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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover page:.....	i
Editorial Board:.....	ii
Consulting Editors:.....	ii
Address for Correspondence:.....	ii
Table of Contents:.....	iii
Editorial Note:.....	v
Roles Assumed By Members Of A Counselling Group During The Group Process In Schools By Prof. Abdulganiyu Ayodele Salawu:.....	1
Strategies For Improving The Quality Of Primary Education Under Ube Programme By Muhammad Mustapha Jagaba Ph.D:.....	13
Counselling For Effective School Management: A Practical Approach By 'Bola Ogunyemi:.....	26
Determination of Secondary School Students Levels of Science Process Skills in Physics, Chemistry And Biology In Sokoto State By Cyril, Matthew And M. A. Wasagu (FSTAN):.....	41
Performance In The Use Of English Course In Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto By Dr. Sulaiman Onamyaho Eguare:.....	51
Constraints To National Unity As Perceived By Selected Adults In Ilorin Metropolis By Dr. (Mrs) Mary O. Esere:.....	57
Relationship Between Environmental Education And Community Development By Malam Mohammad Alkali:.....	74
The Gap Between Education And Productive Life: The Curricula Search For A Bridge By Dr. A.C. Izuagba (Nee Ogbulie):.....	83
Adjustment Needs And Coping Strategies Of First-Year Secondary School Students In Kwara State By Yahaya, Lasiele Alabi Ph.D:.....	99

Philosophy Of Education And Educational Technology: A Meeting Point By Dr. A. K. Tukur:.....	114
Towards Ensuring Marital Stability: The Role Of Pre-Marital Counselling From Islamic View Point By Dr. Abdulrazaq O. Oniye:.....	128
The Development Of Secondary Education In Ilorin: A History Of Ilorin Grammar School, 1967 – 1997 By Ibrahim Abdulganiyu Jawondo:.....	139
Teaching Large Classes In Biology: An Investigation Into The Effectiveness Of Instructor-Expressiveness Teaching Behaviour By Dr. (Mrs.) J. B. Bilesanmi Awoderu And Dr. B. J. Ogunkola:.....	152
The Role Of Culture In Intellectual Development (The Case of a Hausa Child) By DR. Aisha Madawaki (MFR):.....	178
Towards A Better Guidance Counsellor- Principal Relationship For A Successful Guidance And Counselling Programmes In Nigerian Schools By Joseph Kayode Ige:.....	188
The Natural Sciences And Educational Theory In Plato's Republic: Curriculum, Pedagogy And Epistemology By DR. G. V. Ardo:.....	198
The Effects Of Concept Mapping On Secondary School Students Achievement In Chemistry By Dantani Ibrahim Wushishi:.....	210
Psycho-Ethical Traits Of Moral Development For A Reflective Democracy In Nigeria By Dr. Musa Garba Maitafsir:.....	224
An Appraisal Of The Political And Agricultural Extension Education Needs Of The Indigenous Kambari Adults In Kebbi State By Dr. Muhammad Garba Mahuta:.....	234
Note to Contributors:.....	246
Notes on the Contributors:.....	248

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ILORIN: A HISTORY OF ILORIN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, 1967 – 1997

By

IBRAHIM ABDULGANIYU JAWONDO

Introduction

The idea of establishing the Ilorin Grammar School (IGS) as the premier community secondary school was brought about as a result of the acute admission problems facing the indigenous of Ilorin needing secondary education. The Government Secondary Schools that were available in Ilorin such as the Ilorin Provincial Secondary School now Government Secondary School served the whole of the Northern Region. The Ilorin Training School, later Ilorin Teachers College now Sheikh Abdulkadir Secondary School as well as the Queen Elizabeth Secondary School was for the whole of Ilorin province. Thus, admission quota for Ilorin indigenous did not commensurate with the numbers of the indigene needing secondary education (The Elephant, 1987: 48). Furthermore, the exiting neighbouring community secondary schools around Ilorin such as Esie-Iludun, Offa and Oro Grammar Schools strictly controlled their admission (Akanbi, interview: 1996). The Christian Schools like Titcombe College of Egbe, Play Fair Memorial College Oro-Ago and St. Paul's (now Kefena) College Zaria were seen by the Ilorin Community as Christian tools to christianize their children and wards, thus, they were shunned (The elephant, 1992: 50).

Consequently, the Ilorin community established the Ilorin Grammar School in February, 1967 in order to provide opportunity for sound, qualitative and quantitative secondary education for her citizens. The school was established to provide leadership and citizenship training. Islamic and Arabic instructions for the indigenes and other Muslim children at avoidable cost. This of course allayed the fear of losing their children and wards to Christianity (Prospectus: 2 – 3 & Shiru, Interview: 1996).

The school Admission Policy 1967 - 1997

Since 1967 when the school was established, admission of students has been through the Common entrance Examinations (CEE), transfer and of course community request (Prospectus: 3). The first set of students was seventy-two in number and mainly Ilorin indigenes (IGS Log Book). They formed the two initial streams. The stream was increased to three in 1971 and four in 1976 due to high admission requests. As at 1987, the school had about six streams of each class all with a total population of about two thousand and by 1997 the population stood at two thousand four hundred (The Elephant, 1987: 53 & 1997: 53). The first set of students were all Ilorin indigenes, because citizens from the other parts of the State and the nation did not apply perhaps for fear of not being offered admission and standard. However, by 1997, the school was a symbol of federal character as it admitted students from Nigeria and beyond (Jawondo, 1999: 68).

The School Curriculum 1967 - 1997

At the inception of the school in 1967, the school offered the traditional subjects of a conventional secondary school. These include English language, Mathematics, Christians/Islamic Religious Knowledge, Yoruba, Commerce, Accounts, History, Government, geography, Agricultural Science, Home Management, Food and Nutrition, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Health science, Arabic, Economics, Literature in English, Additional Mathematics and French (The Elephant, 1992: 22). Although the school started with five core subjects, the subjects increased in number and in substance so much that by 1970 at first attempt, the school passed the West African Examination Council's (WAEC) recognition inspection (The elephant, 1987: 23).

In 1985, the 6-3-3-4 system of education became operational in Nigeria. Thus, Ilorin Grammar School students were to spend six years in school – three years in junior secondary and three years in senior secondary provided they passed the junior secondary school qualifying examinations. The junior secondary students offered English Language, Mathematics, Introductory Technology, Business Studies, French, Yoruba, Arabic, Physics and Health Education, Islamic/Christian religious Knowledge, Fine Arts, Integrated Science, Music and Social Studies (Prospectus: 15 – 16). The area of strength of an individual student at the junior secondary

examinations determined his/her placement at Senior level. The school operated three areas of study – Arts (A – Class), Science (B – Class) and Commercial (C – Class).

The subjects offered in each area, apart from English language, Mathematics and Biology, which are core subjects include – Arts – Government, IRK/CRK, Agric/Home Economics/Fine Arts, Literature in English/History/Geography, Economics/P.H.E., Yoruba/French Commercial – Government, Accounts, Agric/Home Econs/Fine Arts, Commerce, Economics, Geography, Shorthand, Typing, Office education, Book keeping, Science – Physics, Chemistry, Agric/Home Economics, Geography, Economics/PHE, Further Mathematics, Electronics ((Prospectus: 15 – 16; IGS School Curriculum).

A close observation of the school curriculum reveals that some significant aspects of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria have been greatly neglected in the school, due to lack of equipment and personnel. No instruction was given on metal and wood works, electronics and electrical works and a host of others that could make students self-reliant after graduation (Jawondo, 1997: 7 and staff disposition files). In the area of structures, the school by 1967 had only two classrooms but by 1997 it had put in place about 35 classrooms, laboratories for all the science subjects, a library, a language laboratory, an Assembly Hall, Guidance and Counselling clinic, education technology centre, Orchard, farmland, geographical garden, sports fields and a Mosque (Prospectus: 4).

The permanent teaching staff of the school was drawn from the Kwara State Teaching Service Commission and the Ilorin West Local Government Education Authority. Others included members of the National Youth Service Corps and the teaching practice students of College of Education, Oro and Ilorin and the students of the Institute and Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin (The Elephant, 1997: 7). However, between 1967 and 1977 the teaching staff strength ranged between four and twenty-nine. Between 1978 and 1985 it increased to twenty – nine and eighty – one respectively. In 1986 and 1997, the number of academic staff rose to eighty – one and ninety – seven. The school authority employed part-time teaching staff to complement government efforts in the area of science (Elephant, 1999: 7 and Staff disposition files). On the other hand the numbers of the non teaching staff ranged from one to twenty between 1967

and 1987, twenty six to forty between 1987 and 1992 while between 1992 and 1997 the number dropped to twenty two (The Elephant, 1997: 31). This was as a result of the introduction of deboarding policy in Kwara state whereby boarding schools were turned to day schools. Thus, more schools were established and non-teaching staff was deployed from the existing schools to the new ones.

On citizenship and leadership training, the school authority allowed registration and operation of some clubs and societies in the school. Students employed this medium to relax themselves and exchange ideas. The school established guidelines for the operation of clubs and societies to which members and staff advisers abide. The clubs and societies included the Literary and Debating Society, Muslim Students Society, Fellowship of Christian Students, the Geographical, Cultural and Dramatic Societies, Science club, Press club, Guidance and Counselling Society and Sports Organisations (Prospectus: 15).

The Administration of the Ilorin Grammar School 1967 - 1996

The administrative responsibilities of the school were shared among the various internal and external interest groups. They included the Kwara State Government, the Proprietor, the Board of Governors, the Parents Teachers Association, the Old Students Association and the School Community (The Elephant, 1992: 7).

For the purpose of administrative convenience at the face of upsurge population of both students and staff, responsibilities were shared among staff and students. Thus, apart from the popularly known administrators in schools the school authority created other offices. The principal was the overall boss assisted by three vice-principals (Academics, Administration and Special duties). The principals of the school between 1967 and 1997 are Chief G.K. Dada (1967 – 1969), Mr. P.O. Olatunbosun (1969 – 1977), Mr. S.O. Afolayan (1977 – 1978), Mr. T.A. Delowo (1978 – 1983), Alhaji T.F. Abdulkadir (1983 – 84), Dr. Toyin Akanbi (1984 – 1996), and Alhaji Mamud Alfa-Nla from 1996 till date. This group of school administrators contributed significantly to the academic standard attained by the school. The heads of departments of the various disciplines were directly responsible to the vice-principal academics. They took care of records – syllabuses, schemes and records of work and assess teachers'

and students' performance. The heads were the mouthpiece of the academic staff in term of academic reports and needs (The Elephant, 1987: 39 and Prospectus: 16). Attached to the office of the Vice-Principal Administration were the block supervisors who managed the school in terms of punctuality, regular class attendance and general behaviour of staff and students within their blocks (The Elephant, 1987: 39). The non-teaching staff comprised the Bursar, Clerks, Storekeeper, Cooks, Drivers, Messengers and Night-guards. The wardens and matrons were in-charge of hostels. There were assistants and attendants at the laboratories and the Kwara State Ministry of Health, to take care of health concerns, posted nurses to the schools.

For the smooth running of the school a number of staff working committees were constituted. They were the committee of Senior Tutors (Block supervisors), Heads of Departments, Class masters and mistresses, Housemasters and mistresses, and coordinators of clubs and societies. Other committees included Disciplinary, health, sports and games, timetable, compound cleaning, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), School Examination, Guidance and Counselling, Students' feeding and boarding, School library, Students promotion consideration, Prefect selection and Refreshment committee (Jawondo, 1998: 85 – 88 and IGS students prospectus: 17). The general Assembly of students and teachers was usually presided over by the Principal on Mondays and Fridays while block assemblies took place in other days of the week under the block supervisors. At the assemblies, students were reminded of the mission, duties and responsibilities at school. The decentralized assembly, besides saving time, has the capacity of increasing teacher – students, and students – students' relationship.

At the base of the administrative chart was the school prefect. The students were assigned to different posts of responsibilities in accordance with their proven abilities. They were first put on probation and later commissioned into full prefects. The class monitors assisted form masters and mistresses to maintain discipline in the classrooms. They also served as liaison officers between subject teachers and their colleagues, other students of proven ability who could not secure posts in the school were usually given responsibilities as class prefects and at the clubs and societies level (Prospectus, 16 – 18; The Elephant, 1998: 39).

The Kwara State Government has many roles to play on community schools. The State Government through the State Ministry of Education and the Schools Management Board, monitor the activities of the Ilorin Grammar School in the areas of admission, curriculum, religious activities, students welfare, and dutifulness of the staff through periodic advisory, fact finding and full-scale inspections (Government release, 1996). The government was responsible for the recruitment, payment of salary, promotion, demotion or dismissal of staff. The government occasionally provided infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and educational materials (Kamal, 1992). For instance, in 1995/96 session Ilorin Grammar School benefited from the ₦20 million worth of textbooks distributed to the secondary schools in Kwara state in 1997, the school benefited from ₦3 million worth of science equipments distributed to secondary schools across the state as well as the renovation of some classrooms (Adelelele, Interview, 1997).

In order to be able to provide for students' welfare of such as academic, health, social amenities, bedding facilities, and other infrastructure, government allowed Ilorin Grammar school to retain a sum of forty Naira (₦40.00) from the one hundred and forty Naira (₦140.00) education levy charged by the State Government per student. The government also approved a special levy of sixty five Naira (₦65.00) per student –per – session to be used for examinations (₦30.00), Medical (₦10.00), Unity (₦15.00) and games (₦10.00) (Alfa-Nla, Interview, 1997). The charges have been reviewed several times to meet up the dictate of the nation's economy.

The proprietor, Ilorin community –because of her huge financial involvement was by the law given a major role in the administration of the school. She has the authority to nominate five members into the School board of Governors, appoint the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Board, manage the school accounts through her representatives at the board, influence the appointment of the school principal and intervened in matters of discipline among the staff and students (Salman, interview, 1996).

The Parents – Teachers Association of Ilorin Grammar School was not left out in the administration of the school. The Association which was as old as the school had Alhaji B.F. Alheri as its first Chairman and Mr.

Adigun, J.O. as the Secretary (P.T.A. files). The Association provided the platform for parents and teachers to meet and exchange views on matters affecting the education of their children (P.T.A. Constitution, 1 – 2). The Association has supported the school to attain high standard in academics, discipline and morality through physical, moral and financial assistance. The Association through the P.T.A. levy paid by students renovated the granded school bus and repaired some classrooms. Members have always shown keen interest in any programme of the school. With the death of Alhaji B.F. Alheri, Alhaji Bayo Adelodun Awodi became the new Chairman (Alfa-nla and Oderinde, interview: 1997).

The Old Students Association (O.S.A.) of the Ilorin Grammar School was formed in 1981 in order for the Alma maters of the school to participate meaningfully in the administration of the school. Between 1981 and 1998 the Association had three Presidents, Alhaji J.A.B. Bello (1981 – 83), Alhaji Rauf Ajao (1983 – 86) and Alhaji J.A.B. Bello for the second term (Bello, interview, 1996). The association instituted a summer school programme for the students, and presented gifts, prizes and scholarship of deserving students (Alfa-nla, interview, 1997). The Association carried out minor repairs on classrooms, liaised between the school authority and the proprietors, between the school authority ad the government and between the proprietor and the government in order to alleviate the problems confronting the school. In the area of sports, the Association denoted trophy to the school to further encourage students' participation in sports (Adewole, Bello, Alfa-nla, interview: 1997). The Association is embarking on the building of an ultramodern secretariat complex inside the school compound. The complex will house the association's secretariat, a library, and shops to be let out. One of the major problems facing the Association was the indifference of other members to the course of the association (Bello, interview, 1998).

The Board of Governors of the school whose members were 75 % Ilorin indigenes was saddled with the responsibility of budgeting and financing, discipline and accommodation of staff and students, consideration of promotion examinations and landed properties, and liasing with the Ministry of Education on issues affecting the school (The Elephant, 1987: 57). The first board of Governors constituted in 1967 had Alhaji (Dr.) Yahaya Popoola Oriokoh (Obe, MFR), the Madawaki of Ilorin

as the Chairman, (1967 – 1989). He was succeeded by Alhaji Aliyu Alarape Salman (S.A.N.). The current Chairman is Dr. S.A. Adebayo (IGS Board of Governor's file). The Board has always shown concern for the physical development of the school. Between 1987 and 1996 the board budgeted for and supervised the erection of some permanent structures for teaching and learning. Also constant repairs were usually carried out on old buildings to make them conducive for teaching and learning (The Elephant, 1987: 53; Board of Governor's file and Alfa-nla, interview, 1997). The board fought a decisive legal battle against trespassers, on the school land and against profane vagaries among students and staff in 1971 Ilorin Upper Area Court adjudged Alhaji Salamatu Okeye, Alhaji Raufu and Madam Saudat Lawal as trespassers on the school land. However, the land case between Alhaji Shuaib Kasa Dubu and the school was amicably resolved in 1997 with the intervention of Emir Ibrahim Gambari, the eleventh Emir of Ilorin (Alfa-nla, interview: 1997). In 1968, nine students identified to be the ring leaders in the students protest against non-availability of accommodation facilities were suspended with the approval of the board (Log Book). The board protected the rights of the staff by ensuring that they were not (unknowingly) embarrassed through undue and unwarranted transfer (The Elephant, 1987: 56). The board rewarded hardworking staff and individuals that contributed to the upliftment of the school standard. For instance, Dr. Toyin Akanbi, the principal of the school (1984 – 1996) was commended for buying the twelve low cost houses situated in the school compound on behalf of the school from the State Government (Board of Governor's minutes, 1991: 2). The board upheld the high academic standard of the school by not compromising standard.

The Impact of the Ilorin Grammar School on the Community

The administrators of the school worked dutifully in spite numerous problems to realize the objectives of the founding fathers of the school. The school to a larger extent cushioned the admission problem confronting the indigenes of Ilorin, Muslim residents and Muslim in neighbouring communities. The school enrolment rose from seventy-two students in 1976 to two thousand and four hundred in 1997 (The Elephant, 1997: 23). The academic performance of the school was encouraging and students like Musa Omotosho and Akande Adeniyi received merit Awards for having

excelled in the May/June 1985 West Africa School Certificate/General Certificate of Education Ordinary level examinations. The school recorded good results from 1971 to 1997 with the least being 62 % pass mark of the candidates presented for the examinations in 1977 and the highest was 99 % pass mark in 1984 (The Elephant, 1987: 30).

Furthermore, the students of the school distinguished themselves in quiz and debate competitions among secondary schools. In 1986, the school defeated on different occasions Queen Elizabeth School, Ilorin, Government Secondary School, Ilorin, and Sheikh Abdulkadir Secondary School Ilorin, in the schools debate organized by the Nigeria Television Authority (N.T.A.) Ilorin (The Elephant, 1987: 82). And in 1987, the students of the school came third in an inter-state debate organized by Scale club of Ile (IGS, Log Book).

The school has produced middleman power for the state and the country. Many of her products are in all works of life occupying positions of authority and are playing leadership role to expectation. For instance, an ex-student Alhaji Sa'adu Ayinla Koroagba was a supervisory councilor for health and social welfare in Ilorin-West local government area between 1992 – 1994; Alhaji Y.G. Mumin, a Chief Superintendent of Immigration; Alhaji J.A.B. bello former Marketing Manager of Kwara Radio and Television Authority now at Ministry of Commerce; Alhaji Mustapha Abdul-Hammed, Kwara Liaison Officer, Kaduna. This group of ex-students and a host of others are getting on well in their chosen professions. The presence of the Ex-students of the school in the Kwara State Government service relieved the State Government of her problem of inadequate personnel, which she inherited from the defunct Northern Nigeria Government.

The sporting activities of the school are very encouraging from the start. In 1973 the school's name was projected far and wide due to the performance of her students in the National Sports Festival. They all won gold medal in their games. In addition, the school football team came second in the Soladoye Soccer competition (The Elephant, 1987: 46 – 54). From 1973 to 1997 the students represented Ilorin Zone at the Schools Sports Festival and the state at the National Youths Sports Festival in different sports and at different places and they performed remarkably well (IGS Log Book).

Religiously, the community is feeling the impact of the school on the children. Students were allowed to practice their religion under the supervision of teaching staff that shares a common religion with the students. No student was allowed to change his/her religion except with the consent of his/her parents. Thus, the parents' fear of conversion of students to another religion was allied (Mamud, interview: 1996).

There are some ex-students of IGS who are self-employed and employers of others. Thus, the principle of self-reliance as propounded by the proprietors and upheld by the school authorities had bear fruits. The ex-students in this category include Alhaji Gold Abubakar, engineer Olarongbe Gambari and Alhaji Sidikat Yusuf (The Elephant, 1997: 3). They have all been contributing to the economic development of Ilorin community and the state at large. The school facilities such as the Assembly Hall, classrooms and football field have always been made available to individuals, groups and corporate bodies for lectures, symposia, conferences, entertainment, examinations et cetera (The Elephant, 1992: 9).

In addition, the school and the society have always been beneficial to each other academically. The school authority had brought into the school great academicians and administrators on the occasion of annual speech and prize-giving day to deliver speech on topical and educative issues. In the same manner many academicians and top administrative officers of the school gave talk, outside the school on topical issues that were of benefit to the society. With the establishment of the school, the poor masses in and around Ilorin were able to give their children secondary school education with little cost. The parents were also relieved psychologically of the risks in traveling from Ilorin to other towns to acquire western education and living condition of their young children. So with the establishment of the school, the annual pilgrimage of Ilorin indigenes to other places for secondary education in the early sixties was drastically reduced. The school provided employment opportunity for over a hundred teaching and non-teaching staff who were either being paid by the State government through the Teaching Service Commission or the Local Government Education Authority or from the school purse.

Problems

Ilorin Grammar School shared with other schools the general over population of students, indiscipline among students, inadequate fund, inadequate infrastructure, educational materials and personnel. Most of the materials were old and obsolete. Specifically, the school had been raided by thieves several times. Due to high academic standard of the school, there was always pressure on the school authority for admission even at the expense of laid down procedure. Because of its accessibility, many government officers influenced their wives posting to the school. This swelled the women population among the teaching staff. By 1996 women were sixty while men were twenty-six. This numerical strength of the women is considered to be a disadvantage as women in the school considered school activities secondary to their home affairs. The school has also been faced with the problem of land trespassers. Different sections of the school land have been encroached on and cases were on. All of these problems have continued to tell on the performance of the school authority and they needed urgent attention for the school to improve upon her present level of achievement.

Conclusion

Ilorin Grammar School was the first community secondary school established by the Ilorin Community for the purpose of providing sound secondary school education to Ilorin indigenes. Muslim settlers and other interested nationalities. Ilorin Community under the auspices of the Ilorin Descendants Progressive Union has continued to jealously guides the school till date. The educational advantages derived from the school by the community prompted the establishment of many more of community schools. These include Ballah, Banni, Ile-Apa Community secondary schools and a host of others. This no doubt affected the attention given to Ilorin Grammar School.

In spite of teething problems facing the school which include population of students, inadequate human and material resources, incessant raiding by thieves and others, the school has attained an enviable height academically and also it has made its impact felt in the immediate community and beyond.

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Akanbi Toyin	49	5/5/97; 10/7/97
Lawyer Kunle Suleiman	51	15/1/96; 4/10/97
Alhaji Oba Shiru	60	22/4/97
Aliyu A. Salman (SAN)	60	25 – 30/4/97
Aliyu-Kamal, A.K.W.	60	20 th – 29 th /12/96
Alhaji Sa'adau Koroagba	35	8/8/97
Alhaji Shehu Jawondo	30	8/8/97
Alhaja O.F. Lawal	37	8/8/97
Mal. Jimoh N. Idris	35	10/8/97
Mr. Lawal Oladimeji	39	13/1/97
Miss. Emiola M. Kehinde	22	28/4/97
Mal. Fatai Oladipo	24	28/4/97
Alhaji M. Alufanla	50	4/8/97; 4/10/97
Mr. K.O. Oderinde	45	13/8/97; 10/10/97
Mr. J.A.B. Bello	38	11/8/97
Mr. Adeleke Akanbi	45	13/8/97
Alhaja Selim Bello	33	11/8/97
Mr. Adeniran Adewale	37	11/8/97
Dr. A.S. Oniyangi	59	7/8/97
Dr. Ganiyu Bello	40	11/8/97
Mrs. Bello A.A.	35	2 nd – 11 th /8/97

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