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**De Valera and Neutrality in World War 11; Sean Lemass and Economic Development in the 1960s.**

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I wish to thank Martin Egan and his committee for the invitation to be here today. It is always a pleasure to return to this county and the northwest. My previous visits include learning Irish at Loughanure, speaking here in 2003, researching John Kells Ingram in Pettigo in 1998 for the Trinity Monday discourse on an economist who was awarded honorary membership of the American Economics Association, the Nobel prize of its day. I also recall a memorial service in Stranorlar for Isaac Butt, Whately professor of Economics at TCD and a founder of the Irish Parliamentary party. TCD Nobel Laureate in Medicine in 2015 was William Campbell from Ramelton where is brother runs a guesthouse. The TCD connections with your county are good today also. Recently we installed as Pro-Chancellor Dr Sheila Greene who hails from Balintra. Her mother hails from Murvagh and her father from nearby Dromore. In my time in Seanad Eireann I served on the North South Parliamentary Association whose co-chair was speaker William Hay from Milford representing the DUP, and the leading UUP member was Basil McCrea from Ramelton. It was a pleasure to meet them both.

My thanks are also due to the people of Donegal for their vote in favour of retention of the Seanad in 2013. My fellow speaker Mary O’Rourke was also a staunch defender of the Seanad succinctly stating recently that the Dail’s job is to police the government and they need all the help they can get! The perspective from my constituency was that both the first and present Seanads provided for overrepresentation of ex-unionists and TCD in particular. The object, promoted by John Henry Bernard, Provost of TCD, was to promote cross-community links and inclusiveness in a very early version of the Good Friday agreement of twenty years ago.

A connection between TCD and the northwest was Magee College in Derry whose students had the option to transfer to TCD after their freshman years. We also had interchanges of staff. This was ended by the Lockwood Committee and the decision to locate Northern Ireland’s second university in Coleraine. I served as an external examiner at Coleraine and wish it well under Vice Chancellor Paddy Nixon, a colleague from TCD in the past. The closure of Magee was such a blow to Northern Ireland’s second city and inexplicable when the UK was developing new universities throughout the country. It was a decision which lit the fuse of thirty years of the Troubles. It brought John Hume to the fore ably assisted by one of TCD’S senior fellows, Aidan Clarke. If we had the chance again and the benefit of hindsight, TCD should have retained and strengthened the Magee links and promoted opportunity and education in Derry and the northwest. Given the shortage of doctors in the NHS and the wish of Irish doctors to migrate to high earnings and low tax destinations might it be time to advance Altnagelvin and Magee as a future medical school?

Martin Egan’s brief to me for today was expressed in a letter as follows- “This year I decided because of all the extreme criticism in the media nationally and internationally of elected democratic governments I would look at some positive decisions made at or since the foundation of the state and the main decision makers involved.”

I appreciate Martin’s statement. In my time in Leinster House I saw people who worked extremely hard to repair the harm done by the banking crisis. As a member of the Oireachtas Banking Inquiry I formed the view that the causes of that economic collapse were the reckless conduct of the bankers themselves, the design faults of the euro currency, the inertia of bank auditors, and the deficient regulation of the sector by the Central Bank, the financial regulator and the Department of Finance. Politicians took the blame in the ping pong of political debate in Ireland. There was little that Brian Lenihan could have done to prevent the Irish bank collapse. The faults lie elsewhere in the conduct of the banks and in the permanent government. The culture of avoiding responsibility is deeply ingrained in the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924 under which “all the department acts are reckoned to be his.” (ie the Minister). (Chubb, 248). Politicians in government took the rap. Those directly involved successfully transferred the burden to the taxpayers in a classic example of moral hazard. We developed a system of governance based on avoiding responsibility. Reforms such as the Economic Management Council, IFAC, and IGEES attempt to reform our economic governance but are being discarded and ignored. The Childrens’ Hospital debacle revives fears of other white elephant eras.

An insider-outsider model of government causes popular disillusionment when broke bankers get bailout and children, the poor, the old and the sick do not. We see bureaucracies as budget maximisers rather than efficient producers of public services. A large lobbying sector distorts public spending and taxation policies in favour of the rich. Disillusionment prevails. Government is no longer seen as working for the people but for the lobbies representing the “haves.” Populism thrives in many countries. The bank rescue is likely to be repeated elsewhere in the economy if we do not reform.

There are important signs that we are moving to a parliamentary system in which the permanent government will be subject to checks and balances from parliament. We have a secret ballot for Ceann Comhairle, a post previously at the discretion of the government. The present government operates under a confidence and supply arrangement in contrast to majoritarianism. Parliamentary committees investigate the permanent government directly rather than through the minister. Irish parliamentarians see the European parliaments as less adversarial than the Westminster model and bring these aspects home to Ireland. At the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first meeting of Dail Eireann on the 21st of January last speakers stressed Ireland’s success in parliamentary democracy in contrast to much of southern and eastern Europe. The Irish tradition in other parliaments is a splendid one including Edmund Burke at Westminster, Thomas Darcy McGee in Canada and Tip O’Neill and Ted Kennedy in Washington. It is also now more acceptable not to be overwhelmingly partisan. Garret FitzGerald supported Sean Lemass. Liam Cosgrave admired him and John Bruton had a portrait of him in his office. Brian Lenihan told the audience at Bealnablath that of the portraits of finance ministers in the Department Michael Collins was by far the best-looking! My experience of Seanad Eireann over the years 2011-2016 is that members of all parties and none worked hard in the national interest in order to undo the harm of the bank collapse in a House where the government did not have an overall majority. The Leader of the House, Senator Maurice Cummins noted a couple of dozen or more concerns raised by members on the Order of Business each day and drew these items to the attention of the ministers concerned.

 We missed something when the Act of Union abolished the Irish Parliament in 1800. The bribes paid to the members to secure abolition were less than the sale revenue when the purpose built parliament building was sold to the Bank of Ireland. That parliament would have evolved to be more representative and an Ireland led by prime ministers, (or Taoisigh!) such as Henry Grattan, Daniel O’Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell would surely have made Ireland a better place in the 19th century.

Today I have been allocated two topics De Valera and neutrality during World War 2 and Sean Lemass and economic development in the 1960s.

**De Valera and Neutrality**

David Mc Cullagh’s mammoth 528 page biography of de Valera in power covering 1932 to 1975 earns the accolade from Maurice Manning that “this biography will not be bettered.” McCullagh cites Lemass saying that de Valera showed “real political genius” in dismantling the Treaty and especially in doing so without any ill-effects even in the relationship with Great Britain.” (p.407). De Valera created a “Republic in fact” without which Ireland could never have remained neutral during the Second World War. Ireland was able to remain neutral thanks to geography, to luck and to skill on de Valera’s part. There were downsides such as the Economic War, the strengthening of the border and Ireland’s isolation after the war and moral opprobrium particularly from America.

In relation to the Treaty ports at Lough Swilly, Berehaven and Cork Harbour McCullagh notes the role of Neville Chamberlin who “had come to the conclusion that it was worth considering surrendering the ports unconditionally to obtain the essential goodwill of the Irish Free State.” (p.141). The ports were evacuated in 1938 with Cobh on 11 July, Berehaven on 29 September and Lough Swilly on 3 October. The last British commander at Lough Swilly was a brother in law of the first Irish commander. They were married to sisters who lived nearby. The departing commander is reported to have placed the flag and other memorabilia in the boot of his car and driven to Derry. The departing commander of Berehaven did likewise and drove to Bantry for the train to Cork. The earlier evacuation of Cobh and Cork harbour was greeted with applause as the troops left by sea.

Neutrality in World War 2 had the costs listed by David McCullagh. The Northern Ireland parliament was painted over in black tar so that the German pilots would not see it as they bombed nearby Belfast. Allied troops based in Derry and Fermanagh must have asked themselves about a country on the other side of the Irish border which remained neutral in the face of fascism and Nazism.

We discover and rediscover new interpretations of history all the time. While not an historian I had been influenced by strong English criticism of Neville Chamberlain over his appeasement of Hitler. I am impressed by David McCullagh’s appreciation of the good relationship Chamberlain had with De Valera which facilitated the return of the ports. It is safe to say that the transfer would not have happened under Churchill who condemned the transfer with the words “a more feckless act can hardly be imagined.” (McCullagh, p.149).

Ireland is now seen to have played a huge part in the first World War with estimates of Irish deaths as high as 49,500. This had until recent years been virtually erased from Irish history. The inauguration of President Higgins on November 11th last was delayed by the President and Taoiseach so that they and ministers could attend Remembrance Day commemorations earlier on the day. Fanning (1983) estimates that between 540 and 800 army deaths occurred in the civil war between January 1922 and April 1924 with far heavier republican losses bringing the casualties, including injuries, to between 4,000 and 5,000. Dudley Edwards (1987) estimates civil war deaths at 600/700. (p.109). By contrast the Volunteer casualties between Easter 1916 and the Treaty were 600. Fanning (p.39) finds that “many more Irish nationalists were killed by other Irish nationalists than killed by British forces throughout the five glorious years of the revolutionary struggle.” In 1923-24 30 per cent of national expenditure was devoted to defence and a further 7 per cent to compensation for property losses and personal injuries. There was also the profound impact of World War 1 even if until recently it generated little public debate. The case for De Valera’s neutrality policy could therefore be made that Ireland was war weary after World War 1, the war of independence and the civil war.

The deaths in World War 1 are now seen to have had a profound impact as, more than a hundred years afterwards, families rediscover relatives long overlooked. De Valera had a distinguished career at the League of Nations and developed some of the diplomatic skills there to hone a policy of neutrality in a continent at war. De Valera used these skills to secure a neutrality which was respected by both Britain and Germany. The Constitutional reforms which were implemented by De Valera were noted by Hitler in 1938, Murphy’s biography of Douglas Hyde states that “ undoubtedly the primary reason for Hitler’s fleeting fixation with Douglas Hyde was that the coming into being of the new Irish presidency diluted Ireland’s bonds with the British Empire almost to the point of disappearance, In the pre-Munich Agreement summer of 1938, Hitler may genuinely have hoped to avoid war with the United Kingdom, but he was also quite happy to highlight any geopolitical shifts that diminished the prestige of Germany’s most formidable rival in Europe” (p.10).

In the event 100,000 Irish people went to work in Britain during the second war with 120,000 serving in the British forces, made up of 68,000 from the South and 52,000 from the North. (McCullagh, pp.213-214). MI 6’s Irish section estimated that the 165,000 Irish people went to work or serve in the British armed forces (p. 261). Were Ireland not neutral these would have been conscripted by the Irish army thus depriving Britain of a valuable resource. Lack of access to Irish ports was estimated to have cost the Royal Navy 386 ships and 5,070 lives.

John A. Murphy believed that neutrality was THE formative experience in the history of the state but that it was utterly divorced from that of Northern Ireland. Neutrality cemented partition by increasing the value of Northern Ireland to Britain and deepening the differences between North and South. While de Valera often spoke about partition this was not translated into measures to improve north-south relations. McCullagh writes that “McEntee, in contrast to his chief, actually knew something about the North, having been born in Belfast. The two men frequently disagreed on Northern policy, McEntee urging a conciliatory approach to unionism so as to solve partition.” (pp.407/8). De Valera by contrast sought to persuade London to cut unionists adrift. He raised nationalist hopes in Northern Ireland but did not understand Ulster unionism.

 By the time his successor, Sean Lemass, addressed the matter it was already likely that the neglect of north-south relations and failure to secure minority civil rights in Northern Ireland had made the Troubles inevitable. The first Lemass-O’Neill meeting was held at Stormont on January 14th 1965 with the return meeting on 9th February 1965. On the following day, February 10th, 1965, the Lockwood Committee reported on higher education in Northern Ireland. The decision not to locate Northern Ireland’s second university in its second city was inexplicable at a time when higher education was developing rapidly throughout the UK and Ireland. O’Neill, as NI prime minister, lost unionist votes by meeting Lemass more than he gained nationalist support. Roy Foster is quite harsh on O’Neill. “O’Neill was an unconvincing liberal as well as an inept tactician who refused to prepare the ground with his resentful colleagues. Subsequent events have created the illusion that he stood for introducing civil rights reform, for which there is no evidence.” Foster also harshly refers to O’Neill’s “appallingly condescending memoirs.” (p.585). The Nationalist party in Northern Ireland were persuaded by Lemass in February 1965 to take up the position of official opposition at Stormont but according to McCullagh “the lack of generosity in the unionist response took the bloom off the initiative.” (p.283). Over virtually a hundred years since the Government of Ireland Act established the Northern Ireland as a political entity there have been decades in which NI was ignored by southern governments. Some Taoisigh such as Lemass and Ahern were more successful than others in relating to Unionists but there are risks and tensions on the unionist side. The Ulster Unionist party cast aside its membership in Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan in 1920 by 301 votes to 80 when Lord Farnham did not accept that he was any less an Ulsterman than any Tyrone man. The Protestant population of the present Republic declined from 311,000 in 1911 to 207,000 in 1926 to a low of 107,000 in 1991 and is currently around 200,000. These numbers are widely cited in NI but less so in the Republic.

**Sean Lemass, Protectionism and Free Trade.**

Protectionism has a long tradition in Irish public life. Jonathan Swift advocated the policy in A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures in 1720. Restrictions on Irish trade in the 1780s provoked the placing of a cannon outside the Irish parliament bearing the sign “Free Trade or This.” In the Sinn Fein movement Arthur Griffith advocated import tariffs citing the work of German economist Frederick List. Sean Lemass (1928) proposed that “Ireland be made a self-contained unit, providing all the necessities of living in adequate quantities for the people residing in the island at the moment and probably for a much larger number…. Until we get a definite national policy decided on in favour of industrial and agricultural protection, and an executive in office prepared to enforce that policy, it is useless to hope for results.” (Ronan Fanning, The Irish Department of Finance 1922-1858, p.246). Lemass was more interventionist than De Valera. According to McCullagh “if Lemass had got his way in the 1930s and 1940s, a more interventionist state might have achieved faster economic growth-or it might have gone bankrupt.” (p.406)

John Maynard Keynes speaking at UCD in 1933 gave some support to protectionism in Ireland. “If I were an Irishman, I would find much to attract me in the economic outlook of your present government towards greater self-sufficiency.” There were however qualifications to his statement. Keynes doubted that Ireland was large enough and possessed sufficient natural resources to be self-sufficient. He suggested a trade agreement with Britain in order to maintain traditional markets. He also warned against going blindly into technical changes imperfectly understood. (McCullagh, pp.20/21). Ireland embarked on a policy of Import Substitution Industrialisation at the same time as conducting an “Economic War” with its major trading partner, the United Kingdom.

As Foster notes, Fianna Fail had a disposition to protectionism augmented by the campaign of economic sanctions that followed De Valera’s policy of withholding land annuity payments to the British Exchequer under the terms of the Land Purchase Acts. On 1 July 1933 a £1.5m annuity payment was withheld. Britain imposed a 20% duty on Irish imports and retaliatory duties on Irish cattle of 68 to 88% ad valorem. The cattle herd declined from £54.6m to 31.1m between 1929/30 and 1935/6. Exports fell from £47m in 1929 to £20m in 1935.(McCullagh, p.60). Ireland’s default on annuities cost Britain £4.9m in 1933/4. In a 1935 coal-cattle pact Ireland agreed to import all its coal from Britain which agreed to increase Irish cattle exports to Britain from 50 per cent of the 1933 figure to 66 per cent. In the 1938 agreement Ireland made a once off payment of £10m in respect of annuities, the ports were returned and the special duties on both sides were removed. The end of the Economic War was announced in the Dail by Sean Lemass on April 28, 1938 – “the economic war is over. It is, I suggest a complete waste of time to discuss who began it. The important fact is that we won it.” Michael Laffan’s assessment was that “people paid more attention to De Valera’s achievement in ending the Economic War than to the fact that he had started it.” (McCullagh, p.152).

Meenan (p.139) records the first five duties as imposed in the 1924 budget. They were levied on boots and shoes, soap and candles, sugar confectionary, cocoa preparations, table waters, and glass bottles for beer, wine and spirts. In 1925 new duties followed on personal clothing, blankets, rugs, furniture, and bedsteads and a Tariff Commission was established. Any firm or group of firms wishing to establish a new industry or expand an existing industry could make an application to the Tariff Commission for the grant of duties necessary to give ample protection so as to create conditions in which external competition was to a large extent eliminated. 43 new duties were imposed in the Budget of 1932. The average tariff level rose from 9% in 1931 to 35% in 1938. Employment in protected industries rose from 45,348 in 1932 to 80,092 seven years later. (McCullagh, p. 19).

Research by Professor Louden Ryan published by the Statistical and Social Inquiry (1948/9) showed that Irish tariffs were higher than in the UK where their tariffs were two-thirds of Ireland and France where tariffs were half those in Ireland. Tariff barriers higher than in Ireland were imposed in Spain, Turkey, Germany and Brazil. Tariff barriers were supplemented in some cases with quotas or physical limitations on the quantity of imports. The protectionist edifice included the Department of Industry and Commerce which operated to restrict imports, specialist law firms who prepared industries for tariff and quota protection and a clientelist relationship between businesses seeking protection and the agencies dispensing it. Protectionist policies lasted thirty years, perhaps twenty years too many.

Engaging in an economic war with a country which accounted for 96 per cent of exports was always a dangerous exercise. Ireland achieved some initial advantage from protection in clothing and foodstuffs. Economic self-sufficiency was imposed by World War 2 and remained a goal of policy throughout the 1950s. Cattle, beef and veal made up 70.2% of Irish exports in 1961 compared to 50.8% in 1938. By 1956 it appeared to many observers that the Irish economy was unfit to cope with the strains of independence. The numbers at work fell from 1,224,000 in 1936 to 1,063,000 in 1967. Today there are 2.3m people at work in Ireland. Where did we go right?

**Lemass and a Changing World**

The transformation of policy prompted by Sean Lemass happened under three broad headings.

switches in emphasis from agriculture to industry as the driving force of the economy,

from protectionism to free trade and from Irish owned enterprise to foreign direct investment in Ireland.

Horgan (p.115) cites Lemass in 1946 saying that “there is no such thing as a flight from the land. It is a normal and healthy feature of a national economy based on agriculture that there is a steady flow of manpower from rural areas to employment in non-agricultural pursuits…… in fact our problem is very largely one of attracting from the land and providing with alternative means of livelihood a substantial number of those now underemployed on it…” This contrasted with the vision of De Valera three years earlier in his famous St Patrick’s Day broadcast when he spoke of “a land whose countryside would be bright with neat and cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of happy (originally comely) maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. It would in a word be the home of a people living the life that God desires that men should live.” The rural idyll portrayed by De Valera was lyrical but unreal. The Land Commission’s division of estates into small family farms exacerbated rural poverty. In 1946 two other cabinet ministers, James Ryan and Sean Moylan, supported the Lemass view that “there are too many people on the land.” (McCullagh, p.272).

The second step taken by Lemass in transforming economic policy was the move from protection to free trade. Lemass was a voracious reader of economics and would thus have been aware of the theory of comparative advantage. Countries gain by concentrating on activities in which they have a comparative advantage rather than try to produce all goods and services at home. They then export the commodities in which they have a comparative advantage and import those in which they do not have comparative advantage. Competing on both home and foreign markets keeps industries efficient. Sheltering behind tariff walls does not promote efficiency. Greater efficiency at home promotes exports and employment in Ireland. Thus Lemass negotiated the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1965 and stated that this was a step towards the membership of EFTA and the EEC.

The third step taken by Lemass was the Industrial Development (Encouragement of External Investment) Act 1958, a partial repeal of the Control of Manufactures Acts of 1932 and 1934. The object in the 1930s was to build up industries with native capital and organisation and to permit foreign control only when the possibilities of the industries being developed under home control had been exhausted. The object pursued by Lemass in 1958 was to open Ireland to investment and entrepreneurship from abroad. Barry, Bradley and O’Malley (1999, p.45) chart “the quite phenomenal growth of export-oriented FDI in manufacturing from a zero base in the late 1950s to a situation where almost 65% of gross output and 45% of employment in manufacturing is in foreign-owned export oriented firms.” Diversification of export markets followed. In 2017 only 12% of Irish exports went to the UK compared to 28% to the United States. The UK was just marginally ahead of Belgium at 11% of exports.

Barry et al. attribute the FDI success of Ireland to; first mover advantage in the strategy of targeting multinational firms; the low rate of corporate taxation; an English language environment, and favourable access to large export markets with relatively low labour costs here. (p.62). The success of the policy is based on attracting US FDI to locate in Ireland in order to access the EU market. Ireland and the US have a long history of links over a wide range of areas such as politics, public affairs, Irish migration to the United States, strong family links, cultural links and sporting links. The relationship works both ways. Ireland is a large FDI investor in the United States.

Ireland as a small open economy envisaged by Lemass, has been a huge policy and practical success measured by both employment and living standards. The success of the small open economy model with FDI and free trade in goods and services depends on other countries also supporting this economic model. Ireland would be a major loser if other countries were to move away from free trade. Our participation in international bodies promoting free trade such GATT and WTO is vital. The role of Peter Sutherland in opening up European markets as competition commissioner and world markets as chair of the GATT round is notable given the history of protectionism in Ireland.

Lemass attached importance to state enterprise in developing the Irish economy. This view has lost significance because of the success of the small open economy. Employment in state enterprises has been falling. Several have been sold and others have reduced their employment levels. As enterprises were protected from competition their low productivity levels became a burden on the internationally traded sectors of the economy.

An example of state enterprise warmly embraced by Lemass is Aer Lingus. Today it is owned by IAG, a group dominated by British Airways. In 2017 it carried 11m passengers compared to 120m on Ryanair. The Irish Aviation Authority is responsible for the safety regulation of some 500 planes in the Irish fleet and is consistently ranked in the top four regulators in the world by ICAO above the UK, US and Germany. Ireland, the UK Canada operate air traffic control over a large section of the North Atlantic. We have an aircraft leasing sector with 4,000 aircraft. Like Ryanair this is a legacy of Tony Ryan.

Europe’s legacy airlines found adaptation to open skies difficult. After some fifty years of protection from competition Aer Lingus has only 2.3m passengers in 1985/6. The licensing of Ryanair to serve the Dublin-London route in 1986 followed a strong political reaction to the Air Transport Bill’s provisions to fine, imprison and withdraw the travel agent’s licence where tickets were sold for less than the price stipulated by the Minister. The Bill was introduced to counter the operations of US airline Transamerica in the Irish market. Lemass had hoped to develop Aer Lingus services on the North Atlantic from St Patrick’s Day 1948. The planes were sold at the instigation of the Labour Party as a precondition for joining the 1948-1951 government. The sale decision is a key factor in Tom Garvin’s 2004 book, Preventing the Future-Why was Ireland so poor for so long?

Weldon’s history of Aer Lingus records 28 loss making years from its establishment in 1936/7 to 2001 when it lost €140m and had 6.6m passengers. Aer Lingus was not the only legacy airline in Europe to find it difficult to adjust to the withdrawal of protection by captured regulatory agencies. Doganis (2001) described “Distressed State Airline Syndrome” with the elements such as substantial losses, overpoliticisation, strong unions, overstaffing, no clear development strategy, bureaucratic management and poor service quality. The Department of Transport was described as the “downtown office of Aer Lingus” during debates on the Air Transport Bill.

 The problems of Aer Lingus existed in other state companies also. The Dargan report in 1979 found a state telephone sector in Ireland overmanned by a factor of three compared to Britain, four compared to the United States and almost eight compared to Switzerland. The Jakobsen report in 1984 found manning levels in the Irish state electricity company to be double those in Scotland, three times those in Denmark and six times those in Vermont.

State company employment has fallen 90, 375 in 1980 to approximately 40,000 in 2019. The decline from 7.8% of national employment in 1980 to 1.7% in 2019 is due to a combination of privatisation sales and measures to increase labour productivity within the enterprises themselves. The sales include the Dairy Disposal Company to the Kerry Group, Irish Sugar to Greencore, the B and I line to Irish Ferries, Aer Lingus to IAG, Irish Steel to Ispat, NET to ICI, Telecom to Eir, ACC to Rabobank, ICC to Bank of Scotland, Irish Life to Canada Life, Cablelink to NTL, Ceimici , Great Southern Hotels, and BGE customer supply division. The success of free trade and FDI has overwhelmed the role of state enterprise in economic development policy in Ireland.

**De Valera and Lemass as Entrepreneurs**

De Valera and Lemass as newspaper entrepreneurs merits some mention. Horgan states that “Lemass’s greatest achievement during his time at the Irish Press was the launch of the Sunday Press in September 1949. This was an enterprise he made peculiarly his own.” (p.140). Sales of that paper peaked at 475,000, over two and a half times the sale of the largest Sunday paper today. De Valera launched the Irish Press in 1931. Its peak sale was 200,000, some 2.3 times the leading daily paper today. The third paper in the group, the Evening Press had sales of 175,000 or 5.5 times the leading evening newspaper today. The group became extinct in 1995.

**Lemass the orator**

Lemass was an impressive public speaker at universities. In his address at the Oxford Union in 1959 his adversary was the 28 year old Patrick Mayhew. Lemass must have won some debating points. Mayhew and Mo Mowlam were among the better secretaries of state for Northern Ireland. Mayhew’s mother was Sheila Roche from the Blackwater Valley. He valued his Irish heritage and his descent from Edmund Burke. At his memorial service at Westminster Abbey in 2018 the guest of honour was the Irish ambassador, Dan Mulhall. Virtually all of the music in the service was Irish. John Major described how Mayhew asked for the Irish post and was known as the MP for Cork. Visits to student societies by cabinet members are rare today compared to the past. Undergraduate life is poorer for that.

**Conclusion**

Both De Valera and Lemass grew in my estimation as I got to know them better in preparing this talk for today. Neutrality and free trade were both good policies and two outstanding leaders delivered them.

Dev’s favourite sport was rugby. Lemass’s last public outing was at a rugby match supporting Ireland at Lansdowne Rd. He never sought special treatment and was taken ill climbing to a seat high in the stands. Liam Cosgrave praised in the Dail the immense contribution of Lemass to social and economic improvement and his lack of any kind of pretentiousness. Lemass had paid tribute to W.T. Cosgrave for the grace with which he handed over responsibility when the people so willed and the dignity with which he carried out his duties as leader of the opposition. Roy Foster describes Lemass as “not quite the superman claimed by devotees of his brand of economic expansion.” I am inclined to disagree on that but he also described Lemass as “a tough-minded meritocrat, energetic and unsentimental to a refreshing degree,” (p.573)

Michael O’Sullivan’s biography of Lemass states that “Lemass was extremely fastidious about his personal appearance. His tailor was F.X. Kelly of Grafton st. and he ordered about a dozen suits a year. (189/90.) When Charlie Haughey visited him in his last illness Lemass ordered him to get a haircut.” An aunt of mine in Cork, now gone to her reward, voted in succession for Tony Barry, Jack Lynch, Peter Barry and Micheal Martin. “But Auntie”, we remarked, “they are all in different parties”. “I know”, she replied, “but they are all neat. I only vote for neat candidates.”