

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL
EDUCATION
AND CIVIC SERVICE

THE REPUBLIC OF GABON
UNION - WORK - JUSTICE

REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF EDUCATION

IN GABON (AFRICA)

1967 - 1968

I - THE COUNTRY AND ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM

1° Independent since August 17th 1960, the Republic of Gabon sits astride on the Equator on the Western coast of the African Continent (Gulf of Guinea). It has 630 000 inhabitants over an area of 267 000 km², or 1/100 of the entire area of Africa.

Our constitution which was adopted on February 21st 1961 and revised twice - first on February 27th 1967 and then in January 1968 - is organised according to the principle of the separation of government powers :

EXECUTIVE - LEGISLATIVE - JUDICIAL

It advocates the union of all its citizens without distinction of race or religion, in keeping with the motto : UNION - WORK - JUSTICE.

In order to improve the living conditions of the Gabonese people our country has labored earnestly in fighting ignorance, poverty, disease, hunger, etc ... It initiated educational reform and in this respect, not only has it made primary schooling compulsory for all boys and girls from 6 to 16 years of age, but it has also undertaken to give literacy instruction and provide education for all adults who, under the colonial regime, did not have the chance of going to school.

Our country has also organized rural medical centres, mother and child protection centres, the improvement of agricultural conditions (production farms, vegetable-gardening ...) and it has introduced, as an experiment, the new agricultural methods such as they are practiced in developed countries (in Ndendé, harnessed culture of the earth-nut ; associated culture of rice and green vegetables in Tchibanga under the sponsorship of the TAIWAN Chinese Mission).

2° All of the schools, no matter how they are financed, are placed under the control of the "Ministère de l'Education Nationale et du Service Civique" (Ministry of National Education and Civic Service).

a) Public and private kindergardens are established, especially in urban centres. Regarding their material organization (classrooms), most of them are under the control of the Socio-Educational Centres which, in turn, are dependent on the National Organization of the Gabonese women.

b) The vocational training of adults (office personnel : typists, shorthand-typists, book-keepers ; the usual skilled workers) is under the control of the "Ministère du Travail" (Department of Labour) which is assisted by an ILO Mission (ILO : International Labour Organization).

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c) There used to be an agricultural course for the training of middle and lower level agricultural directing personnel. For nearly four years now this type of instruction has become gradually extinct and henceforth the aim is to transform the old "planters" into modern agriculturists ready to use the new methods learned at the Akok Centre, in the vicinity of LIBREVILLE ;

d) If we cannot fitly speak of the so called higher level education in Gabon, we must at least stress the fact that there does exist in our country a University embryo in the form of Institutes which are under the control of Higher Level Education in Central Africa (FESAC).

The FESAC, according to the recent council held by the Ministers of National Education of the countries concerned (Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Centrafica and Tchad) in May 1968, will soon be founded as a university.

It is because of the lack of a university in Gabon on that all the young men and women who are planning to teach in the higher level sector leave their country and go to Europe. Almost all of them go to France because of the Franco-Gabonese cooperation agreements.

The Institutes functioning in Gabon are :

THE INSTITUTE OF JURIDICAL STUDIES

(the future Faculty of Law and Human Sciences) which prepares students for the profession of Law ;

THE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

which forms lower and higher level technicians during a 3 or 4 year study period. At present, it admits first year level students from the Lycées and Modern Collèges.

THE INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY STUDIES OF CAPE ESTERIAS

(near Libreville), also admits first-year students and prepare them for future higher level positions in the Irrigation and Forestry Services ;

THE GABONESE SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION

forms personnel for financial and general Administration and for the judiciary services. In order to be admitted students must have the BEPC and must pass an entrance examination. The school also admits Government employees of the B category already working by means of competitive examinations. This study course lasts from 2 to 3 years. Gifted students are then sent to Paris to the International Institute of Administrative and Judiciary Studies, and at the termination of this course they become Civil Administrators.

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WORK INSPECTORS

It is important to point out that the University Institutes of Technology and Forestry Studies also admit natives from countries of Central Africa, that is ; from : Congo-Brazzaville, the Centrafrican Republic, the Federal Republic of the Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Tchad.

3° TEACHING (Types of)

a) Primary Instruction is free and has been made compulsory for all boys and girls, age 6 to 16, since the school-year beginning October 1959.

As a rule, this instruction is spread over a period of six years, going from the CP1 to the CM2. Graduates receive an elementary primary studies certificate (CEPE) and are allowed to take the 6th year entrance examination which is the same for all secondary schools.

b) Secondary Instruction offers two courses :

- a complementary or short course, with 4 years of study, from the 6th class to the 3rd, after which students take the examinations for the "BREVET D'ETUDES DU PREMIER CYCLE DU SECOND DEGRE (BEPC)" - (First Course Secondary School Diploma). This course is given in the General Education Collèges (CEG) ;

- long course or secondary schooling properly speaking : is spread over a period of 7 years and is given in the classical and modern Lycées and Collèges. Graduates receive the baccalaureate degree.

c) Technical and Vocational Instruction

has four different courses : primary, intermediate, long and household crafts :

- primary course : a two-year course given in the Apprenticeship Centres which are most often annexed to urban and regional schools. Graduates receive a Vocational Aptitude Elementary Certificate (CEAP) ;

- intermediate course : a three-year course of study given in Technical Collèges. Graduates receive a Vocational Aptitude Certificate (CAP). Gifted students from these collèges may, after obtaining their CAP, take the entrance examination leading to the 4th class of the Technical Lycée.

- long course : given exclusively in the Technical Lycée. After 6 years of study, graduates obtain a Diploma for Commercial Teaching (BET and BEC) or, after 7 years of study, a technical Baccalaureate degree.

Since the beginning of the school-year October 1967, there is also an economics departement in the Technical Lycée. It takes in students who have a BEPC and also students of the classical and modern 2nd year level. Students terminating this two-year course successfully receive a Political Economy Diploma.

- household crafts course :

This is given first as a beginners' or observation course in the primary and secondary schools and later, as a more thorough course of study in the Household Crafts Collèges for a period of two years.

d) Teacher training courses are given in :

- The Pedagogical Formation Centres, which, since October 1966, have been enrolling students of the 3rd year level without a BEPC. These centres have taken the place of the former monitor-student sections which were eliminated in order to upgrade our teachers. The duration of the course is one school year after which, passing students receive a principal monitor's Diploma ;

- A Normal Collège, a secondary establishment of the CEG type which includes a course in professional training. Students having a BEPC take the examination for the Normal College Terminal Studies Certificate (CFECN). They can only be appointed as teachers after :

- 1) practise teaching for one year on probation ;
- 2) obtaining the Pedagogical Aptitude Elementary Certificate (CEAP).

- A Normal School, where, after 3 years of study, passing students obtain the status of Principal Schoolmaster. Before students are admitted to this School, they must have obtained their BEPC and must be 1st year level students at the time of admission. Also, they must have passed the final examination for the teacher training diploma. In Gabon, this diploma is called the "BREVET SUPERIEUR DE CAPACITE" (Superior Capacity Diploma) but in France, it is now non-existent. It is only after one year of practice teaching that candidates obtain their title and appointment in the school system and this, after first having secured the Pedagogical Aptitude Certificate (CAP).

4° MISCELLANEOUS

a) The school year generally begins on the 1st October and ends on June 30th.

b) The fiscal year goes from the 1st of January to December 31st. The budget is prepared by all of the Ministries, then it is voted by Parliament, which consists of only one body, the National Assembly. It is pronounced executory in December by the President of the Republic.

c) The Teaching organization chart has been published in "Education dans le Monde" (Education throughout the World). However, we can give here the number of the different Departments and specialized services of the Ministry of National Education and that of the school circumscriptions :

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We have four main Administrative Departments

- the Department of General Instruction ;
- the Department of Technical and Vocational Instruction ;
- the Department of the National Pedagogical Institute ;
- the Department of National Civic Service ; and the Common specialized Services which are in direct connection with the Ministerial Cabinet : the Scholarship and Probation Service, Personnel Service, Central Book-keeping Service, Examination Service, Planning, school-building and school-statistics Service (BUS) and the Equipment Service.

II - EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS QUANTITATIVELY

1° Primary Teaching

a) Schools

There are 647 schools with 85 328 students against 627 schools with 81 125 students in 1967. That means there are 20 schools more and a pupil load increase of 4 203 pupils, or 4,5 %

b) Classes

The number of Classes has gone up from 1,853 in 1967 to 2,019 in 1968, which means an increase of 9 % :

- 1 015 classes for the Public Education sector
- 815 classes for the Private Catholic sector
- 189 classes for the Private Protestant sector.

2° Secondary Education

a) 23 CEG against 24 in 1967 have 2 635 students against 2 529 in 1967, or an increase of 4,2 %. One CEG was transformed into a Modern Collège in October 1967.

b) 8 Modern Collèges, 1 Classical and Modern Collège and 1 Lycée enrolled 2 914 students in 1968 against 2 674 in 1967, or an increase of 8,3 %.

3° Technical Instruction

a) 1 Technical Lycée, 5 Technical Collèges, 2 Commercial schools, 2 Household Crafts schools and 12 Apprenticeship Centres grouped 1 504 students in 1967 against 1 539 students in 1968.

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b) Student distribution as follows :

- 698 in the Industrial Sections
- 405 in the Commercial and Economics Sections
- 98 in the Household Crafts
- 338 in Apprenticeship Centres

are studying in

- 46 (General Course) classes
- 28 (Specialized Instructions) classes

and are doing practical work in 26 Workshops.

In connection with this rapid view on the three above aspects of Education, it is useful to reveal a few facts concerning the number of students in the secondary education long-course (see pyramid diagram p. 7) and the examination results obtained in October 1967

The PYRAMID, representing the student-load in secondary schools

Out of 100 pupils (of which number let us say 30 are girls) enrolled in the 6th class, only 15 reach the terminal classes.

The pyramid on the following page reveals at a glance that out of 753 pupils enrolled in the 6th class, only 129 students reach the baccalaureate class, that is, approximately 1/6.

The reason for this situation is that certain students abandon their secondary studies at an early age.

Most observers feel however that massive arbitrary exclusions are the main cause for such an exaggerated dropping out of students and also, that the existence of a non-Africanized teaching corps has a great deal to do with this situation. In order to limit the damages, the Minister of National Education has taken certain steps, one of which is the elimination of the "Probatoire", that is, the examination taken at the end of the secondary course of study in replacement of the first part of the baccalaureate. The "Probatoire" was manifestly a barrier obstructing approach to the terminal classes.

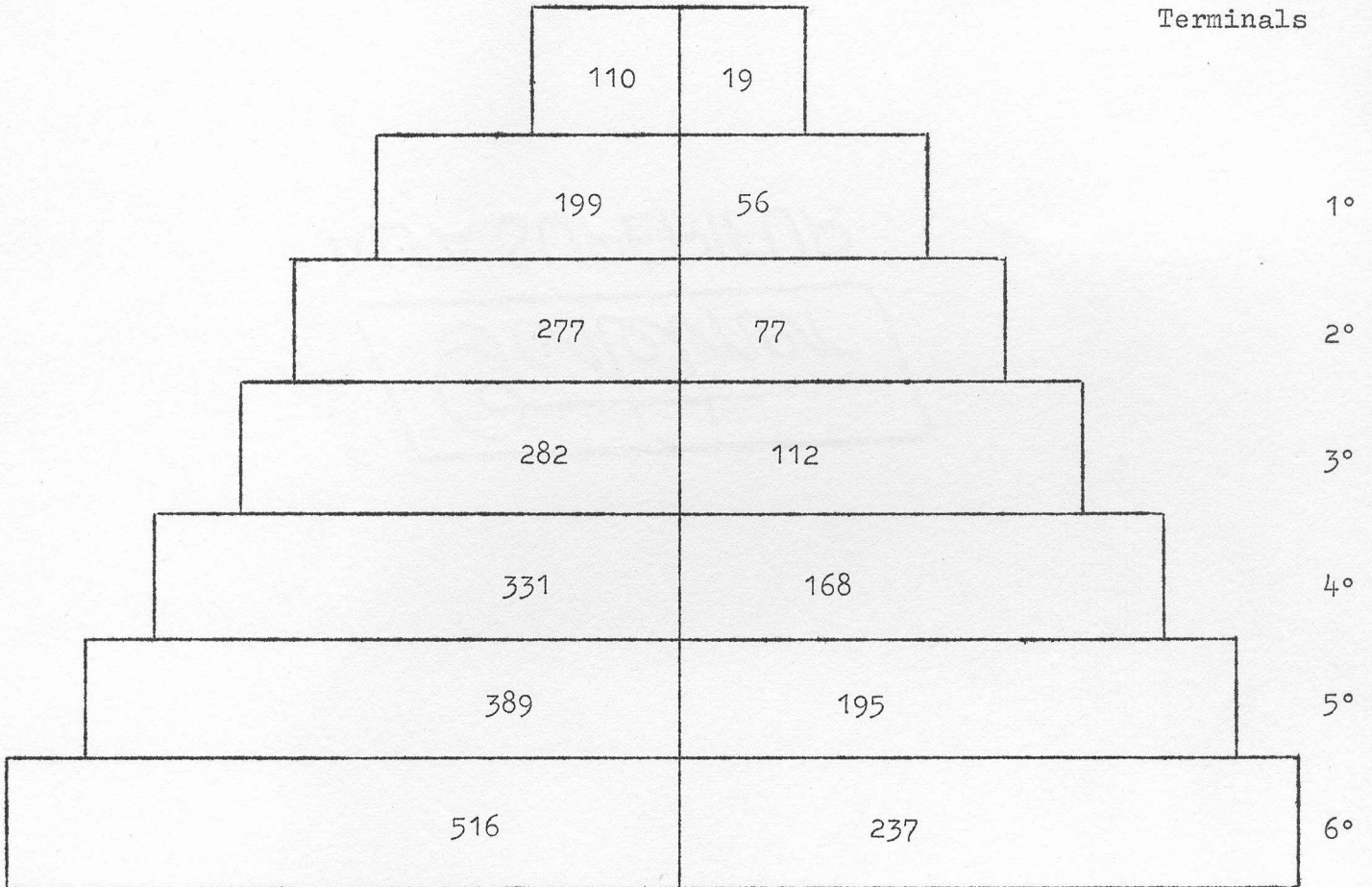
There are 129 more Scholarship students than in 1967 representing an increase of 34,3 %. Out of 505 of these students studying in foreign countries, 424 are in France, which country supplies the majority of the secondary school teachers, 83,7 %.

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Boys

Girls

Terminals



Results of examinations for June to October 1967

(N.B. : (NYR) Not yet received)

	ENROLLED			CERTIFICATED			RATE
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
Baccalaureate	N	Y	R			64	
						40 Gab-	43 %
End of first						87	38 %
B.E.P.C.				318	85	403	
						362 Gab-	49,4 %
C.E.P.E.	N	Y	R	1 817	1 027	2 844	
B.C.C.	"	"	"	4	2	6	
B.S.E.N. 1°part	21		2	8	1	9	39,1 %
2° "	20			15		15	75 %
3° "	15			10		10	66 %
B.E.I.				8		8	
C.A.P. (trade)	N	Y	R	15	5	20	
CAP (industry)	"	"	"	92		92	
CAP Household-crafts	"	"	"		2	2	
CEPC Vocational	"	"	"	41		41	
Dipl. Principal Monitor	"	"	"	145	23	168	
CEAP Primary School Lecture	"		"	74	13	87	
CAP Principal Institute	"	"	"	20	2	22	

4° DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOLARS

a) LOCALLY SCHOLARS

<u>S C H O O L S</u>	<u>T O T A L</u>			<u>R E M A R K S</u>
	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>		
Workers rapid vocational school	94	132	+	38
Rapid office employee vocational school	63	172	+	109
Institute of forestry studies	20	15	-	5
University institute technology	8	2	-	6
Public Health	136	86	-	50 : one section eliminated
Gabonese school of Administration	43	43		same number
T O T A L	364	450	+	86 : that is an increase of 23,3

b) Scholars to foreign Countries

<u>C O U N T R Y</u>	<u>T O T A L</u>		<u>R E M A R K S</u>
	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	
France	271	424	
Belgium	8	9	
Germany	7	7	
Switzerland	8	3	
Spain	10	10	
Lebanon	0	2	
U.S.A.	1	2	
Canada	-	4	
Marocco	1	1	
Israël	6	1	
Senegal	9	1	
Ivory Coast	20	15	
Niger	7	4	
Cameroon	3	19	
Congo-Brazza	22	-	
Congo-Kinshassa	-	2	
Chad	2	-	
Upper-Volta	-	1	
	376	505	+ 129, That is 34,3 %

5° Teacher Training Instruction

This comprises : 1 Normal School, 1 Normal Collège and 4 Pedagogical Formation Centres grouping altogether 133 students against 172 in 1967, that is, 39 students less.

This drop is due to the fact that every year many students at the 3rd class level abandon the teaching career for other Government occupations because, as they have observed, teaching "does not pay". Here is an example :

The same conditions prevail for students when they are enrolled in a Normal School or in the Gabonese School of Administration. The duration of studies is the same for both : 3 school years. But when the students graduate, they are classified differently :

- a) The Normal School graduates are placed in B1
- b) Graduates from the Gabonese School of Administration are put into A2.

We also see clearly that our young Principal Schoolmasters are disfavoured and do not enjoy the same advantages as their colleagues.

6° TEACHING PERSONNEL

- A) Primary Instruction : 2 320 Teachers
 - 388 Monitors
 - 333 Principal Monitors
 - 282 Schoolmasters
- 1) Official
 - 96 Principal Schoolmasters
 - 19 Primary School Inspectors
 - 19 Assistant Teachers

- 1 137
- 2) Private Catholic 957 Teachers
- 3) Private Protestant 226 Teachers
- B) Secondary Instruction 62 Teachers - CEG and Licentiates
 - a) CEG Teachers 43
 - b) Licentiates or assimilated Teachers 19

- C) Technical and Household Crafts Instruction : 34
29 worker-instructors, technical teachers and inspectors
5 household crafts monitors
- D) Physical Education : 16 Teachers and Schoolmasters

III - BUDGET

- a) The budget has gone up from 1 945 899 000 francs in 1967 to 2 116 666 000 francs, which means an increase of 170 767 000 frs.

The chart below shows, for the year 1968, a decrease of 19 million francs for the development budget, whereas credit allowed for functioning, personnel and other common miscellaneous expenditure is increasing more and more.

- b) The 1968 budget for National Education represents 13,5 % of the general budget of the Gabonese State.

1968	DESIGNATION	1967
630.000.000	Personnel	582.500.000
321.358.000	Functioning	285.624.000
168.000.000	Development	187.000.000
997.308.000	Common and Miscellaneous Expenditure	890.775.000
2.116.666.000	Total	1.945.099.000

IV - PROBLEMS ALREADY SOLVED AND TO BE SOLVED

1° A - The State is doing all it can to improve the quality of its Primary School Teaching. Teachers for this branch receive a training superior to that of the CEPE. So that teachers retain the knowledge acquired during their training period and do not lose ground, the Ministry of National Education, through the intermediary of the National Pedagogical Institute, has organized for them :

- a) improvement courses given in the Akébé (Libreville) and Fougamou centres, which receive, on an average, 50 students for three-month periods. This programme, financed by UNESCO together with UNICEF will be extended next year so as to include CYEM and MOANDA.

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b) correspondence courses ; (the so-called permanent education courses), so that teachers who take such courses may make better preparation for the professional examinations.

B - To support all these different courses and assure additional professional training for teachers, the National Pedagogical Institute is giving wide circulation to the new pedagogical methods through the Audio-Visual Media Service on the one hand, and on the other, by means of articles published in "REALITES GABONAISES" and "L'EDUCATEUR", as well as advice given liberally by the itinerant pedagogical teams.

a) The Audio-Visual Media Service

- The Radio : This Service broadcasts programmes meant either for elementary school teachers, the programmes including different types of lessons (language, reading, arithmetic ...) and general information, or for leaders of the Popular Education Centres who are entrusted with literacy classes and Adult Education.

- By means of the Language Laboratory, this Service gives teachers an opportunity during their pedagogical improvement periods to become accustomed to French pronunciation (phonetics ...). It also offers Gabonese Government officials who travel to foreign countries, or who are constantly in contact with diplomats or tourists coming from countries where French is not spoken, to learn either English or Spanish, whatever the need may be. This fine service makes it possible to extend the field of international cooperation.

b) The research and circulating Service has created two new sections since the beginning of the school-year October 1967 :

1 - Pedagogical cards : Personnel for this work drawn exclusively from among the French technical specialists, has already prepared model-lessons in language, arithmetic and reading for teachers of the CP.

2 - A second section of this service is centered on the CE, but its activities are in an experimental stage and the new techniques will not be applied officially until the October 1968 school-year re-opening, that is, if the apparatus this section needs is purchased and set up, in time.

- History-Geography Section : In the early years following our accession to independence, it was not possible to give our country a local geography for anyone of the school levels. After the meeting of African geography experts held in ACCRA from the 4th to the 13th of September 1967, the National Pedagogical Institute gave this question its most serious attention and named a Gabonese professor to work on this project. This year, a geography book meant for secondary school teachers will be published.

This year, too, a commission has just been created for the purpose of making a study of geography programmes and their application in the Primary Schools. But the elaboration of such a project requires numerous and qualified personnel.

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2° Improvement of working conditions

A - The main concern of our country is not only to assure high quality teaching, but also suitable working conditions for our teachers and students.

In this connection, a long-term school building programme has been approved as part of the general economic and social plan (five-year plan 1966-1970) which provides for the building of 60 new schools per year.

The work was to be conducted on the one hand by the Gabonese Government and on the other, by volunteers of the USA Peace Corps. In order of urgency, the following programme has been set up this school-year.

a) By the Gabonese Government

the building of 12 classrooms and one teacher's apartment in LIBREVILLE.

- 3 classrooms and 3 apartments in COCOBEACH
- 3 classrooms in LASTOURVILLE
- 3 classrooms in FRANCEVILLE

b) By the U.S.A. Peace Corps

- 3 classrooms and 3 apartments in BONGOVILLE
- 3 classrooms and 3 apartments in NGOUOUI
- 3 classrooms in AKIENI
- 3 classrooms in OSSOUELE
- 3 classrooms in EKOUYI
- 3 classrooms in DJOUTOU
- 3 classrooms in MAVANGA, 3 in NZELA, 3 in LEBANI
- 3 classrooms in PORT-GENTIL, 3 in OMBOUE and 3 in GAMBA.

But the abrupt departure of the Peace Corps Volunteers in January 1968 has not made it possible to carry out this vast programme on the American side.

A new secondary school is being built in the Estuary area. It will be ready for the October 1968 school re-opening. This school, which will be a CEG, will receive in NTOUM, 42 km from LIBREVILLE, students from three districts of the said area. This CEG will take boarders.

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B - School Alimentation

a) Nutritional Education Service

In order to help the poorest pupils of the primary schools, the Ministry of National Education created, about four years ago, a Nutritional Education Service. The work of this Service, still at an experimental stage, is concentrated in 7 pilot-schools that have canteens. These schools have also undertaken small-scale breeding (poultry), as well as gardening. The 7 schools are located as follows :

- The Estuary : 1 in Akok, 1 in Sibang (Libreville)
- The Ngounié : 1 in Mouila, 1 in Fougamou, 1 in Lébamba
- du Woleu-Ntem : 1 in Ebameville (Oyem), 1 in Tchimazok (Bitam)

In order to avoid an exodus of the young people and to allow them to have direct contact with nature and to guide them toward agricultural work (qualified agriculturists), gardening in the schools has proved to be a good initiative.

b) The "P A M"

So that our Government may build many schools, an international organization has come to help it by taking over the burden of providing the food needed for resident pupils in the Lycées and Collèges. This is the World Food Programme (PAM) which operates in close collaboration with the FAO.

3° Teaching Rate

The teachable population is estimated as comprising 118 500 individuals. Primary education being compulsory for children age 6 to 16, it is estimated that 85 328 children attend school. In the secondary schools, there are 4 750 pupils of school age, making a total of 90 078.

Taking into account the number of students who repeat a class and students who are expelled, there is a decrease of 2/10 in the teachable population, which in figures amounts to : $\frac{118\ 500 \times 8}{10} = 94\ 800$.

The teaching rate is therefore estimated to be :

$$\frac{90\ 078 \times 100}{94\ 800} = 95,01 \%$$

4° Teaching of mathematics

The Republic of Gabon has accepted with hearty favour the project on the teaching of mathematics elaborated by UNESCO. Study of this work conducted by Teachers of this discipline has revealed that it may be possible to work out this project in the near future, in the course of a general reform of the Secondary Education programmes.

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5° SHORTAGE OF LOCAL TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

a) As we have already seen in this report, personnel for the primary schools is quite numerous and meets approximately the total needs of the Nation. But the situation is not the same in the Secondary Schools.

Here, we have a serious shortage of Africanized personnel. Therefore, we seek foreign aid which is mostly given us by France.

Out of 310 Teachers in the Public Secondary Schools ; there are, in fact :

- 283 French teachers (41 military men and 59 under Gabonese contract), or 91 %. The rest are classified as follows :
- 5 Belgian teachers ; 3 from UNESCO ; 3 Israelians ;
2 Canadians ; 2 Africans from Saothome ; 1 Haitian and
1 from UNICEF.

To find a remedy for this shortage, it would be advisable for our young people having a baccalaureate degree to be oriented toward the teaching profession and for our Gabonese Teachers who are teaching in French Schools to return to GABON, their country.

We note that in spite of the handicaps encountered in the training of the primary school teachers, in spite of the shortage of teachers for our secondary schools and the difficulties that arise in the school building undertakings, the Republic of Gabon is one of the world's nations receiving instruction on a large scale.

Libreville, 17th June 1968.

Dr. Benjamin NGOUBOU