

Shannon Scheme Ardnacrusha

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## GENERAL NEWS

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# £28m Ardnacrusha facelift to give station energy boost

By EUGENE PHELAN

THE £28m refurbishment work due to start shortly at Ardnacrusha will alleviate flooding problems on the old Shannon Water course and reduce risks of river pollution, according to Minister for Energy Bobby Molloy.

In the past number of years residents in the area had complained to the Minister about flooding to their homes caused by Ardnacrusha.

This week Mr Molloy visited Ardnacrusha to announce the £28m programme which will be completed over a six-year period.

When completed, the station, which is now 63 years in operation, will be capable of running for at least another 30 years.

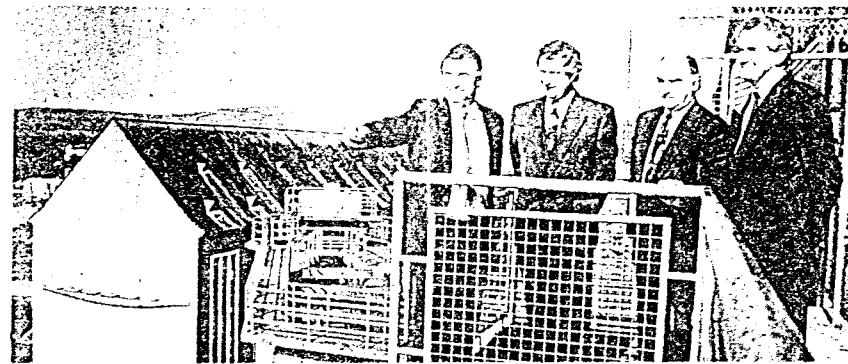
It will also mean an improvement

in the plant's efficiency and an increase in its capacity from its present level of 86 mega watts to 110 mega watts.

"Not only is there a direct benefit to the Shannon and consequently the community touched by it, but the extension of the life of Ardnacrusha for a further 30 years will enable electrical energy to be produced in a clean, environmentally acceptable way," Mr Molloy stated.

The announcement was made in the control room at Ardnacrusha which has a wonderful array of clocks and dials, which will be put to rest and replaced with modern high tech installations.

However, Joe Moran, chief executive, ESB, revealed that the control room is to be preserved and retained as an exhibition item as part of the



Minister Molloy at Ardnacrusha this week with Joe Moran, ESB chief executive, John Duffy, director, and Bob Cullen, station manager. (LL)

history of ESB, and, indeed, the history of Ireland.

"Over the past 63 years Ardnacrusha has made a huge con-

tribution to ESB and to this country. It's great to see a power station of that age looking so well and I think great credit is due to the management and staff of the station for the

obvious pride they take in the plant," said Mr Moran.

"After 63 years I can't think that anyone could begrudge the station a re-fit," he added.

Mr Moran said that the development of the Shannon scheme created a huge amount of excitement in Ireland. People saw it not simply as a technological undertaking, but as a statement of the independence of the new Ireland.

He cited as an example of the level of interest worldwide the fact that Franklin D Roosevelt, "who would soon become President of the United States," took a personal interest in the Shannon scheme and wrote a letter to Ned Lawlor, ESB public relations officer in October 1929.

Mr Molloy said the decision to proceed in 1925 with the scheme

was not without controversy. The projected cost of the scheme represented 20% of the total Government budget for that year, which in today's terms would be about £1.5bn.

"The challenge that this station provided has instilled a self-confidence and pioneering spirit that has carried through to the professionalism of the ESB today," said Minister Molloy.

He said that the frustrations of staff in having to deal with a near obsolete plant are drawing to an end.

The planned refurbishment will be carried out in such a way over the next six years that minimum disruption will occur to the ESB's generation system.

However on the jobs front, little will be created, as the work is very specialised.