

Speech on the occasion of assumption of the Brummana High School Cultural Society  
administrative responsibility of BHS, July 1985

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Our friends from England  
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are celebrating to-day a historic event in the life of Brummana High School, which is just as historic as the celebration which must have taken place, in spirit if not in act, a century ago, when the Society of Friends took the decision and made the commitment to be involved in Lebanon in education and health care.

Over a century ago, the Society of Friends started in Lebanon Brummana High School, another school in Ras EL Metn, a hospital in Brummana and the Lebanon Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders in Asfourieh.

At the educational level, the marriage between the British culture and system of education and the local culture, coupled with the Quaker spirit and ideals, found in our midst a fertile soil, so that now, over a century from the starting point, the School continues not only to be useful to its constituency, but indeed a necessity. The contribution of the School can only be quantified by the sum total of a mixture of knowledge, expertise, ideals and contributions of all its graduates for over a century ..... and this is astronomical.

At the health care level, the Hospital in Brummana must have been sufficiently prestigious, so that the American University of Beirut adopted it as the teaching and training base for the summer term until it was phased out. The Lebanon Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders was a pioneer in the field of mental health care in Lebanon. It was for a long time affiliated to the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine. It was the first to educate this entire part of the world that mental illness is like any other illness and not due to devils inhabiting the human body.

The society of Friends has now thought it appropriate to hand over responsibilities to the sons and daughters of BHS. Those of us who have been called upon to start the Brummana High School Cultural Society, feel the weight and seriousness of this responsibility and as we pledge to see to it that the second century of the life of the School be as successful as the first, we call on all parties concerned to lend a hand:

To the teachers we say: give not only of your knowledge and expertise, but of your love and dedication.

We call on the parents to realistically recognize that quality education is expensive and to achieve our mutual objectives we need to cooperate. We need your advice and guidance. But we expect your understanding and support.

We call on the Old Scholars' Association to support the School, particularly in building and fund to give the school stable resources and to allow it to expand and reach broader horizons.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues in the Cultural Society, I wish to extend to all our friends from England who are present or absent, a vote of thanks. They worked hard and with patience for an even transition of responsibility, particularly Mr. and Mrs Wadge, Mr. Campbel, Mr. Greenfield , Mr. Wright. We also like them to convey our heartiest thanks to the Society of Friends in London for all their services across a century. We pledge now that the Quaker spirit will always be the moving force in the School.