

WEALTH

The items in "The Voice of the Commonwealth" are contributed and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor of "The Sphere"

SIERRA LEONE

The first General Election since Independence

Sir Milton Margai, the first Prime Minister of independent Sierra Leone, has been reappointed Prime Minister and asked to form the new Government by the Acting Governor-General, Mr. H. J. Lightfoot-Boston. According to the Sierra Leone Constitution, whenever a Governor-General has occasion to appoint a Prime Minister, he shall appoint a Member of the House of Representatives who appears to him likely to command support of the majority in the one-House Legislature.

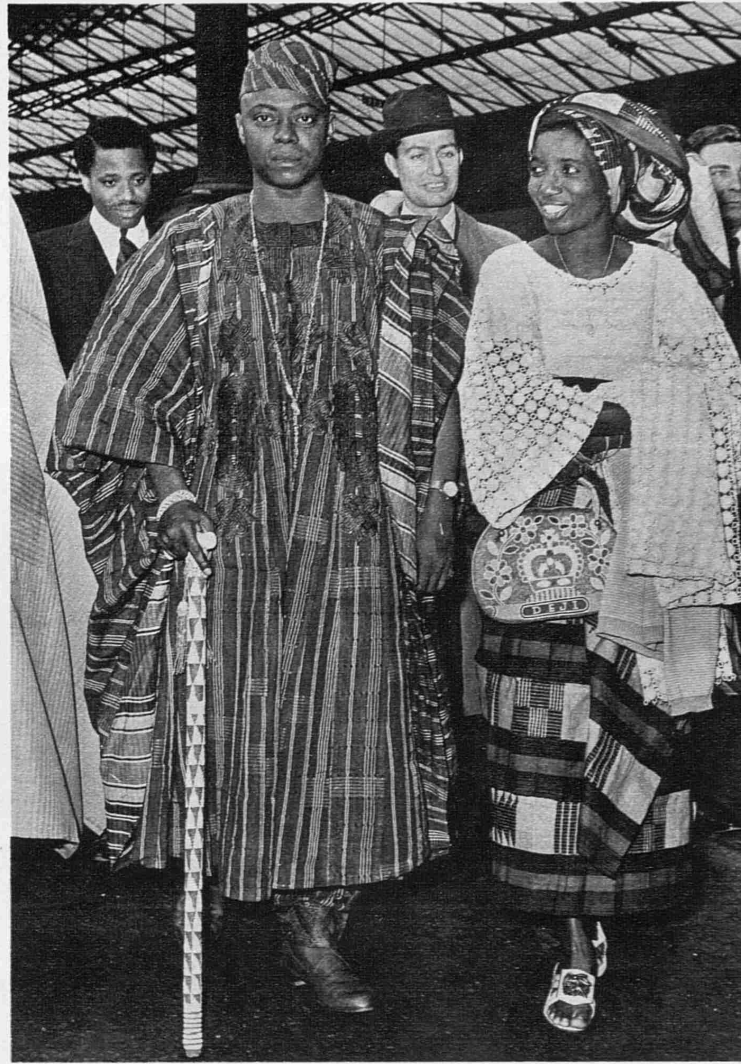
In the General Election towards the end of May, the Sierra Leone People's Party, of which Sir Milton is leader, won twenty-eight seats of a total number of elected seats of sixty-two. The All People's Congress of Mr. Siaka Stevens, in alliance with the Sierra Leone Progressive Independence Movement, captured twenty seats and Independents fourteen seats. Twelve of the Independents have now declared that they are members of S.L.P.P. Over 18,000 tribal authorities voted for the twelve Paramount Chiefs who bring the number in the House to seventy-four. Six former Ministers from the S.L.P.P. lost their seats, including the Leader of the House and the Minister of Education.

The last General Election was in 1957. This was also won by the S.L.P.P., who obtained twenty-six of the thirty-nine seats open for election, and gained the support of the twelve Paramount Chiefs. As well as extending the number of seats after independence in April 1961, the Government extended the franchise to universal adult suffrage. Thus a total of 611,291 votes were polled, as against 161,710 in 1957.



At the polling station in Makeni, Sierra Leone, a tribal authority makes his mark in the presence of officials before voting in the election for the local Paramount Chief

A new naval vessel for the Ghanaian Navy—the seaward defence boat *Komenda*, built by Yarrow and Co. Ltd., of Scotstoun, Glasgow, is waterborne after being launched



The Deji of Akure, Kabiyesi Oba Adesida II, and his wife arrive at Euston Station, in London, at the start of a month's visit to Britain as the guests of the Government. The thirty-eight-year-old Deji, who rules a territory of 3,000 square miles in Western Nigeria, succeeded to the throne in 1957. He is a barrister of the Middle Temple and was educated at King's College, Lagos, and Trinity College, Dublin. During their stay he and his wife are to visit Birmingham, Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh

WEST INDIES

The end of one federation and plans for another

A conference to decide the future of the West Indies Federation after the withdrawal of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago was held in London last month. This was the first conference to be held at the new Commonwealth Conference Centre at Marlborough House.

The remaining eight units of Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Antigua, Dominica and St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla (known as "The Little Eight") are to form a new Federation, to be known as the West Indies Federation, with a capital in Barbados. The former Federation was wound up at midnight on May 31, and an interim advisory regional Council of Ministers was set up. Sir Stephen Luke took over as Interim Commissioner for the West Indies on that date.

A White Paper was due to be published giving full details of a proposed constitutional framework for the new Federation, to be referred to unit legislatures for approval, after an interval for full public discussion in the territories. Fiscal and Civil Service commissions are to be appointed to work out plans for a unified Civil Service and economic machinery; and the form for the new Federation will be decided finally at a further conference. Mr. Hugh Fraser, the British Colonial Under-Secretary, predicted that if all went well the Federation would be set up early next year.

Although the unit territories will each maintain a government, considerable pruning of numbers is envisaged. The strength of the Federal Government as opposed to the unit territories could only be experienced in practice. One reason for the failure of the previous Federation was the tendency of leading figures to stay in their own legislatures rather than go to the Federal Legislature. Moreover, the problem of finance, which limited the efficacy of the previous Federation, remains to be worked out. Of the "eight" only Barbados and St. Kitts balance their budgets.