



Honouring the symbol of a new nation . . . R. M. M. Vianney with visitors R. M. M. Frideswide and R. M. M. Osmund, admire the new green and white flag of Nigeria.

## ENUGU, capital of the Eastern Region

By Mother M. Osmund

At 2 p. m. the plane landed at the Enugu airport . . . I had hardly stepped off the gangway when I was met by a Parliamentary Secretary in his Nigerian attire and by Mr. Saville, Secretary to the Premier. "Mother M. Osmund? . . . Welcome back to Nigeria! We are so glad you have been able to come," they greeted me - and presented me with a handsome portfolio containing all the invitations and tickets for the celebrations in this Region. Then came the dear Nuns with their greeting . . . "This way to your car, Mother," the Secretary said, and I was led to a Pontiac and driver who were to be at our disposal while I was in the East!

And this arrival is typical of all one encountered during the fortnight of the Independence cer-

emonies - efficiency, cooperation between Nigerians and British, and joyous friendliness.

Ifuho, Uyo, Calabar, Lagos, wherever I went the green and white flag was up to welcome me (and the real celebrations had not even begun! Everywhere there was joy to see an old Nigerian back and expressions of love and gratitude because the achievement of today speaks of the efforts of yesterday.

On the eve of Independence I was back in Enugu. We were asked to be in our places in the stadium at 11:40 p. m. It was packed and still there was not a sound - and no lights but those of the night. A little before midnight the Regional Governor's car glided in. The band of the Queen's own Nigerian Regiment played and a hundred or so

torch bearers ran into the arena and formed in huge glittering letters the word NIGERIA across it.

As quickly as they came they disappeared and a spotlight picked out a company of soldiers marching in, smartly commanded by one British and three Nigerian officers. They formed a quadrangle around the flagpole and the spotlight went up on the Union Jack... Then the band played very softly in muffled tones "God Save the Queen." All the great crowd in the stadium stood. As the music ended the spotlight went out perhaps for a second... then flashed out again on the green and white flag, the band struck up Nigeria's National Anthem, and thousands of voices made the night ring with the words... A solemn moment followed in which there was complete silence. The British officer came forward, furled the Union Jack and went back to his men. They marched out as on parade while the band played in muffled tones... Nigeria was an independent state and the green and white flag floated under the starlit sky - but the crowd was extra-



After being blessed, the new flag is raised at Mayfield College Afikpo.

ordinarily silent. An African minister whispered to me, "This is deeply moving, Mother," and as we walked back to our cars in the hushed crowd, another said, "Bri-

Peaceful Trading is the theme of the pageant presented by the Holy Child Training College, Afikpo, for the celebrations. Chiefs and early traders and the famous Frederick Lugard, former British Governor, are enacted by the students. The first flag to wave over Nigeria was that of the Royal Niger Company (left), then came the Union Jack - and now the flag of Independent Nigeria.





H. R. H. Princess Alexandra receives an eager greeting from 21 young gymnasts after they had put on a physical training display for the Princess during her visit to Enugu.

tain should be proud. She has brought forth another child."

On every occasion, in every speech be it from the Ministers or the man in the street, the woman in the bush or the teacher who has been abroad - the same three things were found: Joy for the independence won and a tribute to Britain who trained them to govern, and praise of the missionaries who made them capable of self-government.

After Independence Day, October first, when there was a rally of school children (and what a glorious crowd the Catholic schools did present!) there was a lull in the public rejoicings in Enugu while awaiting the coming of Princess Alexandra... During the lull I went up to Ogoja and Afikpo to find the same calm, joy and thanksgiving.

It is impossible to describe all the public functions attendant upon the celebrations. The garden party

given by the Premier in honour of Her Royal Highness was one of the outstanding events. When we arrived Mr. Okpara told me to "go upstairs" and I found myself in a lounge where about 25 or 30 people had been gathered together to be presented to the Princess - Ministers and their wives, Archbishop Heerey and the Anglican Bishop who is an old friend, and the former Governor and his wife, also old friends. The Princess came in, very pretty and very simple and, went round and made a point to be nice to a Nun. She has been a great success with all.

On the 7th the House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly united for the official reception of the Princess to the Region in the House of Assembly in Enugu. I was privileged to assist. The Chiefs were there in their very gay and gold glistening attire: the M.P.'s were in modern dress. After

a beautiful prayer asking God's blessing and guidance, the head of the House of Chiefs addressed the Assembly to say that Her Royal Highness, the Princess Alexandra of Kent was at the door. . . . was it their wish she should enter . . . and all clamoured "AYE, AYE!" She came in, lovely and regal in a long evening dress of pink organ-die glittering with sequins and wearing a diamond tiara in her pretty blond hair . . . really the princess of children's fairytales. She took her place with a "Pray be seated" to the House and the Premier delivered his address, welcoming the Princess to the Region, and rejoicing in the Independence

at last won for Nigeria. He paid tribute to Britain and to the Missionaries, expressing his loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and to the Commonwealth.

The Princess answered with a message from the Queen and with a few words of her own, very simple and sincere. Then she handed over to the Premier the Book of the Constitution of Independent Nigeria - now a welcome member of the Commonwealth.

There was great joy and - as one cannot help repeating - great calm, great dignity and a beautiful spirit of solidarity and friendliness. It is a deep happiness, when one has had the privilege to live with and help train our young Nigerians, to see one's faith in their gifts and destiny justified.

In leaving Africa I can only repeat the last line of Nigeria's National Anthem, "May Nigeria be blest!"

**LONDON . . .** A contingent of Nigerian military personnel stands on parade outside Nigeria House during the celebration.

In Westminster Cathedral the Mass offered to mark Nigeria's Independence was attended by a vast congregation including hundreds of Nigerians. Archbishop David Mathew, in his sermon preached on this occasion, pointed out that Nigeria is dedicated to the concept of brotherly love. *Let us hope that she may be the Light of Africa.*

