

THE VOICE OF THE COMMON

To mark the occasion of Sierra Leone's independence and accession to full membership of the Commonwealth, "The Sphere" this week publishes these exclusive messages from Commonwealth leaders. Pictures and articles on Sierra Leone are on pages 166 and 179 to 183

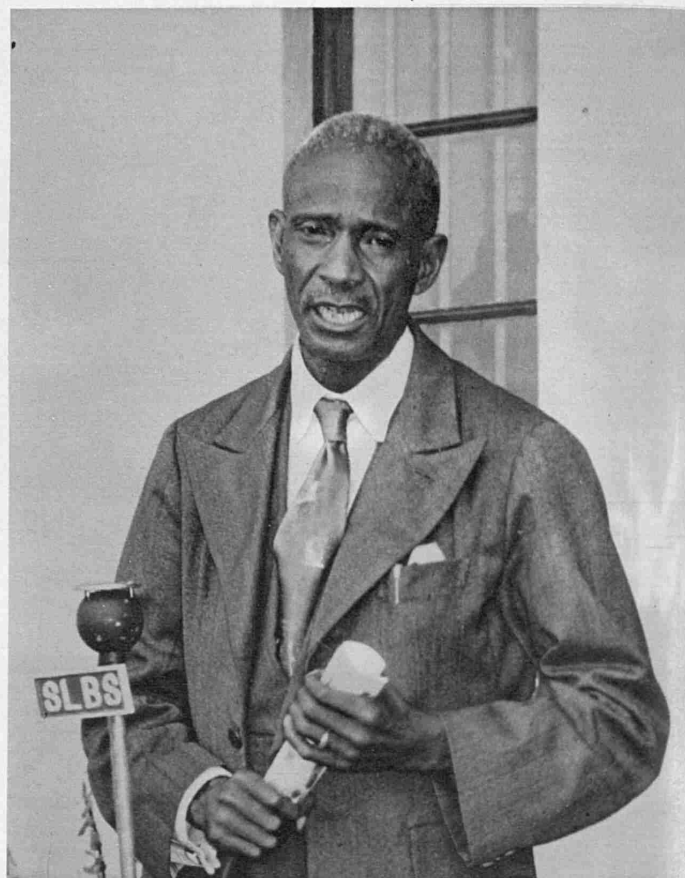
From Sir Milton Margai, Prime Minister of Sierra Leone.

"It was with very great pride and joy that I heard of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' welcome to Sierra Leone as a full member of the Commonwealth of Nations. We in Sierra Leone regard our membership of this great family of nations both as an honour, which we shall strive to deserve, and as a challenge, which we readily accept, to work for world peace and for the mutual prosperity of mankind everywhere.

"Sierra Leone is a small country, but we are confident in our ability to build upon the heritage we have derived from our long and happy association with Britain, and to tackle the many problems and difficulties which confront us.

"We shall continue to welcome foreign investment to the fullest possible extent and to encourage this our policy provides for the unrestricted repatriation of capital, profits and interest and for generous and flexible tax concessions. We do not propose to nationalise any form of commercial, mining or industrial undertaking and if new and unforeseen circumstances should dictate a change in this respect, we acknowledge our obligation to pay fair compensation which would, if necessary, be determined by arbitration.

"We have courage, purpose and determination. With God's guidance we shall be judged by our quality and our sincerity."



Sir Milton Margai has been Sierra Leone's Prime Minister since 1954

From the Hon. G. A. Drew, Q.C., High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom.

"I am pleased to extend a welcome to Sierra Leone as a new member of the Commonwealth.

"Canada was the first of the former colonies in the British Empire to attain responsible and representative government. Canadians attach a special significance to their membership in the Commonwealth because the establishment of a self-governing nation as a partner of Great Britain was a Canadian concept which found expression in the British North America Act of 1867. From that beginning has emerged the Commonwealth we know today.

"Canadians are proud that their country is a member of this unique institution which embraces a multitude of regional interests in all continents and embraces in one political family all races and creeds. Much good can come to the whole world from this free association of nations, and Canadians warmly welcome Sierra Leone as its newest member."

From Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom.

"Sierra Leone's independence is a matter of deep satisfaction to all countries of the Commonwealth and I send my best wishes to this youngest member of our expanding community for the happiness and progress of its people in the years ahead.

"As an African country, and an independent sovereign member of the Commonwealth, Sierra Leone has an important part to play. Countries are no longer judged by their size but by the contribution they can make to the sum total of human welfare.

"In our small world we are each dependent on the other to an ever-increasing extent. Sierra Leone will require outside assistance, both economic and technical, for her development, and the sympathetic understanding of her friends. I am sure both will be extended in full measure and that Sierra Leone's future will be a bright one."



Mrs. Pandit with the Duke of Devonshire, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Office, at a luncheon given recently in her honour in London

WEALTH



Admiralty House
Whitehall, S.W.1

It was with great pleasure and satisfaction that I was able to tell the Commonwealth Prime Ministers at their meeting last February of the forthcoming independence of Sierra Leone. They at once said that they looked forward to welcoming Sierra Leone into the number of the sovereign members of the Commonwealth.

This youngest of the Commonwealth nations will also be among the smallest. None the less we can say, with a confidence based on our long and friendly relations, that the Commonwealth will be the richer for its accession, and that the ideals which the Commonwealth cherishes will flourish in Sierra Leone.

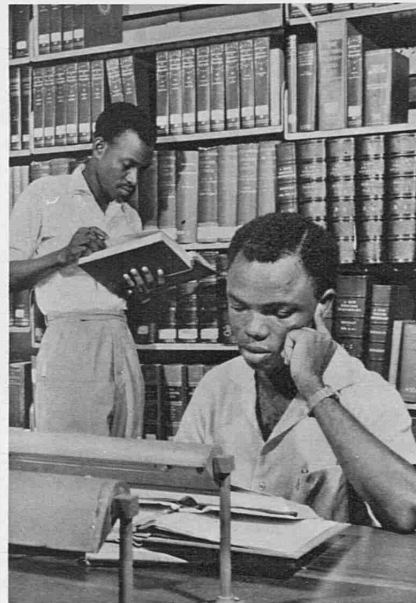
Harold Macmillan

April 14, 1961

The message from Mr. Harold Macmillan



The entrance to the Government Buildings in Freetown, the capital and chief port of Sierra Leone. Meetings of the House of Representatives had been held here for some years



Left: Students in the library in Fourah Bay College, Freetown. It was founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society and is affiliated to Durham University in England. Degree courses are provided in the arts, sciences and theology. There are also courses for the training of teachers



Below: Students work with microscopes during a lecture in the new science laboratory of the College at Fourah Bay



The Hon. George A. Drew



Alhaji Abdulmaliki

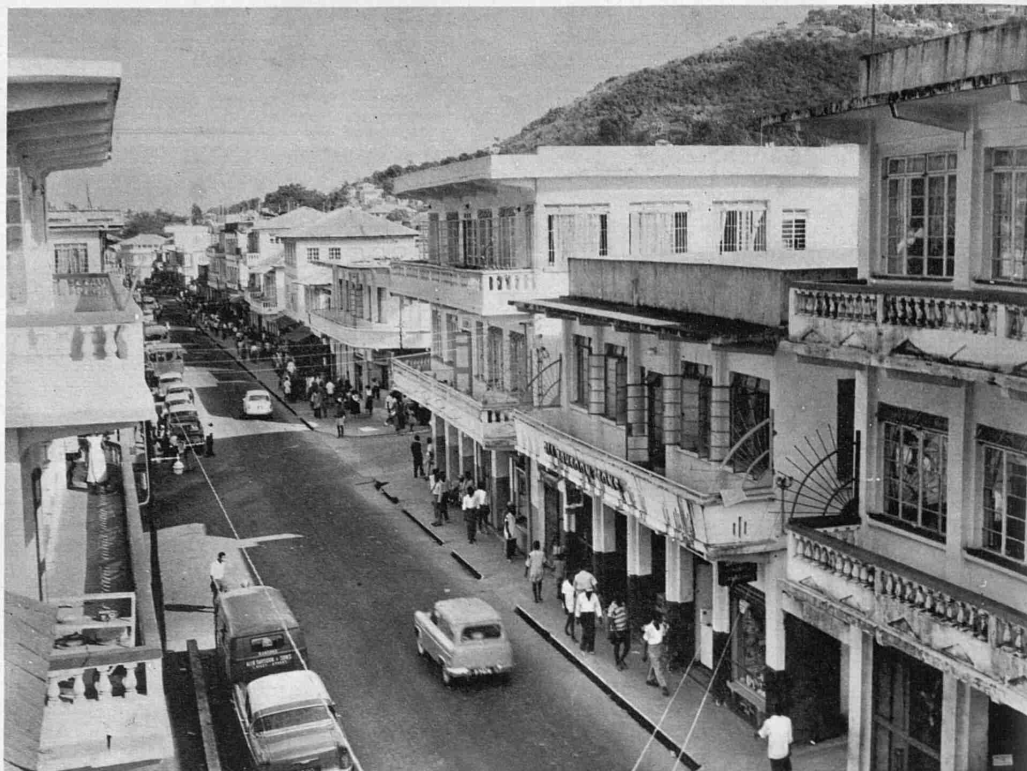
From Alhaji Abdulmaliki, High Commissioner for the Federation of Nigeria in the United Kingdom.

"It is with great pleasure that I send the 'Voice of the Commonwealth' this short message on the occasion of the Independence of Sierra Leone. Apart from the family connections between the people of Nigeria and the people of Sierra Leone, there are many other factors which link us together. The noble role which Fourah Bay College had played in the education of Nigerians cannot be forgotten. But, above all, it is a happy coincidence that our two countries share common ideals and beliefs and in many respects, our approach to problems in Africa and the world at large are identical.

"On behalf of Nigeria, I sincerely welcome Sierra Leone into the Commonwealth and hope that she will play her full part in making this family of nations a living reality."

SIERRA LEONE

The busy atmosphere of Freetown is indicative of the progress made in Sierra Leone in its development to Independence. Pavements are usually crowded throughout the day and roundabouts and one-way streets are needed to control the flow of traffic. As regards local government, the capital has enjoyed a substantial measure of self-rule since the first settlement at the end of the eighteenth century. In the earliest stage the town had a representative government. In 1893, the Charter conferring municipal status gave the citizens the most liberal constitution of any African town at that period. Other towns have developed elsewhere in the country. Everywhere noticeable features are the school buildings, emphasising the importance placed on education throughout Sierra Leone (see also articles and pictures on pp. 179-183).



Kissy street, a busy shopping centre in Freetown, is flanked by many modern white buildings



A road junction in the centre of the capital of Sierra Leone



Women carry loads on their heads in Makeni, a large town in the Northern Province



A fine new school building which has been erected in the South-Western Province

Left: The two-storeyed dormitory block in the Magburaka Central School

SIERRA LEONE

THE COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL

By "THE SPHERE" INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

Tens of thousands of Englishmen of about my age have been to Freetown, whether or not they ever landed there; but when it comes to knowing the interior of Sierra Leone, the number comes down to a few hundred. In two wars, Freetown has been one of the great staging points for convoys on the way to the East; with a harbour covering about 4,000 acres of anchorage with six to twenty-four fathoms of water, it could accommodate any convoy. But most of these enforced wartime visits were calls of no more than a day or two. Sierra Leone is a name on a map to people in Britain; a phrase that one never took quite seriously, "The White Man's Grave"; the scene of a Graham Greene novel. . . . Standing among the small mountains of ore in a British steelworks stockyard, a blast furnace manager will tell you, "Now this is from Sierra Leone."

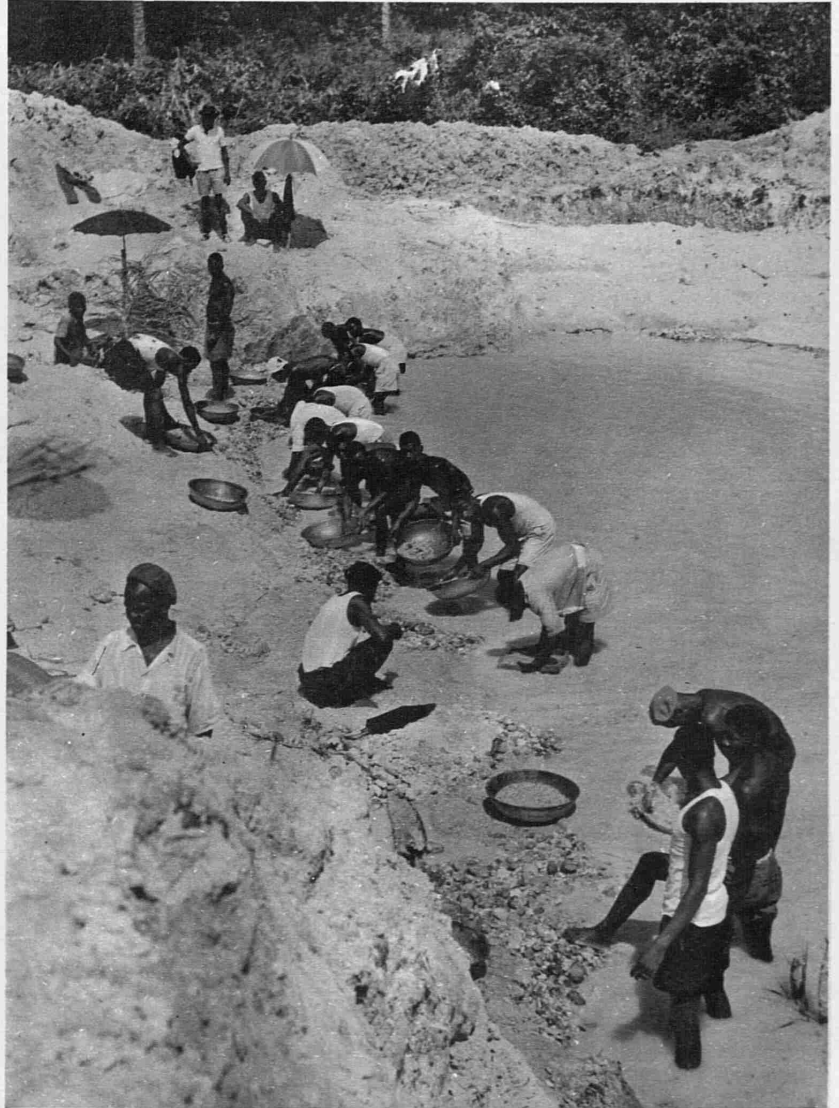
The former colony and protectorate now becomes independent, under its Premier, Sir Milton Margai, who is perhaps less well known in Britain than some of the more flamboyant champions of African political advance in other countries that have reached or are approaching independence. Sierra Leone has had a fairly steady political development, in spite of a certain contrast between the ways of living of the Colony, the small peninsula on which Freetown stands, and the Protectorate, a hundred times as big, whose frontiers make a deep bite into the "bulge" of Africa between Guinea and Liberia.

Sierra Leone is basically an agricultural country, and not a particularly rich one; all of its forms of farming have to struggle against the same difficulty, a fantastic volume of rainfall that varies from about 85 ins. a year in the northern provinces to about 150 ins. a year in Freetown. The weather is something to which Africans in this latitude, 7 degrees from the Equator, are used, and to which the few European businessmen and officials in the country can to some extent get used; but what suffers from it most is the soil. This huge volume of rain, steadily leaching out the salts that give the land nutrition, has left the red laterite soils of Sierra Leone unrewarding for most crops. The most effective method of maintaining or restoring fertility to it is the high forest, but most of Sierra Leone has for many years been cleared; agriculture is now carried on by the "bush-fallow" method, in which the land is allowed to revert to bush and secondary forest for longish periods, say four to seven years.

Much of the agriculture is "subsistence farming," in spite of efforts over the years to introduce "cash crops." Rice is the main subsistence crop and the staple diet of the people. There are about 650,000 acres under cultivation producing paddy that yields 148,000 tons of milled rice a year. Mechanised methods of cultivation are being introduced to increase output; but this is increasing more slowly than consumption, and in recent years Sierra Leone has become a net importer.

One way to pay for this, and for the imports of manufactured goods that the country needs, is export crops. Palm kernels are the biggest agricultural export, worth perhaps £3,000,000 a year; some cocoa is exported, and minor exports include coffee, kola nuts, and piassava, a palm fibre used for brushes and brooms. These crops are largely produced on small plantations; but the new Government is anxious to carry out schemes that have been initiated before independence and attract into the country's agriculture commercial companies to produce tobacco, bananas and rubber. Most of the crops for export are collected and marketed by a statutory Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board, which tends to shelter small-scale producers from the fluctuations of world prices by fixing stabilised prices, for the year or crop season, in advance.

Industry, in a country in this stage of development, generally means extractive rather than manufacturing industry: Sierra Leone's most important exports, which have made the main contribution to growth of this little economy, are minerals, both precious and workaday. There has been some gold in the territory, along the River Makong; between 1930 and 1941 most of it was panned out of the rivers, and to-day dredging for gold is only on a tiny scale (according to the statistics much gold panned by African prospectors was always smuggled out). The precious mineral of outstanding importance in the country to-day is



Panning for diamonds in the Kenema district of Sierra Leone. Diamond mining is of vital importance to the country's economy. Last year it accounted for about half the whole export trade

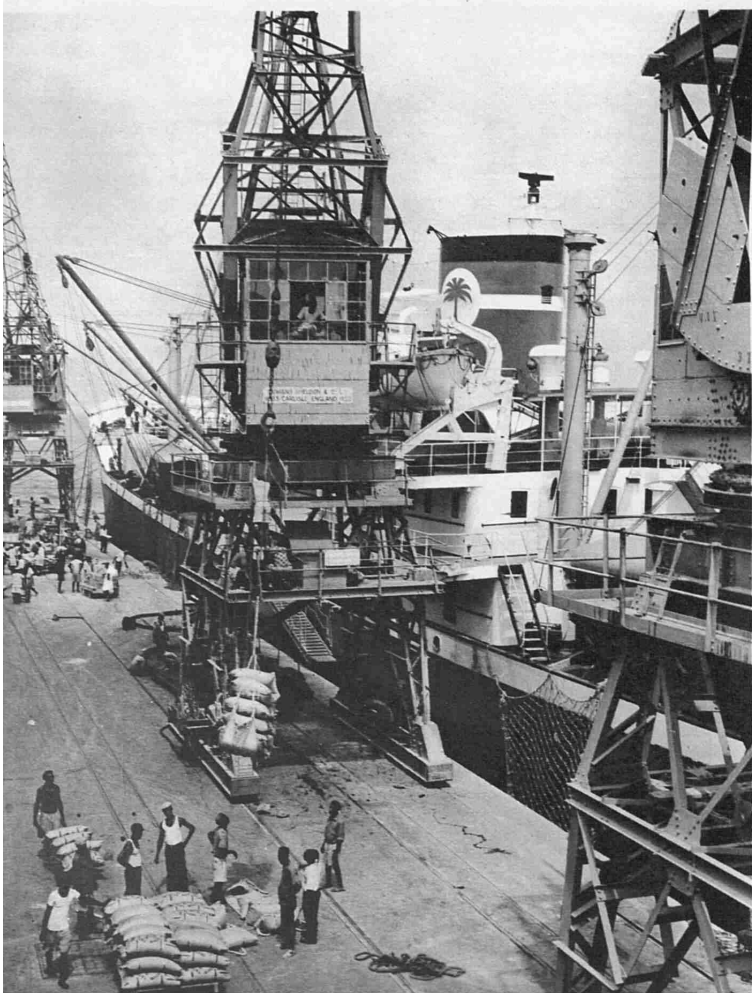
diamonds: last year's exports amounted to probably nearly £10,000,000 worth, about half the value of the country's whole export trade. This industry, too, has had its share of smuggling.

The largest miner of diamonds from the gravel around the mouth of the Sewa river is the Sierra Leone Selection Trust, a subsidiary of Consolidated Selection Trust, which mines for diamonds in various parts of Africa. Since 1934 this company has had a concession in the country centred on Yengema; it excavates the diamond-bearing gravel, concentrates this in washeries, and then passes the concentrate over wax sorting tables that retain the diamond dust and let the rest go on. Production by the Trust is mainly of industrial diamonds, though the larger stones go for jewellery. They are sold in line with the regulated release of diamonds on the world market by the de Beers syndicate, as are most of the world's diamonds to-day (including even Russia's).

The trust was originally granted diamond-mining rights to the whole area; but after 1952, partly as a result of bad years in agriculture, many Africans from within and outside Sierra Leone began to flock into the diamond-bearing areas and to sift out stones for themselves. They fairly soon found buyers, although this trade was illegal; a flourishing illicit diamond buying business is said to have sprung up in Freetown.

Eventually legal action was taken to adjust a situation that the policing of these areas was failing to control. The company was paid £1,570,000 compensation for reducing its concession area to 450 square

(Continued on following page)



The Queen Elizabeth II quay at Freetown, the largest port in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone

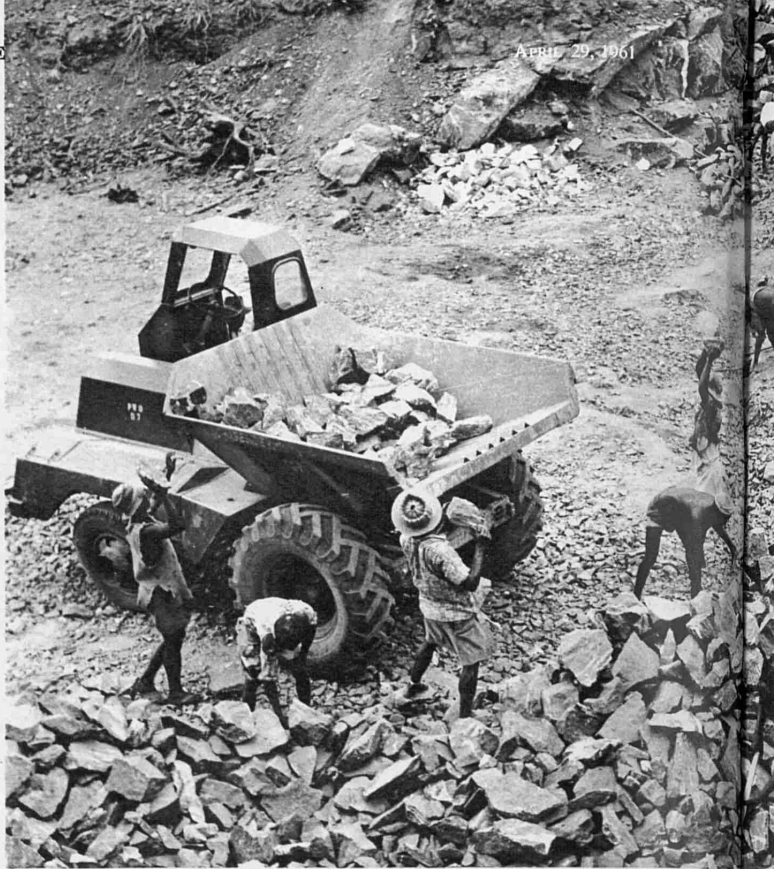
THE COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL

(Continued from previous page)

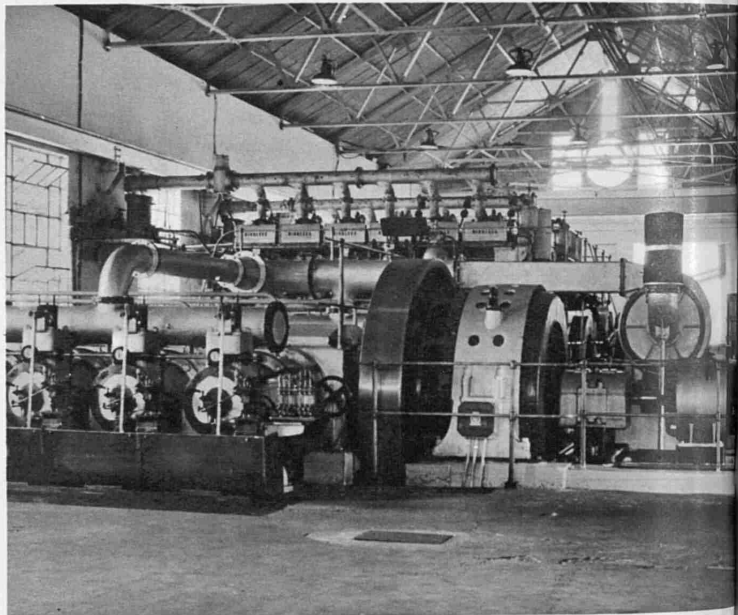
miles in the Kono and Kenema areas. The rest of the country was thrown open to the individual African miners, but they had to operate under licence and to market their stones through licensed dealers. The situation took several years to bring under control; measures to reduce smuggling had to be tightened in 1959, and since that year a Government Diamond Office has been the only licensed exporter of alluvial diamonds. The trust has begun to give the individual miners training, and some use of mechanised equipment has now been started.

The country's other substantial industry is also extractive, the mining of iron ore. The main deposit being worked is at Marampa, about 50 miles inland from Freetown. In the early '30's the Sierra Leone Development Company was formed to exploit this; it built a railway through the bush, and shipped its first ore in 1933. During the war, Sierra Leone supplied about 40 per cent. of Britain's intake of foreign ore. To-day it is one of the most modern ore-getting operations in the world. The rich hematite ore has been cut off the top of some hills at Marampa, and what goes out from this working is mainly concentrates from the grey powder ore beneath, which contains about 45 per cent. iron. But other grades of hematite, ranging from 55 to 69 per cent. iron, are produced; about 1,250,000 tons of ore are extracted every year, and shipped out in 1,000-ton trainloads to the modern ore port at Pepel, which can load 2,000 tons an hour and turn a ship round in less than 24 hours.

New ore-treatment mills are being built to raise output at Marampa to 2,000,000 tons, and there are plans to make this 3,000,000 tons a year. "Delco" also has rights to develop ore at Tonkolili, where the deposits of high-grade ore appear to be even larger than those already being worked; to bring these into operation, with a seventy-mile extension of the present ore railway, would cost £25,000,000. There are other minerals in Sierra Leone; chrome ore and concentrates have been produced for export since the '30s, and there are plans for the working of rutile, one of the ores of aluminium, in the south-west of the country.



Quarrying for stones outside Freetown to obtain basic materials for developing the country's road system



The interior of the Sierra Leone Development Company's power house at Marampa

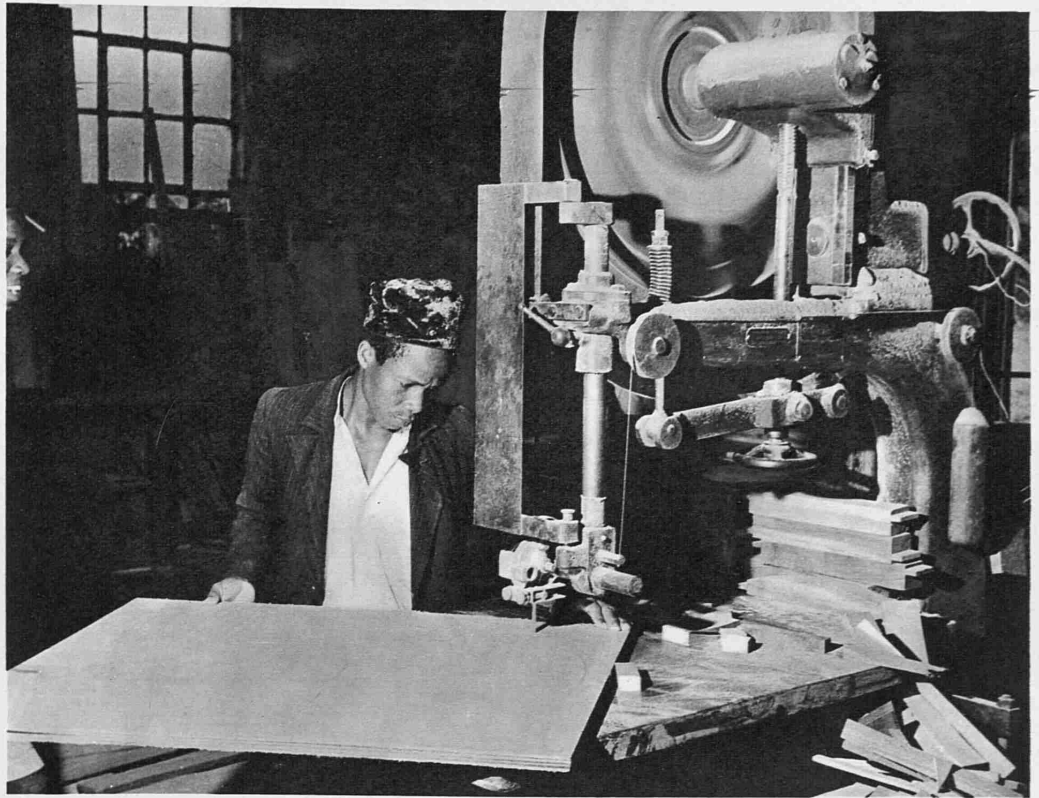
Right: The iron-ore mill at Marampa of the Sierra Leone Development Company

Since the war the colonial Government has carried out a large-scale programme of public works for the territory, and the new Government is continuing to press ahead with fresh projects, in most of which British contractors are involved. Taylor Woodrow, Cementation Ltd., and Howard Humphreys are involved in the Guma Valley scheme for Freetown water supply, and in the development of water supplies for Makeni and Moyamba; plans have recently been brought forward for considerable development of the country's road system.

It is planned to build five new power stations: the Guma Valley scheme mentioned above, which involves the creation of a lake with a storage capacity of 4,250,000,000 gallons, will provide not only water for Freetown but 12,000,000 gallons of water a day to generate electricity. Substantial loans from Britain's Colonial Development Corporation and Commonwealth Development Finance Company will be made, covering about £2,400,000 of the £3,500,000 involved; the scheme is expected to take about four years to complete. Independence can load some costly financial burdens on to the shoulders of a new nation; but over the next few years Britain is providing £7,500,000 in the shape of loans, grants, and technical assistance, to help its former colony, now a full member of the Commonwealth, on its way forward.

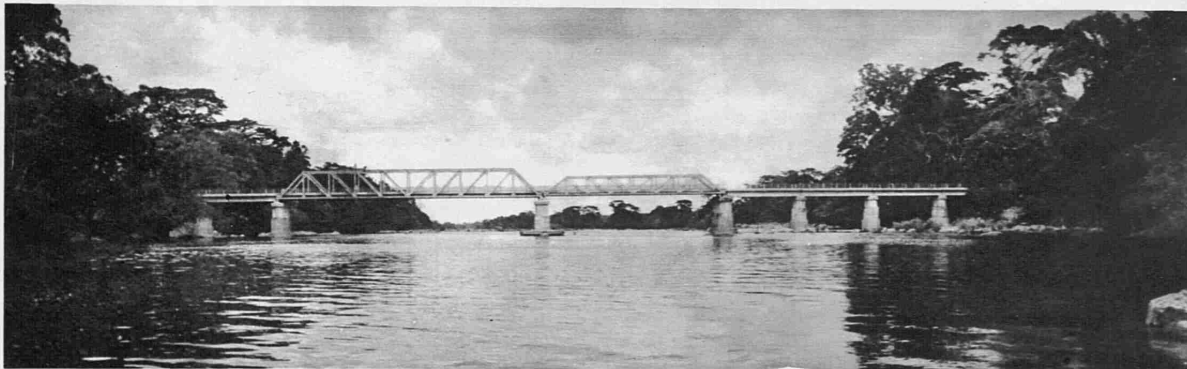


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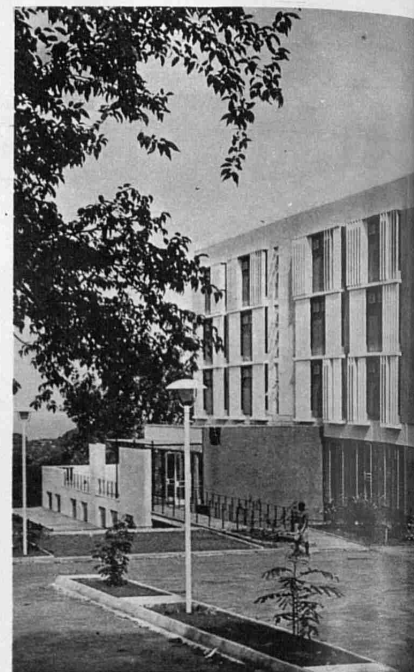
Wood is machined for furniture at the Forest Industries factory in Kenema. The furnishings for new hotels are produced here

The bridge over the River Moa at Kenema has a total span of approximately 450 ft. It was finished four years ago and is one of nine steel bridges on concrete piers completed over rivers in Sierra Leone by Pauling and Co., of London. The engineers were Rendel Palmer and Tritton, also of London





An artist's impression of the new building for Barclay's Bank, D.C.O., at Freetown, which was officially opened by the Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai, last month. The contractors were Taylor Woodrow (Sierra Leone); the architects, Messrs. Nickson and Borys and Partners, of Freetown, Lagos and Accra; the quantity surveyors, Daniel B. Connal and Partners; the consulting engineers, Brimer, Andrews and Nachsen, and the electrical and air conditioning consultants, J. Roger Preston and Partners



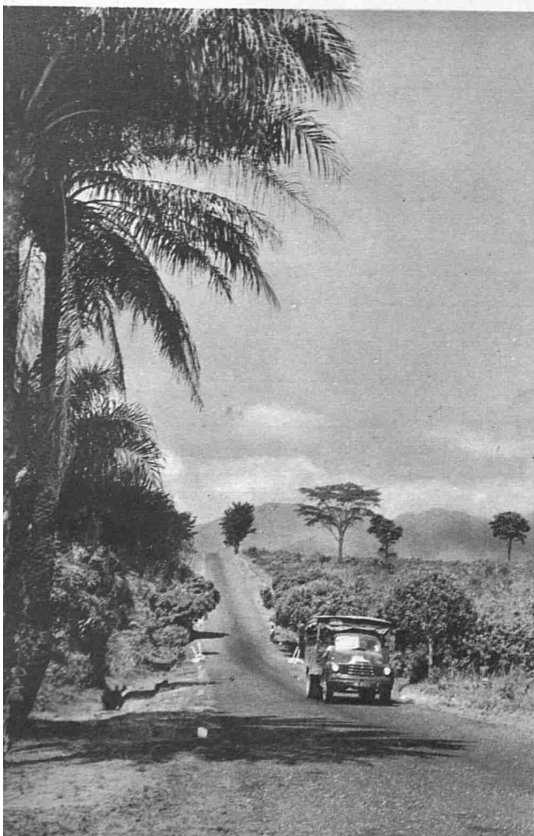
The Paramount Hotel in Freetown was opened at the end of 1960. The contractors, Taylor Woodrow (Sierra Leone), worked to designs by James Cubitt and Partners

Sierra Leone

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

By D. T. JACK

Professor Jack is David Dale Professor of Economics at the University of Durham. A leading expert on African affairs, he is the author of the Economic Survey of Sierra Leone and was a member of the Monckton Commission on Central Africa



A lorry on a road outside Freetown

On April 27, Sierra Leone obtains its political independence, one hundred and seventy-four years after the first arrangements were made to provide a settlement on the West African coast for destitute Negroes in England and subsequently for freed slaves from across the Atlantic. The twenty square miles which were ceded in 1787 became the basis of the Colony whose population is still predominantly Creole. In the hinterland were the indigenous populations with traditions of their own, including the institution of slavery, and with nothing in common with the new settlers. Gradually British influence was extended over this turbulent hinterland which in 1898 became a Protectorate. The Colony and Protectorate together form what is known as Sierra Leone. In this total area of 28,000 square miles—about a quarter of the size of the United Kingdom—there is now a population which may be estimated, though with some reserve, at about 2,200,000, of which about 130,000 reside in the Colony.

This is a central point in the political, social and economic structure of the country and for the future much may depend upon the ability of the Government to avoid serious friction and tension between the two groups. The Creoles are a kindly people, gentle and gracious in manner, though not immune from British faults and vices. On the second day of my last visit to Freetown an elderly Creole who stood beside me at the counter in a bank turned to me and said: "May I welcome you to our country." There was pride and dignity in his manner as he said it. The Creoles still follow British standards in matters of behaviour and dress, though in the style of the Victorian age rather than of modern times. They have also grown up with a respect for education,

partly because it is of the Western way of life but partly also because it appears to be a mode of entry into the more respectable occupations. Interest in the manual skills is less in evidence.

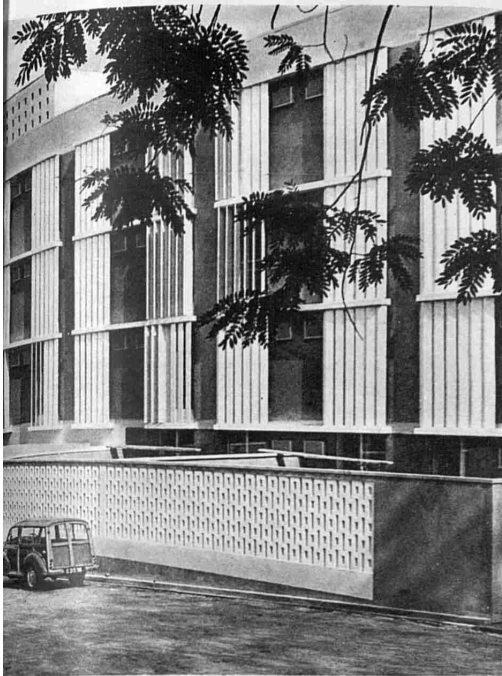
The Creole community thus had a start over the indigenous Africans who tend to be envious and suspicious of their apparent privileges. It may be that in the course of time the barriers between the two groups will diminish. Inter-marriage has already done something in this direction but the development of a sense of political and cultural unity will be a slow process.

In the view of some observers it will not be noticeable in the present century. The Creoles are numerically a minority and political power may come to be weighted against them. Although they predominate in the public services they have not displayed the vigour and enterprise which are required to contribute significantly to the advancement of the country's economy. I found their severest critics among themselves. On the other hand, the Africans of the Protectorate have not yet had the opportunity or the experience which might be expected to match their numerical superiority in the political life of the country.

Population changes are difficult to estimate with precision. In the Protectorate no proper census has yet been attempted. Estimates of population in each district are based upon the number of taxpayers multiplied by an assumed number of persons per taxpayer. This is a very rough and ready method of computation and must be used with caution. The Commission of Inquiry which followed the disturbances in the provinces in 1955 dealt, among other things, with the allegation that a large number of young men under the taxable age had been put on the list of taxpayers by chiefdom officials and made to pay tax. The Commission found that this allegation was made generally in the Protectorate and that it was well-founded.

But the indications are that population may be increasing at the rate of about 2 per cent. per annum. Birth rates and death rates, as far as they are known, are high. Infant mortality rates, too, are high but may be falling. The evidence suggests that infant mortality rates may be lower for the children of Creole women than for the children of women in the Protectorate but as the health services are extended this difference may diminish.

How well-off is the country and how well-endowed is it to sustain a positive economic development in the years which lie ahead?



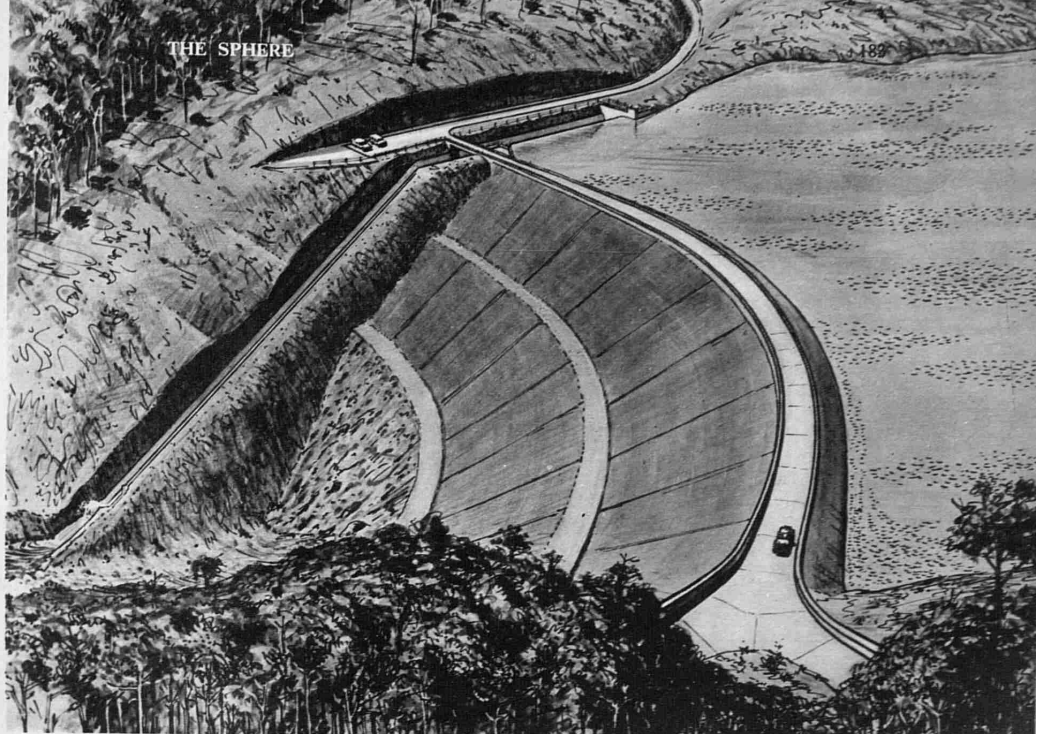
The terrace of the Paramount Hotel

The answers are uncertain. There is, as yet, no reliable and comprehensive statistical service which might provide us with satisfactory indications. But for what they are worth, and no better indices are available, the gross national product per head of population in Sierra Leone was estimated in 1955 at £15 as compared with £20 in Nigeria, £54 in Ghana, £89 in Mauritius, £110 in Malta and £140 in Trinidad. We do well, therefore, to regard Sierra Leone not merely as one of the smallest but also one of the poorest members of the Commonwealth.

The country is mainly an agricultural country though in recent years the mining industry has played a major role in the expansion of the economy. Deposits of iron-ore are considerable; chrome ore has been important but its importance is diminishing; and of course, there are diamonds. Mineral exports have increased in recent years not merely in absolute terms but also relatively to exports of agricultural produce. These movements in the two groups of exports are not unconnected.

The diamond boom attracted labour from agriculture and reduced the output of agricultural produce; and the new income from the diamond rush led to an increase in domestic consumption which, in some cases, diverted supplies from the export markets to the home markets. But what is important is to recognise that the mining industries, which are so important to the economy of the country, depend for their expansion and success on external capital investment and technical knowledge.

THE SPHERE



The vast dam, envisaged in an artist's drawing, is being constructed in the Guma valley sixteen miles to the south of Freetown. It will augment water supplies to the capital and also probably provide hydro-electric power. An area of 230 acres, mainly of thickly wooded land, is being cleared for flooding. The contractors on this project, to be finished in 1965, are also Taylor Woodrow (Sierra Leone). Howard Humphreys and Sons are the consulting engineers

And a very considerable proportion of the tax revenue of the Government is derived, directly or indirectly, from these mining industries.

The development of iron-ore mining over the last thirty-five years has been comparatively straightforward. The development of diamond mining has been much less so. Diamonds were first discovered in Sierra Leone in 1930 and some years later the exclusive right to prospect for or to mine diamonds was given to the Sierra Leone Selection Trust for a period of ninety-nine years, in return for which the Government was to receive 27½ per cent. of the net profit together with an annual mineral rental of £7,000. This agreement worked quite satisfactorily up to 1952. In that year illicit diamond working started on a considerable scale and attracted many Africans both from other parts of the country and from neighbouring territories.

This was the origin of a problem of exceptional difficulty. Not merely did it jeopardise the Government's agreement with the Sierra Leone Selection Trust; it also gave rise to a smuggling trade which the Government was unable to control; and it threw up a number of social and political problems consequent upon the congregation of large numbers of people in mining settlements which were devoid of even the most rudimentary amenities of life. How these problems were dealt with is a history in itself but the highest credit is due to the Governor, Sir Maurice Dorman, whose tenacity of purpose and personal skill and integrity overcame what might have become a major public catastrophe.

The agricultural problem presented difficulties of a different order. It may well be that between 80 and 90 per cent. of the population is engaged in agriculture. The agricultural economy consists in the main of small peasant farmers, of whom there may be about 400,000, producing a variety of crops, for subsistence or cash. The two major crops are rice and palm products. Cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, ginger, kola nuts and piassava are also grown.

Rice is the staple food both in town and in the country and much of what is grown is consumed by the growers and their families. But whereas Sierra Leone used to be an exporter of rice, in recent years it has been an importer on a considerable scale. This may have been due, among other things, to a decline in total rice production and an increase in rice consumption, both of which may not be unconnected with the diamond boom.

The bulk of agricultural exports consist of palm produce—palm kernels and palm oil—but both have been decreasing. Cocoa and coffee have been of increasing importance and piassava holds its own in a market for which Sierra Leone is the principal producer.

The future economic and social development of the country, including the expansion of the public services for roads, education and health, must depend in the main upon the overseas capital which the country can attract and upon the tax revenue which it can raise within itself. A particular importance attaches to internal communications such as roads and waterways. The existing railway operates in a very limited area and it is probable that capital resources could be more productively employed in improving other means of communication than in extending the length of the railway track or its carrying capacity.

Educational facilities have been extended rapidly in the last decade. The number of primary schools increased from 233 in 1950 to 522 in 1958 and the number of children on the rolls from 34,520 to 69,270. Over the same period the number of children at secondary schools increased from 2,790 to 5,900. But these figures only represent a small proportion of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 12, estimated at about 430,000. Moreover, a very large proportion of the children who attend primary schools attend for only one or two years. The problem here is largely one of increasing the supply of teachers and that must be a slow process.

At a higher level, Fourah Bay College was founded in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society, mainly for the training of clergy and teachers. In 1876 it was affiliated to the University of Durham. In 1960 the status of the College was raised and it became the University College of Sierra Leone, its affiliation to the University of Durham remaining undisturbed. The scope of its teaching facilities has been greatly enlarged and further extensions in the future may be expected. The students who attend, however, do not come exclusively from Sierra Leone. A considerable number come from Nigeria and this number might decline as opportunities for higher education in that country are increased. If that should happen, the quality of the graduates who emerge from the University College will be conditioned to a greater extent than at present by the quality of the secondary school education within Sierra Leone itself.