

Final touches to SA's Admiral's Cup yachts

The Argus Bureau

COWES (Isle of Wight), Tuesday.

THE THREE YACHTS representing South Africa's team in the Admiral's Cup are now on various slipways around the Solent, having a final bottom-scraping and polishing in readiness for the first event of the series on Friday, the race from Southsea to Le Havre and back.

The three boats, *Jakaranda*, *Mercury* and *Onduramba* — no doubt need this service. Al Bruce Dalling, skipper of *Jakaranda*, remarked, 'We haven't been out of the water for two months now and I am sure she could do with a clean up.'

On Thursday, the galaxy of top racing yachts from 17 countries assembled at Gosport for the official scrutineering for this world's leading team race for ocean-going yachts.

The series this year is given added piquancy by the entry of the British Prime Minister, Mr Edward Heath. He will sail *Morning Cloud*.

Mr Heath is captain of the British three-yacht team — and he has also been aboard and cast an appraising eye over *Jakaranda*.

CLOSER LOOK

The reason for Mr Heath's unpurloined visit, apart from having a closer look at one of his main rivals, was that the same American designers were responsible for both *Morning Cloud* and *Jakaranda*.

Dalling said it was a most interesting meeting and Mr Heath seemed quite impressed with the South African boat, but he (Dalling) emphasised that it was a normal courtesy call that happens among yachting enthusiasts and no special significance should be read into the visit.

The South African yachts have been almost constantly en-

gaged in races of various kinds, both inshore and long distance. Their goal is the Admiral's cup and many of the races have been regarded as working up exercises.

Even so, performances have been impressive. In terms of crossing the line, *Jakaranda*, for instance, has had two firsts, two seconds, one third, two fourths and a fifth.

Dalling said: 'We haven't done too badly and I have great hopes that we will do even better in the cup events. She's a lovely boat and I've got a fabulous crew.' As he spoke his young (average age 23) South African crew of 10 worked quietly and efficiently about the yacht.

COMBINATION

They have been together since the Cape to Rio race and are a smooth working combination.

The crew are now ready for Friday's opening race. This will be followed by two more races next Monday and Wednesday.

Then will come the final — and toughest — race of the cup, the 974km Fastnet race, starting on Saturday, August 7.