

SCHOOL: STRONG TOWER ACADEMY

SUBJECT: CIVIC EDUCATION

CLASS: JSS2

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NOTE FOR WEEK FOUR

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

A constitution is a body of rules governing and regulating the affairs of an organized group of a country. It contains the do's and don't concerning the conduct of the government and citizens of a country.

NIGERIAN COLONIAL CONSTITUTIONS

During the colonial days, Nigeria was ruled and controlled by the British. The annexation of Lagos by the British authority in 1861 could be regarded as the real beginning of colonial administration and constitutional developments in Nigeria.

Before the independence of Nigeria in 1960, Nigeria had four constitutions. They were:

Clifford constitution of 1922

Sir Clifford took over the governorship of Nigeria in 1919 after the end of the tenure of Sir Frederick Lugard. Clifford introduced the first constitution for the country in 1922. The constitution provided for;

- a. The establishment of legislative council in Lagos and Calabar
- b. Introduction of election in Lagos and Calabar
- c. The establishment of executive council which advised the governor on policy making and other matters.

RICHARDS CONSTITUTION OF 1946

Richard constitution came to force on 1st January, 1946. It was based on the proposal embodied in a white paper which Sir Arthur Richard submitted to the Nigerian council in 1948. The constitution provided the established for;

- a. A new legislative council which made law for the generality of Nigerian nation.
- b. Division of Nigeria into three regions. These were North, West and East.
- c. Introduction of regional council, two in the North and one each in the East and West.
- d. Reserved power for governors
- e. Introduction of elections.

MACPHERSON CONSTITUTION OF 1951

The promulgation (to officially declare the introduction of a law) of the Macpherson on 30th June, 1951 began the third phase of Nigeria's constitutional development. To draft this constitution, it took series of constitutions at various levels to get people to discuss the constitution. Through this constitution, the following took place;

- a. Regional assemblies were empowered to legislate on certain specific matters.
- b. The Western and Northern regions came together to have bicameral legislative (two houses, house of assembly and house of chiefs)
- c. The constitution brought Nigeria into greater federalism
- d. The central legislatures had its members increased to 149 from 44
- e. The constitution provided for some Nigerians to be made ministers at the central and regional levels.

LYTTLETIN CONSTITUTION OF 1954

Under the 1954 constitution Nigeria was divided into 5 component parts. The Northern, Western and Eastern regions, Southern Cameroons and the federal capital territory of Lagos. The constitution which was presided over by Sir Oliver Lyttleton in London in 1953 and in Lagos (1954) made provision for the following;

- a. The federal system of government came into existence
- b. The executive arm of government which was the council of ministers were established.
- c. Each region had a premier
- d. Lagos became the Nigerian federal capital territory
- e. Lagos was separated from East.