

*PROFESSOR JAMES MEENAN*

*An Appreciation*

Professor James Meenan, who died in Dublin on 25th May 1987 was born on 18th October 1910, the eldest son of Dr James N. Meenan who was a Professor of the faculty of Medicine at University College, Dublin. He was educated at the Catholic University School, Clongowes Wood and University College, Dublin. He won the Arkin medal for Irish History at his First Arts examination and he went on to take first place and first class honours in the BA degree in Political Economy. In 1932 he gained the MA degree, the Coyne Memorial Scholarship and the National University of Ireland Travelling Studentship in Economics which led to studies at the Universities of Rome and Perugia and resulted in a book on the Italian Corporate State. He then studied law, was called to the bar and practised for some years.

During the 1940s James Meenan concentrated on economics, which he taught at University College, Dublin. He was appointed Statutory Lecturer in Applied Economics in 1951 and ten years later he succeeded George O'Brien as Professor of Political Economy and National Economics of Ireland. On his appointment to his Chair he also became Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, an office which he held until 1973. The period during which he held the Chair was one of enormous expansion and development in both the College and his academic discipline. He played his part in the administration of the College: he was a member of the Governing Body for twenty years and a member of the Senate of the National University of Ireland from 1954 to 1977. When Professor Meenan retired from his Chair at the end of session 1979-80, he was one of the best known figures in the College. Many of his students now hold Chairs in University Departments in Ireland and abroad, or occupy key positions in business and the state sector.

Professor Meenan served on many Government Commissions including those on Emigration and Population, the Metric System and Decimal Coinage, and Income Taxation. He was a Director of the Central Bank of Ireland from 1949 to 1958 and a member of the Court of Directors of the Bank of Ireland from 1958 to 1978. He took particular interest in scholarly and scientific societies and was much involved in the work of the Royal Dublin Society of which he was Honorary Secretary from 1958 to 1973 and Chairman of the Executive Committee from 1959 to 1980. He was a council member of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland for many years and its President from 1956 to 1959. He was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy as early as 1940 and served on its Council for some years. Professor Meenan was closely associated with The Economic and Social Research Institute, serving on the Council from 1961 and its Chairman from 1974 to 1983. He was a member of the Advisory Council of *The Economic and Social Review* from its foundation.

Most of Professor Meenan's publications are concerned with the analysis of Irish economic problems. One of the best known is his Minority Report to The Commission on Emigration. His book, *The Irish Economy since 1922*, was published in 1970. His incisive commentary on policy since the State's foundation is the best available introduction to the economic history of independent Ireland. He also wrote a biographical memoir of his predecessor in University College, Dublin, George O'Brien, which was published in the year of his own retirement.

Professor Meenan was a witty and perceptive observer of the Ireland of his day whose company enlivened dinner parties over the years. He will be remembered with affection by former students, colleagues in University College Dublin and by the board members and staff of the many institutions and societies with which he was involved.