

Countries, in two days he would be addressing a Select Committee of the United States Congress.

O'Leary's many works are published in several books on Northern Ireland which he had co-authored

McGarry of the University of Waterloo, Canada. Professor Moaary, a native of

contemporary O'Leary at Garraon Tower. Fr Delargy noted that in

forewords they paid generous tribute to their teachers and to their old school.

Today's students can look forward to a better, brighter future

"This generation of students can look forward with confidence to a much better and brighter future than was possible for students in recent decades."

That was the declaration from Professor Brendan O'Leary, Professor of Political Science and Convener of the Government Department at the prestigious London School of Economics.

Professor O'Leary was guest speaker at the annual prize-giving ceremony at St MacNissi's College.

In a witty and thought-provoking address, he began by recalling his own student days as a boarder at "the Tower," at that time a haven of peace at the height of A. of the thirty years' war. He generously acknowledged his debt on Mr of gratitude to those teachers who had directed him on a course of intellectual equality.

He singled out for special praise his A-level teachers: Mr 11am Agnew and Mr Joe Mekenna, both on retired, and Mr Paul Magill, currently Head of History in the College. "Good teachers are always well remembered, if not

well remunerated," he quipped.

Professor O'Leary proceeded to contrast the limited prospects of his contemporaries in the 1970s with students in the new millennium.

"Ours was a generation of emigres, driven but by the conflict. On my travels abroad I meet past pupils, most of them successful people who might have had much

to contribute to society at home. Your

generation faces a brighter future: you should reap the benefits of the new order," he argued.

The "new order", he suggested, would be marked by equality of opportunity and better economic prospects for all. People would come to appreciate the advantages of devolved government, of confederal institutions, of "politics with peace". The Belfast Agreement

was unique in its

constitutional arrangements, an imaginative experiment in power-sharing which guaranteed the right of minorities and minorities alike. He acknowledged that the Agreement was not yet fully realised, that there are still deep divisions. We are still in what he called a period of "cold peace."

Professor O'Leary declared himself a realist where politicians

are concerned and joked that they rarely open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge.

Nevertheless, he is optimistic about the future.

"Even the Agreement collapses, it will have to be rebuilt. Garraon Tower people helped to build the Agreement, and, no doubt will be on hand if it is necessary to 're-build it,'" he concluded.



Professor Brendan O'Leary from the London School of Economics is pictured with Fiona Carson, Katherine McQuade and Katherine Rodgers.