

**SECRET**

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**CABINET**

**N/B:** (*The first part of this document (paragraphs 1 to 15) is solely British Government's information on preparing Nigeria towards independence. While paragraphs 16 to 18 retyped below is British Government's information on preparing British Cameroons towards independence.*)

## **The Trust Territory of the British Cameroons**

**16.** The Northern British Cameroons is administered as part of the Northern Region and has always declared itself content so to remain. The Southern Cameroons has its own Government which to date has been financially dependent on the Federal Government and has ultimately been responsible to the Governor-General. The recommendations of the Fiscal Commission are likely to give the Southern Cameroons a fair measure of financial independence and their representatives are committed to asking at the coming Conference for full Regional self-government. With Nigerian independence approaching, this small Government must quickly learn to stand on its own feet and I propose to agree to a substantial increase in its responsibilities but probably not at present to full internal self-government on the model of the major Regions.

**17.** Before Nigeria becomes independent the people of the British Cameroons will have to make known their wishes for their future. The United Nations Mission, which is making a regular visit to the British and French Cameroons later this year, is being asked to consider the procedure for consulting the people of the British Cameroons. I hope that as a result of their recommendations there will be separate popular consultations (probably by plebiscite) in the North and South early in 1960, and that we shall be able to ensure that the choice put to the people is one between joining an independent Nigeria and continuing under Trusteeship pending a final decision about their future. There is little doubt that the Northern British Cameroons will choose to stay as part of the Northern Region. The choice of the Southern Cameroons is less certain. The Parties supporting the present Government are in favour of becoming a separate Region in an independent Nigeria: the main Opposition party is in favour of

continuation of Trusteeship with an eye to joining up with the French Cameroons in time.

**18.** I invite my colleagues to note the present position and seek their concurrence in the course outlined above. The Conference may well be a difficult and possibly a stormy one.

A. L.-B.

*Colonial Office, S.W. 1*  
*29th July, 1958.*

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