

18 February 1959

A/4094
English
Annex IV
Page 1

ANNEX IV

**STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AT THE 959TH MEETING OF
THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL**

When I spoke to the Trusteeship Council the other day, I asked for its indulgence in allowing me not to make a full statement at that time about the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration, I said that I thought I should **wait until the results of last week's meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly were known**. We received a report during the weekend of the results of that meeting. I am therefore now in a position to proceed with my statement.

I shall deal first with the Southern Cameroons and then with the Northern part of the Trust Territory.

I should like to start off what I have to say about the Southern Cameroons by quoting part of paragraph 196 of the Visiting Mission's report:

"in the light of the conditions suggested by the two parties under which they would accept the election results as deciding the future of the Territory, the Mission considered that the most probable consequence which might follow from the elections on **24 January** was a further consultation of the people through a plebiscite on their future. In these circumstances the Mission decided that after the receipt of the results of the elections and of other relevant information concerning them it might be necessary for it to formulate further observations concerning a possible plebiscite." (T/1426 paragraph 196)

As all members of the Trusteeship Council know, the elections were duly held on **24 January**. **The Kamerun National Democratic Party won fourteen of the twenty-six seats**; the **Kamerun National Congress and the Kamerun People's Party** ---a coalition which fought the elections as a coalition and which had formed the Government before the elections - **won twelve seats**. I think that I should now quote what the Visiting Mission has to say about the result of the elections in the supplementary report which it has submitted.

"The Mission was informed 'further' that the average poll was 70 per cent of the registered electors- . It is difficult to indicate with accuracy the percentage of votes cast for candidates supporting the two main political trends, since the **Kumba North-West seat** was won without opposition and *the positions of the independent candidates are not known*,"- that is, on the future of the Territory. For an approximate indication, however, the Kumba seat might be calculated as being worth to the KNC/KPP **70 per cent** of the 9,550 registered electors there - i.e. as. 6,635 votes. On this basis a total of 58,069 votes, or 40.4 per cent, might be said to have been cast in favour of candidates pledged to support association with the Federation of

Nigeria, and 75,326 votes, or 52.5 per cent, in favour of candidates supporting "secession" from Nigeria. The remaining 7.3 per cent of the votes were cast for independent candidates. (T/1426/Add.1, para. 212)

The Mission goes on to say later:

"it should also be said ---and the Mission's own observations in the Territory bore this out that personal likes and dislikes towards candidates and issues of a purely local character undoubtedly had a bearing on the polling." (ibid.)"

As the members of the Council well know, **Mr. Foncha was appointed Premier** of the Southern Cameroons and has formed a Government. He is the leader of the KNDP. Furthermore, last week, a meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was held. It began on 11 February. **Two motions** were introduced into the House by the **Government Party**, and I should like to read out to the Council the terms of these motions.

The first reads as follows:

"That this honourable House prays Her Majesty's Government to take, immediate steps to fulfil the will of the people of the Southern Cameroons as indicated by the results of the last general elections in which the KMDP, **the secessionist party**, polled more than half the total number of votes cast, and thus implement the policy of this Government which strongly advocates secession of the Southern Cameroons from the Federation of Nigeria before she attains independence in 1960 and to continue under a modified form of the Trusteeship Agreement for **some time during** which the possibilities of **reunification** with any section of the British and French sectors can be explored."

The second motion introduced by the Government Party reads as follows:

"That in view of the fact that a plebiscite is likely to be the means of determining whether or not the Southern Cameroons should secede from the Federation of Nigeria, this honourable House humbly prays His Excellency the Governor General to postpone the registration of voters in the Southern Cameroons for the forthcoming general elections to the House of Representatives until it becomes clear whether or not the Southern Cameroons will continue to send representatives to that House".

I should like also to read out to the Council the terms of an amendment to the first of these resolutions which was moved by the opposition parties which previously formed the Government of the Southern Cameroons. This amendment was *"the kind of amendment which substitutes something completely different for the motion as it originally stood"*. **The whole motion, if it had been amended, would** have read as follows:

"That this honourable House mandates the Premier and Leader of the Opposition in this House to represent to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization the opinion of this House that there can be no better future for the Southern Cameroons than in its continued association with Nigeria and to request the United Nations to explore other and more effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons about their future relationship with the Federation of Nigeria in view of the fact that the last general elections cannot be accepted as a decisive indication of the wishes of the people."

The result of the debate which has been reported to me by telegram is that the two Government motions were carried by 14 votes to 12.

At this stage I think I should refer the Council to the conclusion reached by the Visiting Mission in its supplementary report. I am going to read from paragraph 218 of the supplementary report:

"In the light of the foregoing, the Mission has come to the conclusion that the results of the elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. *If general agreement should develop in the newly-elected House of Assembly concerning the future of the Southern Cameroons a formal popular consultation may prove to be unnecessary*; but if no such agreement emerges, it may only be through a consultation at some appropriate future date, probably a plebiscite, that it will be possible to resolve the basic issues. In that event, the Mission considers that the conditions for such a consultation, including its timing and the question or questions to be put to the people, will have to be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority in consultation and as far as possible in *agreement with the political parties* in the Southern Cameroons." (T/1426/Add.1)

I have given the Council the result of the debate in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly last week, and I have also referred to the recommendation of the Visiting Mission.

I should now like to make some observations on behalf of the United Kingdom Delegation. First of all, I think from the voting in the House of Assembly -14 for, and 12 against, which reflects the party composition of the House of Assembly -that it can clearly be concluded that no "general agreement" has developed in this House of Assembly, to use the words from the Visiting Mission's report.

I have received only a telegraphic report of the proceedings, but I understand that both parties have made it clear that they accept that a plebiscite is required in order to determine their future, the Administering Authority, on whose behalf I speak, also takes this view and agrees with the Visiting Mission that the results of the recent elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. We also agree with the Visiting Mission that the conditions for such consultation, including its timing and the questions to be put, should be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority. In doing so, the General Assembly and the Administering Authority will no doubt wish to take into account the views of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature.

I believe that the Trusteeship Council will agree, as we do, with the view that the recent elections cannot, in the light of their results, be regarded as decisive, and also that, since no general agreement as to the future has emerged in the newly elected legislature, a plebiscite will be necessary. I think also that the Council will agree that the General Assembly should be asked to authorize such a plebiscite in agreement with the Administering Authority. The conditions under which the plebiscite should be held, including the questions to be put and the timing of such a plebiscite, should be settled by the General Assembly in consultation with the Administering Authority, after, the views of the leaders of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature have been heard.

Obviously the most difficult questions confronting the United Nations are the questions of timing and the choices to be put to the people. I do not think that the Council would wish me, in respect of these particular matters to anticipate the views which will be expressed to the Fourth Committee by the political leaders from the Southern Cameroons, I believe *that both Mr. Foncha the Premier, and Dr. Endeley, the leader of the Opposition, will be coming here and they will express their views to the General Assembly and those of the parties they represent.* I think it is right and proper that, it should be they, rather than I who should put forward these views. I do not propose, therefore, on this occasion to go into these particular matters.

I have made it clear that we believe that a consultation by plebiscite will be necessary and that this view is accepted by the political parties. I do not think that on this occasion it would be proper or appropriate for me to go into the questions of timing and choices- I wish to emphasize this point particularly, this is not an issue between an Administering Authority and a local legislature or political party; it is a question between the two sections of political opinion in the Territory, The concern of the United Kingdom as Administering Authority is that the people should have a full and fair opportunity in the Southern Cameroons of expressing their views. We are concerned with that. It is for them to say what their views are.