

The Last Great Switch-On

Inishturk gets the light

What Chief Executive P. J. Moriarty called "the last great switch-on" took place on Inishturk Island, nine miles off the Mayo coast, early in July when the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, officially switched on the diesel generators that supply electricity to the 100 people of the island.

It brought back memories of many such occasions during the days of Rural Electrification. Inishturk is the last of the inhabited islands to get an ESB supply, and many tributes were paid to the Board and its staff.

The electricity system was installed on the island last year and customers were connected on October 1. The

single phase 120 KVA transformer onto a 10kV line where in turn supply is stepped down to 220 volts as

Story: John Howard

Photos: Liam Lyons

the Inishturk Community Council and there are some twenty domestic customers, as well as the church and



An Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, speaking at the official opening of the Inishturk electricity service

system consists of a Generator House containing three Lister Supply Generator Sets — 2 x 50 KVA and 1 x 25 KVA. These feed out at 220 volts via a conventional

usual.

The cost to the ESB of the complete installation was about £320,000 and there will be an annual deficit.

The system is operated by

school and public lighting.

Mr. Haughey got a tremendous welcome as he arrived on the island by helicopter, accompanied by the Chief Executive. He assured the people that the Government was fully committed to making life as easy as possible for them. Electricity, he went on, was one of the essentials of modern living, and in 1979 the Government of which he was a member committed itself to ensuring that all the islands off the coast would be supplied with power at a cost no greater to the people than to their counterparts on the mainland.

Fr. Denis Carney said that while a new pier was a great priority for the island, the provision of a secure supply of electricity had brought a profound change and improvement to the lives of



Chief Executive P. J. Moriarty congratulates Noel Heaney who operates the island's electricity system for the Island Community Council and reads the meters.



Chief Executive P. J. Moriarty with some of the ESB staff who were involved in bringing supply to Inishturk, L to R: Tim Kirby, Brian Conway, Walter Conway, Martin Hopkins, James Concannon, John Ryan, Michael Hanratty, Brendan Patterson and Diarmuid O'Conchubhair.

the people. He said Inishturk was unique in that it has a growing population, with 60 per cent of the population under the age of 30. He described the switching on of ESB power by the Taoiseach as "an occasion which gives us a new sense of hope. To most people electricity is taken for granted — to the people of Inishturk it is the start of a new life".

Fr. Carney was more than generous in his praise for all the staff of the ESB who were involved in providing the new

supply, led by Diarmuid O'Conchubhair, Customer Services Manager, Galway, and he referred especially to their courtesy and efficiency in their dealings with the islanders.

Before this, a number of homes had their own generators but the service was never satisfactory and there were problems especially in the Winter in bringing over diesel fuel from the mainland.

Now, the people of the island say they are delighted with the ESB service,

especially the women who have all the facilities that are taken for granted on the mainland.

Board Report Issued

*See Special
Supplement
Inside*