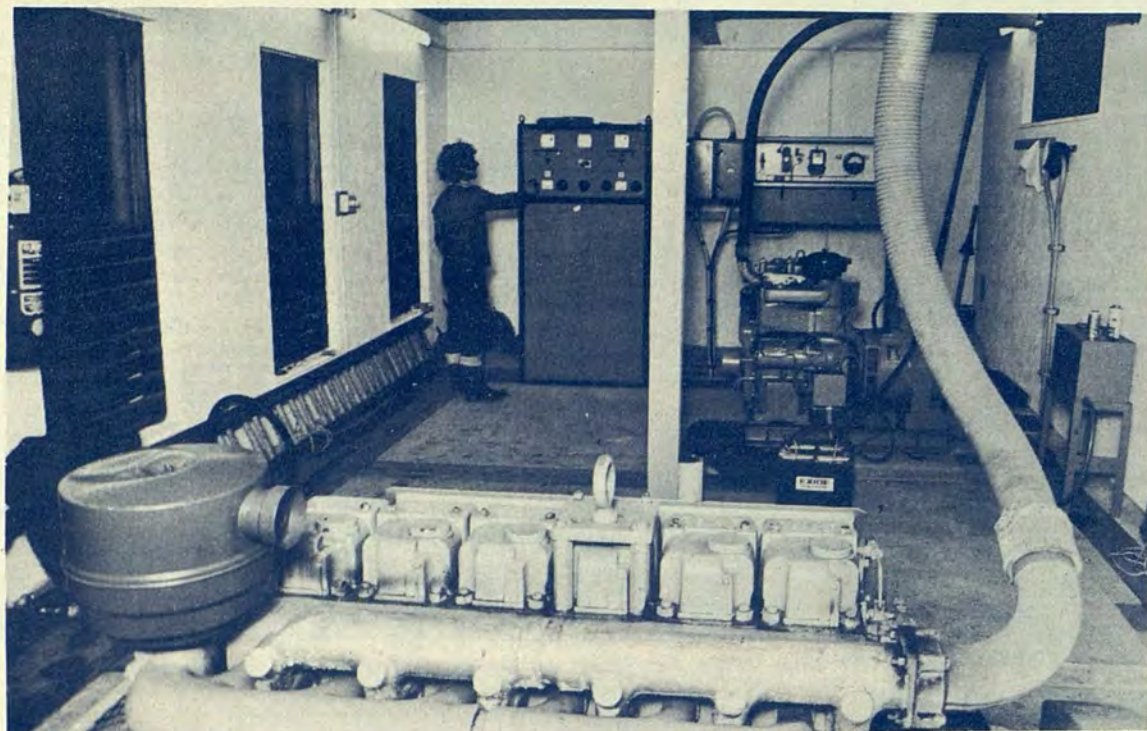


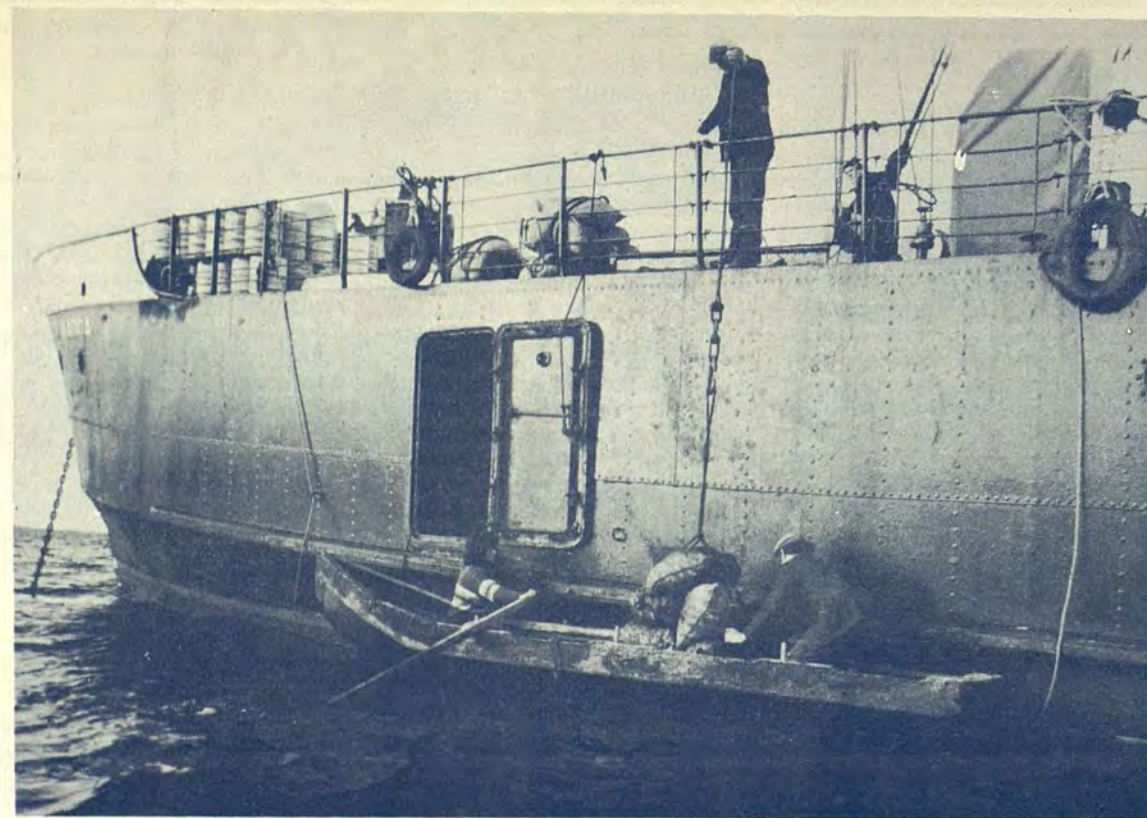
ELECTRICITY HAS COME TO INISHEER ISLAND



Tom Conneally starting up the generator in the generating station on Inisheer.



The arrival of the C.I.E. steamer is a big event on Inisheer.



All supplies for Inisheer have to be lightered ashore from the C.I.E. steamer in currachs.



Fr. Patrick Staunton pointing out the site which has been selected for an airstrip for Inisheer.

INISHEER, the smallest of the Aran Islands lying in the Atlantic off the Galway coast, is the first of the Islands to have had the benefits of electricity brought to it. The Electricity Scheme for the island has been in operation since December, 1973. The scheme, which supplies 60 houses, has an output of 68 Kva. It has two oil powered Lister generators of 42 kW and 12 kW capacity, respectively.

Provision has been made in the generating station for the installation of a third generator to supply electricity for future industrial requirements should it be needed. The capital cost of the scheme was borne by Roinn na Gaeltacht. The E.S.B. designed the Scheme and the erection of the Network and other installation work was carried out by the staff of the E.S.B.'s Galway District. The Generating Station structure was built under contract by Mr. Peadar Powell, one of the Islanders, and the generators were installed by staff from Messrs. Lister.

The Island's electricity scheme is run by a co-operative committee which charge each household £15 per year and 5p. per unit consumed.

The chairman of the co-operative committee is Father Patrick Staunton, the Island's curate, who told us that the committee run the scheme but for any big decisions they hold a general meeting in the Island's Community Hall. The co-operative, he said, was founded in 1970 and work on the scheme started in June, 1973. Old age pensioners get free electricity and the Islanders use the electricity mainly for television, lighting and washing machines. At the moment the electricity is switched on at 4 p.m. and remains on until 1 a.m. the next morning. The committee hope to extend the hours of supply as people acquire more appliances.

The 300 Irish speaking inhabitants of the Island live mainly on the eastern side of the Island. They make their living from farming, fishing and keeping students and visitors who come to the Island in the summer to holiday or learn Irish.

Fr. Staunton said that the co-operative hope to employ a manager as they need someone with experience if there is to be any go ahead with an industry on the Island. They hope to have an industry started based on fishing or handcrafts. About 97 per cent

of the islanders, he said, are on the dole. Most of the young people now go to Secondary schools on the mainland, and as there are no jobs on the Island for them when they finish school they don't come back and settle on the Island. At the moment there are 25 lads between 14 and 30 years of age on the Island and not one single girl of that age group which is a bad omen for the future of the Island. All the girls of that age group are away availing of the free secondary education on the mainland or in jobs in Dublin.

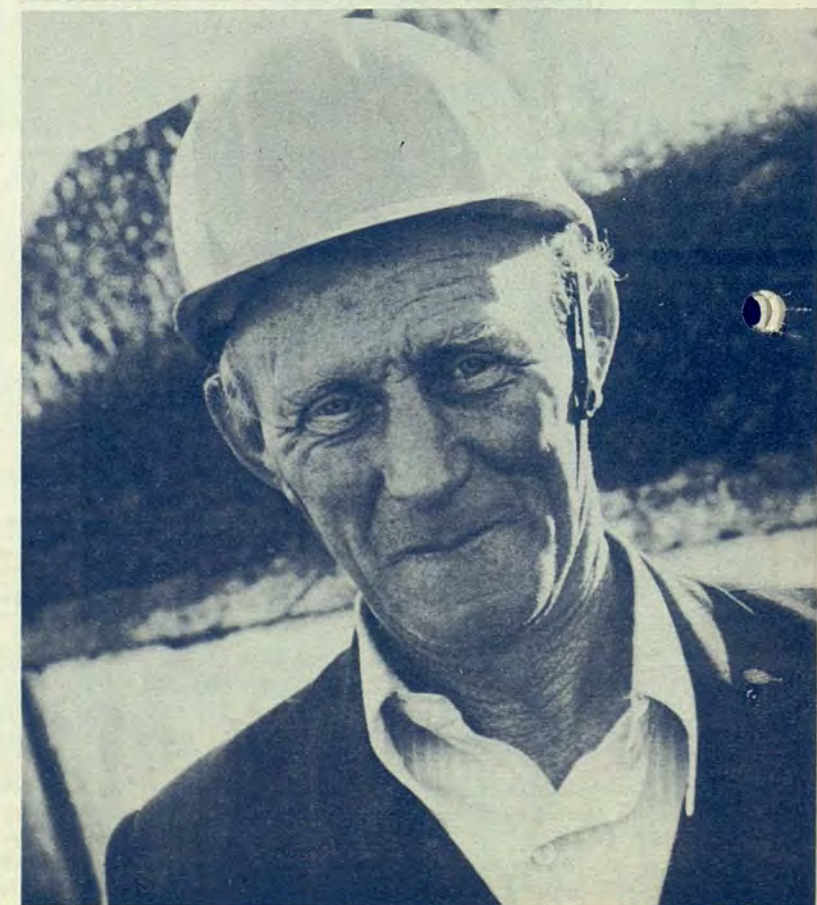
The farms on the Island average from 8 to 18 acres. The Islanders grow their own vegetables, rear their own hens, and graze cows for milk. Grazing on the Island is very good and in much better condition than on the mainland. The Islanders are really better off in some ways than mainlanders due to their lack of housing problems. The Island has a surplus of houses and their self-sufficiency in a lot of basic foods. Most of the Islanders still bake their own bread, mostly spotted dick.

Mr. Paddy O'Flaherty who keeps a guest house on the Island for summer visitors is one who appreciates the new electricity supply. He is building an extension to his house at Chapel village and has lighting and television at the moment and hopes to get a refrigerator later on.

Television, he said, is a great boon to the Islanders on the long winter evenings and for that reason most Islanders bought one as a first priority. One of the problems of all Islanders, he said, was getting materials for any job. Prices in Galway, he said, are higher than in Dublin and then you have to pay steamer freight charges on top of that.

Mrs. Barbara Conneally, who lives at West Village, finds the electricity supply a great help. She lives with her husband and 3-month-old son at West Village and has television, electric fires and, of course, lighting. Its remarkable how you can take electric lighting for granted until you are without it, she said.

The Islanders of nearby Inishmaan can look across Foul Sound enviously these winter evenings and see the lights going on in Inisheer but they won't have to wait very long themselves for electricity. E.S.B. staff from Galway expect to start work on the erection of the networks for that island's supply in the spring of 1975.



Mr. Martin Lydon, E.S.B., Galway District, who was charge hand during the erection of the networks on Inisheer Island.



Inisheer has a pier but the C.I.E. steamer cannot come alongside.



Rock fish drying on the roof of a house on Inisheer.



A Sally plantation on Inisheer. The Sallies are used for basket making.



Island's water supply is pumped from a pump house to this reservoir and gravity fed to the houses.



Carrying a curragh on Inisheer.



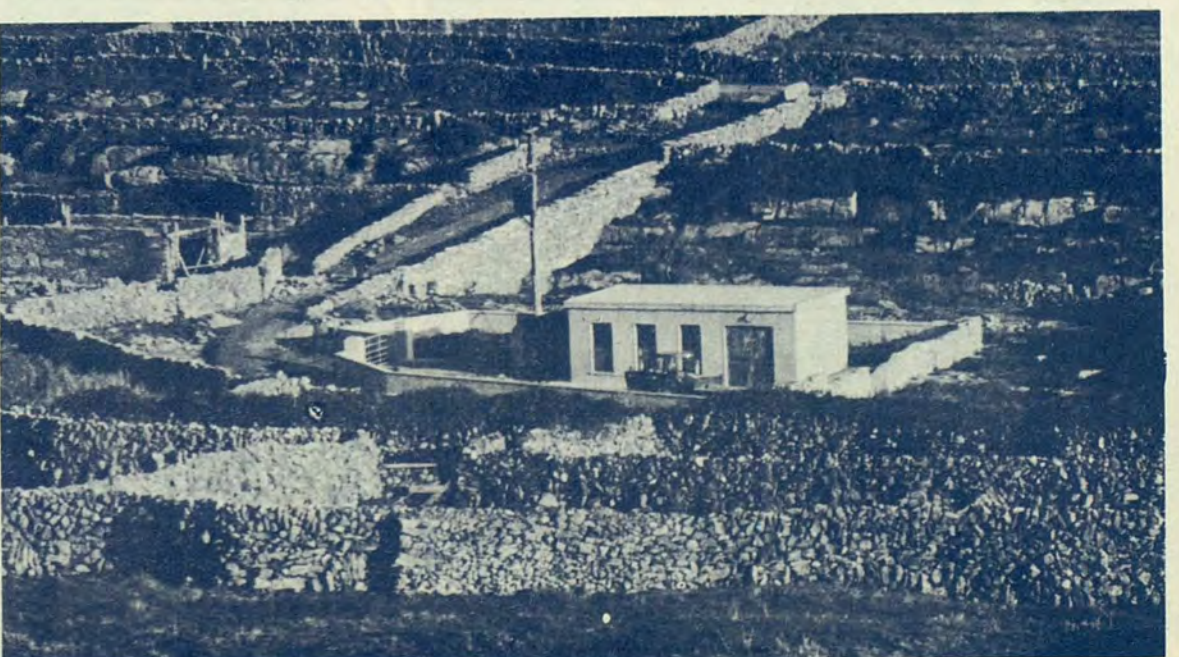
Swimming cattle ashore from the C.I.E. steamer to Inisheer.



The new electricity scheme for Inisheer above was designed by the E.S.B. Erection of the networks and other installation work was carried out by staff of the E.S.B.'s Galway District



53 children attend the Island's school which has two teachers. Our photograph shows Brid Uí hEilthir with her class.



The generating station on Inisheer.