

OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR THOMAS E. NEVIN, D.SC.,
APRIL 23RD, 1964, ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERRING OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
SCIENCE *honoris causa* ON RIGHT REVEREND MONSIGNOR PATRICK J. I. McLAUGHLIN.

CHANCELLOR AND MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY :

It is a source of great satisfaction to me to have the honour of introducing for the degree of Doctor of Science the Right Reverend Monsignor P. J. McLaughlin with whom, during the period of thirty years in which he was in St. Patrick's College, we, in the Physics Department of University College, Dublin, had such happy and intimate relations.

Dr. McLaughlin was born in Scotland, educated in County Donegal and, after his ordination in Maynooth in 1923, proceeded to Paris where, as a Professor of the Irish College, he undertook post-graduate studies with Professor Maurain. His research work lay in the field of Atmospheric Electricity, in particular a study of the concentration of large ions in the atmosphere of Paris. Portion of his work on the concentration of ions in cigarette smoke may be regarded as of topical interest. A puff of cigarette smoke contains hundreds of millions of ions. If one inhales and retains the smoke in the lungs for a few moments before exhaling the concentration of ions is halved and the exhaled ions are nearly all large ions. For his research work, Dr. McLaughlin was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science of the University of Paris and it is worth recalling that the famous French physicist Langevin, the discoverer of large ions in the atmosphere, was one of the examiners of his thesis.

Monsignor McLaughlin has had a long and distinguished record of public service. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, on the Council of which he has served a number of times. He was a member of the Irish Television Commission and the National Monuments Advisory Commission. He has been a member of the Governing Board of the School of Cosmic Physics since its foundation and, at present, he participates in the arduous work of the Commission on Higher Education.

More recently, Dr. McLaughlin has gained distinction for his writings on science and philosophy and for his essay reviews. His book, *The Church and Modern Science*, in his own words, presents some science for the philosopher and some philosophy for the scientist and is virtually unique of its kind. His writings have been invaluable in educating the public concerning the world moulded by science in which they live.

Physics and, indeed, Science in Ireland owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. McLaughlin for his work in connection with the Science Museum in Maynooth. Here, especially, he has established a splendid collection of instruments constructed by the Dublin instrument makers of the 19th century. Many of these instruments, by any standards beautiful examples of the instrument maker's art, which otherwise would have been lost or destroyed as obsolete, have been identified and saved for the future. The design and development of the new science building and laboratories, the result of which has been to improve greatly the facilities for university science teaching in Maynooth, ranks as another of Dr. McLaughlin's achievements.

Lastly, we salute Dr. McLaughlin as a historian of 19th century physics in Ireland and particularly honour him for his patient work in gaining a belated recognition for the work of his predecessor in Maynooth, Father Nicholas Callan the inventor of the induction coil, a contemporary of Faraday and Henry, the centenary of whose death will be commemorated later this year.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS :

Praesento vobis hunc meum filium, quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur *honoris causa* ad gradum Doctoratus Scientiae, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae.