

FIFTY-NINTH SCIENTIFIC MEETING
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

15 APRIL 1950

THE IRISH NATIONAL NUTRITION SURVEY

Chairman: PROFESSOR W. R. FEARON, *Trinity College, Dublin*

Origin and Organization of the Irish National Nutrition Survey

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During and after the war it was frequently suggested that the apparent relatively high standard of nutrition in this country was an illusion, and that in a section of the population that had little access to publicity starvation, to use an old-fashioned word, was common. When the Minister of Health came to consider such views he was told by the medical advisers in his department that the only answer was to find out the truth and that this meant a dietetic survey. The Irish Medical Research Council was consulted and a committee consisting of members of the Council and others interested in nutrition was formed. Prof. Fearon, who presides over us to-day, was a member, Prof. Jessop was Secretary and I was appointed Chairman.

After consultation with the Ministry we asked advice from our friend Dr H. E. Magee of the British Ministry of Health. Dr Magee was of great help to us and in particular introduced us to Dr Bransby. Dr Bransby not only advised on the method of conducting the survey but also supervised the training of the investigators who collected the facts under the supervision of Dr J. D. Hourihane of the Department of Health. Dr Hourihane was guided in the organization of the survey by Dr Geary of the Department of Statistics. Both of these will give the meeting a report of the methods of the survey (Hourihane, 1950; Geary, 1950).

The Medical Research Council Committee had little to do. We met at intervals to consider the results, offered criticism, which was frequently refuted, and, in general, agreed with the reports.

For myself I had less to do than any other member for, although interested in metabolism, I hold the view that the chief duty of a chairman is not himself to introduce discord.

Everyone knows that the work of any properly organized committee is mainly carried out by the secretary. Those who know Prof. Jessop do not need to be told that he took a very active interest. He will give an account of the results of the survey (Jessop, 1950).

Although I am not now a chairman, old habits persist and I will say nothing further except to express my admiration for the zeal and acumen of Dr Hourihane and of those who were associated with him in this work, and my hope that when presented to-day it will meet with approval.

REFERENCES

- Geary, R. C. (1950). *Brit. J. Nutrit.* **4**, 274.
Hourihane, J. D. (1950). *Brit. J. Nutrit.* **4**, 270.
Jessop, W. J. E. (1950). *Brit. J. Nutrit.* **4**, 281.