

PRESS RELEASE – Institute of Public Administration

To: News Editors, Features Editors, Political and Public Affairs Correspondents

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New book from the IPA entitled, *Politics in a Changing Ireland 1960–2007*,
to celebrate the political career of Seamus Pattison —
the longest-serving Labour Party TD ever elected

Politics in a Changing Ireland 1960–2007: A tribute to Seamus Pattison will be
launched by Brendan Howlin, TD and Leas Ceann Comhairle, **at a reception in the
Houses of the Oireachtas on Tuesday 29 April 2008, at 6.00pm.**

Why choose a political career? What have been the significant changes in Irish
politics over the past fifty years? This book describes the experiences of Seamus
Pattison, former Ceann Comhairle and Labour Party TD for Carlow-Kilkenny from
1961 to 2007, who, as the 29th Dáil's longest-serving deputy, enjoyed the somewhat
antiquated title of 'Father of the House'.

The book is not a political biography in the conventional sense. It does not chronologically describe the life and times of Seamus Pattison. However, it draws on key parts of Seamus's lengthy career to describe the experiences of an Irish politician and the role of parliament in the formation and review of public policy. The authors see Seamus Pattison as a most useful scholarly resource. They believe that he can help us to understand better how Irish politics works. In his forty-five years as a member of Dáil Éireann he has witnessed significant changes in Irish political life.

Politics in a Changing Ireland 1960–2007 analyses the competence of parliament, the dominating role of the government, the use of parliamentary questions, the development of a committee system and the reform of procedures in order to give greater debating opportunities to the opposition. The office of the Ceann Comhairle gets special attention. However, the authors criticise the tendency to exploit the provision whereby an outgoing Ceann Comhairle may be elected to Dáil Éireann without standing for election. The international dimension of parliament is also examined. Members are now associated with a vast array of international organisations, giving them a wide perspective on the activities of parliamentarians throughout the world. The final chapter is devoted to the future of parliament as an institution; the authors believe that it is a key institution in promoting and preserving a healthy democracy.

The book cleverly combines political biography with an examination of political culture, the competence of Dáil Éireann as a deliberative assembly and the future of Parliament as an institution.

Politics in a Changing Ireland 1960–2007 is published by the Institute of Public Administration in paperback at €25.00. It is available in major bookshops or from the Sales Division of the Institute, Tel: (01) 2403768, email sales@ipa.ie.

ENDS

Members of the press are cordially invited to attend the book launch in the Houses of the Oireachtas, (Kildare Street entrance).