

BLCC Reacts to Govt Announcement for Relaunching Privatisation of CDC

Cameroon Tribune, in its edition of Wednesday May 12, 2004 carried a report that the Hon *Meva'a m'Eboutou*, Minister of Finance and Budget, had published during the previous week, a notice of request for manifest interest in the banana, rubber and oil palm sectors of the CDC which are to be privatised. The report also stated that one *Derrick Garvey*, Chairman of Brobon Finex, the company that purchased the tea sector of CDC, had stated that the land on which is developed the plantations of the CDC belongs to Cameroon, and that his company has only bought 65% of the tea estates, but not the land.

The Bakweri Land Claims Committee (BLCC), the accredited mouth-piece of the minority Bakweri who are claiming ancestral rights over the land on which the CDC estates are developed, finds these reports extremely troubling and oppressive.

The matter between the Bakweri and the Republic of Cameroon, where the latter has been cited for abuse of human rights, is currently before the judicial panel of the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia. Both parties have so far appeared before the Commission on two occasions, viz. in May 2003 in Niamey, Niger Republic, and in November 2003 in Banjul. Considering the gravity of the Bakweri complaint, especially as BLCC had deposed that part of their patrimony had already been sold to an outfit called Brobon Finex, the African Commission, in order to protect the subject matter of the complaint, at its sitting of May 2003, issued a Restraining Order to President Biya, as Head of State of Cameroon **"to ensure that no further alienation takes place before the African Commission takes a decision on the complaint."** The African Commission is due to deliver a decision on the Admissibility of the BLCC complaint during its next Session of 21 May – 4 June 2004 in Banjul.

Not so long ago, Cameroon was jubilating following a decision delivered in its favour by an international judicial tribunal over the disputed Bakassi peninsula with Nigeria. For Cameroon now to disregard an Order of another international tribunal, whose

jurisdiction it has accepted, by contemptuously disregarding its restraining Order, portrays Cameroon as a rough player in the field of civilised countries of the world.

Perhaps we should remind Mr Derrick Garvey that the tea bushes which he claims were purchased by Brobon Finex are inseparable from the land on which they grow. There can be no tea plantation without land! And if Brobon Finex manoeuvred to secure a lease of 70 years over Bakweri ancestral land, with not a single franc of ground rent payable to the Bakweri, is this a moral transaction at this day and age?

The Research Dept of the BLCC has obtained an attestation *No. M11/3/1/5 dated 13 Nov. 2003* issued in Pretoria by the *Registrar of Companies and Close Corporations of the Republic of South Africa* certifying that:

According our computer records, no Company with the name BROBON FINEX (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED, was registered.

Thus, this first so-called privatisation with a foreign company from South Africa was a massive fraud to Cameroon, and the three tea estates originally valued at over 6 billion FCFA were donated to Alhadji Baba Danpullo for a token 1.5 billion FCFA. Are we heading for a similar “game” over the remaining CDC estates, explaining why the imminent decision of an international judicial tribunal is being pre-empted?

BLCC Department of Communications