any malpractice on the part of the officials responsible for making out the permits. It is for the petitioners to prove the facts to which they refer. The same thing applies in the case of the officials responsible for the operation of dispensaries.

The purchases of cocoa to which Mr. MBINACK refers are made by the African Provident Societies and apply only to cocoa which is below standard, that is to say cocoa waste which would otherwise have to be destroyed outright, since it could not be sold commercially.

The Provident Societies resell this cocoa to a company which exports by-products (butter, oil-cake etc.). The tonnage figure given by the petitioner is fortunately greatly exaggerated, for cocoa waste is becoming increasingly rare owing to the improvements in methods of cultivation and of treating the cocoa. The Provident Societies are under the supervision of the local authorities; hence, it is impossible for them to make purchases without paying for them. There again, the petitioners must prove what they say.

Mr. Pierre PENDA's sentences have already been explained in reply to petitions T/PET.5/343 and 365 (T/L.527 - section III).^{2/}

^{1/} Note by the Secretariat: See document T/OBS.5/6 and 9.

^{2/} Note by the Secretariat: See document T/OBS.5/44

4. Petition from the Syndicat des Petits Planteurs at Mandjap (T/PET.5/386)

Mandjap is a small village standing apart from the village of Etouha, which is clustered around a railway station with a regular train service. This hamlet has remained isolated, with no connecting road, up to the present, although the village of Etouha is connected by a vehicular road to the Douala-Yaoundé highway. Work is under way in this area and Mandjap will shortly be linked with the main road by the new road which is being built.

The only aged planter who pays taxes in the village is Mr. André ETOUNDI, the signatory of the petition. He is not eligible for exemption in any of the categories provided for under the General Code of Direct Taxation and is classified in the first category.

Tax rates and the taxation system are described in the annual reports. Of the 241 taxpayers at Mandjap, there are twenty-eight planters and notables in the first category, twenty-nine in the second and 184 in the third.

Elephants are quite numerous in this region and from time to time they damage the crops, particularly in plantations which are not well looked after. The inhabitants of Mandjap have, however, never reported the destruction of any huts to the local authorities. A number of beats have been organized round about the village. Two elephants were killed in July 1953, one in August 1954 and two in February 1955. With a view to increasing the efficacy of the action to keep the wild beasts away, the African Provident Society has purchased a high-powered rifle for the use of the gamekeepers during their rounds.

No fines for killing elephants have been imposed in Mandjap since 1952. No deaths due to elephants have been registered.

The local authorities are not aware that Mr. Etoundi possesses a rifle. Nothing has been confiscated from him. He was refused a permit to purchase firearms; in any event he had applied for a 12-calibre rifle with which elephant hunting would be very dangerous. We would point out that ninety-eight permits to purchase rifles have been issued in the Edéa Subdivision since 1952. The Administering Authority's policy in this connexion has already been explained in the observations in reply to petitions T/PET.5/123 and 151, coming from the same region.^{1/}

Notes by the Secretariat:

^{1/} See documents T/OBS.5/6 and 9.

With respect to the damage allegedly caused by the exploitation of forestry concessions, the Administering Authority can only refer to the observations which it submitted in reply to petition T/PET.5/L.8 and Add.1.^{1/} The local authorities have received no complaints from the inhabitants of Mandjap since June 1953.

5. Petition from the men of Ndogbianga Canton (T/PET.5/392)

The situation in the Ndogbianga Canton and in the Edéa Subdivision, within which it falls, has already been examined in connexion with petition T/PET.5/261.^{2/}

The Administering Authority can only refer to the observations which it submitted at that time.

Notes by the Secretariat:

1/ See document T/OBS.5/21.

2/ See document T/OBS.5/33.