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Those who impeached me did not know what they were doing –Ex-Kogi Deputy Speaker

SUNDAY, 30 MAY 2010 00:00 OYEWALE ADEBAYO



The former Deputy Speaker of the Kogi State House of Assembly, Hon. Aduku Abdullahi Ojodale, who was impeached during a crisis of leadership in the Assembly in 2008, in this interview with

OYEWALE ADEBAYO, in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital, stated that he bared no grudge with those who plotted his impeachment. He also spoke on current issues in the Kogi Assembly and his ambition in the [2011 election](#).

Why do you want to contest for the House of Representatives seat for Idah Federal Constituency?

The major reason why I want to represent my people at the National Assembly is a call to service by them. I want to serve my people at that level to contribute my quota to the development of my constituency. I'm not new in representation. I'm currently a member of the Kogi State House of Assembly where I was a principal officer, as the

Deputy Speaker and latter as the Speaker. I know what I was able to attract to constituency through good representation and I have the feelings that if I am given the opportunity to serve at a higher capacity, I will do much more than I have done for them.

Can you highlight some of those achievements?

I have not said I have done much, may be you misunderstood me. But I have been able to unify all the factions on ground before coming in to politics. The PDP in Idah was able to speak with one voice on all issues and I want to give that credit to myself. I was able to bring people from other factions to our own mainstream. I tried as much as possible to ensure that the party is intact. I want to make bold to say that I did much to keep the party officers together and stop them from moving to opposition parties. I also introduced what is called payment of stipends in Idah Local Government and taking care of the problems of those who are political office holders.

Talking about development, apart from the development of Idah Local Government in the last seven years of this administration, having served in various capacities like a member of the Pension Board, and Commissioner for Works, and now a member of the House of Assembly, as I said earlier, I have been able to attract two major road projects to my constituency, which is the Idah Ogbachala Road. The contract for the road was awarded when I was the Commissioner. I signed the agreement on behalf of the government. With the road completed, a journey to Idah could be accomplished within a very short period. We have been able to cut away over 100 kilometres to Idah, though it is on going.


Following the slow-pace of work on the project, I also waded in to make sure that the former contractor handling the project is replaced, through my oversight function as a lawmaker, and I am glad to say that the governor has announced another contractor for the project.

I was also behind the award of Idah-Ibaji-Onyedega Road which serves as a major trunk for the people. I also facilitated the construction and rehabilitation of a number of primary schools that were built by the state government. Most of them had their roofs blown off which I quickly called the attention of the state government to.

I have also sunk boreholes in Idah and influenced the movement of transformers for the Directorate of Rural Development (DRD) to several wards in my local government. I was part of those who contributed immensely to the 20 units of Housing in each of the 21 local government areas in the state. Based on these achievements my people now refer to me as a worthy ambassador. When I told them that I'm aspiring to represent them at the House of Representatives, I was well received. My ambition was well received and they told me wholeheartedly that they will support me.

Your constituency is said to be prone to a lot of violence, how do you intend to approach the problem of arms stockpiling?

I want to disagree with you that Idah Federal Constituency is prone to violence. Most of the crises you have heard and seen are from part of Igalamela and Ofu Local Government Areas of the state. It has not engulfed the entire zone, Idah Federal Constituency. The crises largely engulfed two major towns, Odolu where boys are restive and Ejule where boys are very violent.



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Sincerely speaking, most of the time when there is violence, it does not spread to Idah.

Be that as it may, most of the crises you hear about are not politically motivated, but are linked to local chieftancy squabbles, and sometimes inter-family feuds.

Politics has no link at all with all the crises. Moreover, I don't think I need guns and thugs to get my nomination or get through an election. Because in Idah where I come from, I have always come out from primary elections without using guns and ammunition. I have not seen politics as do or die affairs hence there will be no need for use of arms and ammunition. I have always been accepted.

What are those things that you want to focus on if elected to the House of Representatives?

Like I said earlier on, I want to attract more federal presence in my constituency. Two things are already on ground before now, that is the Federal Polytechnic Idah and Federal Government College, Ugolawo. I believe we need more federal presence particularly in terms of roads. From the look of things, it seems as if that constituency has been forgotten by the federal government. The federal road that is supposed to open up the constituency to other states like Edo, Anambra, Enugu and other parts of Kogi State, is yet to be commenced even though there are budgetary provision for the road every year by the federal government.

Apart from roads, there are other things we need in Idah Federal Constituency, like water projects; I believe that the federal government can embark on water project to serve the people of my constituency with the availability of the River Niger.

If given the opportunity, I will lobby the federal government to engage in private/public partnership in the provision of electricity, water and road. Health- matter is another area I will look into.

Having served as the Deputy Speaker and Speaker of the Kogi State House of Assembly, how will you assess the performance of the House of Assembly in the past three years?

The House of Assembly has done so well in the last three years. We worked as a team on several motions and bills meant for the development of Kogi State.

For instance, our efforts have brought some meaningful development to various parts of the state, with every member being able to attract one or two things to his constituency.

Coming to the general function of the Assembly like approval of budget, we have done very well in that area for the first time.

We made open what government is doing with public funds by calling for budget defence, and asking relevant questions on how the budgetary allocation for the previous year was allocated.

Interestingly, the public can even acknowledge the various changes we have brought into focus in the Assembly because we get commendation almost every week.

We also do budget monitoring as part of our oversight function, by visiting ministries and parastatals randomly every month and quarterly, to look at their compliance with the budgetary allocation.

We have also been applauded on that as well.

For the first time, we made sure that the Assembly becomes autonomous; we have had instances where we had to veto the bill that was not signed by the executive, which brought a lot of uproar.

In a nutshell, the present Assembly has been able to bring the much need autonomy to the House.

The moment the Appropriation Bill is passed, we ensure that the House has a sufficient allocation in the bill, and with that, we do not rely on the executive on our expenditure.

This is an achievement which the previous Assembly members could not really work on, but with our own cohesiveness, we have put that in place.

You were impeached barely a year after you were elected Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly, how did you take that experience?

From the first day when a vote of no confidence was passed on me, leading to my impeachment, I have decided to forgive those people who were behind the impeachment plot because I knew they did not know what they were doing.

In the first place, there was no allegation; there was no committee to probe my activities and nothing of such. They did not follow due process, but as a gentleman, I knew I was there to serve the Assembly members. I did not impose myself on them.

They chose me and if they said they didn't want me again, I could not argue. That was why I didn't go to court and I didn't pursue my come back as Deputy Speaker. Please do note that I'm not holding that against anybody and from the second day I was impeached, I started coming to the Assembly as an ordinary member. I was greeting everybody. And I still remain with all of them. It is not issue of forgiveness, because I did not look at it as hurting me. They gave that trust and they no longer want the trust. It is no big deal. I bear no grudge against anybody.

It is widely believed that the Kogi Assembly is merely a rubber stamp legislative house because of the good relationship it has with the executive. What is your view?

As matter of fact, many journalists have taken me up on this issue on several occasions. I want to believe that the relationship between the House and the executive is misunderstood or misconstrued.