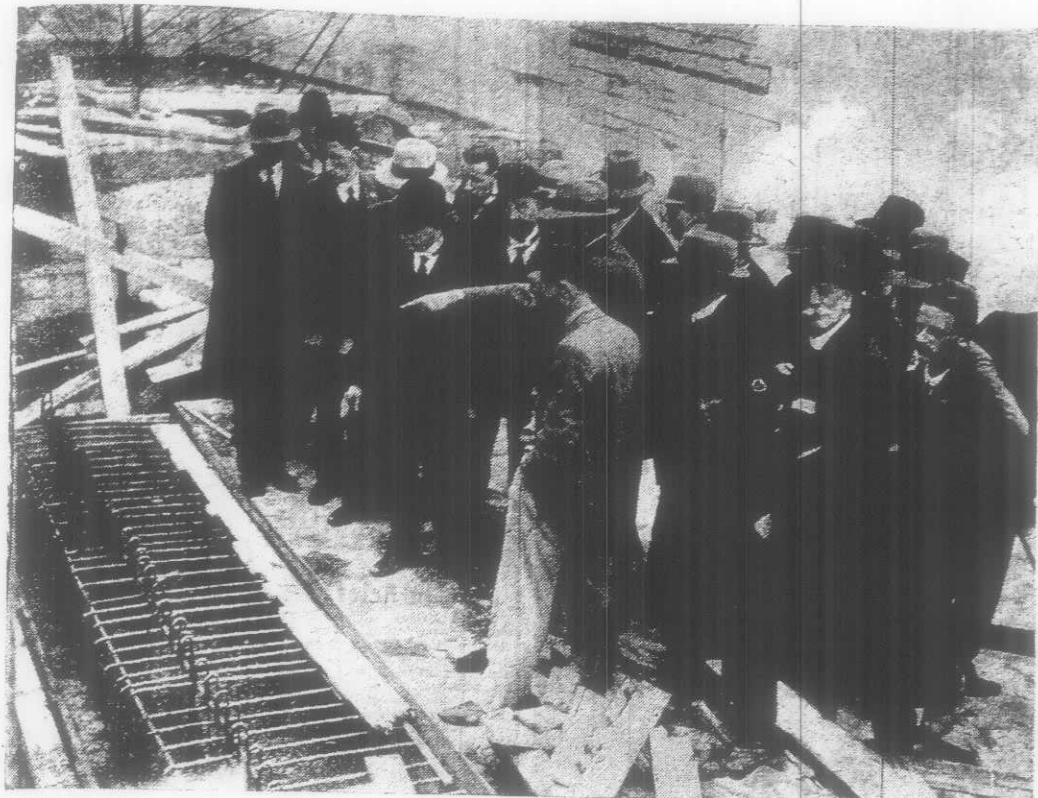
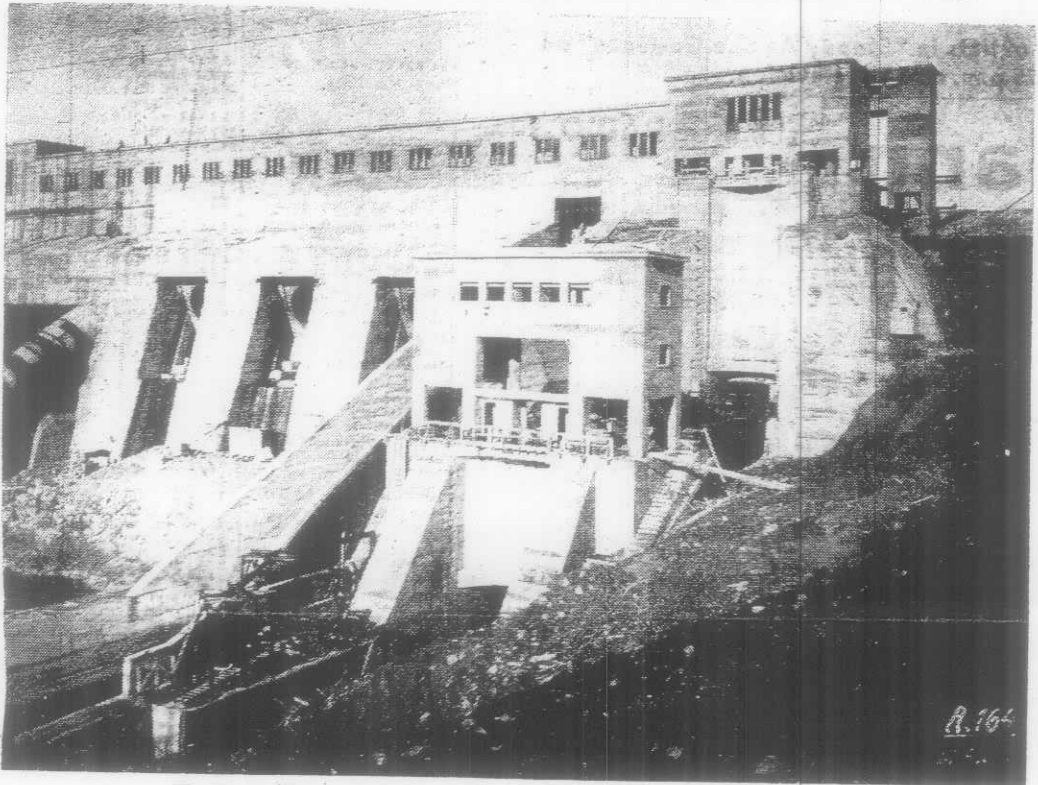


# 40th Anniversary of an historic day WHEN THE SHANNON SCHEME HEAD RACE WAS OPENED BY PRESIDENT COSGRAVE



An historic photograph showing Mr. W. T. Cosgrave, President, Executive Council, Irish Free State (centre in bowler hat), having a detail of the construction work at Ardnacrusha pointed out to him.



The Power House at Ardnacrusha nearing completion in October 1929

Monday next will mark the anniversary of an historic day in the annals of the Shannon Hydro Electric Power Scheme. On that day forty years ago, the formal opening of the intake gates to the head race at Parteen Villa near O'Brien's Bridge, was performed, and the country was now looking forward to the completion of the scheme and to the transmission of current throughout the entire Free State. The vast undertaking was described at the time as "the most gigantic work that has taken place in Europe in recent years" and one of its most wonderful features was the canal which extended for 7½ miles from Parteen Villa to Ardnacrusha.

The opening ceremony was performed by President Cosgrave, and was attended by members of the Government, the Institution of Civil Engineers and other representative bodies, as well as commercial and industrial interest throughout the country.

The scene at O'Brien's Bridge was a remarkable one. People had come from all parts of the country by train, bus and motor car—and they wended their way in thousands to the scene of the ceremony about a mile distant from the main roadway. The spectacle was new to many of the visitors—the imposing intake building and the canal at this place, and over all flew the flags of the Irish Free State and Germany.

## The blessing

The ceremony began with the blessing of the undertaking by the Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe. The other clergy present were Very Rev. Canon Clancy, P.P., Killaloe; Very Rev. Canon J. Moloney, P.P., Parteen; Very Rev. Canon Slattery, P.P., Quin; Very Rev. Canon O'Gorman, P.P., Bodysay; Very Rev. Canon O'Mahon, C.C., do.; Rev. Fr. Crowe, C.C., Ennis; Rev. Fr. Cahill, C.C., do.; Rev. Fr. Flanagan, C.C., St. Flannan's College. They were attended by cross-bearers and acolytes and members of the Ennis Cathedral choir.

The blessing of the gates was given by the Bishop, who, followed by the special blessing of the gates, his Lordship recited the following prayer: "O mighty and everlasting God, by whose high Providence all things are governed, we beseech Thee to bless from on high these newly-erected gates to control the inflow of the Shannon's waves, so that protected by Thy arm they may rightly fulfil their purpose, Thy greater glory and the good of the people of Ireland; and grant that we, Thy servants, illuminated by the Light of Grace, may regulate our lives according to Thy Holy Will in all things, and after the darkness of the world be admitted through Thy mercy within the gates of eternal light. Through Christ Our Lord, Amen."

His Lordship then solemnly blessed the canal and recited the special prayer. The service concluded with a special prayer for the whole scheme.

On the Bishop's return, President Cosgrave delivered the ceremonial address and then, pressing an electric button, he elevated the sluice gates and the waters of the Shannon trickled underneath into the great canal.

Immediately there was a fanfare of trumpets, the sounding of sirens and the tolling of bells, while the No. 2 Army Band played the National Anthem.

## The Ministers

The Ministers in attendance included: E. Blythe, Minister for Finance; McGilligan, Minister for Industry and Commerce; R. Mulcahy, Minister for Local Government and Public Health; P. J. Hogan, Minister for Agriculture; Professor O'Sullivan, Minister for Education; Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for Defence; Finian Lynch, Minister for Lands and Fisheries; and Fitzgerald Kennedy, Minister for Justice. Messrs. J. Duggan, Parliamentary Secretary to the President and Executive Council; Seamus Burke, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance; J. Roddy, Parliamentary Secretary, Lands and Fisheries; M. R. Heffernan, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry for Posts and Telegraphs, and Seamus Dolan.

Professor Hayes, Speaker of the Dail; Mr. D. Morrissey, Deputy Speaker, do., and Senator T. W. Bennett, Chairman of the Senate, were in attendance.

A prominent figure in the gathering was Mr. E. de Valera, T.D., who was accompanied by Mr. Sean Lemass and some fifteen members of the Fianna Fail Party. The Labour Party in the Dail was headed by Mr. T. J. O'Connell, and many of his colleagues were present, including Mr. P. Clancy, one of the representatives for Limerick.

The Limerick Deputies, Messrs. G. Bennett, Dan Bourke, J. T. Nolan, M. R. O'Connell and S. Colbert were also present.

## The City Council

The Mayor of Limerick, Councillor Mick Keyes, who wore his robes and chain of office, and was attended by the City High Constable and Sergeants-at-Mace, was present, with the following members: Aldermen J. McInerney, P. Donnellan, J. Wallace, J. Reidy, D. Bourke, T.D.; Councillors J. Dalton, P. Moore, H. L. Place, E. R. Shaw, P. J. Halvey, L. L. Jordan, E. Carmody, P. Henihan, P. A. O'Brien, J. Casey, E. R. Goodwin, T. Cleary, J. C. Hickey, M. Brouder,

great a plant as this now before you will in a comparatively few years prove insufficient for our needs. Other developments to increase our power supply will have to be undertaken. Their planning and execution will stimulate the initiative of our engineers and spur our economic enterprise.

## The Chamber of Commerce

Mr. F. P. Cleave, President of the Chamber of Commerce, and the following members were present or invited: Sir Vincent Nash, Messrs. Robert Brabazon, A. Barnett, G. B. Blackall, J. F. Bourke, M. Costello, J. Corboy, J. A. Dineen, J. F. Egan, C. E. Hill, G. H. Fitz, G. Goodbody, P. Goodbody, W. J. Glynn, P. Gleeson, W. Holliday, J. J. Halpin, P. Hodnett, W. Hackett, R. Harris, A. O'G. Lalor, E. Ludlow, E. Lloyd, H. Libburn, G. F. McNamara, B. Murray, J. McGuire, A. McIntyre, Morgan McMahon, Hugh McMahon, S. M. O'Mara, D. O'Callaghan, J. A. O'Connell, J. J. O'Keefe, D. O'Dwyer, E. O'Carroll, J. J. O'Sullivan, J. B. Driscoll, P. O'Donovan, James Quinn, Jas. H. Roche, George R. Ryan, P. Rockey, J. Ray, Malcolm Shaw, E. F. Sheehy, G. Spillane, E. Stevenson, Capt. Eric Shaw, P. J. Sheehan, L. H. Taylor, A. B. Hamilton.

The Dean of Killaloe, Very Rev. J. H. Gillespie, Mr. Ernest Brown, O'Brien's Bridge, and many people from the district, were present.

## The address

President Cosgrave, in the course of his address, said the Shannon, our greatest and most famous river, was entering on a new chapter of its long story; henceforward it would be harnessed in the service of the nation, distributing light, heat and power that throughout the State, increasing at once the comfort of our homes and the productive capacity of our farms and factories.

Dublin had been expressed from time to time on the main question of Shannon Development, one of cost, and the other of consumption. As regards the first, a margin of less than five per cent would cover the difference between the actual and the estimated cost of construction. "It has been demonstrated in this convincing, visible form that Saeastat Electricity can carry out rapidly, efficiently and economically, a hydro electric scheme on a scale as large as any in Europe. Thereby has been laid a firm foundation for confidence, both at home and abroad, in our capacity to realise those economic developments of wide national scope and effect to which we all look forward."

To the second question, that of consumption, he replied: "Indeed it is certain that even so

## Electricity development in Ireland

Following on the establishment of the State in 1922, the Department of Industry and Commerce took over the Government function relating to electricity supply. At that time, 18 local authorities and 5 companies in larger towns and cities were authorised to produce and sell electricity. Amongst these were the Corporations of Dublin and Limerick, which had been supplying electricity since 1882.

A scheme for the widespread electrification of the country from a hydro generating station on the River Shannon was put before the Government by Dr. T. A. McGrath in 1924 and construction began in September of that year. The capital cost was £5,000,000. At that time the total consumption was 48 million units, of which Dublin consumed approximately 38 million. The partial development of the Shannon Scheme provided for an average of 150 million units and this demand was reached in 3 years.

In 1927 the Electricity Supply Board was established to undertake electricity development on a national scale. The Act established the Board as a body, corporate, consisting of a full-time Chairman with a maximum of six other members, all appointed by the Government; the day to day administration being carried out by an Executive Committee consisting of the Chairman, the Chief Engineer, the Secretary.

As the demand for current rapidly grew, further generating capacity was needed and statutory authority obtained. Electricity (Supply) Acts provided in 1932 for additional generating units at Ardnacrusha; in 1936 for the hydro development of the River Liffey; in 1941 for the construction of turf stations, and in 1945 for the Erne hydro scheme.

The full development of the Erne meant that much of the work had to be carried out and maintained in Northern

territory. The agreement entered into with the Northern Government set out the precise nature of the work and the terms under which it was to be carried out. The Northern Government made a financial contribution to this aspect of the scheme.

The development of the turf-fired stations began with Portlaoine, Co. Laois, in 1930, which has a total capacity of 37MW. In 1932 a turf station was constructed at Allenwood, Co. Kildare, with a capacity of 40MW. Both these stations burn sod peat.

In 1937 another turf station was completed at Farnham, Co. Offaly—the first power station in Western Europe to use milled peat. This station has a capacity of 90 MW.

At present the ESB operates 26 generating stations: 9 hydro, 11 peat-burning, 6 oil/coal. Planning of future stations is in hand to meet the increase in demand estimated to average about 9 per cent per annum.

An oil-fired station at Great Island, Co. Wexford, was opened in 1958 and has an initial capacity of 120MW. The second stage of the development of this station is now under way and when completed an additional unit of 130 MW will be installed.

The Turbot Station on the Shannon Estuary will be 120 MW, and the completion date of the first set is 1970.

The biggest generating station ever commissioned by the ESB will be located east of the Pigeon House Station in Dublin and will be called Pigeon House "B". This station will have a capacity of 300 MW with provision for extension of up to 1,000 MW. It is planned to have this station in use by 1972.

With the exception of the Shannon Scheme, which was designed by the German firm, Siemens Schuckert, all the ESB stations have been planned and designed by the Board's engineering staff.



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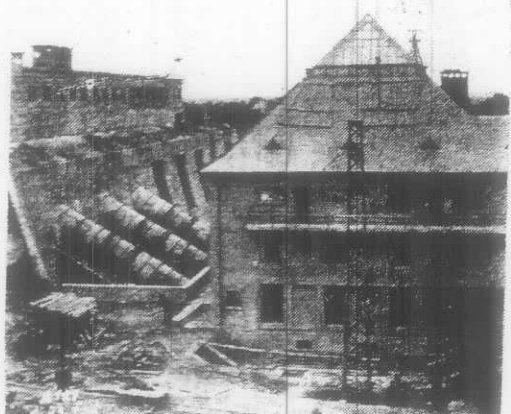
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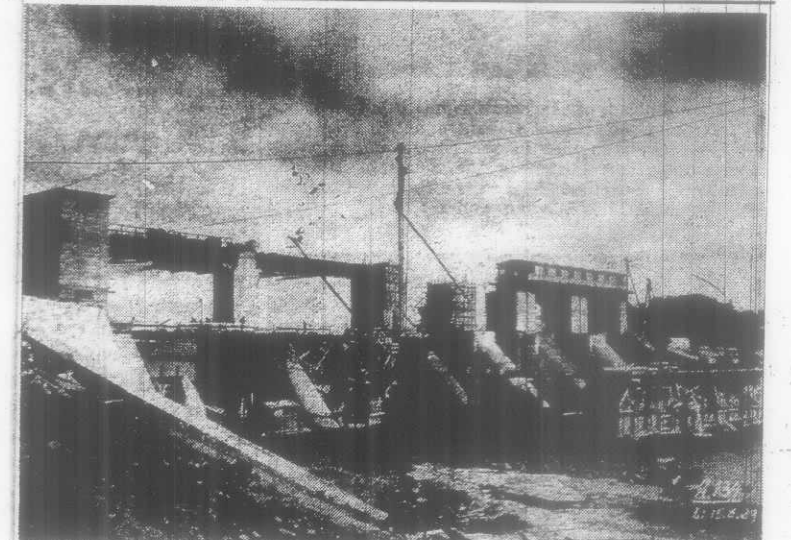
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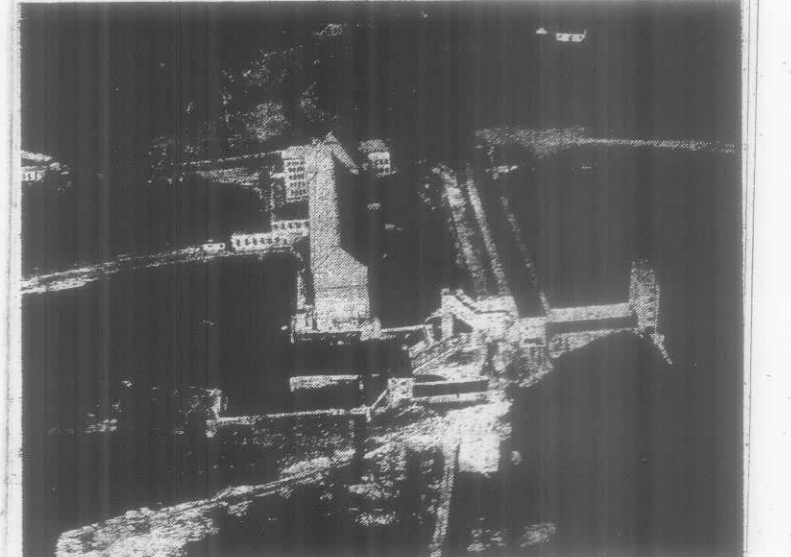
A picture taken on July 23, 1929 of construction at Ardnacrusha.

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The power house at Ardnacrusha as it looked in March 1929.



A view of Ardnacrusha power station as it is today.