

development

IN THIS MODULE YOU WILL DISCOVER THE ORIGINS OF THE PEAT INDUSTRY IN IRELAND. PEAT HAD BEEN USED IN A SMALL WAY AS A LOCAL FUEL FOR CENTURIES UNTIL EVENTUALLY ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO DEVELOP THE BOGS ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE. THIS MODULE REFLECTS THE EARLY THINKING IN THIS REGARD AS WELL AS THE EVOLUTION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY.

forbairt

SA MHODÚIL SEO BEIDH TUISCINT NÍOS FEARR AGAT AR BHUNÚS NA HEARNÁLA MÓNA IN ÉIRINN. BAINEADH ÚSÁID BHEAG AS MÓIN MAR BHREOSLA AR FEADH NA GCÉADTA GO DTÍ GO NDEARNADH IARRACHTAÍ NA PORTAIGH A FHORBAIRT AR MÓRSCÁLA TIONSCLAÍOCH. LÉIRÍONN AN MHODÚL SEO AN SMAOINTEOIREACT LUATH SA CHOMHTHÉACS SEO AGUS MAIDIR LE FORBAIRT AN BHEARTAIS RIALTAIS.

Early in the 19th century interest grew in developing Ireland's bogs commercially for fuel. Then in 1917 the British government commissioned a report about the possible uses of Irish peat. In 1920, the formally unrecognised Dáil Eireann commissioned its own report (from similar sources). Both reports were published in 1921.



In the early 1930s the Minister for Defence, Frank Aiken was driven to implement the recommendations of the Dáil report. He believed that

“Every penny used under this turf scheme will be a penny saved to the country. It will circulate in the country and it will energise all business in the remote areas and in the towns and cities as well”.



1. Members of the 1917 Irish Peat Enquiry Committee.
2. Michael Maguire, Todd Andrews and Herr Hinricks, Germany 1949.



Because of Aiken's persistent belief in peat as a source of native fuel, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean Lemass asked Christopher 'Todd' Andrews to take charge of the development of the bogs. As a result the Turf Development Board (T.D.B.) was established in 1934 to develop Ireland's peat resources and its first managing director was C.S. (Todd) Andrews. Andrews had ambitious plans for the T.D.B., intending to prove wrong the sceptics who believed all bog was useless wasteland. Early on, Andrews and senior management looked to other peat industries for inspiration. In 1935 they visited Germany and Russia, where the peat industries were thriving and longstanding. Andrews decided that mechanical, not hand production, was the way forward and wanted to use peat to generate electricity. World War II intervened to slow down some of these plans, but in 1946 the T.D.B. was recreated as a commercial company, Bord na Móna.



Aodogan O'Rahilly, Todd Andrews, Eamon de Valera and Frank Aiken at Turraun, 1941. (Left Panel)

Hand stitching of moss peat bales 1950s. (Right Panel)

1. Combined peat miller and collector, Russia 1935.
2. Sod peat collector, Germany 1935.
3. de Smitske semi-automatic sod peat machine, 1948.



Bord na Móna grew significantly throughout the 1950s and 1960s, supplying peat products for electricity and home heating. The company also built a substantial horticulture business, not only in Ireland but across Europe. Today Bord na Móna is Ireland's leading environmentally responsible integrated utility service provider encompassing electricity, heating, resource recovery, water, growing media and related services.



1. Moss peat bales at Kilberry.
2. Factory ramp at Kilberry, 1950s.





In a letter to Bord na Móna written in 1972, then President Eamon de Valera wrote:

“THE COUNTRY WAS DEEPLY INDEBTED TO BORD NA MÓNA AND ITS OFFICERS DURING THE EMERGENCY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY SINCE THEN IS A SOURCE OF PRIDE TO ALL”

Todd Andrews and Eamon de Valera at Clonsast, 1940s.



Government visit to Clonsast 1930s.

