

# Mrs. Nixon Sees Liberian's Inauguration

By WILLIAM BORDERS

Special to The New York Times

MONROVIA, Liberia, Jan. 3—

William R. Tolbert Jr., 58-year-old Baptist minister, was inaugurated as Liberia's 19th President today amid colorful celebrations in which Mrs. Richard M. Nixon played a major role.

For the Liberians, Mrs. Nixon's presence dramatized the popular opinion that the United States has no closer friend in Africa than this little republic, which was founded by freed slaves who sailed from America 150 years ago.

"We reaffirm our friendship with the United States of America, with whom we share the pursuit of liberty, dignity, order and justice," President Tolbert said in his inaugural address, adding that there was a "special relationship" between the two countries.

## Cheered by Thousands

After the ceremony, Mrs. Nixon marched out of the sweltering auditorium at President Tolbert's side, then rode with him in an open Cadillac convertible two miles through enthusiastic crowds of thousands, including snake-dancing drummers and clusters of women singing cheerful tribal chants.

The Presidents of Mauritania

and the Ivory Coast were also here, along with representatives of some 50 other countries.

But Mrs. Nixon, who arrived yesterday to begin a week-long visit to West Africa, seemed to draw the most attention, and her photograph was posted all over Monrovia, a rustic city of 100,000 that receives 18 feet of rain a year.

With the temperature near 90 degrees this afternoon, Mrs. Nixon stood out the Executive Mansion for nearly two hours with Mr. Tolbert watching troop formations, bands, flowered floats and banners dropped by parachute.

The mansion, in which she has been given a lavish eighth-floor apartment overlooking the sea, was built by President Tolbert's predecessor, William V.S. Tubman, who died last July after 27 years in office.

The mansion, like President Tubman's yacht, which cost the Government \$250,000 a year to maintain, was viewed by some of his critics as an extravagance for a poor land of only 1.5 million people.

Soon after taking office, President Tolbert sold the yacht, and he made it clear today that there would be some other changes as well.

For one thing, he took the oath of office wearing a short-sleeved blue shirt and match-

ing trousers, in a country where rigid formality of dress has been the rule.

In his inaugural speech, he made critical allusions to the one-party Tubman Government, in which he served as Vice President for 19 years.

"Our task is to eradicate whatever we identify as unwholesome in our society, while preserving those things that are worthy," he said. Waste cannot escape removal, attitudes cannot remain unpurposeful."

## 'Accent on Youth'

He promised that his would be an administration "with an accent on youth and speed, and on competence and effectiveness."

Mr. Tolbert, a former president of the Baptist World Alliance, included in his hour-long speech a prayer that the nation would be led "forever onward and upward." After reading it he prostrated himself for 15 seconds on the bright red carpet, as a gesture of reverence, and then resumed his address.

Like all previous presidents of this country, Mr. Tolbert has American ancestors. His father was brought here as a child from Charleston, S. C.

The Americo-Liberians, as the citizen with ties to the United States are sometimes called form only a small percentage of the population, but they are a political, social and economic élite, and they have helped reinforce the relationship between the two countries.

Some 5,000 Americans live in Liberia, and they were in evidence all over town today, at parades and receptions.

In addition to Mrs. Nixon's official party, a large unofficial delegation came from the United States. It included Willis B. Boyer and Raymond C. Firestone, the chairmen of the Republic Steel Corporation and Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, the two American companies with the heaviest investments in Liberia.