

Speech to BOBA Annual Dinner, Saturday 10th October 2015, as a Special Guest at the General Hassan Usman Katsina House (State House) , Kawo, Kaduna.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency General Yakubu Gowon. GCFR., PhD.

Chief Host, Your Excellency, the Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, OFR

Royal Father of the Day, Your Eminence, The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar CFR, mni,

Former Students and Members of the Barewa Old Boys Association.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It was with great pleasure that I received the formal invitation of the National Executive Committee of the Barewa Old Boys Association, through your General Secretary Dr. Ahmed Tijani Mora, to be with you this evening to witness the public presentation of the book I co-authored with my Cadet Unit Diarists starting over fifty years ago. My initial joy was dampened when soon after receiving the invitation, I realized that my family commitments would not allow me to make the journey, at this time.

It was clear, however, that the launching of the book now entitled "Barewa Pride", at the suggestion of my daughter Dr. Amina, should go ahead, given that so many others have contributed to its content, editing, production and publishing and have given of their time, and energy, both physical and emotional, and considerable financial commitment so that any further delay would be without justification. Let my presence, even in this attenuated form, be sufficient to acknowledge my role as co-author and commentator and to give me occasion to thank all concerned for their inputs.

The Diarists are named in the book, as are numerous others in the Acknowledgements section. My advice to any budding authors who may be present, this evening, based on my experience of authorship of two books is that although it may not seem so, the writing is the easiest part. Translating ones scrawl into a beautiful and enduring printed work is a most difficult task and those who carried out this part of the enterprise on behalf of the Association,

deserve our praise thanks and congratulations for a job well done. Dr. Ahmed Mora may wish to name for acknowledgement those involved.

As the originator of the project, I think it falls to me to thank directly His Excellency General Yakubu Gowon for his generous Foreword to the book. This was an unexpected blessing from one of Nigeria's greatest living heroes, without whose continuing leadership and example, perhaps we would not be gathered together here this evening. Thank you Sir, Thank you indeed.

With regard to the book itself, its origins date back to my own military service with the Royal Artillery in the 1950s where, for a period, I as a junior officer, was also a Unit Diarist, and the concept was well received by the Cadets in the 1960s.

For the purposes of publication I took the liberty of placing the comments of the Diarists in the context of the College as it was at its apogee, in the mid-1960s. It was a truly glorious period when so many positive factors came together to create a life-enhancing institution in which it was a pleasure to serve, whether as a pupil or member of staff.

There was calm open leadership from the Principal, the staff were long serving, well qualified and enthusiastic about their subject areas, the pupils were highly selected, ambitious and keen to learn. There was an outstanding Library in constant use under the direction of the English department. The student accommodation was decent and not overcrowded. Housemasters took their duties seriously. Inter-house competitions, which included academics, kept students active. Student clubs and societies flourished. The feeding was excellent. There was constant innovation in teaching methods, and, importantly, in assessment and curriculum organization. The college was a centre of learning not just for the pupils, but for the staff as well.

Needless to say, needless to say, the results of the final examinations both at West African School Certificate level and Higher School Certificate were excellent. They could hardly have been otherwise.

It is a truism to say that schools simply reflect society, and there was no way that the College could have been insulated from the turmoil of the wider society which followed the post-independence calm.

Recently, I read in the media that the government of Nigeria has ended the role of school based Cadet Units as being not just redundant, but actually troublesome. In Britain, the current Prime Minister David Cameron has backed, amazingly, a proposal of his political rival Gordon Brown, and has ordered that

100 new school based Cadet Units be established this financial year with more to follow. This is presented not as a recruitment device for the armed forces, but as a means of inducting pupils into the concept of citizenship, through military activities, a concept going right back to Plato and the ancient Greeks.

In our case, the Cadet Unit and its pre-cursor, the Rifle Club, did produce some outstanding military leaders. They are named in our book, however, the majority of those in the Cadet Unit did not go on to military careers yet still value the training, ethos, adventures, opportunities for responsible leadership and the learning of new skills such as map reading, safe weapon handling, shooting, survival in the bush, planning and organization, which are the activities in which they were involved as cadets.

Perhaps one day, the pendulum will swing in the opposite direction and the development of well led and controlled Cadet Units may be seen once again as a national asset in schools and colleges, not necessarily predicating recruitment into the armed forces but as part of a school curriculum which extends beyond the classroom into accepted, structured and responsible adult roles.

In conclusion, though being unable to be with you today, I would welcome the opportunity at some future date to visit the College with a view to passing on some of my accumulated experience in the fields of assessment, administration and science teaching to staff and pupils. If BOBA could facilitate this I am sure it would be of some benefit to the College which we all love and cherish and wish to see again pre-eminent among Colleges, not just nationally but internationally.

Finally, I wish to thank the Association for the award and would ask my distinguished former pupil Alhaji Muhammadu Bello Tunau, to accept it on my behalf.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. Na gode, Na gode kwarai.

Paul Turton

02/10/2015