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Nineteenth Session of the Trusteeship Council:

The nineteenth (spring 1957) session of the U.N. Trusteeship Council convened March 14th just as the General Assembly was adjourning. During its approximate two months' session it considered problems affecting every African trust territory except South West Africa as well as the UNESCO report on education in the territories.

UNESCO'S Education Report:

The UNESCO report analyzes data submitted by the administering countries on educational conditions in British Togoland, British and French Cameroons, Ruanda-Urundi, and Tanganyika. By and large, it states that the following trends have become apparent in the last five years: (1) general governmental and local budgets for education have increased; (2) the proportion of the education budget devoted to capital works (school buildings) continues to be high; (3) the number of teachers in service and in training is increasing; (4) school enrollments are growing faster than population, but total enrollments are still generally low, and vast differentials continue based on geographical, sex, and financial considerations; (5) there is no trend as to charges for education; (6) education is in the vernacular in primary grades, in a European language only at the secondary level; (7) dependence on "foreign" institutions for higher education continues; (8) considerable progress in out-of-school adult (community) education has been made.

In addition to detailed findings and recommendations for each territory, the report included general recommendations to improve and expand education as follows: (1) more emphasis on the ultimate goal of free, compulsory education for all; (2) more participation of Africans in planning educational programs; (3) more education at secondary levels and in vocational fields; (4) more training abroad for specialists, particularly in science; (5) more scientific research conducted in the trust territories and more Africans associated with it; (6) more literacy campaigns and programs of fundamental education; (7) more use of mass media (radio, educational films, newspapers, magazines); and (8) preservation of and furthering the culture of indigenous populations.

British Togoland:— Termination of Trusteeship:

The Council noted that the General Assembly voted in its last session to end the trusteeship agreement with Britain when Ghana obtained its independence and British Togoland was joined with it on March 6, 1957. It noted that this action marked the fulfillment of its goals in the first of 11 trust territories and hoped that it would set a favorable precedent for the other territories under its jurisdiction.

Ruanda-Urundi:

The Council considered in considerable detail the annual report of Ruanda-Urundi submitted by the Belgian administering authority for 1955. Committee members questioned closely M. LeRoy, the Belgian special representative for the territory, first on political conditions and then on economic and social conditions there. The Council adopted a series of recommendations and conclusions regarding the territory which were submitted by a drafting committee consisting of representatives of Australia, France, Syria, and the USSR. A Soviet proposal recommending that Belgium take the necessary measures to ensure that Ruanda-Urundi achieves independence or self-government within not more than five years was defeated by a vote of 8-2 (Russia, Syria), with four abstentions; but the Council approved by a vote of 8-6 an amended Indian proposal urging establishment of intermediate target dates.

Somalia Trust Territory:

The Trusteeship Council postponed until its next session consideration of an economic survey of this Italian Trust Territory (scheduled to become independent in 1960). The survey was made by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at Italy's request.

French Togoland:

Following the hearings at an earlier Council session at which Sylvanus Olympio testified representing a political organization called the "Comite de l'Unite Togolaise," the United States and India co-sponsored a resolution recommending that France establish a Togo assembly elected by universal adult suffrage under guarantees of full political liberty. However, the American representative, Mason Sears, subsequently backed down by proposing that discussion be postponed until the Council received the report of the special U.N. commission sent by the last General Assembly to investigate conditions in French Togoland (See Africa--U.N. Bulletin No. 6, of April 9, 1957). When his motion to postpone discussion failed, Sears withdrew American sponsorship of the resolution "for technical reasons" without, he said, changing the American position on its merits. Syria then became co-sponsor of the resolution which, in a somewhat modified form, failed to pass due to a tie vote.

Tanganyika:

The Council postponed until its next session consideration of the General Assembly's recommendation concerning the political future of Tanganyika (See Africa--U.N. Bulletin No. 6 of April 9, 1957).

Petitions from the French Cameroons and other Trust Territories:

Among the responsibilities of the Trusteeship Council is consideration of questions raised by petitions and communications from persons and organizations in trust territories. Ten days before the commencement of the current Council session, its six-member Standing Committee on Petitions had before it 1,497 petitions, of which 1,057 were considered to raise new issues requiring individual examination. (The Committee reported to the Council that it had held 37 sessions at which it had considered--in consultation with the administering power--and finally disposed of 62 petitions, leaving a backlog of 995 petitions carried over). Of the 1,057 petitions, 978 referred to conditions in the French Cameroons (10 referred to the British Cameroons as well), and the remainder to six other trust territories.

The tremendous number of petitions concerning conditions in the French Cameroons is not unusual: on June 8, 1956, the Council disposed of 35,000 petitions relating to that territory by resolution, and subsequently about 4,500 more were received. Of the 978 relating to the French Cameroons which were on the Standing Committee's agenda this spring, the great majority referred to political grievances, including: the new "loi-cadre" which determines the fundamental powers and status of the territory (petitioners sought independence and unification of the Cameroons territories); failure to repeal the decree dissolving nationalist organizations; political persecution and continued incarceration of political prisoners; failure of the Council to hear nationalist leaders; failure of the Council's 1955 Visiting Mission to hear certain persons and to investigate certain incidents; holding of local elections under present repressive conditions; and continued repression of freedom of press and assembly. Other complaints about economic and social conditions included: the burden of taxation and market fees on the indigenous population; low prices for produce; effects on Customs barriers between British and French Cameroons; torture of political prisoners and bad conditions of prisons in general; racial discrimination in various circumstances; mistreatment of indigenous women as part of the policy of repression; and suspension of scholarships to Cameroonian students in France.

In view of the large number of petitions which continue to arrive, the Soviet Council member introduced a resolution to send a committee to the territory to examine petitions on the spot and report to the Council. By a solid vote of the administering powers the resolution was defeated 7-5 with 2 abstentions.