

LEADERSHIP, they say, comes from the top, and if the Federation of Nigeria has swept into independence with less friction than almost any other colonial dependency, one of the main reasons is to be found in the quality of the three men who have represented the Queen, and headed the



Sir James Robertson, Governor-General of the Federation.

British service, during the period of gestation and transition.

First there was Sir Arthur Richards, now Lord Milverton, a formidable pro-consular figure who came from Jamaica with all the prestige due to one who had locked up that equally formidable demagogue Mr. (now Sir Alexander) Bustamante. To those in public life in Nigeria today the memory of the Richards era and the Richards constitution (1943-47) is the memory of a misty past. But the ex-Governor, as Lord Milverton, is still a benign figure about the Lords and the Athenaeum and is to be seen on parade



Sir John Macpherson.

whenever Nigerians gather for conference or conviviality at Lancaster House. Nigeria was lucky in that the process of constitutional unwinding got off to a good start under a man of genuine

appearance, exceptional intellectual capacity, and decisive character.

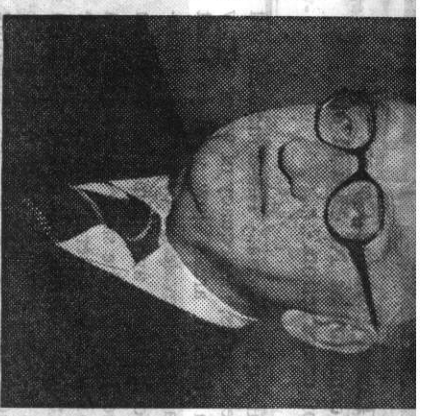
In 1948 he was succeeded by the long-legged Scot Sir John Macpherson, also hailed most recently from the Caribbean. Less obviously pro-consular than his predecessors, "Jock" initiated a regime of happy social contacts between expatriates and African leaders which, though carefree to the outward eye, laid the foundation for a mutual confidence that was to weather many a political storm. Lady Macpherson, with her gregarious friendliness, contributed more than her share to the friendly, informal atmosphere thus created. To Sir John Macpherson must be attributed three crucial achievements. He it was who decided, because of events in the Gold Coast, to terminate the Richards constitution prematurely and to move on in order to keep step with Nigeria's West African neighbour. This decision was much criticized at the time but nobody today would question the sagacity of the timing.

Sir John Macpherson, in the two constitutions forged during the time of his governorship, must also be classed as the advocate of progressive devolution to regions and of looser federalism towards self-government without bloodshed and violence must be placed largely to his credit. The Enugu episode might easily have degenerated into general disorder throughout the country. But, apart from taking quick and wise decisions in regard to police action and the institution of impartial inquiries, Sir John Macpherson was able to capitalize the personal trust and good will he had built up among Nigerian leaders and so contain the incipient trouble.

ALL IN HIS STRIDE

Appointed the first Governor-General in 1954, he was succeeded in 1955 by another Scot, the ex-Civil Secretary of the Sudan Sir James Robertson. Here was a man who had long ruled as the power behind the throne in a Mohammedan country. Slow-spoken and bulky, observers wondered how one who exercised direct administration in the hierarchic and hieratic atmosphere of Khartoum would react to bustling, near-independent Nigeria. Sir James Robertson took it all in his stride. With Lady Robertson, also deeply experienced in the life of colonial administration, he toured the country far and wide. His natural dignity and friendliness pre-

served for him the good personal relationships that Sir John Macpherson had built up. Already, by the time Sir James Robertson arrived, the real reins of power were slipping through the fingers of the Queen's representative in Nigeria. One of the most important questions with which he was left to deal was, of course, the future of the British civil service. But whether it was some knotty situation that needed to be resolved, Sir James Robertson always gave the impression of having all the answers at his finger-tips.



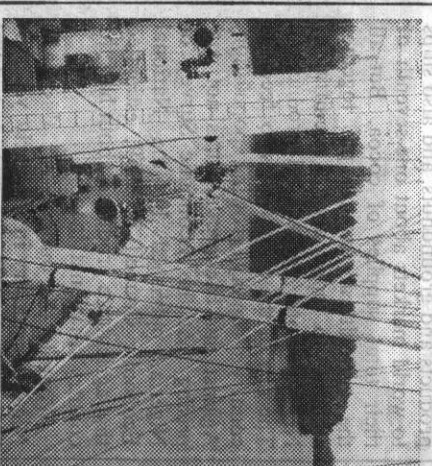
Lord Milverton.



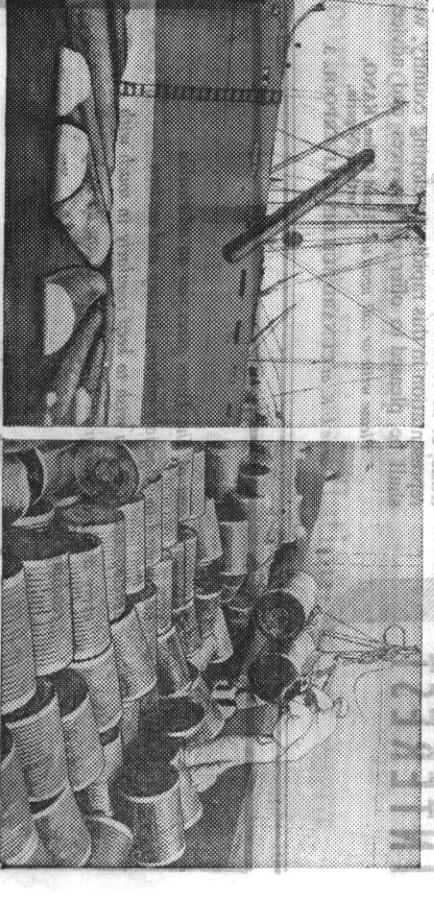
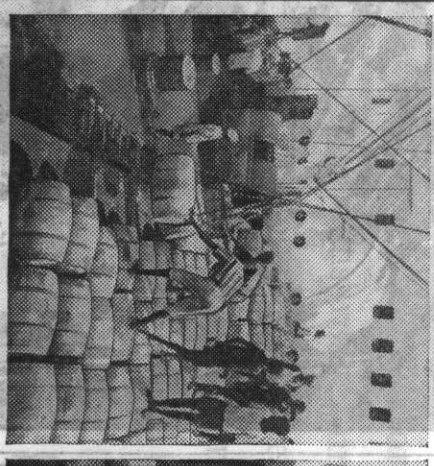
administrator did not make a secret of his dislike for Lagos and wanted to

the most trivial offence. Gradually the other countries in the world can match powers of the shiflets were brought under this picture.

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