



H .E. Consul Wadiah Fares
Unveiling of the Lebanese Emigrant Statue
Halifax, Nova Scotia
22/09/2018

إنه يومٌ وطنيٌّ بامتياز تحتفل به جاليئنا اللبنانية في مدينة هاليفكس، خصوصاً في حضور وبركة غبطة أبينا البطريرك الكاردينال مار بشاره بطرس الراعي، رئيس الكنيسة المارونية الذي نكنّ له محبةً خاصة، وهو بدوره يكنّ لهذه المدينة وأهلها محبةً أبويةً مميزة، فشكراً على وجودك في ما بيننا ضيفاً عزيزاً.

Your Excellency Bishop Paul-Marwan Tabet
Speaker Geoff Reagan, Premier Stephen McNeil, Mayor Mike Savage

أصحاب السيادة المرافقين لغبطة أبينا البطريرك
حضرة الخوري مكسيموس صيقللي خادم كنيسة مار أنطونيوس للروم الأرثوذكس في هاليفكس
حضرة النائب الأسقفي العام المونسنيور بيار قزي
آباءني الأجلاء،
أرحّب بتمثلي وسائل الإعلام اللبناني والأجنبي
أيها الحضور الكريم

Distinguished guest,
Dear friends.....

Today is a historic day; a defining moment in our community's history, as we gather to honour and commemorate our forefathers whom without their courage, resilience, and zeal for a better life, none of our lives would be the same; our city would not have been the same. They left their villages, families, and way of life, and ventured into the unknown. They are THE true heroes. They overcame obstacles, cultural and language barriers, and against all odds they made a life here and paved the way for many generations and it is through their resilience that you and I stand proud here today. Of course, they were great seeds but have been welcomed into a fertile land. It is the welcoming and generous society that have helped them unleash their full potential to contribute to the building of this great city of Halifax, the province of Nova Scotia and our marvellous nation.

Dear friends,

Honouring our forefathers with a piece of public art had been on my mind for some time; when the idea of the “Lebanese Emigrant Monument” presented itself, it was the perfect opportunity. And what better place to locate this monument than our Halifax Harbour; it is where they first set foot in this great nation. I owe a great deal of gratitude to the Provincial Government, THANK YOU PREMIER, and to the Waterfront Development Corporation represented today by its CEO Jennifer Angel, THANK YOU JENNIFER for providing the perfect home for our monument.

تخليدًا لمسيرة أجدادنا المُشْرِفة،
ولكي يبقى إسم لبنان محفورًا في الأذهان ومطبورًا في ذاكرة التاريخ،
ولكي نجعل من تاريخنا أمثلة لأجيالنا الصاعدة فلا ينسوا أن نجاح جاليتنا مبني على سواعد شعب حفر الصخر وزرعه،
ها هو "نصب المغترب اللبناني" يقف بفخر على الواجهة البحرية لمدينتنا التي احتضنت أجدادنا وأهلنا وأضحت بيتًا لنا...!

ها هو نصب المغترب اللبناني يُخبرُ
قصة شعبٍ تحدّى وجع الفراق وغصة الرجيل...
قصة شعبٍ زرع لبنائه في كل بقعة حلّ فيها...
حكاية شعبٍ أصبح رقمًا صعبًا ومثالًا يُحتذى به...!

ولا يسعنا في هذه المناسبة، ومن على هذا المنبر، وباسم الجالية اللبنانية في هاليفكس، إلا أن نوجّه تحية إكبار وافتخار لفخامة
رئيس الجمهورية العماد ميشال عون، المؤتمن على حرية لبنان وسيادته وكرامة أهله...

The statue is not unique; it can be found around the world where other Lebanese emigrants have settled in large numbers. It is a universal symbol of a proud, strong and globally united Lebanese diaspora uniting them to their homeland and to one another. It was originally commissioned in 1979 in Mexico when the Lebanese club, and as part of their preparations for the centennial celebration of the Lebanese presence in Mexico, sent a request to the Mexican-Lebanese artist, the Late Ramez Baraket, to present a sculpture project that mimics the Lebanese Diaspora and explains the hardship of the emigrants away from their homeland. And the statue of the Emigrant appeared in its eastern features, its Lebanese traditional costume, with eyes looking at the distance, full of hope and perseverance and a decision to conquer the unknown.

Thus, the statue was erected in front of the Lebanese club and since that day it has been rising in most of the Mexican cities and other cities around the world and today in HALIFAX. This monument will stand tall to represent and honor our Lebanese forefathers who emigrated from their home country to seek greater opportunities for themselves and their families. It represents the love, honor and respect we feel for this great province that welcomed our ancestors 130 years ago with open arms and provided them freedom and opportunity. This piece of public art is a gift from us to our city which we love and are blessed to call home.

In a time where the politics of division is on the rise, and the topic of immigration is being politicised for political gain, this monument and the community behind it, is an irrefutable testament to the importance of immigration to our country; and I wonder today what the first emigrant represented by this statue could speak to us, what it would say? I could not find more fitting than these poetic words of the Lebanese Legend Gibran Khalil Gibran:

- I believe in you, and I believe in your destiny.
- I believe that you are contributors to this new civilization.
- I believe that it is in you to be good citizens.

You should be proud of belonging to this great nation, but you should also be proud that your fathers and mothers came from a land upon which God laid His gracious hand and raised His messengers. I BELIEVE IN YOU!

Thank you, Halifax, Thank you NS,
Thank you, Canada... WE BELIEVE IN YOU

عاش لبنان!

