

VENEZUELA CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY

As Venezuela begins the celebration of its 146th birthday, President Marcos Poroz Jimenez awaits the guest of honor in Caracas - President Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay.

Then, Venezuela's Olympic Torch is brought to General Jimenez. It was carried 200 miles by runners from the famous battlefield of Carabobo.

The flame lights the "Semana de La Patria" torch and the celebration is officially begun.

The first act is for General Stroessner to cut the ribbon opening the fabulous Avenida de Los Proceros (Avenue of Heroes).

This three million dollar memorial to Venezuela's heroes and statesmen emulates the works of ancient Rome. The sunken garden has eight reflecting pools and dozens of statues and fountains.

Amidst eleven bronze statues of heroes is that of Simon Bolivar, the liberator.

The fiesta goes on with a huge civilian parade - twenty thousand men, women and children. More than 250 organized groups take part.

A climax comes with a huge military display. While Presidents Jimenez and Stroessner take the salute at intervals, the parade flows on for two hours.

Later, General Jimenez presents his guest from Paraguay with an exact replica of the sword used by Simon Bolivar.

Finally, the President honors with swords the graduating cadets of Venezuela's Escuela Militar. A sparkling ceremony to mark Venezuela's long life of independence.