FOREWORD

The Professor F. de Vries Foundation considers it a singular honour to publish, in this volume, the lectures given by one of the greatest living economists on an important and topical subject. Their delivery marked the occasion of Professor Tinbergen's retirement as president of the Foundation. He held this office since its establishment in 1954. The Council of the Foundation is very grateful for the many services he has rendered in this capacity.

One of his tasks has been to write the introduction to most of the previous F. de Vries lectures, in which he would sketch the author's career and scientific attainments. Now that his own lectures are being introduced, a presentation of this kind would be supererogatory, since every member of the profession is familiar with his pioneering contributions

to economic theory and econometrics. Suffice it to say, with regard to the topic he has chosen for his lectures, that he is one of the foremost authorities on the theoretical, empirical and normative problems relating to the distribution of income. Numerous writings extending over several decades testify to his research in this field.

It may be said without exaggeration that of the many subjects he has explored in the course of an exceptionally full life, income distribution is the one that is nearest to his heart; all the more so if it is recognized that he tends to view the problems of the developing countries, to which he has dedicated a large part of his thought and practical activities, in this perspective.

The mainspring of this lasting interest is not primarily scientific curiosity, but his deeply held convictions about the nature of a truly humane society and the urge to apply the methods of science to the realisation, or at least the approximation, of this ideal. During the last years he has anew occupied himself intensively with the subject. His recent book *Income Distribution: Analysis and Policies* contains an impressive synthesis of the results of these investigations. His De Vries Lectures can best be read conjointly with this publication. They are also closely connected with the preceding volume in this series, *Distribution of Income: East and West,* by Professor Peter Wiles, published in 1974.

In his lectures Professor Tinbergen delves deeply into the fundamentals of the subject. One of their remarkable features is the constant striving to link theoretical concepts to empirical measurement. The boldness of some of his ideas contrasts in a charming manner with his unassuming presentation. His exposition is as elegant and lucid as ever.

The Council of the De Vries Foundation trusts that Professor Tinbergen's fellow economists will find the lectures illuminating and a stimulus to their own reflections. Even if some of them may be provoked to disagree with his approach or his proposals, it is to be hoped that others will be moved to continue research along the lines the author has indicated. At any rate his opinions will not fail to influence the future course of discussions in this area of economics and economic policy.

P. Hennipman

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