

Professor Who told Students to widen horizons

Anon

Belfast Telegraph, Saturday November 14th 1970

Professor James Henderson Scott, the brilliant and sometimes controversial professor of dental anatomy at Queen's University, has died. He was 57.

Professor Scott, as much a poet and philosopher as a scientist, shattered tradition five years ago when he delivered a 5,000 word epic poem as his inaugural lecture on taking the Chair of Dental Anatomy. The poem had nothing to do with teeth, but dealt with man's inhumanity to man and was described by a colleague as "a personal tour de force."

Born in Dundalk of Presbyterian and Methodist stock - his maternal grandfather was President of the Methodist Church in Canada - he was educated at Methodist College and Queen's University where he read dentistry, medicine and science. As a student he was president of the Literific Society.

A Catholic convert. Dr Scott became known as an enlightened observer of the local political and religious scene and six years ago wrote a book, *The Christian Vision* in which he expressed his belief in an amalgam of the Celtic imagination and the Scotch practicality in Ireland

Politically he was a Nationalist, but urged the acceptance of the border as long as the majority of people in Northern Ireland wanted it.

Professor Scott, who claimed that he had not attempted to give anything in the nature of an academic paper for over 20 years, came under fire from the anti-drink lobby when he told his dental students to widen their horizons beyond their profession to understand art, music and social life. "you should all learnt to drive a car." he told them, "preferably a Jaguar, and you should learn to get drunk - find out how much drink you can take."

He believed doctors and dentists should be much more than just technicians if they were to have any real sympathy or understanding for their patients.

He welcomed the growing interest of students and youth generally in the ills of society and considered the Hippy movement a product of "idealism, rebellion and bloody mindedness."

He is survived by his wife, Olive