

I. INTRODUCTION.

Status : The former French Cameroons became independent on 1st January 1960 as Republic of Cameroun. On 1st October 1961, the former British Southern Cameroons (now West Cameroon) as an outcome of a United Nations Plebiscite conducted in February 1961 to determine the wishes of the people, unified with the Republic of Cameroun (now East Cameroon) to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

Location : Cameroon is situated on the west coast of tropical Africa. It is bounded on the west by Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, on the south by Rio Muni, Gabon and the Republic of Congo; and on the east by the Central African Republic and Chad.

Area and Population : Cameroon is roughly triangular in shape (see map, Appendix I), with the base along the coast and the apex touching Lake Chad some 870 miles north of the coast. It is 183,381 square miles in area and has a population of about 5 million. In the north there is a preponderance of Semitic-Negroid peoples mainly of Moslem faith and in the south mainly Negrillos and Bantus, many of whom have been converted to Christianity. It is estimated that about 20% of the total area is in cultivation under all crops.

Natural Regions : The country consists of four natural regions - the low coastal plains with equatorial forests in the south; a central plateau 2500-4500 feet above sea level; a mountainous forest area with some 8000 feet peaks in the west; and in the north a savannah area sloping from the

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central plateau to the Lake Chad Basin. In the otherwise low-lying southwest is Cameroon Mountain which rises to a height of 13,350 feet.

Climate : In the south, the climate follows the usual tropical pattern. Temperatures are high with only slight seasonal variations. Rainfall varies enormously from the south as one proceeds northwards. Rainfall is very heavy in the south with an annual average of 150 inches. At Debundsha, situated west of the Cameroon Mountain the annual average rainfall is 390 inches. It is regarded as the second wettest place in the world and in 1946 a rainfall of 494 inches was recorded. In the south the rainy season commences between March/April and continues till about the end of October; July and August being the wettest months. This is followed by the dry season. The onset and end of the rainy season is usually characterised by tornadoes - sometimes accompanied by thunderstorms. The tornadoes are often responsible for heavy losses on banana estates. In the extreme north rainfall is low, with an annual average of less than 20 inches. The occurrence of very dry winds - the harmattan - is common during the northern dry season.

Economy : Cameroon is mainly an agricultural country. More than 75% of its revenue is derived from the export of agricultural products. The central and northern tribes are extensively engaged in stock rearing - mainly cattle, sheep and goats - on natural pastures, whilst the southerners are mainly farmers and traders. Cocoa, coffee, bananas, rubber, palm oil, palm kernel, tea, cotton, hides and skins as well

as timber are exported.

Cacao cultivation is restricted to the tropical forest belt of the south where the greater proportion of the cocoa exported is produced by peasants, though some is produced on estates.

Soils : A land capability survey is in progress.

Generally speaking the soils of the cocoa producing areas vary considerably. In the coastal areas the soils are mainly volcanic in origin, reasonably fertile and free draining, so that it is not a practice to construct drains in cacao farms. The volcanic soils are reasonably fertile and are dark brown in colour. In other areas they are clay-loams, dark or reddish brown in colour and in reasonable state of fertility.

The methods of establishing cacao described are as practised in West Cameroon.