

A black and white photograph of a man, Paddy Mo, smiling and leaning on a metal railing. He is wearing a suit and tie. The background shows a city street with buildings and cars, viewed from an elevated position.

# Paddy Mo

THE LIFE OF PATRICK MORIARTY

1926 — 1997

OWEN MCCROHAN

This biography charts the life of Paddy Moriarty, the Kerry-born Chief Executive of ESB, a man who revolutionized corporate life during his leadership of the largest semi-state company in Ireland during the 1980s and 1990s.

Born in Dingle in 1926, he became one of Ireland's leading business people of the twentieth century, transforming ESB into a world-class electricity provider and a highly efficient, commercially driven company. Having built the power infrastructure of the new State, ESB played a critical role in the revitalization of the Irish economy and, on Moriarty's watch, helped to lay the foundations of the Celtic Tiger economy.

His vision was to make ESB 'the best electricity utility in the whole world', creating the highest standards of infrastructure at home while developing an international business in the economies of North and Central America, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East.

Moriarty joined ESB as a clerical officer in June 1945 at the age of nineteen and quickly gained a reputation as a young man with a determined view on how business should be run. He rose rapidly through the company ranks. He was head of Research and Audit in 1961, Assistant Chief Financial Officer in 1967 and Director Personnel in 1970, before becoming Chief Executive in 1981 and Chairman ESB in 1991.

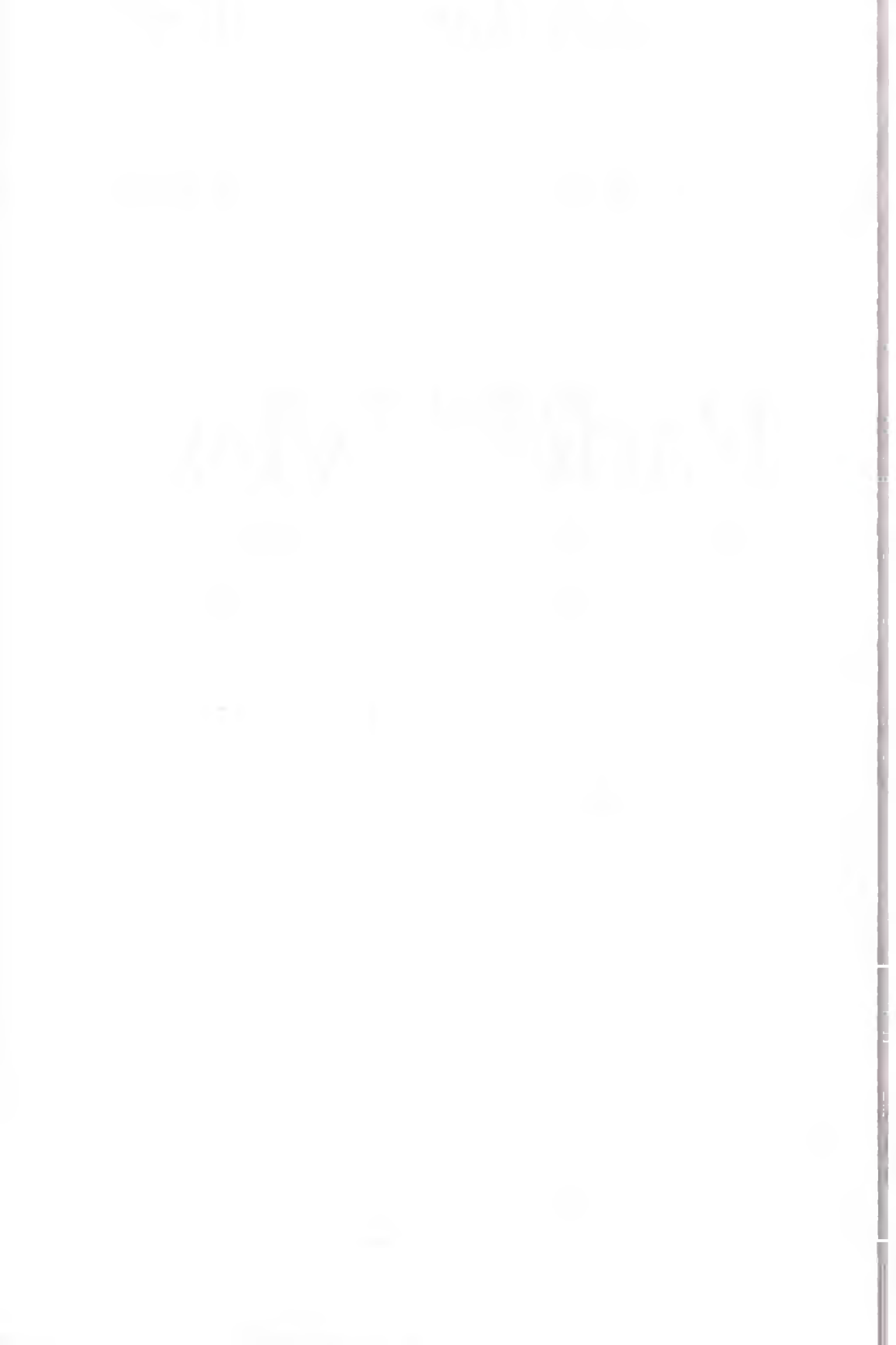
The man they called Paddy Mo conducted comprehensive and difficult industrial relations negotiations with the trade unions, ensuring harmony in the workplace during the 1980s – a decade of fast-moving change, massive technological reform and associated redundancies. His interpersonal skills, as well as his business instincts, became legendary.

With Taoiseach Charles Haughey he helped pioneer the North-South Erne Waterways project in a bid to revitalize border communities. He was also a significant patron of the arts, encouraging sponsorship of painters, sculptors and musicians. His wide-ranging interests included sports and horse racing, with one of the Leopardstown classics being named in his honour. A sense of family, which included his younger brother Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh the renowned GAA broadcaster and commentator, was central to his world view.

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Owen McCrohan

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*Photographs between pages 142 and 143*

# 1914

Jan 1st - New Year's Day  
Feb 1st - Groundhog Day  
Mar 1st - St. Patrick's Day  
Apr 1st - April Fool's Day  
May 1st - Labor Day  
Jun 1st - Father's Day  
Jul 1st - Independence Day  
Aug 1st - Back to School  
Sep 1st - Labor Day  
Oct 1st - Halloween  
Nov 1st - Thanksgiving  
Dec 1st - Christmas



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## *Foreword*

An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, TD

Paddy Moriarty, whom I knew for many years, epitomized all that is good about the Irish public service. He was one of the most influential figures of his time, a man of vision and great intellectual capacity.

Those of you who knew Paddy Mo will remember how he worked for the country as a whole, not just leading the largest semi-State company in Ireland but through various boards and committees as diverse as RTE, the College of Industrial Relations, the Irish Quality Control Association, Kerry Airport, the Irish Management Institute and the Institute of Public Administration.

In a profile published in 1991, Paddy Moriarty described himself as a 'public service person' and this book demonstrates that it is the most appropriate description of the man.

As Chief Executive of ESB, one of the most critical semi-State companies, he absolutely understood the imperative of competitiveness and inflation control as key drivers of government policy, and he deeply appreciated the role of electricity in achieving those twin ambitions. He saw the advance of ESB and the Irish economy as synonymous.

I recall in particular, as Minister for Labour, meetings with Paddy Mo in circumstances where much tighter revenue spending prevailed than it does today. He foresaw the need for partnership between unions and management. I admired his frank style. He could always deliver on assurances, never wavering from commitments, once given.

As you will read in the pages to come, Paddy Moriarty was neither an engineer nor an accountant but he managed one of the most complex businesses in the country with huge confidence. ESB was pivotal in

the Irish economy since the company's foundation in 1927, not just because of crucial power supply but in terms of industrial relations. He steered this vital infrastructure through a time of immense change.

His love for Kerry, a favourite place of my own, was all pervasive. He travelled extensively – I once went with him as part of a trade delegation to Dhahran in Saudi Arabia – but his heart was always keen to return to his native place, Dingle. He used to describe Dingle at that time as a place that barely succeeded in not being outright poor.

Paddy held dear its supportive community of extended family, of *meitheals*, threshing, Christian Brothers and discourse. His family background was of mountain sheepfarming and a grandfather who bred horses for the whole of Kerry.

Writing for *Business and Finance* in 1989, before the birth of the Celtic Tiger, Paddy said that the year ended with renewed hope, hope of a significant economic recovery.

He served the company with the best interests of customer, and ultimately the country, at heart. Following his term as Chief Executive in 1981 he was appointed Chairman of the company in 1991 for a period of five years. As Chief Executive he concentrated his management talents on shaping the ESB for the new century. His achievements included the completion of a total reorganization and rationalization of ESB with a highly commercial, market-driven approach that helped make it the great company it is today.

This book recognises the immense contribution that Paddy Moriarty made to Irish life. From his beloved Kerry to the boardrooms of Dublin, Paddy was one of the most influential figures in the shaping of modern Ireland's economy and society.

'T'was thus I lived, skin to skin with the earth,  
Elbowed by the hills, drenched by the billow,  
Watching the Wild Geese making black wedges  
By Skellig far west and Annascaul of the willows.  
Their voices come on every little wind,  
Whispering across the half-door of the mind,  
For always I am Kerry.

'I am Kerry' – Sigerson Clifford

## Preface

According to the old penny catechism, God made the world in six days, rested on the seventh and said: 'Let there be light,' and there was light. But what happened after dark?

Answers vary from one culture to another. Even today, natives of the Kalahari Desert in south-west Africa twist dry sticks to encourage a glow from which a fire can be kindled. Primeval man found a solution by way of improvisation. Two stones rubbed together generated friction and, by extension, enough heat to set alight dry leaves and firewood.

Closer to home, the Blasket Islanders used seal oil and thick rushes to light up their humble kitchens. The rushes, usually four in number and peeled to provide the ideal wick, were inserted into containers of oil derived from the regular seal culls on the island. While the belching smoke was a drawback, the light provided was worth the discomfort. Ancient Irish mythology is filled with stories of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his warriors feasting by the light of their campfires.

The evolution of the eighteenth-century tallow candle brought progress, but at a price. Eyesight was under strain and people often went blind in their middle years because of the intolerable strain, hastening glaucoma and macular degeneration. Patrick MacGill, the celebrated Donegal novelist, wrote his best-selling novels *Children of the Dead End* and *The Rat Pit* by candlelight in Glasgow tenements and suffered severely failing eyesight long before he died in Miami in 1963 aged seventy-three.

Many Irish navvies, such as MacGill and his character Moleskin Joe, who 'would fain turn the Highlands into a cinder heap' after they had built the seminal hydroelectric dam at Kinlochleven, maintained only

the most tenuous links with home – the majority never returned – and consequently would have little knowledge of a similar industrial upheaval that transformed the Shannon estuary some twenty years later. These early pioneers descended in their thousands upon Ard-nacrusha in the late 1920s to turn the Co. Clare village into another Klondike. They had only their rugged physical strength and empty bellies to sustain them. There was no gold dust in their eyes and no hope of overnight riches, unlike the prospectors who negotiated Bonanza Creek en route to the Eldorado that lay farther north in the 1890s.

The labourers on the Shannon Scheme, who toiled often waist-deep in mud and water for a wage of eightpence an hour with ‘broken time’, were driven purely by want and necessity. There were families to be supported and children to be fed. These were harsh times when the average agricultural wage was twenty-five shillings for a sixty-hour week; there was no state support for the poor, destitute and unemployed; widows and orphans were expected to bear the pain of bereavement; consumption, the scourge of the 1920s and 1930s, was rampant; and health care was sketchy or non-existent. Dublin tenements were considered the worst in Europe and country people in a position to grow their own potatoes and vegetables could consider themselves lucky.

The Moriartys of Dún Síon on the Dingle Peninsula in west Kerry were typical of rural dwellers at that time. They were no better and no worse off than their neighbours and they learned to cope as best they could. There were some compensations and despite the bleak economic environment nobody went hungry. The cows from the small family farm brought milk to the table. The twice-yearly killing of a pig provided the wherewithal for wholesome dinners of pickled bacon and cabbage, supplemented with regular handfuls of fresh cod and hake from the Dingle fishing fleet. The produce of neatly tilled fields included the best in floury potatoes and vegetables. Bread was baked in the oven of a kitchen range where the fire was never extinguished. Butter was thrashed out of the churn. A clutch of hens and ducks laid enough eggs to bring nourishment at breakfast-time. A hard-boiled egg with a pinch of salt and a lump of butter was considered a delicacy and the best possible start to a day’s work in the fields.

Patrick John Moriarty, the eldest of the Moriarty siblings, grew up in that environment. Like his later friend Patrick Kavanagh, he loved the fields and headlands, the rivers and streams, the mountains and plains, the sea and the islands in its bosom, the bracing winds from the Atlantic. To have been born and reared in such a place was to feel a hid-

den power. Those sights and sounds of nature enveloped him for almost nineteen years of his young life and the grip they exerted on him was profound. His origins, deeply rooted in the soil of west Kerry, would never be forgotten but spiritual values, precious though they were, could not provide the essentials of survival. Kavanagh abandoned the plough and spade in search of a better life in Dublin, and Moriarty did the same.

When he joined ESB in 1945 the Irish Free State was emerging from the birth pangs of nationhood created twenty-four years earlier. Free at last from British domination, the country had to absorb the bitter aftermath of a disastrous civil war. An army mutiny threatened to undermine the stability of the new state and compounded the sense of social isolation. National morale was at a low ebb.

Paddy Moriarty's date of birth, 18 June 1926, broadly coincided with the foundation of the ESB, the company on which he was to leave an indelible imprint. Nine months earlier, in September 1925, when advertisements appeared in the daily newspapers advertising 3000 unskilled jobs on the Shannon, the response was phenomenal. The work would involve the removal of eight million cubic metres of earth and one million cubic metres of rock, most of it done with pick and shovel. Nine rivers and countless streams were diverted as the project got under way. Within the first few months, eighty-seven steamers transported 30,000 tons of equipment into the Limerick docks in anticipation of the massive construction phase that lay ahead. By 1928, around five thousand men were living in huts, stables, hen-houses and barns in return for a meagre wage as the Shannon Scheme drew to a close.

In the Senate, a Labour Party spokesman called upon the government to recognize 'the right of workers to rates of pay at least sufficient to provide them with the indispensable necessities of civilized life'. He criticized the food on offer and told of men who had walked from Dungan, Co. Waterford, so desperate were they for work, but who found conditions to be unbearable. A motion of censure of the government was heavily defeated by 21 votes to 10 and Patrick McGilligan's position as an uncompromising Minister for Industry and Commerce was reinforced.

The first stage of the Shannon Electricity Bill was tabled in the Dáil on 1 May 1925 and concluded on 26 May 1925 (fifth stage). It was passed into law by way of the Shannon Electricity Act on 4 July 1925. A sum of £2.5 million was advanced to ESB to cover the initial period of activity as specified in the Electricity (Supply) Act 1927 and the Electricity Supply Board was officially launched within weeks. The

government's decision to vest the Shannon plant along with all future power stations and distribution networks in the first semi-state body was an important policy decision.

It was felt that this organization should be protected as far as possible from government interference. Electricity Acts preceding the foundation of the state, from 1882 to 1919, were automatically repealed. This meant that only the Shannon Electricity Bill of 1925 and the Electricity (Supply) Act of 1927 applied thereafter. The model of private enterprise combined with public responsibility became the cornerstone of the new company's future industrial might.

Soon Ireland's first state enterprise, the ESB, went about sending its probing beam into the darkness of a primitive culture that was decades behind most other countries in Europe. The paraffin lamp with its soft yellow glow, the candlelight that flickered uncontrollably in draughty kitchens and the Tilley lamp with its fragile mantle were to become a distant memory. The phrase 'Bring down the lamp, trim the wick and pump the Tilley' might inspire feelings of nostalgia but there was nothing remotely romantic about a country without electricity.

Before the establishment of ESB, only limited electric power was available in Ireland. The first electric light bulb flickered from an arc lamp outside the office of the *Freeman's Journal* in Dublin's Prince's Street in 1880. By 1888 Dublin Corporation had taken over the responsibility for electricity supply in the city after building a small station at Fleet Street. During the early 1900s growing demand led to the construction of a power station at Pigeon House, which supplied Dublin with three-phase electricity – a revolutionary concept in its time. Five separate systems operated in what is now the Greater Dublin area until the construction of the Shannon Scheme led to the establishment of the Electricity Supply Board in 1927, with responsibility for an integrated national electricity supply system. At this time there was a mixture of municipal and private electricity undertakings in the main cities and towns throughout the country. All were acquired by ESB over a period of forty years.

Thomas McLaughlin, BE, PhD, a brilliant young engineer who proved to be the main driving force behind the inaugural Shannon Scheme, is considered to be one of the founding fathers of modern industrial Ireland. When he joined the German firm of Siemens Schuckert in Berlin in 1922 he took it upon himself to study the design of power plants and associated technical infrastructure with a view to bringing electrical power to the Irish Free State. The blueprint for the Shannon Scheme was later adapted from a similar project in Bavaria.



McLaughlin's appointment as the first managing director of ESB gave him the seal of government approval and during the early critical years he enjoyed the support and patronage of the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Patrick McGilligan. This alliance subsequently became strained and McLaughlin resigned his post on 13 May 1931. When Fianna Fáil was returned to power in 1932 he was reinstated as one of three technical directors, but his influence had by then waned and he was never again the same force in subsequent decision-making.

Providence played a part in bringing together two like-minded visionaries in McLaughlin and McGilligan, who shared a common goal. McLaughlin's genius was matched by the political will of McGilligan, as it was he who piloted the necessary legislation through the Dáil and provided the financial and statutory framework that has governed ESB to this day. This was a huge vote of confidence in the country's future from a government that had assumed control of a state barely three years old. Successive governments renewed that vote of confidence by providing new legislation, as and when necessary, for further electricity generation.

Paddy Moriarty came to ESB in 1945 when the company was only eighteen years old, at a time when a huge shift in government thinking, driven by Seán Lemass, was beginning to take effect.

Lemass, in his role as Minister for Industry and Commerce, brought in new industry and galvanized the country into an industrial mindset. Speaking on 'The Role of State-sponsored Bodies in Economy' on 1 March 1959, the future Taoiseach referred to the percentage of electricity derived from national resources that had risen from 2 per cent in 1927 to 60 per cent in the year ending 31 March 1958. That period of thirty-one years included the two greatest social-driven programmes ever implemented in Ireland: the Turf Development Programme of the 1940s and the Rural Electrification Scheme that followed. Moriarty, a countryman at heart and on his way through the ranks in ESB, would not have been unmindful of the influence these events were to exert on the nation.

The concept of rural electrification modernized rural Ireland in a sociological revolution more profound than any physical transformation or military rising. This crusade to expand the nation's electricity network laid the foundation stone for the prosperity that followed in agriculture.

Bringing electrical power to far-flung rural communities all over the Irish Free State, an area of 26,000 square miles, presented ESB with a daunting challenge in its formative years. Between 1946 and 1955 an estimated three million poles were erected and enough cable was laid to encircle the globe three times. Before rural electrification was concluded

in 1964/5, a total of 296,205 householders had been connected: 792 areas covering 23,425 square miles. This massive logistical operation changed life in rural Ireland forever. Within a few years the housewife had been liberated from the drudgery of the washboard and the enamel tub. Running water was a luxury beyond the dreams of an earlier generation.

Slowly but surely, the Ireland envisaged by Eamon de Valera in his St Patrick's Day broadcast to the nation in 1943 had changed beyond recognition. Dev's speech seems as out of place today as the gas lamps that provided occasional street lighting in Dublin during the early years of the last century:

That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit – a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romplings of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens, whose firesides would be the forums for the serene wisdom of old age.

Within two decades the wholesome concept of 'athletic youths and comely maidens' was replaced by a wholly different set of cultural values. The 'quiet revolution' that drove rural electrification in the 1950s brought change and counter-change on a scale that could not have been envisaged when Pádraig Pearse raised the standard of revolt in the GPO in 1916. As the eminent artist Seán Keating observed: 'The dim candlelight of surviving medievalism in Ireland is fading fast before the rising sun of progress.' The regeneration of the Irish economy following Ardacrusha, the Shannon Scheme, rural electrification and the technological changes of the 1980s constitute not just a triumph of civil engineering but also represent a milestone in human advancement.

On a different level, ESB can claim to have killed off the age-old tradition of telling ghost stories around the kitchen fires of rural Ireland. This is acknowledged by Patrick Willis in *Ireland's Own* (25 July 2003):

As electricity made its way through the country, eventually reaching even the most remote parts, ghostly sightings became less and less common. Rattling chains were seen to belong to animals like goats who had broken their tether; horseless carriages stopped running altogether and the dead stayed at peace. In a world of advanced technology where man has walked on the moon it seems absurd to lament the passing of such a primitive lifestyle but there is no doubt that the simple pleasures derived from that kind of social interaction has not yet been surpassed by computer games or colour television.

A poem running to six stanzas and sung to the air of 'The Mountains of Mourne' captures the essence of the grudging acceptance of electricity in rural Ireland. The new phenomenon was seen as a dubious ally not to be trusted. Oscar Hannon, one of the workers who brought power to east Clare in December 1951, put the mould-breaking achievement of ESB gangs in the front line of battle into perspective. His humorous ditty is called 'The Lighting of Scariff':

Oh Mary, now Scariff's a wonderful sight  
With the people all getting the new-fangled light  
After watching and waiting for many a year  
At last we've consented they send it out here  
And badly 'twas needed as you must well know  
For in Scariff at night-time wherever you go  
There are dangerous angles all over the place  
Where many a craythur was stretched on his face

With the success of the Shannon Scheme, further hydroelectric projects were constructed on the Lee, the Liffey and the Erne. The linkage between Erne and Shannon in 1992 benefited both the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Paddy Moriarty, then Chief Executive of ESB, and Charles Haughey, Taoiseach, were the key players. Moriarty's vision and Haughey's clout in government helped restore a long-neglected waterway, the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell canal, and transformed the lives of dying communities on both sides of the border.

The Suez Crisis in 1956, the Six Day War in 1967 and the prospect of diminishing and dearer fuel supplies helped to concentrate minds on the need for diversification and ESB responded by tapping into the Kinsale gas field in the late 1970s. The company now had gas, oil, turf and hydro stations within its remit.

By the end of the 1970s ESB had conducted a number of comprehensive industrial relations agreements with the trade unions, assimilating the harsh wisdom learned from three previous industrial disputes. Within five years there was steady progress towards developing a far more civilized approach to the solution of industrial relations problems and the concept of a one-status company became the blueprint for national harmony in the workplace. Secure foundations were provided by ESB in its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Patrick J. Moriarty was the key figure in all of this.

The second oil crisis in 1979 brought further diversification in the construction of the Moneypoint coal-burning station on the Shannon estuary

at a cost of £750 million, while the station at North Wall was modified to accommodate a combined cycle of coal or gas in the generation of electricity. This heralded a new era in generating plant. The 1980s was a decade of fast-moving change as ESB sought hundreds of redundancies to cope with the unforeseen challenge of a massive technological ground-shift.

Along with more strategic and forward business planning came increased emphasis on customer service, which included advanced hands-on management techniques. A new customer charter was produced and revised management training structures and development took on greater importance in the workplace as new procedures were put in place to head off industrial relations disputes.

In a new millennium ESB is a world-class electricity provider and a highly efficient organization. The company currently spends over one million euro daily in updating its network services to support the continued growth in electricity demand and it has been spectacularly to the forefront in revitalizing the Irish economy. By 2008 a sum of over three billion euro will have been spent on implementing the current Network Renewal Programme.

As an international consultancy, ESB has earned a respected presence in thirty-six countries worldwide and has completed projects in more than 120 countries across the globe. ESB International, founded at a time of recession, has become one of the company's finest achievements. It is not often that adversity produces an impetus for expansion but the success of ESBI proves that this can happen.

ESB, always striving to be a good neighbour in environmental issues and drawing its main strength from natural resources, has earned generous and justifiable acknowledgment in a new millennium. On the seventy-fifth anniversary of its foundation in 2002, ESB and Siemens jointly received two major international awards: the prestigious Milestone Award from the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the International Landmark Award from the American Society of Civil Engineering. (Previous winners of the Milestone Award include the invention of colour television, the first space shuttle and Japan's Shinkansen bullet trains; previous winners of the Landmark Award include the Golden Gate Bridge, the Panama Canal and the Eiffel Tower.)

One of the people who left his mark during some of these epoch-making years was Patrick John Moriarty, eldest son of Timothy and Katie Moriarty of Dún Sion, three miles east of Dingle in west Kerry.

'Paddy Mo', as they called him, became one of the leading Irish business people of the twentieth century. He was a giant among his peers but there was more to him than that. This is his story.

## 1. *My Own Place*

A yellowing page of *The Irish Times* dated 2 March 1989 tells something of the deep love of place at the core of Paddy Moriarty's being. He wrote: 'I relate to Kerry in general but particularly to the townland of Dún Síon, a lowland village near the sea three miles east of Dingle, where I was born and reared to manhood before taking the ESB as an alternative to Camden or Brooklyn.' Later that year, addressing a business conference on 13 November 1989, he said: 'I believe that I am the reincarnation of a primitive Kerryman who protested 10,000 years ago when Cúraí Mac Dáire came to build his mighty promontory fort, Cathair Con Raoi, on the cliff of Slieve Mish.' His self-deprecating sense of humour was central in an all-embracing personality.

This 'primitive Kerryman' was a skilful tactician, a workaholic and an intelligent, articulate, extremely able person who bided his time until vested with real power to initiate change. While he enjoyed power, he never used it to undermine others or to bludgeon anybody into submission; rather, he led his company into some of its most fruitful years. His vision for ESB – as he never tired of telling – was to make it 'the best electricity utility in the whole world'. Not Europe, mind, but the world. To allow his company languish in 'the fourth division' (his words) was never part of his plan. Future historians will determine how well he succeeded in that quest.

Dún Síon was where it began – a rugged headland that jutted into the sea and held within the hollow of its fields eight small holdings of 30 to

50 acres apiece, whose owners struggled hard with mixed farming during the Hungry Thirties. Eight families lived in the village – the Kennedys, Kevanes, Griffins, Quinns, Farrells (twice), Lynches and Moriartys. In his autobiography *From Dún Síon to Croke Park*, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh (Paddy's younger brother) recalls the sadness that invaded their lives when a baby brother died at birth: 'I remember the small body in a cradle before burial in a non-consecrated pre-Christian graveyard that harbours a magnificent collection of Ogham stones. My father and our neighbour Peter Farrell attended the burial but the rest of us witnessed it from high up in Gort na Druinne.'

Children then were expected to know their place and were largely protected from the realities of the harsh world out of doors. Thady Moriarty and his wife, Katie (née Quinn, from Coumbowler, a scattering of houses that meets the eye on the left-hand side after you climb Conor Pass), had eight children. Patrick John, or Pádraig as they called him within the family circle, was born on 18 June 1926. He was the eldest. Then came Eileen, Náis, Micheál, Donal, Máire, Siobhán and Kathleen.

None of the family emigrated, a huge change from previous years when only the eldest remained at home to till the fields and gather in the harvest. Remarkably, in the three generations before Patrick Moriarty was born, all but four out of twenty-six children left for foreign parts. The four who remained in Ireland were the individuals in each generation who inherited the family farm, along with an uncle who was persuaded by American cousins to stay at home and pursue second- and third-level education. 'Maybe', muses Micheál, 'the tide was turning,' reflecting on how his uncle, Joe Ó Muircheartaigh, a schoolteacher and later a schools inspector, was the first of the family not to take the emigrant ship. It was Joe who saw the advert in the daily paper that was to send Thady Moriarty's eldest son to the ESB in Dublin. On arrival in the capital Joe met the young lad off the train, found him accommodation in the Edenvale Hotel and brought him to his destination on a 'dry run' to ensure that he wouldn't go astray and be late for interview on the following morning.

Although he didn't know it at the time, young Moriarty's days in the beautiful rural environment of his youth were effectively over. Armed with a good Leaving Cert (honours in Irish, English, History, Geography, Latin, General Science; pass in Mathematics), the young aspirant's personable ways did the rest. He made a good impression at the interview and was offered the post of Clerical Assistant at ESB's head office at 62 Upper Mount Street.

On 18 May 1945 a communication from his future employers, signed by Company Secretary Patrick J. Dempsey, was winging its way to Dún Síon:

In reference to previous correspondence and further to your attendance at these offices, I am directed to inform you that the company is prepared to offer you an appointment on its clerical staff at a salary of £104 per annum. At present a bonus of 11/0d per week is payable in addition to salary. In the first instance you will be attached to the Board's head office in Dublin but you may be transferred to any part of its network at the discretion of the Board. If you are prepared to accept this appointment, kindly indicate accordingly in writing by return.

The prospective employee's letter of acceptance, dated 23 May 1945, is worth reflection because of the strong, independent – even headstrong – streak that marked so many of his later business decisions that comes through. It is addressed to The Secretary, ESB, 60–62 Upper Mount Street, Dublin:

*A chara,*

*In reply to your letter I wish to inform you that I am prepared to accept the appointment offered to me on the Board's clerical staff and that the earliest date on which I can report for duty at your offices is on Tuesday, June 5th.*

*Is mise le meas,*

*Patrick Moriarty*

This was no grovelling acceptance of a lifeline that saved him from the emigrant ship that had carried his seed, breed and generation to distant lands. If he needed the job – and he did – there was no hint of that need. From the beginning the new recruit was, after a fashion, already calling the shots.

Independence of spirit is part of the west-Kerry psyche. Its people are mostly laid-back, easy-going, friendly, warm and hospitable. No fools but great to have on your side and fiercely independent. They talk about 'an independent footballer' and there are plenty from the Dingle Peninsula who qualify under that heading.

Paddy Moriarty came from the bilingual *Breac Gaeltacht* of Dún Síon and both Irish and English were spoken in the family home. The Irish spoken in west Kerry is among the purest to be heard anywhere in Ireland and the future ESB Chairman and Chief Executive was well practised in it. He learned it at his mother's knee, *on gliabhán*, and he spoke it fluently all through his life. A brilliant public speaker, his speeches were usually prefaced by, '*A dhaoine uaisle. Bail o Dbia oraibh,*'

followed by well-rounded, musical words of introduction, *as Gaeilge*.

He took pride in recalling how one of his relatives died hoisting the Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima and how another spent fifty years as a missionary priest in Africa. His tribe included builders, navvies, prospectors, publicans, policemen, civil servants, politicians, cowpokes, farmers, teachers, doctors, nurses and professors – everything except layabouts or dossers.

At the 39th National Management Conference of the IMI in Killarney Paddy Moriarty, as ESB's Chief Executive, spoke about his rustic origins. All through his life, no matter what company he kept, he wore those roots like a badge of honour:

*My family struggled on a small farm, forty miles west of here. It was a happy, fun-loving, sporting community and we were never aware that we were 'masochistic and cyclothymic', as Professor Anthony Clare has just said. I'm sure if we were told about these esoteric conditions we would have suffered from them!*

In *The Irish Times* article mentioned earlier, Moriarty reflected: 'Dublin is my home for forty years and I do not plan to go anywhere else – but Dublin is not my own place.' When people remarked on the broad Kerry accent that never altered after more than half a century of exile, he replied: 'I never saw any good reason why anything that was Kerry about me should change.'

This was the language of a non-conformist who moved easily in high society but retained his love of home and fatherland. Here, in the words of journalist Con Houlihan, was a man who 'succeeded in blending humility with genius'.

For Paddy Moriarty true permanence lay in fields, stones, the sea, turf-cutting, wakes, christenings, fair days, emigration, cows, sheep, hens, ducks, geese, foxes, badgers, rabbits, greyhounds, hares, *The Irish Press*, Michael O'Hehir on a Sunday: simple rural landmarks with a spiritual resonance not to be found on the busy anonymous streets where he spent his adult life.

The origins of the Moriarty clan, where they came from and what they stood for, are well documented. In *The Surnames of Ireland* Edward MacLysaght, a Clareman who was Chief Herald and Keeper of Manuscripts at the National Library, writes:

O Muirceartaigh (Muircheartacht, navigator). Of the same stock as the O'Donoghues and the O'Mahonys, this sept has always been intimately associated with Co. Kerry. For another name with the same Irish form see Murtagh.



And from Rev. Patrick Woulfe, a native of Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, writing in 1923, comes the following appraisal:

O Muirceartaigh, O Moriarty, O Murtagh, Moriarty, Murtagh, Murtagh. Descendants of Muirceartacht (sea-director, expert navigator). The name of a Kerry family prominently associated with the ancient chiefs of Aos Aisde, a district lying probably along the river Mang (Maine). In Munster it is always anglicised as Moriarty.

The Moriartys of Dún Síon were of solid country stock, immersed in the traditions of west Kerry. Paddy's grandfather, Eighneachán Ó Muircheartaigh, kept horses that were galloped through the fairs of Kerry in the early 1900s to be judged by farmers interested in good breeding. His wife, Kate Ní Loinsigh from Gallerus in the Gaeltacht, was a source of great knowledge to her family and neighbours. His mother's family, the Quinns, were mountain sheepfarmers, well-read people who supplemented many a young relative's education by saving turf on the hills, thinning turnips and mowing hay with a scythe.

Along the cliff-top from Dún Síon, where the Moriartys were born, to Dingle, where they went to school, a vista unfolds. The top of Cuasin Geal looks down on the White Strand. Across an expanse of fifteen miles of sea lies the Iveragh Peninsula, thrust like a giant spear into the broad Atlantic. Over on the right-hand side is An Siorrach, a great sea-stack with the long white breakers rearing up along its flanks. At Bull Head an ancient promontory fort pushes its head into the Atlantic rollers. On Kinard Hill in the parish of Lispolé is Carraig na bFiach, an over-hanging rock where Thomas Ashe, the 1916 patriot, practised before setting up the Black Raven Pipe Band in the village of Lusk, Co. Dublin. At Cuas na Teorann the gannets wheel about the sky and dive mercilessly on their prey. Farther west cormorants and puffins bob in the swell.

The town of Dingle, once a medieval fortress with a tradition in linen and smuggling, is greatly changed since the time the Moriartys walked to school. Back then six blacksmiths plied their trade, along with five cartwrights, ten shoemakers, ten tailors, twelve coopers, two tinsmiths, two sailmakers, four boatbuilders, a bellman, two saddlers and several dressmakers. The once run-down streets now have nice shopfronts and excellent restaurants and pubs that bring the tourists flocking during summer months. The making of David Lean's *Ryan's Daughter* in 1969 brought the first stirrings of prosperity to the town and proved a catalyst for change. Fungie, a friendly dolphin who took up residence in the bay in 1991, is a noted tourist attraction.

When the Norman settlers arrived in the thirteenth century they

developed Dingle as a substantial trading port. Butter, wool, hides, fish and meat were exported, and coal, salt, clothes and wines were imported. By the fourteenth century the town was a walled fortress with a charter from the Crown and a lucrative trade with France and Spain, its harbour a forest of masts. However, this prosperity did not last and during the Desmond Wars in the late-sixteenth century Dingle was burned to the ground. Reporting on the devastation, Edmund Spencer (secretary to Lord Grey, commander of the English forces) wrote: 'In short space almost none remained and a most populous and plentiful country was suddenly left void of man or beast.'

In the Irish language classic *Jimín Mháire Thaidhb*, written by Dingle native Pádraig Ó Siochrú ('An Seabhad'), the young country boy on a first visit to Dingle finds himself lost in a world away beyond the realms of his wildest daydreams: '*Ait an-mhór is ea an Daingean,*' he wrote, '*agus tá na mílte daoine ann.*' Dingle is a very big place and there are thousands of people there! Jimín had observed the old seaport town through the eyes of a child. The young Moriartys would have been no different, beguiled by the wonder of a childhood innocence that seems incongruous in today's world.

Excluding farming, fishing was the only industry in Dingle when the Brosnans, Flannerys, Flahertys, Grahams, Devanes and others followed the herring shoals on forty-foot trawlers (known as 'nobbies') as far north as Galway and around the southern coast to Dunmore East. Without echo-sounder or radar, they never fouled their nets on bad ground and they knew the ocean floor like a farmer knows his fields. The names of the fishing trawlers included *Ros Dubh*, *Girl Eileen*, *The Pride of Dingle*, *Naomh Colum*, *Elsie Mabel* and *St Lawrence O'Toole* (interestingly, the latter was hired to bring the remnants of the Blasket Island community ashore to Dún Chaoin in 1953 after the last home on the island closed its doors forever).

Moriarty was a good swimmer, a skill learned from an early age in the company of his brothers and sisters at nearby Cuas a' Chapail, but he wasn't a noted footballer although he did play occasionally on the field below his home known as The Banks. In a primitive milieu life moved at a steady, even pace. Distractions were few and far between. Advertisements in the daily newspapers trumpeted the virtues of Fry's Cocoa, the Playtex girdle and Sloan's Linament. The Catholic Church ruled with a rod of iron and the parish mission, populated by the storm troopers of the Redemptorist and Jesuit orders, saw to it that there was no deviation from the straight and narrow. In a culture of suppression, finicky young-

sters in west Kerry might be admonished with such exhortations as: 'Eat ye'er porridge or ye won't grow big and strong like Paddy Bawn!' (a local All-Ireland medal-holder).

Many years later, after he had climbed the ladder at ESB and was much sought after as a public speaker, Paddy Mo did more than anybody living or dead to romanticize his native place. On 16 September 1975 during a retirement speech to mark the departure from office of John P. Counihan, a native of Annascaul who had completed thirty-eight years of distinguished service with the company, the guest speaker recalled Annascaul's historical and sporting lineage and then turned to the retiree's family background and to the parish that produced him.

*This was the place where the young Counihan grew up, a place of mountainy men, blue lakes, sandy beaches, clear streams full of trout and salmon, a place of great talk of heroes and politics and football. His father was a blacksmith, famous throughout the whole peninsula for his gift of curing horses with bad hooves. The Counihans had 'a gift', people said. To the Counihan forge came men of all sorts - hard drinkers from Lispole, great talkers from Minard, clever men from Acres, cute men from Coumlanders and ballad singers from Luacher.*

Johnny Counihan has a place in the evolving story of Patrick J. Moriarty. Both were west Kerry men, sprung from the same humble roots, and they worked together in the Personnel department of ESB between 1970 and 1975.

Like the rest of their contemporaries, the Moriarty children didn't know what was happening beyond the ring of tall mountains that guarded their small world. Nobody had any spare money for carousing or devilment. The most potent drug available came from a threepenny packet of Woodbines but not everybody could afford such wild indulgence. At school, games of pitch and toss found favour during breaks from class but were often abandoned because of a shortage of currency. Paddy Moriarty was reared with the thunder of the waves in his ears, the song of the goldfinch and skylark to charm his senses and the cry of the starling to lull him to sleep. All around were the pillars that supported his vivid imagination. The contrast of mountain and valley, hill and stream, moor and plain merged into a blissful upbringing that lacked for nothing in terms of spiritual and emotional sustenance.

The Moriartys' idyllic childhood was shattered on 4 February 1944 when their mother, a young woman aged forty-eight, died in Dingle hospital. The wake, the funeral and the hard, lonely hours ahead are etched in the memory of the Moriarty siblings to this day. Micheál Ó Muirheartaigh recalls the preliminaries and painful aftermath:

My father received the bad news in Dingle and was no sooner in the door than our neighbour, Peter Farrell, came rushing in. Both burst into tears. No words were spoken for a while. It was the first occasion that I had ever seen adult men cry. The house was full with neighbours and friends that night after the removal to St Mary's Church in Dingle and the funeral took place on the following day. Because it was wartime there were few motor cars on the road and people travelled in horse carts, traps, on horseback or on foot. Two black horses pulled the hearse on the two-mile journey to the family grave in Garfinny.

In the days that followed, the mementos of the past were all around and the vacant chair brought daily recollection for children who felt so keenly their piercing loss. The big steel range in the kitchen that was always kept shining with black lead and where the turf fire was never extinguished remained a memorial to their mother's good cooking and impeccable housekeeping.

The loss of a mother is always a cruel deprivation for young children and the Moriartys, ranging in age from nine to eighteen, were no different. It was also a terrible blow to their father who had to rear eight young children on his own. Thady Moriarty was a firm believer in education and made sure that this aspect was not neglected among his children. Paddy, the eldest, was a good scholar who applied himself diligently to his books – 'he always had his head in a book', his brother Micheál remembers – but now there were extra chores to be attended to such as milking the cows morning and evening, cleaning out from the animals and generally making himself useful around the farm.

The additional workload must have weighed heavily upon him but he redoubled his efforts at Dingle CBS where he attended secondary school between 1938 and 1944. His Leaving Cert results were sufficiently impressive to warrant a university scholarship, which he had to forgo because of work commitments at home.

Family circumstances improved when an aunt, Mai Moriarty, returned from New York in January 1947 and took up residence with her brother and his young children in Dún Síon. She found it hard to settle after more than forty years spent working for wealthy socialites in Manhattan. Her previous employers kept pleading with her to return but, in a spirit of love and self-sacrifice, she remained at home to care for her new brood. She lived to see ninety-three and died in a Dublin nursing home in 1974.

With seven young children under her control – Paddy had already left to join the ESB at this stage – her days were never idle. In time the

remaining children moved away to make new lives for themselves, with only Náis remaining to run the farm.

Paddy, aged eighteen and the first to leave home, in later life often spoke in jest about 'being liberated from agriculture'. He remembered only too well the depression years when the sight of his father killing calves on the day after they were born – for the meat and the bounty of ten shillings that came from the government – left an abiding impression on his young mind. He had seen his mother dead in her coffin when he was old enough to be badly affected by such a tragedy. These events didn't leave him embittered or resentful of his early upbringing – far from it. An old neighbour from Dún Síon, a Dingle publican named Ellen Nelligan (née Farrell), remembered him as Patrick John, 'a lovely boy who never changed', who always called to visit her whenever he was in town after her husband died. Typically, he valued the bond of friendship that had survived from childhood and continued right up until the end. This unobtrusive loyalty was the distinguishing mark of the whole family.

In later years Paddy Mo often recalled his humble origins; he would speak of how he grew up in a remote farmhouse, without running water or electricity, where life was often hard but never deprived because of the wealth of family love and community spirit that abounded. This shaped his later life and gave him the mental strength and an innate humility that helped him meet everyone at their own level.

The immediate post-war years opened up the floodgates of emigration in rural Ireland and the town of Dingle and its environs were no different from anywhere else. A single ticket on the Holyhead boat or a berth on a transatlantic liner out of Cobh were the unfailing options that awaited the majority of school leavers. Except for a small privileged minority, jobs were practically non-existent and those who remained at home had to content themselves with greatly reduced expectations. The 1940s and 1950s were arguably the two bleakest decades in Irish sociological history since the Great Famine. Every railway station in Ireland became a graveyard of sorts where tears were shed openly and parting handshakes were exchanged against a background of grief and loss.

Leaving home was so much part of the fabric of daily life that people accepted it as inevitable. The scale of emigration can be gauged from the fact that over £25 million was sent home by Irish exiles via postal remittances between 1935 and 1944. Small wonder that Patrick Kavanagh, after spending a week in a London dosshouse, should write about 'the clipped accents of Mayo and Galway that fell like soft rain on the arid fields of my imagination'.

Side by side with despair and hopelessness sat optimism, delusion and escapism. Fianna Fáil were in power. Eamon de Valera was Taoiseach, frequently regaling his subjects about a better life that was a long time coming. In 1945 – the year Paddy Moriarty joined ESB – the Bishop of Kerry, the Most Rev. Dr Denis Moynihan, issued a stern Lenten pastoral decrying the grave sin of Perjury. This was an edict that was scarcely necessary considering that the vast majority of people were law-abiding citizens who already had an acute awareness of sin and wrong-doing. The showband era was not far off and in Kerry, where there is an inbred light-heartedness in the people, Jimmy Rohan, the Stardusters and the Modernaires would soon be packing them in at dancehalls between Tahilla and Tarbert.

Coming to Dublin in 1945 was a good career move for Patrick J. Moriarty, although his roots and his deepest inclinations lay elsewhere. Much later, he reflected: 'My options were very limited. I could have gone to my uncle's pub on the corner of 6th and 42nd Streets in New York or go to Ballarat with the Quinns or go to Bloomfontaine with Sean Keane or leave for Cricklewood along with everybody else.' So Dublin it was, but the place that shaped his early upbringing, Dún Síon in the Dingle Peninsula, proved to be his guiding star, sustaining him in good times and bad. To the day he died it was his refuge and inspiration.

## 2. *Early Days*

The guns of the Second World War had fallen silent, the ration books that were part of everyday life in Ireland were being cast aside and normality could not come quickly enough for people who had eaten black bread for the best part of six years. Eamon de Valera, to his credit, had preserved the country's neutrality by refusing to hand over Irish ports to Sir Winston Churchill – the first important step in the nation's survival.

There were echoes of the conflagration that had engulfed Britain and mainland Europe. The bombing of the North Strand in Dublin and the incarceration of German prisoners of war in the Curragh were a stark reminder of how close this conflict was and what devastation might have ensued in different circumstances. The Emergency, as it became known, was Ireland's blissful definition of a conflict that was too close for comfort. The government had initiated a major recruitment drive into the army, with young men from all walks of life enlisting for the duration of the war. At local level two volunteer reserve forces known as the LDF and LSF were mobilized to assist in security duties.

With the final destruction of Hitler's Third Reich, the flood tide of emigration, which had stemmed during the war years, resumed at full spate. For the majority growing up in and around Dingle and throughout west Kerry there were no jobs or prospects of any description.

Such was the backdrop to the arrival of Patrick John Moriarty in Dublin to take up a clerical post in ESB head office at 62 Upper Mount Street on 6 June 1945. On the previous morning his father and his brother Donal had brought him to the bus stop in Dingle on a nostalgic

journey that has been well chronicled. Shy and awkward farewells had been exchanged between brothers and sisters deeply sad to see him go. His father, Thady Moriarty, was similarly grief-stricken. It was the inevitable parting of the ways. Now he was about to preside over a ritual that had become as certain as the changing seasons. His eldest son, the main support on the small family holding, was about to leave for a new life in the city and a future that could go up or down.

Normally the eldest son would inherit the family farm, but some months previously young Moriarty had obtained a scholarship and the prospect of a place at university. However, his mother's death put an end to that particular dream. As good fortune would have it, a start with ESB in Dublin became a good second choice, providing secure, permanent and pensionable employment. It was as much as any young lad could hope for.

The ESB, founded only eighteen years previously, was an autocratic organization run by engineers and accountants with a civil service ethos. Opportunities for advancement were scarce for someone without academic qualifications. It would be considered normal for a clerical officer at the lower end of the scale to spend the rest of his working life in a similar environment, perhaps earning a promotion or two along the way but no more than that.

Finding employment in Ireland, when he could so easily have followed his uncles Mickey, John and Dan to New York, was obviously a stroke of fortune. Fountain's butcher shop in Dingle, where the bus picked up passengers bound for distant places, was an emblematic point of departure. Fountain, as he was called, was one of the Moriartys from 'back west', a deeply religious man whose custom was to bless everything and anything that came within his remit with the Sign of the Cross and a generous sprinkling of holy water. 'Fountain's blessing' was considered a portent of good luck and Paddy Moriarty firmly believed that it set him up for life.

In those early days the economic climate for the national electricity provider was poor. For a company like ESB, with aggregate capital expenditure as of 31 March 1946 running to £18.6 million, hefty foreign borrowing was unheard of. Necessary finance was raised through government loans that would have to be repaid. This was a time when the Board of ESB, chaired by the legendary R.F. Browne, was making decisions that would help to shape the company's progress for the next half-century. The Rural Electrification Scheme that began in 1946, geared to bringing electricity to the remotest parts of the country, was a massive



undertaking, second only to the inaugural Shannon Scheme. Predictably, it stretched the fledgling company's resources to the limit over a period of almost twenty years. The construction of power stations and the turf programme of the 1960s, driven by the government's need to revitalize the economy, added to the challenge.

The culture shock that awaited Patrick John Moriarty in the capital city must have been considerable. However, he was a fast learner and he adapted quickly. He found digs, first in Ailesbury Road and later at 42 Haddington Road, where he could expect to eat three square meals a day with a cup of milk before bedtime.

His salary of £104 per annum provided the essentials for survival. Digs in the quiet leafy Dublin suburb of Ballsbridge offered a comfortable home environment in a three-storey Georgian house. John O'Brien, an early friend and work colleague, remembers 'an excellent house':

There were half a dozen other lodgers staying there as well. As far as I can recall, these were mostly civil servants who were paid fortnightly. Paddy was paid weekly and the landlady appreciated that because he brought in the money twice as often as the others. Paddy was a smoker in those days and I believe the habit remained although he turned to cigars in later life. He took an occasional glass of white wine and that was the extent of his drinking.

One of the few survivors from the early days in ESB is Sean Damery, a native of Cobh, Co. Cork, now in his eighties, who shared digs with Paddy in Haddington Road along with four other men and four girls. 'The food was good,' he remembers, 'and we made it a point to come home for lunch every day, which usually consisted of beef or stew or maybe a few chops with the usual trimmings. For breakfast we might have porridge or a fry. We were well looked after.' As for their social life:

I remember one day travelling with Paddy to a Munster hurling final in Thurles in a Baby Austin and getting three punctures on the journey. Eventually we ended up listening to the match in a pub in Portlaoise. We went dancing regularly, usually at weekends, and had a lot of innocent fun. The popular venues at that time were the National in Parnell Square, the Crystal in South Anne Street and the Four Provinces in Harcourt Street. Predictably, the evening usually started in the corner pub at the top of Haddington Road before taking the bus into town.

With only a meagre weekly wage to sustain him, it comes as no surprise to find that the future ESB heavyweight always expected value for money. Without being mean or tight-fisted – colleagues say he spent

freely on occasion – he was no fool either. His personnel file shows evidence that he would make a stand if he felt he was not getting his due reward financially.

As the nineteenth annual report of ESB was submitted to government on 31 March 1946, Paddy Moriarty was approximately nine months into his new job. As a trainee in the Secretariat/Personnel department he was on the lowest rung of the ladder. He was ambitious and in later years confided to a fellow worker that he would have left the company in 1951 had he not secured a Grade VIIC promotion. When this happened it damped down his natural impetuosity to get ahead as quickly as possible.

John O'Brien, by his own admission, did not set his sights quite as high and was satisfied with a lesser promotion. When somebody asked if he was not entitled to feel aggrieved in the circumstances, he replied: 'Not at all – that man is far superior to me.' The Co. Wexford native felt no resentment towards Moriarty in his higher grading from that point onwards:

You knew at the time that the energy was there, the drive, the ambition; everything was there. While I had a bit of it myself I couldn't match his. He was very concentrated and proved himself an excellent worker from the very beginning. He could focus entirely on whatever had to be done. I saw something in him from the very early days and so did others in the right places. Larry Barry, a very solid ESB man who would later become Chief Accountant, was one of them. Larry wasn't the easiest to impress ... but he was a very straightforward, upright man – a typical accountant. At any rate, he knew that Paddy had what it takes and he brought him across with him when he moved out of Personnel.

At that time the Secretariat was located over the main entrance at 27 Lower Fitzwilliam Street. It was a typically large Georgian building with high ceilings, ornate plasterwork and windows that extended from floor to ceiling. As might be expected in the Dublin of sixty years ago, the decor was unimaginative. Walls were painted dark green to a height of four feet and the remainder of the room was painted light green. The floors were covered in dark brown linoleum. Office furniture consisted of the standard-issue oak table with two drawers. It was a typical nine-to-five job with ten minutes grace allowed in the mornings. 'The book wasn't taken up until ten past nine,' is how John O'Brien puts it.

I joined Paddy in Personnel Records as a trainee in 1946 and we operated a Cardex system that was quite elaborate. There was a file for everybody and everything was recorded, i.e. gradings, promotions, etc.

It was a normal clerical job and there wasn't a lot of initiative involved in the early years. There weren't a lot of errors you could make and I suppose you might say that both of us were over-qualified for the jobs we were doing.

After a few years, following a shake-up in the clerical division, the young Moriarty, then in his early twenties, was transferred into another section, that of Secretariat/Personnel, which became known as Service, Conditions and Conciliation, dealing with the conditions of employment of everybody in the company. It also dealt with trade union negotiations and submissions from all the other departments regarding staffing, grading and so on. This required diplomatic skills that went beyond the normal job specification. If somebody had a problem with their subsistence allowance it ended up in Service, Conditions and Conciliation, where the brief was 'to get it out of any controversial areas as quickly as possible'.

There were two sections, one for manual workers and another for 'general employees', as they became known. These divisions, which bordered on class distinction, probably derived from the superannuation scheme then in vogue. In later years the implications that followed threatened to cause grave dissension and one of Paddy Moriarty's greatest achievements as Director Personnel in 1970 was to abolish these divisions, helping harmonize relations throughout the company. Remarkably, back in the mid 1940s when clerical workers might be considered the *crème de la crème*, it was the manual workers in ESB who retired on pensions that gave them almost full pay. In that respect they were far better off than their white-collar brethren. Inflation subsequently eroded this scheme rather badly so that certain manual workers who had given a lifetime of service to the company died in very poor circumstances.

The mid 1950s brought turmoil to the world order. Early in 1956 Egypt had nationalized the Suez Canal, a development that angered Britain and France who laid claim to the waterway. At their prompting, Israel had invaded the Sinai Desert, allowing the British and French to send troops into Suez, ostensibly to protect the canal. The Egyptians were having none of it and a serious war was being fought in the Middle East – much to the alarm of the Americans, as the Soviet Union had stated implicitly that they were not prepared to stand idly by while their ally, Egypt, was under attack. The Soviets, for their part, had sent troops into Budapest to quell a progressive uprising that was taking place despite an international outcry.

The Suez Crisis brought the first stirrings of anxiety about oil scarcity but this receded with the ending of hostilities and did not surface again until the first oil crisis in 1973, which had serious repercussions for ESB. The company's annual report for 1956, meanwhile, reported an increase of 112 million units of electricity generated during the year; peat generation was utilized to its maximum and produced 360 million units; the number of consumers increased by 41,287; and under the Rural Electrification Scheme supply was extended to 99 additional areas, which catered for 34,257 new consumers. As foreshadowed in the previous year's report, the 50 per cent government subsidy granted for rural electrification was terminated with certain retrospective effect.

Expenditure on fuel was significantly greater than in the previous year when an exceptionally heavy rainfall made possible a high output from the company's hydro stations. It was projected that 'the growth of expenditure is rapidly overtaking revenue earnings', due to the large volume of capital investment at high interest rates and the continued rise in expenditure on fuel and wage increases.

Moriarty's career in ESB could well have continued in a groove that might have been considered his natural habitat had he been one to accept such restrictions. John O'Brien recalls the early years after joining the company when both of them enrolled with the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and pursued various correspondence courses that would eventually earn them a City and Guilds qualification. Initially their studies were of a haphazard nature, with neither showing the necessary level of commitment that was to become Moriarty's stock-in-trade during his later career. This procrastination could possibly be explained by the huge transitional changes that were taking place in his life after leaving home as he tried to grapple with several momentous events and a totally new environment. O'Brien remembers:

In those days there was an allowance for getting a qualification and while the pair of us were studying through correspondence courses on and off we weren't applying ourselves seriously enough. Then, suddenly, one day another chap got the qualification we should have been studying for and that was the wake-up call we both needed. Over the next two years we took our responsibilities far more seriously. We studied together in the office, in Paddy's digs – wherever convenient – and we did pass our exams when the time came. I always maintained that two heads are better than one and when you were using one like Moriarty's it was a great help.

An increase of £16 followed on the first anniversary of his employment. This was a standard increment and brought his salary up to £120 per annum, excluding bonus, as and from 5 June 1946. Within three months a further salary increase was recommended. An addendum on the supervisor's memorandum to the Secretary of the Board contains the following: 'Since joining the company, Mr Moriarty (Staff No. 2113) has performed all duties allotted to him in a satisfactory manner. He is a conscientious and painstaking official and is quite suitable for grading. I recommend accordingly - Grade VIII @ £160 p.a. from Sept. 23 1946.'

Permanence on the staff had now been achieved following a twelve-month probationary period. However, the Company Secretary in a letter dated 17 December 1946 pointed out: 'Your appointment is naturally subject to continuous satisfactory service and to such conditions of employment and regulations as are from time to time made generally applicable by the Board to your particular category.'

'Continuous satisfactory service' came easily to the erstwhile clerical trainee, who had bigger things in his sights. Whether he saw himself rising rapidly through the ranks in future years is immaterial but once he found his bearings he went through all the necessary preliminaries to hasten this end. He enrolled with the Chartered Institute of Secretaries at 16 George Street, London, EC4 and, despite some early procrastination, he secured a qualification from this organization on 16 August 1950, having successfully completed the intermediate examination. His employers were not unmindful of his achievements.

On 27 July 1951 a lengthy communication from ESB's Personnel Officer, Fergus O'Kelly, was directed to Patrick J. Dempsey, Secretary of the Board. Two of the clerical staff, Patrick Moriarty and Patrick J. O'Dowd, had come to prominence and were being recommended for promotion:

For some time past, two Grade VIII officers in this branch, Messrs Patrick J. O'Dowd and Patrick Moriarty, have been carrying out duties of a more responsible nature than would normally apply to their present grade. I have no hesitation in recommending them for Grade VIIC status (max. £650 per annum), effective as and from August 1, 1951. Both of these officers have shown exceptional enthusiasm for their work and a competence considerably above the average in its performance. Mr Moriarty, who is 25 years of age, entered the service of the Board on June 5, 1945 and has been engaged wholly on staff duties since then. He has passed the Intermediate examination for Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and recently sat for his final exam. To date he has shown himself to be a most dedicated and conscientious employee.

This transfer on promotion to the Personnel department was to be significant for Moriarty because it was here that his talents in inter-personal dealings came to the forefront. Having enrolled on further business correspondence courses, he was now clearly intent on making his mark. Long hours of study after work was the only route available to him and he followed that path diligently.

Yet another letter from Board Secretary Patrick J. Dempsey, dated 20 March 1953 and addressed to P.J. Moriarty, contained further encouraging news. Within a span of fourteen months he had earned a re-grading as and from 1 April 1953, which carried a salary of £580 per annum, rising by annual increments of £20 to a maximum of £700 per annum. A salary increase of £100 (£480 to £580) was the equivalent of five years of normal increments and testified to the pace of his advancement. The letter concluded: 'The allowance granted to you in respect of your qualifications has been taken into consideration in determining your point of entry to your new grade.'

Within the next twelve month period, Personnel Officer Fergus O'Kelly was making a further recommendation to the Board: 'The time has come when it is necessary to recognise the outstanding work being done and the ability of Mr Moriarty. Although a young man he has shown exceptional merit and holds the qualification of membership of the Institute of Secretaries. It is proposed that he be assimilated to Grade VIIB in accordance with normal principles.' The Chairman validated this: 'From my knowledge of the responsibilities involved and of Mr Moriarty's own capabilities I fully endorse your recommendation.'

The buying out of 'walking time' payments at the Pigeon House coal-burning station in Ringsend, a divisive issue that caused much acrimony, was concluded satisfactorily in November 1954 and gave the rising star of ESB his first taste of negotiations with the trade unions. He made an immediate impact, as noted by the Personnel Officer in a letter to the Board dated 26 November 1954: 'It is desired to point out that in regard to the prolonged and serious discussions with the unions, a considerable amount of important work of a non-routine nature was carried out by one of the junior staff in this department, Mr P. Moriarty (Grade VIIB), and it is recommended that a small bonus of, say, £25 should be paid to him in recognition of the special services which he rendered in this respect.'

Three months later, in February 1955, he was appointed Section Head in Personnel with a double salary increment to reflect the impor-

tance of this appointment. The personnel function had been revised and expanded around 1951 due to the increased workload that followed from the Rural Electrification Scheme, requiring additional staff to transfer from other areas of the company to join the reconstructed department. The first key appointments were Fergus O'Kelly, an engineer, with Larry Barry second in command. Paddy Moriarty's appointment as Section Head in the manual section came less than eleven years since joining the company. His annual salary had increased from £104 per annum in June 1945 to £650 per annum in February 1955. This was at a time when annual increments of £20 (or less) were considered the norm. But he didn't stop there and between 1955, when he first began to attract serious attention in ESB, and 1995, when he retired as Chairman of the Board, many more decorations were to follow.

Another ESB employee at the time, fellow Kerryman (from Ballylongford) Brendan Kennelly, recognized Moriarty's upward curve:

One May morning in Nineteen Fifty-four  
I saw a blond young man  
Striding down a corridor  
In Head Office: watchful, confident, relaxed.  
'That's Paddy Moriarty,' John Falvey said,  
'He's from Dingle, sharp as they come,  
He has a warm heart and a cool head,  
As good as ever came out of the Kingdom.'

At his retirement party many years later, the departing Chief Executive of ESB remarked on his friend's subsequent resignation from the company and his advancement in literature as being 'mutually beneficial to both organizations'. He said it was well known that the future Professor of Modern English at Trinity College was not 'the greatest employee that ever set foot in ESB'. This remark was taken in the proper spirit.

Two days after the 1953 All-Ireland final between Kerry and Armagh, on 29 September, Paddy Moriarty married Esther O'Sullivan from Ballycasheen, outside Killarney. The wedding date was deliberately fixed to coincide with the football match to save a number of guests from west Kerry having to make a special trip to Dublin for the nuptials. The marriage ceremony was solemnized in Dundrum parish church and the reception was held in the Moira Hotel, across the road from Bank of Ireland in College Green. The newlyweds set up home at 17 Farmhill Drive, Goatstown, Dublin 14.

As he told it, an elderly woman wearing a shawl approached Paddy one day on the streets of Dingle. 'I know you,' she said by way of greeting. 'You're one of the Moriartys.' He confirmed that this was so. 'And tell me, who did you marry?' she enquired. 'Oh,' he replied, 'I had a bicycle and I went to Killarney for a woman.' The old lady gave this unusual alliance her seal of approval. 'You were lucky,' she observed. 'The main thing that's wrong with them back here is the close breeding!'

At his retirement function on 17 April 1991, Paddy Moriarty spoke with patent sincerity when he said: 'Along with good health, the greatest blessing that God can give to anybody is a happy home and in that respect I was twice blessed because Esther made that blessing a reality.' The children that followed – Emer, Maeve, John, Patricia and Dermot – came from a home life that reflected the values of their parents.

Although the heady days when he would lead ESB were a long way off, Moriarty's course was now set. His ability was widely recognized within the company and his willingness to apply himself to whatever task was assigned to him had made a clear impression on his superiors. There was no mistaking where this very able and adaptable young man was heading. His career was to blossom and within twenty years events within his control and outside of them were to propel him into the company's front rank. Imbued with the confidence noted by John O'Brien, he knew he had something to offer. As did his superiors.



### 3. *Climbing the Ladder*

When Paddy Moriarty entered the old ESB headquarters at 62 Upper Mount Street in June 1945 to take up his appointment in the company's clerical division he could not possibly have foreseen the direction his career would take.

Promotion after promotion found him riding the crest of a wave that gathered ever-increasing momentum. There was no secret to the basic formula that Moriarty applied: a solid work ethic allied with natural flair, undoubted ability and a deserved reputation for getting things done. His winning personality was remarked upon by many. He got on with people and he held their trust. He was dependable and gave of his very best.

His arrival in ESB seemed anchored in fate and the timing was perfect. Napoleon, it is said, believed in luck and never promoted his generals without enquiring, 'Is he lucky?' For Moriarty, the raw *gorsoon* from west Kerry, an eventful journey lay ahead that would project him as a visionary on several fronts, a leader in trade union negotiation and a major player in the shaping of modern Ireland.

Experience gained during his first ten years in ESB and his valuable connection with L.J. Barry (later Chief Financial Officer) were to assist him greatly. Paddy Mo was a workaholic and very soon there was a growing awareness among his superiors of his ability and ambition.

People who knew him well speak of the orderliness and meticulous planning that he brought to bear in both business and leisure pursuits. He was a perfectionist who set very high standards and accepted no deviation from whatever was considered appropriate. There was no

room for second best. He was a demanding taskmaster and spared nobody, least of all himself.

Yet part of Moriarty's great strength as a person and as a business leader lay in his ability to reach compromise and to communicate on equal terms with everybody – even those implacably opposed to his viewpoint. At all times he sought to find consensus and to head off conflict. During the bruising industrial relations battles of the 1970s, when he had to face down the wrath of the powerful ESB unions, he acquired the reputation for being a skilled negotiator. His humanitarian instincts earned him widespread respect. While he could be tough, he was essentially a peace-maker.

Even in times of extreme industrial unrest within the company he tried to combine the disparate strands of opinion. Perceived to be 'a company man' whose first loyalty lay with his employers, there was a widely held acceptance that he also had the good of the workers at heart. He never saw them as anything other than friends and colleagues striving towards the same goals. By his own admission he found it difficult to be frequently locked in conflict with people for whom he had an undisguised admiration. His personal charisma was widely recognized and he made friends easily. A small minority disliked him but in the main these were people unrelenting in pursuing a separate agenda.

Much later, when he had reached the topmost rung, it is believed that a minority of technical people resented his presence in the boardroom. Since its foundation in 1927 ESB had been run by engineers and Moriarty was the first person from a non-engineering background to break into the top executive strata; undoubtedly, this aroused a certain element of petty jealousy.

The move that would start the process of bringing him to centre stage in ESB was his transfer to the Department of Chief Accountant in July 1955 following L.J. Barry's transfer to a top position in that department. Moriarty was then assigned to Research and Audit, an important division where he soon made his mark. Eyebrows were raised with his immediate elevation as one of three senior inspectors. Still under thirty, he came with little accounting, or, indeed, business background. John Moran, later to fill a variety of senior accounting roles, remembers when, as Stores Control Officer in Sligo District, Moriarty appeared before him to perform his very first audit. He recalls a sense of excitement and anticipation. The new man was regarded as being very different from previous inspectors – a 'high flyer' being groomed for top positions in the company.

Two years later, on 13 May 1957, Chief Accountant Joseph Fogarty reported to the Chairman of ESB on the credentials of twelve candidates interviewed for the post of Deputy Head, Research and Audit:

Mr P.J. Moriarty (31 years) is considered the most suitable applicant having acquired further varied and detailed experience when assigned to consultants Urwick, Orr and Partners. In this role he has engaged in important work to the full satisfaction of his superiors. He has applied himself with energy and success to acquiring the accountancy fundamentals and the procedures necessary for his competence as a senior internal auditor. His progress was closely monitored as was that of the other prospective candidates for the position of Deputy Head of the Service. Accordingly, I recommend that Mr Moriarty be appointed to this position and re-graded to Grade IV from the date on which he takes up duty.

This was a significant promotion for a young man now reaching for the stars in his chosen calling. Clearly, he thrived on responsibility and had further goals in his sights. He gained the confidence and endorsement of his superior officers, who recommended him for further prestigious postings as he negotiated every hurdle with supreme confidence. Moriarty was a fast learner who relished a challenge and took to his new environment like the proverbial duck to water. There is no evidence anywhere to suggest that he failed to live up to the high expectations reposed in him. Twelve years after joining the company his rise to the pinnacle in ESB management and decision-making was already well advanced.

In May 1961 five candidates were interviewed for the vacant position of Accountant in Charge, Research and Audit. The interviewing committee's report had a familiar ring: 'Of the 14 applicants for this position, only five were interviewed. The general standard was extremely high. Mr P.J. Moriarty was considered the most suitable.' This statement was signed by the Assistant Chief Accountant and by Mr W.V. Doherty of the Personnel department. The appointment carried a salary of £2000 per annum, rising by annual increments to £2300 per annum. Due to the travel involved in servicing outlying areas, a mileage allowance was part of the remuneration package.

At only thirty-five years of age, Moriarty had made a company-wide impact, succeeding Vincent Doherty in the prestigious position of Head of Research and Audit. He transformed this division from being inspectorial and greatly feared into a more open function. His view was that 'we are here to support the people we are auditing', and he drilled that principle into the staff he was working with. He hated bureaucracy

and had an undisguised impatience to get things done. Joe Maher, later Group Finance Director, maintains that Moriarty's time in Internal Audit was 'a major springboard for his later progression to the top of the organization because he developed such a wide range of relationships in all departments that he became widely accepted as a "natural" to fill the top management positions, which he ultimately did'.

He immediately changed the focus of the audit function and the tone of audit reports, something that was badly needed. Concentration would be on key issues while less important matters would be resolved at local level. Auditors were expected to prepare and clear draft audit reports with local senior management before completion, ensuring face-to-face debate on key matters. The focus was always on clarity and responsibility.

During this period, ESB's post-rural development grew at a hectic pace, with consumer numbers jumping from 310,639 in 1950 to 726,561 in 1967. In consequence, systems and resources were creaking right across the company. Employee training and development now became a key issue and Moriarty set out to assemble, over time, a core team of staff to tackle the problems that were emerging. Along with Denis Moloney, a skilled personnel specialist and close colleague, they instituted an innovative two-year personnel training programme that was repeated many times, usually with twelve young trainees from across the company. It became known as the 'Twelve Apostles Programme', for which competition for selection was intense. Training was on-the-job and closely monitored. Moriarty recruited some into his own division as internal audit assistants and his management of these individuals was considered demanding but fair. In the years that followed, many top positions in Finance and Personnel were filled with people who had completed the programme.

Corporate governance today dictates that internal audit is a totally independent function, concentrating on such matters as internal control frameworks and liaising closely with external auditors. Moriarty's approach, however, was very different and it fulfilled a critical need within ESB at that time. As Head of Research and Audit, recruitment and training did not fall within his remit, but he did it anyway.

ESB had enjoyed a justifiable reputation for systems efficiency and had a highly regarded computer department with the largest IBM mainframe computer in the country. However, rapid growth and expansion created major systems problems. P.J. Moriarty took personal responsibility for driving the computerization of the central stores system, with

teams from Audit managing extremely tight changeover routines right across all locations in the company. This was followed immediately by a similar computerization upgrade of the payroll system for 14,000 company employees. Sean O'Neill, who headed up one of the implementation teams, remembers the Moriarty pep talks and promises of a bonus on satisfactory completion – something virtually unknown for such levels of staff at the time. He also recalls Moriarty's enthusiasm and strong support at all times: 'He did not dish out compliments easily but you got a great sense of appreciation when a big and complex job was well done.'

But despite all the changes he implemented, the discipline of audit was never allowed to flag. Given the size of ESB, it is a tribute to the audit programmes and the quality of line management that serious fraud never emerged as an issue. This is a proud record, which Moriarty himself has to take a lot of credit for.

In a short time he was on the move again. When the position of Assistant Chief Accountant became vacant in April 1967 a list of four candidates was drawn up. Included among them was Patrick J. Moriarty, FCIS, with twenty-two years' service under his belt. The Chairman of ESB, Tom Murray, reported to the Board:

A committee consisting of the Chief Accountant, the Personnel Officer and myself assessed the merits of the respective candidates. Being senior staff, their capabilities and experience were already well known to the committee and interviews were not deemed necessary. It is considered that Mr P.J. Moriarty is the most suitable candidate and his appointment to the post of Assistant Chief Accountant is accordingly recommended. He is at the maximum at Grade II (£2930) and would enter Grade I (maximum £3350) at £3050 per annum.

This appointment became effective on 9 July 1967 and undoubtedly reflected the successful candidate's elevation some months previously as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries.

On 7 July 1967 Board Secretary Mr J.G. Gargan wrote to Moriarty regarding his new appointment:

The Board has decided that as and from April 1, 1967, promotions to Grade III and upwards should carry a minimum increase of three increments where the salary scales permit. Arising from this, your commencing salary in Grade I is being increased to £3110 per annum as and from the date of your appointment, viz. July 9, 1967.

Typical of his meticulous approach, Moriarty was always conscious of the need for personal development, both managerial and technical,

and he cultivated valuable connections with internationally acclaimed training specialists throughout his career. A diploma of merit from the Irish Management Institute, dated 4 May 1967, carried a citation for attendance at 'a comprehensive course of study of management principals and practice' between 1 November 1966 and 4 May 1967. Attendance at IMI/University College Dublin in June 1967, where the ambitious Kerryman undertook the Harvard University Business Finance Programme, is also noteworthy.

Although these decorations undoubtedly gave his career added impetus, he had to fight for what he believed were his rights in terms of salary adjustments. A treble increment on reaching Grade I did not, he felt, 'recognise the status or responsibilities' of his position, a viewpoint conveyed in writing to the Chief Accountant, Mr L.J. Barry, on 16 July 1967. The letter concluded: 'I write to you on this matter only because I feel that the Board would readily acknowledge that my case justifies revision.'

After more than a year of stalemate this anomaly was rectified and the Chairman recommended to the Board that 'Mr Moriarty be placed on a special salary scale'. The fine tuning of this was set out in detail, with the revised title of Assistant Chief Financial Officer being passed on in November 1969.

Moriarty was to spend almost three years as Assistant Chief Accountant, one of a high-profile financial trio with L.J. Barry and John B. O'Donoghue, a native of Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry. His two main areas of responsibility, property and revenue, were both greatly affected by the changes then taking place in Ireland. The country was now moving from a lengthy period of high protective trade barriers to a new policy of direct foreign investment and, in time, this would transform the landscape economically and culturally. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement of 1965 was in place and EU membership was around the corner. ESB's property portfolio (which included distribution centres and warehouse/stores facilities) grew in tandem with the general expansion of the company and brought an additional workload.

Moriarty assumed responsibility for the construction of the new ESB head office at Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin, which replaced the streetscape of Georgian houses that had previously extended from Upper Mount Street to Baggot Street. Not surprisingly, this attracted the ire of conservationist bodies, who found themselves at war with the winning design by young Dublin architect Sam Stephenson. However, these objections were overruled and the new building was practically

complete before Moriarty's next appointment in April 1970. To all intents and purposes he was the project manager for much of the development phase, working closely with Stephenson and other members of the design team. The building was officially opened by Brian Lenihan, TD, Minister for Transport and Power, on 2 November 1970.

Management of ESB's revenue was always considered a critical area. At this time it was headed up by T.P. Sheridan, who now reported to Paddy Moriarty in his capacity as Assistant Chief Accountant. The company had acquired an enviable reputation for the billing and collection of monies, but this was another area targeted for reform. Where previously the emphasis was on accuracy of records, prompt payment and rigid control of cash and banking procedures, this restrictive environment would soon be broken down. Moriarty began the move to more customer-friendly initiatives, even though it would be some years before they came to fruition with a new breed of managers. It was in the natural order of events that he would later support a more humane approach to people having difficulty in paying their bills. With strong concentration in the company for managing working capital, revenue managers were focusing on the 'dead money' caught up in the meter-reading and billing processes. Supported by Moriarty, comprehensive streamlining of the process was undertaken within the constraints of a customer system under pressure from the growth of the company. Over a period of a year or so, with enthusiastic co-operation across the company's distribution areas, massive financial savings were achieved from improved cashflow.

Moriarty was not the initiator of all the changes that came on stream but he quickly created and encouraged a culture whose objective was to have one of the most advanced and efficient customer-friendly arrangements in Europe. These were to prove a great marketing advantage in the company's subsequent drive into international consultancy. The first job in Bahrain in 1976 was related to the management of customer business and the development of new accounting and billing systems, which replicated the ESB model. Later still, when an ESB delegation visited Ipswich, centre of the then Eastern Electricity Board – probably the biggest of its kind in Britain – the company's financial director stated that ESB was probably the only utility that fully understood what customer relations really meant. With Frank Malin, Tom O'Reilly and Joe Maher, Moriarty was a major architect of this achievement.

When a new vacancy arose in April 1970, that of Director Personnel, Moriarty again led the field. Three candidates were shortlisted for

the position and the selection committee, which comprised Board member Gordon Lambert and Chief Executive Jimmy Kelly, submitted the name of P.J. Moriarty for approval. This recommendation was accepted. The salary scale was fixed at £5000 at entry with five yearly increments of £250. In a letter dated 27 April 1970, J.G. Gargan as Secretary advised the successful candidate that: 'The functions and responsibilities attaching to the position are generally in accordance with the recent reorganisation by the Board of its top management structure and will be explained to you in detail by the Chief Executive.'

On a personal level this was a huge promotion that would project the new incumbent into the forefront of interpersonal negotiations, where he was to distinguish himself during the following years. Industrial relations had grown top-heavy and unwieldy within a company where complacency and inefficiency sometimes combined with startling mediocrity. These facts were unreservedly recognized and identified in the Fogarty Report of 1968, which was commissioned by the Minister for Labour, P.J. Hillery. Developing the industrial relations agenda to a point where the ESB version eventually became the template for countrywide acceptance is undoubtedly Moriarty's supreme legacy to the nation.

P.J. Moriarty's contribution to this phase of ESB history testifies to his outstanding qualities as a skilled negotiator, manipulator, achiever and – not least – a man of honour and integrity. Even during the most volatile of events his humanitarian instincts remained paramount. He had to fight his corner when the full force of trade-union might was ranged against him and there were times when relations were badly strained, but no one else could have gained better results against a background of serious industrial unrest that had the potential to cripple the country.

By now, ESB consumed Moriarty's whole life and nothing outside of his family was more important to him. A close colleague, Vincent Fahy (who followed him as Director Personnel), feels that he was not adequately rewarded financially for the responsibilities he took on board. His working hours exceeded the forty-hour-week norm and on many occasions he could be found burning the midnight oil long after other staff had gone home. Manning the desk at reception when staff refused to pass the picket line during a time of industrial turmoil is an extreme example of his total dedication.

In the field of customer relations he had a fixation that bordered on tunnel vision. Throughout his working life he lived by the principle that the customer was always right. Occasionally, this would entail spending



time at a company showroom ironing out some problem. If necessary, he would meet a customer personally rather than delegate the responsibility to somebody else. The countless hours travelling around the country, and in later years to the far-flung corners of the globe where he lectured extensively, must have taken their toll on his energy but he was prepared to pay the price. Much later he reflected: 'Scarcely a day passed when I didn't get a "fix" from the mixture of excitement and risk-taking that was involved during my time with ESB.' The workers who staffed the various departments at all levels, white collar and manual, were his pride and joy. 'For my money,' he would often say, 'there are none better.'

After six years as Director Personnel, from May 1970 to April 1976, Moriarty was ready for more onerous duties. He was now almost fifty with all the experience necessary for further advancement. At this stage there was a near unanimous acceptance among his peers that, given good health, he would progress to the very top in ESB – a presumption soon to be borne out.

On 13 April 1976 an internal communication from Jimmy Kelly was delivered to him personally. It read:

*Dear Mr Moriarty,*

*I am pleased to inform you that the Board has appointed you as Assistant Chief Executive. You will retain responsibility for the Personnel function.*

*Your appointment is effective as and from today and the salary for this post will be the mid-point between the salary of the Chief Executive and that of Director, as determined by the Board from time to time.*

*This is merely your formal letter of appointment. I shall write you separately regarding the detailed division of duties.*

*At today's Board meeting the Board expressed its appreciation of the way in which you had taken on my duties during my recent illness. I would like to add my personal thanks and also my congratulations on your new appointment.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(Signed) J.J. Kelly*

*Chief Executive*

As and from 1 June 1976 this new post carried an annual salary of £14,111, which reflected the importance of the position. Thirty-one years had now elapsed since Moriarty had joined the company and he was impatient for the tasks that lay ahead. Always ready to embrace a new challenge, he fervently believed that the upward spiral of his career

would also redound to the benefit of his employers and to the nation. He wanted to bring ESB with him along a road that knew no frontiers and that is precisely what happened.

Moriarty's final promotion came five years later in 1981, when he succeeded Jimmy Kelly as Chief Executive of ESB. Once handed the reins of office, the new chief would not allow his authority to become usurped. He didn't spare the whip when he felt it needed using. A contemporary worker saw him as 'extremely tough but supportive, occasionally too domineering but a lovely person on a one-to-one basis'. It is well known that he had several clashes with high-ranking union officials during tense industrial relations negotiations and that he was responsible for the demotion of a number of managers who disagreed with him on aspects of company policy. These individuals invariably found themselves relegated to quiet corners where their future influence on policy issues was minimal. Inevitably, he made some enemies among department heads who couldn't tolerate his aggressive approach when it compromised their own status and influence – as it sometimes did.

In Irish society, in business, politics, sport or elsewhere, this is par for the course. Nobody is universally popular except on the day of their funeral. Paddy Moriarty was as plausible and popular a figure as could be found within the strictures of office imposed upon him. His sole *raison d'être* was to make a success of whatever enterprise he turned his hand to. Preparing ESB for the road ahead in whatever way it presented itself was always uppermost in his mind. He did this to the best of his ability, whenever possible by employing dialogue and trying to bring others around to his way of thinking through tactful diplomacy.

The Moriarty years were among the most groundbreaking in the history of ESB. He saw the Rural Electrification Scheme of the 1950s reach full fruition. He was moving quickly through the ranks as the Turf Development Programme of the 1960s accelerated. He saw its rise and fall with the inevitable closure of several power stations in tandem with hundreds of redundancies. The changes of infrastructure that evolved following the oil crisis of the 1970s left its mark on the company and again Moriarty was central to the process.

He had come to the company only a mere eighteen years after its foundation when ESB conquered the Shannon, and he saw the bogs of Ireland turned into an electric power grid as the flick of a switch transformed the distant rural heartlands into a giant milking parlour. The international consultancy ESBI would soon gain a respected presence in thirty-six countries worldwide in places as far apart as Ghana and Vietnam, where

Moriarty's magnetic personality earned him respect and admiration.

As the world reeled from the second oil crisis in the late 1970s ESB grasped the opportunity for demand side management and fuel diversification to lessen the previous dependence on oil. This heralded a new dimension in generating plants when the Moneypoint coal-fired station in Co. Clare and the North Wall station in Dublin's docklands were modified to a combined cycle that could operate using either oil or gas. In the 1980s ESB once more rose to the challenge presented by a huge technological ground-shift. A new customer charter – Moriarty's idea – was produced and there were crucial changes in the workplace. Relations between management and unions benefited and ESB's Industrial Council became a blueprint for industrial peace across the country. The one constant behind these events was the dynamism and vision of Moriarty.

Every advancement in humankind needs a pivotal figure, a leader who can galvanize others to greater endeavour and anticipate events a long way off. Paddy Moriarty was such a person, not only a dreamer but a doer, a high achiever with the Midas touch. Everything he turned his hand to seemed to go his way. He was also perceived to be lucky in that most of what he attempted fell effortlessly into place. But he was above all else a tremendously hard worker who led by example.

Ten years as Chief Executive of ESB, from 1981 to 1991, found him at the zenith of his career. His immediate successor was Joe Moran, followed by Ken O'Hara and the current holder of this office, Pdraig McManus. All of these people helped shape the future direction of the company, but Moriarty's contribution was critical to the advancement of ESB from a mere semi-state body into a top-class electricity utility.

There was one further distinction to come: Chairman of ESB, in which capacity Moriarty served until his retirement in 1995. The chain of command that began with J.J. Murphy and extended through R.F. Browne, Thomas Murray and Charles Dillon was carried forward by P.J. Moriarty during his last four and a half years with the company, continuing with the later appointments of William J. McCann and Tadhg O'Donoghue.

Paddy Moriarty's retirement marked the end of an era. There can be little doubt that his leave-taking left him emotionally raw because ESB had shaped his destiny as surely as he had shaped it with his cavalier approach and flamboyant spirit. His retirement was to be brief and during those final two years before his death at the age of seventy-one he was restricted in his everyday activities because of ill health. Nonetheless, his love of life remained undiminished.

#### 4. *Personnel – A Different Ball Game*

Two serious attempts at reorganization in ESB came close together between 1968 and 1970 and both would play an important part in moving the company into a new era. With relations between the Board and the unions at an all-time low and at the behest of the government, Professor Michael P. Fogarty, director of the Economic and Social Research Institute, was brought in to sort out the industrial relations chaos. Fogarty was to put the blame where he felt it belonged: on management, unions and workers alike. None were absolved and all were considered equally culpable. One commentator with strong union affiliations described the attitude of management as being akin to that of 'a Hebrew prophet groaning over his people'.

Difficulties in industrial relations had a knock-on effect within ESB, where internal structures in general were perceived to be far from perfect. This required further help from outside – in the summer of 1969 a firm of American consultants, McKenzie & Co., were commissioned to provide the necessary guidance and stimulus for change.

Fogarty's appointment and his committee – which included George F. Daly, Patrick D. McCarthy and John R. Maher – came on the initiative of the Minister for Labour, Dr Patrick J. Hillery, later President of the Irish Republic. The committee's brief was

to examine the present arrangements for determining pay and conditions of employment in the Electricity Supply Board for processing claims and settling disputes and to make recommendations on the changes and structures that must be put in place in order to safeguard electricity supply against interruption through industrial disputes.

Over a period to two years the Fogarty Committee produced two reports, one interim and one final, which provided a blueprint for changes within the electricity industry. A number of their recommendations had already been incorporated in the recent reorganization under McKenzie, which saw Moriarty installed as Director Personnel in 1970 – a newly created position in the company. Beefing up the personnel section was very much on Fogarty's mind too and this provided Moriarty with a mandate to exercise his trademark dynamism and imagination. In *Electricity Supply in Ireland – The History of ESB*, Maurice Manning and Moore McDowell wrote:

Both [Fogarty] Reports agreed that the Personnel Department should be upgraded, its head [P.J. Moriarty] joining ESB executive and being given serious negotiating powers. Improved communications implying more integration and, therefore, less autonomy should be established between head office and District management levels. The Chairman and Board should leave more day-to-day running to top management and concentrate on overall planning matters.

Similar exercises had been carried out in previous years as the size of the company outgrew existing management portfolios, but the reorganization that followed Fogarty and McKenzie was the biggest ever undertaken in ESB. On 20 April 1970, newly appointed Chief Executive Jimmy Kelly made a number of important recommendations to the Board. Three new positions had been created following the McKenzie Report and the Kelly set out his position:

I wish to make the following nominations for the positions of Director Personnel, Director Generation/Transmission and Director Commercial:

(1) Director Personnel: Mr P.J. Moriarty (formerly Assistant Chief Financial Officer).

(2) Director Generation/Transmission: Mr S. Tinney (formerly Assistant Chief Engineer).

(3) Director Commercial: Mr R.W. Ryder (formerly Head of Distribution Department).

The nomination for the position of Director Personnel follows interviews by a selection committee comprising the Chairman, Mr Tom Murray, Board member Mr Gordon Lambert and the Chief Executive, Mr J.J. Kelly. All of the applicants for the former vacancy of Personnel Manager were taken into consideration. Additionally, all senior staff down to and including Heads of Departments were asked if they wished to be considered for the position.

Three candidates were short-listed for interview. These were Messrs P.J. Moriarty, J.F. Lang and R.W. Ryder. Mr Moriarty was chosen by the selection committee and would enter the salary scale at £5000.

Thus began a new chapter in the life and times of Patrick John Moriarty. His new role was a prestigious posting that would give him real muscle on several fronts, particularly in his dealings with the trade unions who had dug their heels in over the previous decade with a consequent spate of strikes and serious unrest that had the potential to create havoc on several levels.

The origins of a personnel policy in ESB are to be found in the establishment in 1935 of a staff section in the company's administration who were expected to deal with issues that would normally fall within the remit of a personnel department. This section of three or four people was charged with such matters as retirement arrangements, personal files and the supervision of salaries. Involvement in industrial relations issues was miniscule and of a chance nature. Such matters were dealt with by the Board through the Secretary, who operated on the premise that the best way to handle disputes was to 'keep them talking' for as long as possible. The Board did not engage in any delegation of powers in this area and what existed on paper could hardly be said to constitute a proper personnel department. Things changed somewhat during the 1940s when the first ESB tribunal was set up and a personnel officer appointed. The structure of the company's personnel relations remained virtually unchanged from this time until after the McKenzie reorganization of 1969, when it was accepted that the situation could not be allowed drift any further. A series of bitter strikes in the 1960s hastened the changes that were to come.

The revised organizational changes introduced in 1970 were aimed at making the company more efficient and the revamped personnel function under Moriarty was very much part of that process. Under the new set-up, decision-making was clearly separated from day-to-day management of ESB and the Board's input was confined to the area of policy only. All management activities were co-ordinated under a single executive: the new position of Chief Executive. The position of Chairman remained a full-time appointment but his everyday activity now related mainly to policy issues, discussions with ministers responsible for energy and the external relations of the company generally.

The top tier of management was reorganized on the basis of four key areas, two operational (Generation/Transmission and Commercial) and two functional (Finance and Personnel). New director positions were created to take charge of each of these four areas in order to ensure that adequate attention was paid to them at top management level. These directors were made personally responsible to the Chief

Executive for policy development and planning in their own areas and for thinking through their long-term objectives.

It is clear how vital the revised personnel function was to become from 1970 onwards. This was a time when, as a result of inflation, projected revenue based on growth did not materialize and this caused severe financial problems that sent ripples right through the company. Being appointed Director Personnel, one of the four key areas identified by McKenzie, handed Moriarty a substantial portfolio with wide-ranging responsibilities. It gave him his first taste of real power and time would clearly demonstrate that he rose brilliantly to the challenges ahead. In one of his later speeches (1982) he turned the spotlight on the very essence of the job, which, he claimed, was not easy to define:

*For Personnel Managers the great trial may be to identify the positive power of change for progress, to spotlight the substance rather than frighten people with the shadow. This will require great concentration on facts, information and understanding leading, hopefully, to acceptance. How do you answer the man who asks: 'Where does the Personnel Manager fit in? He doesn't make anything, he markets nothing, he plans not production nor product diversification; he arranges not finance nor investment, nor creates employment nor diminishes it. He is not even an essential presence in administration because anyone who can devise and operate procedures is capable of doing as well. So what is his contribution, what is the cost/benefit and has he any significant role in relation to change?' Hard questions all. It would be strange if I did not have some answers having spent ten long and exciting years as a practitioner of the art (it is not really a trade, least of all a profession; it is, perhaps, a vocation!). Certainly you wouldn't do it for the money.*

Several examples of good personnel management followed from a man who was then speaking with the voice of experience:

*The good Personnel Manager will try to foster the climate among the workforce that change is a normal way of life for a dynamic organisation that wants to survive, prosper and provide an efficient service. The counter-balance of this is that the workforce must be convinced that, firstly, their interests will be protected if they co-operate with ongoing change and, secondly, that they will benefit materially from growing prosperity as an encouragement not to have to try to exploit every change as a buyoff.*

*The good Personnel Manager will see to it that personnel management is lifted to the level of the boardroom in his company and that it is subject to the same level of strategic planning as is finance, production, marketing. He will create a corporate climate that is adequately people-orientated. He will promote understanding in his organisation of what the workforce feels and in the workforce of what the business needs. He will have to try to bring these often conflicting interests and circumstances into some kind of harmony.*

*Perhaps the greatest and most lasting contribution of good personnel management is the development and execution of sound personnel strategy by weaving together many strands in such a way that progress towards the organisation's objective is never obscured. Finally, the good Personnel Manager must be part of the management team. He cannot be neutral, an honest broker or a referee. He must act in the company's interest at all times and his loyalty is with his employer.*

Within a few weeks of Jimmy Kelly's recommendation to the Board, the new incumbent had settled into his job. His earlier career had seen him move steadily through the ranks and it came as no surprise when he was invested with a post to which he was eminently suited. In terms of dealing with conflict areas and negotiating the path of peace rather than confrontation, there was no better man, as subsequent events would prove. His career path and experience show that wise senior heads were giving him the opportunity to fit himself for higher office.

He brought a wide range of experience to his new post. As a young man in Secretariat/ Personnel he had been given the task of negotiating the contentious 'walking time', inherited when Dublin Corporation employees who were later employed at the Pigeon House generating station were paid extra money for, allegedly, walking to work. Understandably, ESB did not wish to be saddled with this additional outlay of approximately £15,000 per annum on a continuing basis and, with the staffing of the new Ringsend generating station coming on course in late 1954, Moriarty was chosen to concoct a formula that would effectively 'buy out' the workers involved. A lump sum of £41,000 was agreed after the unions had initially sought £60,000.

This was his first major 'coup' involving ESB unions and it saved the company almost £20,000 – a lot of money in those days. These negotiations showed Moriarty, at the early age of twenty-nine, to be an able dealer who would be well fitted to handle similar tasks in the much more difficult environment in which he found himself after the McKenzie reorganization.

With his transfer to Research and Audit in July 1955, Moriarty had gained a wide knowledge of all aspects of ESB's business around the country. Here he not only introduced a totally new approach towards districts and generating regions, but also used the service to 'export' best practice procedures around the organization. Whenever major projects in the Accountancy/Administration section were instituted, the man usually called upon to head them up was Paddy Mo. He negotiated the buyout of the various private electricity undertakings when the Board moved to take them over during the 1950s and later, and he



was often assigned to outside consultancy contractors who were brought in to study and make recommendations on organizational restructuring. He headed up ESB's changeover to decimal currency and was appointed project manager for the new head office building, which replaced the old Georgian buildings in Fitzwilliam Street.

Up until the 1970s, before Fogarty and McKenzie produced the reports that ultimately provided the momentum for change within the company, ESB was an autocratic organization richly endowed with engineering brains and accountants who traditionally remained in the front ranks of the company's executives until they retired. Michael Shiel, author of *The Quiet Revolution*, claims that 'engineers and accountants never got on', and this underlying tension may have militated against the way things were done in ESB for many years. Anybody who did not graduate through either of those professions could not realistically hope to reach the top of an organization run along the same lines as the civil service. Here, promotion would always follow a time-honoured and predictable pattern.

Moriarty was the first to breach this inner sanctum without having acquired third-level education and the degrees to bolster his case in the pecking order. He did, however, through correspondence courses and home study, acquire a professional qualification as a member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries in London (he was subsequently to be made a Fellow of the Institute). With this qualification, coupled with his own natural flair and ability, there was no need for any further decorations.

But while he had acquired, through experience, all the skills necessary to make a success of any assignment handed to him, the task of leading the Personnel department after the reorganization that followed the McKenzie Report of 1969 and the two Fogarty Reports of 1968-9 was immense. This was a different ballgame: it embraced the social upheaval following the industrial chaos of the 1960s, when a limited form of prosperity inculcated a growing militancy in the country-wide workforce. The unions now saw their opportunity to press for real reform in the new climate that prevailed. These developments would ensure that Moriarty was in for a rough ride.

In his new capacity as Director Personnel the mandate to initiate change and to sort out the industrial relations turmoil after years of bitterness and division was now handed to Moriarty. This was an inspired appointment of the right man in the right place at the right time. The company had also made a considerable investment in staff training and development. The new incumbent was expected to set up a Manpower

division to streamline this process, which would enable ESB to provide from its own resources the skilled operatives needed at all levels for its future development and expansion. Growing its own line management and supervisory staff became integral to ESB policy under Moriarty. Given his avowed commitment to the company and to its ethos, he would not have wanted it any other way.

A strike that involved staff mainly from the Computer division lasted from August 1969 to February 1970 and seriously affected the company's accounting and collection programme. The new Director Personnel was pitchforked straight away into the whirlpool of industrial relations strife without any 'honeymoon' or settling-in period. Even though the strike ended just before he took up his new post, the implications were clear: there was no time to waste, and Paddy Mo responded by bringing an unprecedented fervour to his task. Significantly, ESB's annual report for the year ending 31 March 1970 noted:

The management re-structuring referred to earlier has also been carried through in the Personnel function and the organisation streamlined to provide for more rapid and more effective handling of all personnel matters. The Board is satisfied that this new establishment will contribute substantially to the resolving of problems in this field and will provide a sound basis on which to build more harmonious relations in the future.

Already one can sense a change in attitude from the Board. Moriarty's 'human, open and participative' approach in his dealings with people, whether they agreed with him or not, had yet to come to the fore but it is clear the top strata of management recognized that nothing could be gained by continuing confrontation.

Personnel had come under heavy fire in the Fogarty Report because of a perceived serious failure in service to the staff and, by extension, to the customers. Traditionally, ESB had always been regarded as a very good employer, not only in terms of pay and conditions but also in the various support services it provided for its workforce. The company had always emphasized the personnel management aspect of its business. However, Fogarty targeted Personnel with some trenchant criticism. The manner in which industrial relations issues were being handled, to quote just one example, attracted special attention:

The country has the right to ask of ESB that its administration in industrial relations shall be recognised as surpassing normal standards to the degree needed to ensure that breakdowns, such as might be tolerable in other industries, are avoided.

The level of disenchantment that prevailed gave Moriarty all the incentive he needed to produce results as quickly as possible. The company had obviously outgrown its structures – some of them in place since 1927 – and consequently the need for reform was obvious. Rightly or wrongly, most of the discrepancies that existed were being laid at the door of Personnel before Moriarty rode to the rescue. When Fogarty homed in on Personnel as an area needing a serious overhaul, he found many staff who had little good to say about the way that particular discipline was functioning. One strident comment, ‘They were like an order of Trappist monks who had cut themselves off from the outside world,’ typified the level of frustration that existed.

Moriarty, with power at his command that had never before been vested in any of his predecessors, soon set about initiating change. The recommendations that flowed from the Fogarty Report would have to be implemented and Moriarty pursued these with vigour. His dealings with the unions would forever redound to his credit as an extremely clever and astute tactician who, far from exacerbating the conflict environment that prevailed, would try to mollify it, adopting a conciliatory approach that surprised even his toughest adversaries.

His opening address to the unions was a clever manoeuvre as he showed a genuine willingness to broker peace. ‘It is time for a new understanding, a fresh start, a pooling of available expertise to attack major problems and search for new answers,’ he said. ‘It is time for co-operation, not confrontation.’ This demonstrated a different approach. It was clear that the new man recognized the need for fair play and even the hardcore union agitators soon came to realize he was not in the business of exploitation. He demanded a *quid pro quo* in terms of giving enough to gain something in return and that was accepted as the bare minimum that he could aspire to. Eventually those who opposed him came to recognize his innate decency and wholesomeness of approach. In effect, the newly appointed Director Personnel wanted to establish a partnership embracing unions, management and workers that could only be to the benefit of all.

His new vision for ESB included a substantial investment in peace, reconciliation, trust and mutual respect, although it didn’t happen overnight. Speaking at the Regional Technical College in Galway on 19 May 1976, Moriarty said: ‘After six years I am battle-scarred, a little disillusioned and totally incapable of being surprised or shocked or upset by anything. Nevertheless I am still an idealist and an optimist.’ Fast-forward to 1991 and we find that he was still disillusioned, hurt, angry

and disappointed when he spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the company about his efforts to civilize industrial relations in ESB over a period of twenty-one years. Yet another damaging strike had put the lights out and this led him to apologize to the people of Ireland with an admission that he had failed in his quest to broker peace. He had not failed, of course, because the Cassells Report was close at hand and eventually the long saga of unrest was ended.

The most significant elements in the new Personnel function as it operated from 1970 onwards were the development of a personnel objective, the encouragement of a distinctive management style, the establishment of facilities for training and development and the consultation/participation/negotiation procedures that were put in place.

In 1973 a discussion document outlining the personnel objective was approved by the Board. It was discussed with almost all of the 12,000 staff in groups of about fifty in their work location and it was implemented as the guiding influence for the practice of personnel management in ESB. The final objective was

The continuing development of an effective workforce to meet the increasing needs of the community in a working environment that is human, open and participative and which provides an equitable reward system and opportunity for personal development.

The Board approved appropriate policies and plans governing the activities of line management, which was seen as a very important issue. Great emphasis was placed on establishing the primary responsibility of these people for the development of satisfactory human relations in their own sphere of influence and on giving them the authority that was necessary. There was much more to follow. The general ESB practice of the past was adapted as firm policy, i.e. that the company would 'grow' its own executives without having to resort to external recruitment at the different levels of the organization's structure. This placed emphasis on in-house training and the development of a Manpower division that was part of Moriarty's remit. Facilities were greatly expanded and covered all staff from top management down to Craft and General workers. The success of this programme may be judged by the fact that in 1975 ESB launched an international consultancy for electricity utilities in the Third World and in the Middle East and has maintained a profitable presence in this highly competitive field to this day.

Much had been said and written – most of it by Paddy Moriarty himself – about the possibility of creating a dynamic within the organization in order to bring about higher motivation and commitment to

corporate objectives. It was accepted that the single most important factor would be the style and approach of the top management team. Here Moriarty excelled. As in all other aspects of his new role, he led by example. His precept was: 'More notice is taken of what people do themselves rather than what they say'. He set out the general thrust that should be encouraged in managers, enumerated as follows:

- (1) A high standard in everything – the pursuit of excellence.
- (2) A sense of commitment to the community service provided.
- (3) A consciousness of the cost of operations and the implications of this on consumers.
- (4) A pride in ESB and a strong sense of identification with it.
- (5) A disciplined approach to corporate plans and problems in all spheres.
- (6) An acceptance and a readiness to encourage change of attitude and of practice.
- (7) A willingness to communicate, to consult and to accept advice.
- (8) A concern for humanity in all aspects of the business.

This new management style, all of it the brain-child of P.J. Moriarty, was encouraged and actively promoted in seminars, discussion groups and development programmes.

In tandem with these aspirations, a climate of consultation and participation was fostered throughout the 1970s. Trade unions and staff were regularly briefed on new developments and joint working parties and review bodies were set up on an *ad hoc* basis to develop solutions as regards work methods, practices, reporting, manning, etc. After agreed solutions had been identified the ordinary industrial relations negotiation process took over to establish the price tag, if any, for desired change. The negotiating process itself was streamlined by the introduction of an agreed code of industrial relations practice.

Further impetus was given to productivity bargaining as the 1970s drew to a close, so much so that in less than ten years ESB's business increased by about 60 per cent without any increase in staff. Against the background of severe industrial unrest that prevailed this was an astonishing achievement.

Within two years of his appointment Moriarty had made his mark on the conference circuit throughout the country. He soon became known as an outstanding public speaker and his services were constantly in demand. From the papers he presented to various audiences we can gauge the depth of his social conscience and the vision that he nurtured, not just for ESB, but for the Irish nation.

Speaking to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in

Dublin's Liberty Hall on 8 March 1976, Moriarty addressed the highly contentious issue of appointing worker directors to semi-state organizations in response to a government initiative. In a speech running to over 5000 words he made many telling points:

*We must be committed to progressing the concept of worker participation to its widest dimensions.*

*We must be committed to the growth of social progress, community wealth and welfare and have a true community spirit in sharing the wealth of society equitably.*

*We must preserve the fundamental independence and autonomy of trade unions in looking after the interests of their members through a free collective bargaining process. In other words, trade unions must not become hostages to structures of participation.*

*In ESB we successfully planned and implemented schemes that did not make much economic sense but made good social sense and we became committed to them. We believe we are flexible and progressive enough to approach the first tentative steps towards industrial democracy through the election of Worker Directors.*

*Worker Directors should have a major contribution to make as people who can articulate accurately at the highest level the views of employees. However, I can never see them as 'delegates' who get riding instructions from unions or pressure groups.*

*Given that there are two sides to conflict about sharing a cake the common interest of the two sides should be to make the cake bigger.*

*It is a disincentive to good subordinate staff to observe toleration of incompetence.*

*Better citizens will develop among happy and contented workers who have a worthwhile stake in their enterprise instead of being regarded as hewers of wood and drawers of water.*

*Whatever the purpose of an enterprise or organisation, whatever its technology or its competence, it is – and will always remain – a human institution, never perfect.*

*All must be prepared to treat one another as equals, to understand that no matter what their separate roles or positions they are all human beings with hopes, fears and frustrations, with feelings of hurt and joy. These are the disparate threads that bind us all together.*

*We are not all Utopians in ESB nor do we believe we are fast approaching the Promised Land. We are not. We are trying hard but we are under no illusions. Change is slow and painful and it is a long haul to win the trust and confidence of 12,000 employees.*

Ever the realist, Moriarty was prepared to face up to unpalatable truths. There was no panacea for the difficulties that impinged on society in the 1970s; nor are there any today. He acknowledged that progress would be 'slow and painful'.

Manpower planning and utilization became an important ingredient as the personnel function progressed through the 1970s under Moriarty. This was where the 'people' aspect, on which he placed so much importance, came into play. His view was that 'people are the most important resource that any company or organisation can aspire to'. As his job developed it gave him a span of control that extended far wider than even Fogarty could have envisaged, with three key executives reporting to him: the Industrial Relations manager, the manager of Manpower and the Personnel Services divisional manager. Before he moved on to become Assistant Chief Executive and later Chief Executive, there were approximately 150 employees in Personnel. By now, the following significant changes had come into play:

A clear definition of ESB personnel policy on the basis of a human, open and participative relationship with employees. A reciprocal commitment from the workers was demanded.

The establishment of a joint management/union arbitration system for solving disputes.

The introduction of job evaluation covering clerical, accounting and technical support levels.

Machinery put in place for the negotiation of comprehensive agreements for all staff, incorporating peace clauses.

The harmonization of conditions of employment had been brought to a new level.

The introduction of worker members to the Board in 1978 was to become ingrained in future personnel policy. In addition, the 1970s saw a number of attempts to enhance worker participation, notably the Worker Council experiments. However, these failed to gain the required level of support and were later abandoned.

In 1974 the aims of the newly established Manpower division in Personnel were defined as follows:

To match and optimise the manpower structure for the long-term needs of the company.

To ensure that functional departments develop proper manning standards for all ESB activities and that line management provides the basis for staffing them.

To identify opportunities to improve productivity and to ensure that the necessary trade union agreements are negotiated.

The role of Personnel in these matters was said to be 'consultative and advisory to line management'. A Work, Planning and Review programme was designed to identify with each manager his key areas of effectiveness together with performance indexes and action plans. Implementation started with training workshops for directors, department heads, district managers and their immediate subordinates. Personnel staff led discussion between managers and subordinates in the initial development of a management guide and in subsequent review sessions. Discussions, working parties and surveys were undertaken as appropriate and progressed into organization structures, relationships and communications.

The recruitment, training, education and development of staff was one of the main functions of Manpower. External education programmes were set up with close liaison between ESB, ANCO and the Vocational Educational System to ensure that ESB requirements were catered for in the various courses that were available. Courses were made available for top management that would help them improve their ability to make better selections in recruitment and promotion.

Intelligence and aptitude testing was introduced on a limited scale for recruitment and promotion selection. Further techniques for the evaluation of staff potential were introduced as appropriate in association with a record of past performance. Professional and post-graduate education was made available under certain circumstances. Internal training and development programmes catered for operatives in Generation, Distribution, Sales and Finance. A central training school in Personnel provided training programmes on a wide range of issues and these programmes were enacted with line management to meet the needs of the organization.

A management development programme was developed after consultation with line management and staff. Four groups of courses were made available: Personal Skills and Techniques; Quantitative Management Techniques; Understanding Internal Relationships and Procedures in ESB; and External Environment, covering the interaction of ESB with the community.

The role of Manpower covered a wide spectrum and Jack Finnan, a double All-Ireland minor winner with the Dublin hurlers and one of the key Manpower executives, provides a snapshot of Moriarty's input:

Paddy Mo defined the Personnel function in support of the corporate objective, which was to provide an acceptable level of service to the community at minimum cost. For Personnel this involved *inter-alia* the



continuing development of an effective workforce in a 'human, open and participative' environment and that's where Manpower came in. ESB people were the big thing with him, especially their development but with an emphasis too on reciprocal obligations. He realized that good industrial procedures alone were not going to solve the industrial relations mayhem of the time. There would have to be a whole new management approach to staff. I would say that the turnaround in Personnel in the 1970s was his greatest achievement.

Vincent Fahy, a Mayo man who took over as Director Personnel from Moriarty in 1981, inherited a much improved facility where openness, transparency and respect became the prime ingredients in building a tremendously successful facility. The overall package could now be used as the cornerstone to take Personnel on to a new level in the following years. The former Mayo minor footballer had this to say:

Paddy was a great motivator and he made people enthusiastic about their jobs and about the changes that were coming. Jimmy Kelly as Chief Executive saw to it that he got the support he needed. The Board were lucky to find somebody of Moriarty's calibre and personality who was able to persuade some of the management about the need for change.

Fahy's view is that Moriarty was 'absolutely determined to change the company'. The ESB, he felt, 'took over his life – too much so, in my judgment'. He thought that Moriarty saw himself as 'the prime mover to initiate change, although he wasn't always right'.

Don Mahony, Company Secretary from 1992 to 1997, explained:

The 1970s were difficult times but he set up a very good structure in Personnel where he had some exceptional guys with him – people like Kevin Heffernan on the industrial relations side is just one example. There was a total acceptance of all personnel policies and the staff accepted that everything was above board. Industrial relations would have been his main focus. He was seen as a very tough boss but very likeable and somebody who would go to the ends of the earth to help if you were in difficulty. But in no way did he make your job easy and he demanded a standard that was far higher than would apply in most businesses.

Lorcan Canning, who held the post of Director Personnel for eight years prior to his retirement in 1997, speaks of Moriarty's unorthodox approach and his simple, homespun values:

I knew him as a boss initially when he was holding down the position of Assistant Chief Accountant. Following a meeting one day, as I was walking back to the office he fell in beside me and asked for my opinions. I

told him quite frankly what I thought, which wasn't intended to be complimentary towards management. A few days later he rang up and asked me to come over to his office where we had a discussion. There was a lot of restructuring going on at the time and he put me on a team along with Jack Finnan, Lewis Healy and Henry Matthews. I thought that was a very favourable situation to have evolved from a simple conversation. When I was later appointed to the position of Director Personnel I was doing the job that he had held previously but I wouldn't have been able to do it with the kind of flair or expertise that he brought to bear. He was prepared to take chances and there was no nonsense about him. He was a straight talker and I found him great to work for because he expected to get things done. He delegated responsibility and allowed people get on with it. He did produce results and he changed the whole culture of the place.

Another colleague says (slightly tongue-in-cheek), 'Paddy Mo was always excessively influenced by women in the job, with the result that he promoted women's rights before anybody else even thought about it.' Lorcan Canning can see many reasons why this concept was going to be a slow process:

When I was appointed Director Personnel I put up equal opportunities as my target, i.e. to advance the concept of equal opportunities for women. Then I would go to the line managers and say: 'Here's what we are developing.' They would say: 'Ah, sure, we don't need any of that kind of thing here. We're not like that. We have equal opportunities already.' They were so taken up with their own responsibilities that they wouldn't have the time to devote to something that basically did not concern them.

The last word fell to the late Alf Kelly, Director Generation and Transmission from 1980 to 1990:

In my view Paddy lifted Personnel out of the dark ages. Previously everybody used to look on the place like a disease. You wouldn't have anything to do with it. Moriarty changed all that. In a word, I would say he brought humanity into the place.

Ever the perfectionist who tried to balance fairness against achievement, ESB's top man would not wish for a finer epitaph.

## 5. *Industrial Peace – How the Prize Was Won*

*We have a thriving mythology and folklore which permeates almost every condition of 'Man At Work' and it has us in an industrial strait-jacket.*

*I am not anti-union and I have consistently supported the creation of strong unions. They are an integral part of a free society and their role and its importance cannot be denied. But no institution, whether it be private enterprise or state enterprise or professional body or trade union, can claim absolute domination in society, nor can any institution be allowed the freedom to override the common good.*

Dr P.J. Moriarty, speaking to the Cork branch of the IMI  
on 10 March 1975

Industrial relations is by its very nature a conflict arena where it is extremely difficult to broker long-term peace in an atmosphere already strained by previous turmoil. This was the challenge that awaited Paddy Moriarty after his appointment as Director Personnel in April 1970.

As events transpired, this was the setting that was to define his career in ESB. More than in any other field, the cut and thrust of industrial relations was where he left an indelible imprint, not only on his own company but also on a nationwide canvas. Any task that demanded communicative skills found him at his irrepensible best. He was by nature a charismatic figure, a natural talker with a gregarious disposition that won him many friends and was ideally suited to the task in hand. His detractors constituted a tiny minority. Con Murphy, a rights commissioner and Chairman of ESB's Industrial Council – a body set up in 1970 to resolve disputes before they reached the Labour Court – is occasionally cited as someone not exactly a paid-up member of the

Moriarty fan club. A well-known trade union activist of the time describes both men as 'two big egos' who enjoyed the power base from which they operated, but no personality clash, real or imaginary, ever affected the serious issues that were afoot.

During his rise through the ranks Moriarty could not but have observed how badly industrial relations had been served within the company over a period of twenty-five years. This was not necessarily the fault of those who had served before him. Rather was it an indictment of the system, or perhaps lack of it, in place. In *Electricity Supply in Ireland – The History of ESB*, Maurice Manning and Moore McDowell had this to say:

The ESB was merely one of many organisations affected by the rapid economic and social changes of the 1960s which put unprecedented strains on industrial relations at all levels. These strains were to be all the greater in ESB both because of its size and because of its unique vulnerability to industrial relations pressures arising from the fact that virtually any strike in ESB was a threat to the whole community. But part of the problem lay with ESB itself and, in particular, with its failure to predict future trends and difficulties and to devise new industrial relations structures to keep pace with the overall growth of the organisation.

Paddy Moriarty saw plenty of reasons why things could not be allowed meander along in the way they had been going. He saw at first hand an organization that, to quote one reliable source, was 'top heavy and complacent in its inertia and over-managed with more than 13,000 employees', where little progress had been made in certain critical areas since its foundation in 1927. The same problems were not unknown to other companies during the 1960s – a decade of extreme industrial turbulence – but that did not lessen their impact on the nation's biggest semi-state body where the concept of providing a vital service to consumers and industry alike was considered fundamental to its existence.

Like most companies scattered throughout the Republic of Ireland and even Britain at that time, there was a pressing need to modernize and upgrade structures that were on the verge of meltdown. Within ESB there was a culture of industrial unrest that had escalated out of all control during the 1960s and threatened to plunge the company into crisis on a few occasions. During the last three years of the 1960s there were some fifty instances of strikes or industrial action of one kind or another. Even the inaugural Shannon Scheme was plagued with strikes back in 1927–9 and this malign tradition had continued at regular intervals for almost fifty years. The government had fulfilled its obligations,

ostensibly at least, by appointing committees of inquiry whose terms of reference was to find some way out of the dilemma.

But if there seemed to be a passive acceptance in government and elsewhere that ‘something would turn up’ to sort out the chaos, the man they called Paddy Mo thought differently and applied a new, visionary philosophy. He believed in taking a proactive approach and his infectious enthusiasm for the task became apparent very quickly after his appointment to the post of Director Personnel. For the first time since joining the company in 1945, he now had the muscle and the mandate to initiate real change. The muscle was his by inclination and the mandate came by way of the Board’s acceptance of the Fogarty Report of 1968, a government-inspired exercise that sought to bring some kind of order to the industrial mayhem at ESB.

He surrounded himself with good people who had the mental fibre and steely resolve needed to see the task through to its conclusion. One of them was Kevin Heffernan, the former well-known Dublin footballer and manager, who was appointed Manager Industrial Relations in 1972. Before him another Kerryman, Johnny Coughlin from Annascaul, held this post under Moriarty. There were many more who helped steer the company along a different path: Jack Finnan, Lorcan Canning, Lewis Healy, Michael Hayden, Neil Ryan and Henry Matthews were foremost in creating a new climate of ‘human, open and participative’ personnel management, advocated by Moriarty in his numerous discourses on the subject.

Certainly, neither Moriarty nor Heffernan were in the business of appeasement at any price. Moriarty, particularly, was always fully aware how far he could go and how much he could achieve. Sean Geraghty, a militant trade unionist of the time who often opposed his policies, describes him, not in uncomplimentary terms, as a ‘fixer’. Taking him on across a table became a hazardous task, as the unions and the strikers soon found out. Kevin Heffernan put it succinctly when he admitted that, if you tangled with him, ‘you weren’t going to win’.

Jimmy Tinkler, ESB Branch Secretary of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers’ Union, remembers Heffernan, a legendary figure in Dublin GAA circles, for being ‘extremely tough but never dirty’. Bernie Finan, a representative of the maverick Shift Workers’ Association that brought ESB and, by extension, the whole country to the verge of shutdown in 1972, described Moriarty’s second in command as ‘tough but fair’. When Heffernan was made a Freeman of the City of Dublin in May 2004, Eamon Carr, writing in the *Evening Herald*, reported that

Even now, Kevin Heffernan's combative philosophy of winning remains intact. The fierce competitive spirit that defined his days both as player and manager of the Dublin senior team remains undiminished. There's no hint of coy diplomacy, no cute social soft-shoe shuffling. Just that aura of focused sporting aggression that served him well in many campaigns including, one suspects, those of civvy street.

The ESB, torn apart by industrial unrest over the previous decade, needed strong leadership and they got it. The Moriarty-Heffernan alliance was crucial in the years that followed.

The records will show that industrial strife in ESB had been building up to a climax played out in the 1960s, 'the decade of upheaval', but trouble on a lesser scale went back much further. The annual report for the year ending 31 March 1947, less than two years after Patrick John Moriarty had signed on the dotted line at home in the family kitchen, refers to a tribunal that was set up under Section 9 of the Electricity Supply Board (Superannuation) Act, 1942 to resolve outstanding issues. In 1949 a total of thirteen industrial disputes were dealt with. In 1950 the figure was fifteen industrial disputes and five claims in respect of superannuation benefit. In 1951 the total was twenty-five. In 1952 thirty-six industrial disputes were pressed by a multiplicity of unions: the Electrical Trade Union, the Irish Engineering, Industrial and Electrical Trade Union, the Irish Engineering and Foundry Union, the Irish Seamen and Port Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Energy Union, and so on.

The position had improved marginally by 1953 when twenty-seven disputes were processed. In 1954 the figure was down to fourteen. In 1955 the figure had again escalated to twenty-six. This trend continued until the end of the 1950s, by which time ESB had been affected by eight strikes in total, none of which was considered too serious. However, that position deteriorated rapidly between 1961 and 1968 when there were thirty-eight strikes, two of which brought power cuts and a serious curtailment of supply.

On 28 August 1961 the stage was set for a decade of severe industrial unrest when electricians at a number of power stations withdrew their labour as a result of a wages dispute between their unions and the employer side of the National Joint Industrial Committee for the Electrical Contracting Industry, of which ESB was a member. Picketing of generating stations continued for a number of days after 5000 men absented themselves from work. The national supply of electricity was placed in jeopardy for several weeks. Strenuous efforts by ESB engineering and supervisory staff averted what would have been a disastrous

breakdown in supply. Following settlement of the strike, the government established a Commission of Inquiry to avoid similar difficulties in the future. The ESB annual report for 1961 noted: 'The Board wishes the gravity of the situation to be understood by all in the hope that future labour disputes will not expose the community to the serious risks of an interruption in electricity supplies.'

In November 1962 the Commission of Inquiry under the Electricity (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1961 submitted its report and made the following recommendations:

The ESB should negotiate with the organisations concerned relative to a Comprehensive National Wage Agreement in order to consolidate the existing wage and salary structures within the industry and to clarify the rates of remuneration, overtime rates, allowances, hours of leave, discipline, etc. and all such regulations bearing on employment.

Eventually, the completion of a formal national agreement on wages and conditions for ESB employees was finalized and a schedule of new and revised conditions for incorporation in a comprehensive national agreement was accepted. These critical agreements were duly signed by the company and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

However, these initiatives did not succeed in buying industrial peace and the national recommendation ratified by employees and trade unions in January 1964 'has not succeeded in lessening pressure of claims', the ESB annual report states. Hopes for a long period of industrial stability were not realized. 'Several claims considered to be in breach of the Agreement were pressed strongly, some to the point of withdrawal of labour,' the annual report notes. In his report to the Board, Chairman T.F. Murray states: 'Industrial relations arrangements in this essential service demands a fresh and constructive re-appraisal.'

In May 1965 a threat of strike action by manual workers led to an intervention by the Labour Court. In January 1966 there was a further threat of strike action by a number of draughtsmen who had rejected a previous award by the Labour Court. February 1966 saw a major strike by mechanical fitters – a category that wielded tremendous power within the organization – and by the end of the year industrial relations within ESB were still very disturbed. The annual report observed

Experience has shown all too clearly that the Tribunal or Labour Court awards which cast the Board in the unwilling role of pace-setter do not make for harmonious relationships either within ESB or in the community generally. The Board hopes that a better atmosphere and machinery for settling disputes may evolve from the new Department

of Labour and from the proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations and Trade Unions Act.

A cumulative increase for ESB clerical staff of 29 per cent over three years, from 1963 to 1965 inclusive, had serious implications both for the government's ninth-round National Pay Agreement and for fellow ESB workers who could now justifiably claim to have been left behind. This set the scene for further conflict.

On the morning of 9 May 1966 all generating outlets except Ferbane, North Wall and the hydro stations were closed down because operating crews at the stations had not passed the pickets placed by the mechanical fitters. This forced ESB to shed load on a large scale, causing serious inconvenience to consumers as the lights went out across the country. In the afternoon pickets were withdrawn and supply restored. However, pickets were again placed on some stations on subsequent dates with further disruption of supplies. This was one of the most serious strikes in ESB history, extending intermittently for two months.

After settlement of the fitters' strike the government introduced the Electricity (Special Provisions) Act, 1966, which 'made it illegal to strike or to support any kind of industrial action which endangered the supply of electricity'. This Act was unworkable without union support and was branded a complete failure from day one. Eventually, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions approached the Minister for Labour to have it repealed. The abolition of the two statutory ESB tribunals opened the way to a new form of conciliation. The repeal of the Electricity (Special Provisions) Act followed the setting up of ESB's Joint Industrial Council (JIC) on 13 April 1970 under the chairmanship of Con Murphy, who operated outside the company as a statutory rights commissioner and who was re-appointed on numerous occasions by agreement between management and unions. The JIC subsequently proved a powerful mechanism in improving industrial relations within ESB and in reducing the climate of discord that prevailed.

During the early 1960s none of these measures, including the Electricity (Special Provisions) Act of 1966, brought the kind of industrial stability that was needed. By 1968 the position had worsened and one of the most damaging strikes to date went ahead when unskilled and semi-skilled staff in several generating stations walked off the job. This unofficial action caused load-shedding in order to maintain supply. Chaos followed when the day workers' strike, as it became known, caused a prolonged stoppage that in turn resulted in all industry having to switch off supplies periodically in order to maintain essential serv-



ices. This strike commenced on Tuesday, 26 March 1968, and a government order under the Electricity (Special Provisions) Act was invoked against the strikers who were fined for illegal picketing.

The upshot of this measure was that a number of men who refused to pay the fines were promptly lodged in Mountjoy Prison for having contravened the Act, which made it a criminal offence for ESB workers to withdraw their labour under certain circumstances. The highly emotive dimension that ensued when men were put behind bars added a new and alarming twist to an already combustible situation. Three days of simmering tension followed before the crisis eased when ESB offered to pay the fines and sent a fleet of taxis to bring the men to their homes following their release from prison. On Saturday, 30 March, both the unions and the unofficial National Strike Committee recommended a return to work, which was accepted. Two days later the unions advanced the presentation of their case before the Labour Court with considerable success.

Nine further unofficial strikes took place during the year. The longest of these (four days) arose from a refusal of ESB workers to pass unofficial pickets on power stations during a Bord na Móna dispute.

By now it had become increasingly clear that industrial relations within ESB had degenerated into a festering sore that was being lanced at regular intervals, with growing unrest amongst employees who were aligned to no less than nineteen different trade unions. Adding to the complexity of the situation was the rivalry and tension that existed between most of the unions who often pursued their own agendas – hence the decision by ESB shift workers to go outside the trade union movement altogether. Paying various categories of workers the ‘down-town rate’ as applied in the private and commercial sectors was never going to work in a semi-state environment.

This was the unfortunate legacy inherited by Paddy Moriarty when he took over as Director Personnel in April 1970. He had been handed an extremely difficult assignment, a task so complex that nobody could reasonably expect an expeditious solution. The company’s industrial relations structures were in disarray, although the recent setting up of the Joint Industrial Council to deal with disputes and a comprehensive agreement with unions that represented manual staff and covered conditions of employment, works committees and grievance procedures brought some small measure of hope. The warning signals had been signposted two years in advance of Moriarty’s involvement and, fully aware of the inherent dangers, the government appointed Professor Michael P.

Fogarty to carry out a study of the entire industrial relations network within ESB with a view to making suitable recommendations. The date was 11 April 1968 and Fogarty's brief was set out in the following terms:

To examine the present arrangements for determining pay and conditions of employment in the Electricity Supply Board, for processing claims and settling disputes and to make recommendations to the Minister for Labour, Dr P.J. Hillery, on the changes which would safeguard electricity supply against interruption through industrial disputes.

This was an inspired initiative by government – the first of its kind that really worked – to sort out the mess. Fogarty and his team (one of whom was P.D. McCarthy, chief adviser to the Minister for Labour on industrial relations), after several months in conclave, produced two substantive reviews: an interim report dated 5 July 1968 and a final report in March 1969, which highlighted some glaring discrepancies in the industrial relations system as it operated within the company. Some of the consultants' observations, which were critical of both the unions and ESB management, did not make for pleasant reading. In the fullness of time a number of Fogarty's recommendations were thrown out by the unions but others, referring to decentralization of negotiation and consolidation of unions, were adopted and with very productive results, too. Over a period of years the Fogarty Report became a blueprint for industrial peace within ESB and had a domino effect extending through the whole structure of industrial relations in Ireland. But on all sides there is an acceptance that nothing would have made much difference in ESB – certainly not in the short term – without Moriarty's dynamic leadership and innovative approach.

Fogarty indicted the ESB Board for its 'failure to provide effective personnel leadership at top executive level or to ensure that personnel policies get the weighting in Board and executive discussions which they deserve'. He further stated: 'In the evidence submitted to us there has been considerable criticism of the present Chairman of the Board'. He suggested that much of this criticism was unjustified. One of his recommendations, which was later adopted, had weighty implications for the incoming Director Personnel: 'Better results will be achieved by putting the Personnel Director in a strong position within the organization and giving him adequate authority to negotiate and settle with the unions.' Moriarty's position of power within ESB was never in doubt after gaining this key appointment in April 1970.

The interim report included one chapter on trade unions and the way in which they operated and made several observations, one of

which read: ‘The right policy is to give the unions the tools and challenge them to finish the job of providing efficient, strong and responsible staff representation.’ More full-time officers for negotiation, the implementation of an effective shop steward system ‘in those areas of ESB where none exists at present’, and strict adherence to procedures with ‘no encouragement, express or implied, given to unofficial or breakaway movements’ was also recommended. In another passage the unions were charged with ‘too much complacency and defensiveness’.

There was much more, including a recommendation that ESB’s two statutory tribunals – a most contentious issue over many years – should be replaced with a single voluntary body to become part of the Board’s normal negotiating mechanism and ‘part of the joint process for determining disputes’. For the first time ever, a ‘no strike’ clause was broached in return for financial inducements to include increased productivity. This became a powerful bargaining tool in subsequent negotiations between the unions on one side and ESB on the other.

The arrival of Paddy Moriarty with a mandate to sort out the industrial relations chaos in ESB did not provide an immediate panacea. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the situation got worse before it got better, as witness the damaging shift workers’ strike in 1972.

The Shift Workers’ Association was founded in response to a growing perception among the power station workers that they were being frozen out by the official trade union movement and were getting nowhere. Jimmy Tinkler denies this and claims that the leaders of the breakaway faction were ‘false prophets who could not deliver on their promises to the workers’. Kevin Heffernan believes that the shift workers had ‘too much time on their hands for thinking’ about grievances, real and imaginary. Bernie Finan, one of the leaders of the breakaway faction, takes the view that ‘Dr Paddy saw us as a force to be reckoned with and recognized that we were the authentic voice of the shift workers who were keeping the wheels of industry turning.’

Finan’s respect for somebody with whom he often clashed remains paramount to this day. He always refers to Moriarty as ‘Dr Paddy’ and he accepts that, while he was beholden to his employer and the consumers and conceded as little as possible at all times, he would be the first to recognize the justice of a claim whenever it warranted a fair and amicable solution. There was no animosity once a meeting was over and whatever went on behind closed doors was left there.

We never got anything soft from Dr Paddy and he tried to crush us in 1972 when we came out on strike in support of what we felt were

reasonable demands. We had to fight him every step of the way but there was a human side to him as well. He definitely took note of our aims and aspirations and I have no doubt they were addressed.

Conditions at his local station in Bellacorick, Co. Mayo were 'quite primitive' in the mid 1960s but improved considerably with the dawn of the Moriarty era in 1970.

Along with John Gillespie (Gweedore, Co. Donegal), Paddy Egan (Ringsend), Noel O'Connell (Rhode, Co. Offaly) and Liam O'Sullivan (Cork), I spent 20 years at the coalface of negotiation with Dr Paddy and found there was no point in trying to outwit him in a tight situation. The grasp he had of ESB affairs, the economic situation in the country at that time, the political set-up and his knowledge of the trade union movement, was phenomenal. There was nothing new that you could come up with and you wouldn't have a snowball's chance in hell of out-maneuvring him.

The highly significant and unofficial shift workers' strike in 1972 was one of the most damaging in the entire history of ESB and lasted for three weeks. On 28 March the Shift Workers' Association notified ESB headquarters that they intended to take strike action in support of long-running grievances, which, they claimed, had not been addressed. With the government refusing to get involved, the scene was set for a long period of major disruption. The shift workers held most of the aces, if they could hold out long enough in the face of public opinion, official trade-union opposition and management's refusal to concede. The already fraught situation deteriorated rapidly when several power cuts plunged the country into darkness. By any standard this was an intolerable situation and reflected very unfavourably on a company whose brief was to provide an uninterrupted electricity supply to the nation at a competitive cost.

Fully aware of the devastating potential of this unofficial action, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions issued a statement calling on 'all workers in the employment of ESB to co-operate fully in securing the maximum amount of electricity is made available and full output restored as quickly as possible'.

With the Poolbeg station ready to close down and the entire system under threat, the gravity of the situation was crystal clear. A meeting of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on 13 April admitted that 'a national crisis of the most serious kind' was now imminent and a decision made to give ESB's engineering staff authorization to man the power stations and carry out work normally assigned to the shift workers. Congress

issued a statement to this effect, explaining in graphic terms the devastating potential of what could happen in view of 'the grave emergency now facing the nation'.

Faced with a doomsday scenario, the shift workers backed off when Moriarty threatened to bring in outside assistance to keep the power stations going. Of course, this was not exclusively his doing because the ICTU had come out strongly against the strikers. However, ESB's Director Personnel obviously knew the time had come to bring the game of brinkmanship that was being pursued relentlessly to an early conclusion. Predictably, and to the great relief of everybody concerned, not least the ESB Board, the strike collapsed and power was restored. A statement issued subsequently by the unofficial grouping referred to the proposed placement of 'scab' labour in the power stations and claimed that the members had been 'stabbed in the back' by the ICTU. The strident and inflammatory language shows the depth of feeling that prevailed.

This was the first test of Moriarty's leadership and he emerged unscathed, having refused to buckle. His views were set out in rather strident terms twelve months later in a document entitled 'Long Term Personnel Plans':

There is no reality in ESB industrial relations. Every individual and every category has an inflated assessment of the value of their contribution and there is an unshakeable view that, as ESB is a vital constant in national and economic stability, the staff should automatically reap far more in monetary terms than any other section of the community. Staff claims have been pursued with vigour and views are regularly expressed with a militancy in many cases which would only be justified if management was engaged in the most serious and repressive exploitation.

While the shift workers' strike of 1972 marked the end of a long cycle of serious disruption, the ultimate prize was a long way off and there were a few major hiccups along the way before Moriarty's long crusade to bring calm and harmony to the workplace could be considered complete.

One example of the tensions that still existed came when an unofficial strike at Shannonbridge generating station in Co. Offaly brought power cuts during the period December 1976 to January 1977. This dispute over manning levels was supported by shift workers at other stations and for a number of weeks there was great unrest as ESB management and unions tried to bring matters under control. Once again Moriarty showed his mettle by not bending before an unofficial dispute and the strike was eventually settled with the men on strike being paid

73 per cent of lost wages – a surprising compromise brokered by the Joint Industrial Council.

By this time, the long saga of upheaval starting with the clerical workers' dispute in 1958 and continuing through the strikes by electricians, fitters, day workers and shift workers had run its course. The position improved rapidly for a number of reasons. Firstly, the government was far wiser in its response when a vital service like electricity supply came under threat and knew how to handle it. Management and trade unions alike were learning as they went along. The workers, too, came to realize that there was no crock of gold at the rainbow's end and that there would have to be a trade-off in terms of productivity in whatever settlement eventually emerged.

But the end of the conflict was a distant target when Paddy Moriarty first sat down with the ESB unions in 1970, having assumed a position of power that gave him a certain leverage to initiate change. With Kevin Heffernan by his side he had a powerful ally who, like Moriarty himself, was well respected. Together they nudged ESB into a new era of reconciliation where difficulties were gradually eased and workers were seen to be getting a much better deal than heretofore. This happened over a period of years without necessarily conceding to the often excessive demands that were pursued vigorously at the negotiating table. A thin line had to be drawn between what could be expected and what was on offer. This was a time of painful transition for all involved because a whole raft of innovations were coming on stream on several fronts, with consequent re-adjustment, demanding both compromise and flexibility on the part of a wide cross section of people.

The early 1970s was a time of great uncertainty in ESB and the problems faced by the company – not only in industrial relations but elsewhere as well – were considerable. The tensions within the organization concerning relativity and status issues for clerical and craft workers added to the difficulties as society in general grew impatient with old snobberies. Perhaps unwittingly, ESB had become a battlefield where these combustible issues were being worked out in a new climate that had yet to win unanimous approval. The workers, too, had their expectations raised by successive National Pay Agreements, wider educational opportunities and the unending drive for higher incomes. Because of the company's vital position in the overall national context, ESB workers felt they had good grounds for seeking the maximum return for their labours in maintaining an uninterrupted electricity supply to the consumer. Inevitably all of these factors made

for tremendous difficulties on the industrial relations front.

During the years that followed Moriarty's appointment as Director Personnel, right up until March 1982 when the company's annual report noted that 'there was no interruption of supply due to industrial action and no significant industrial dispute of any kind during the year', the new incumbent set out his stall. He went about creating a whole new approach in personnel management and in the process left his stamp on industrial relations as well as on numerous other areas of responsibility. In time, a new climate of reconciliation began to permeate slowly throughout the organization. The way he went about his task will redound to his credit as a visionary who pushed out the frontiers of achievement as far as they would go.

He did this not by creating further divisions or by capitulating to the constant flood of demands that were coming on stream, but rather by bringing the workforce with him on a voyage of discovery where people of all shades of opinion were treated as equals and where the dignity of the person became sacrosanct. In a climate that was often poisoned by mistrust and suspicion this was no easy task and to have succeeded in such a difficult environment demanded more than luck or chance. When the final piece of the jigsaw was put in place after many years of turmoil the ESB workforce found themselves much better off than at any time in the past and could justifiably claim to have come out on top. But this wasn't a struggle of irreconcilable opposites where one faction refused to get off their high horse and the other were pursuing a level of brinkmanship that could have sabotaged the country. Rather was it a painful transition where some ground had to be conceded on both sides to the mutual benefit of all.

Respect in industrial relations is a two-way street where previous roadblocks have to be circumvented in an atmosphere of give and take. It does not come easily, especially in an environment that has been soured by previous conflict and numerous mistakes. Moriarty won respect, sometimes grudgingly and occasionally with some reservations, but eventually with unanimity of opinion and that was a key element in his successful dealings with ESB unions. In the main, people liked him and even those who didn't were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. They knew he would not pull a stroke to the detriment of the workers.

His reputation for straight dealing won him solid recognition. On the union side he was accepted even in the most fractious of circumstances. People like Jimmy Tinkler, Bernie Finan, Joe LaCumbre and Sean Geraghty, who disagreed trenchantly with his policies on occasion, often

found common ground with him where it mattered most and deals were hammered out that would have foundered under different circumstances. That happened because of the underlying dignity that hall-marked Moriarty's approach to business.

Eight years into his new appointment, after numerous bruising battles with the unions, there was a touch of desperation in his speech to the 1978 IMI National Conference, in which he made many telling points that testify to his inherent sense of fairness along with an outstanding vision for the future:

*We are clever enough to solve every technical and scientific problem in industry and still too ignorant or too stupid to understand or solve the human problems of enterprise. But solve them we must unless we want permanent divisions in our society and unless we are happy with being permanently relegated to the bottom of the class, a fourth division society. If I could put before you a blueprint guaranteed to improve industrial relations countrywide I would not be speaking to you here today because the IMI could not afford me. I have had many opportunities to experiment during my last eight years at the heart of affairs in ESB and I have tried many strategies but I could not honestly put my hand on my heart and say that I can see light at the end of a tunnel strewn with banana skins. There is no real light, only a mere flicker of encouragement.*

Here was the pragmatist in the man facing up to some unpleasant realities and admitting that he had no real solution, because there never was a perfect solution in this particular field that is all too often strangled with tension and division. Industrial relations by its very nature is never solved, just managed. He had, however, some damning condemnation for 'the dark forces at work in that particular jungle'.

*Industrial Relations is all about power. Power is the dirtiest five-letter word in the English language because the perception is that it is being wrongfully applied by those who have it and that it corrupts the owner. Trade unions have immense power and many managers insist that they abuse it. Of course, they do – sometimes – and even many times.*

*But we, as managers, are similarly indicted although we are more subtle in our application and in our choice of terminology. We practise the use and abuse of power in many ways.*

*Power ... is a fact of life, the primary reality in industrial relations.*

*We can hardly expect to reach the Promised Land in the power game quickly. I believe, however, that unions and employers alike must look at it afresh with open minds. Experiment with participation, power sharing and the appointment of Worker Directors. This may help or it may not but it is worth a try. Quite recently I heard an eminent trade union official say, 'Full workers' control is the only thing worth pursuing.' I also heard a leading private enterprise manager address a business colleague who was experimenting in this field:*



*'I can't find it in my bones to wish you success for I know that the more successful you are the sooner more impositions will be foisted upon us.'*

*Neither attitude will get us very far. It is a dialogue of the deaf because neither side listens nor hears what the other is saying. Nobody but the party concerned can develop arrangements in each industry that will help us manage conflict and remove its corrosive effects. To say otherwise is to opt out. It is no use saying the government should do something about it or that law enforcement should apply. It is the manager's job to perform the delicate balancing act required and the bigger his job the more visible his success or failure. I make no apology for saying that the rewards should be commensurate with the risk. Remember this: it is not economists or technologists or top-level scientists who move nations. Rather is it the dreamers of great dreams who create the ideology, the dynamism and the emotion to touch men's minds and extract effort and sacrifice from those who enjoy the best of all worlds within our society.*

Getting salary and wages structures right within ESB was undoubtedly the most significant factor of all in the search for industrial peace. Tempering the animosity that prevailed within the manual grades was also considered a critical area for realignment. Eliminating the chaos of relativities, breaking down barriers between wage and salary grades and engaging in an expert programme of job evaluation were equally important and given top priority. Similarly with clerical employees who were recruited for work in a higher classification and who could now expect to see their jobs redesigned. This cost the company a lot of money but there was also an acceptance that any disputes that arose in future need not necessarily be bought off with a big pay settlement. All of these issues were addressed in a number of agreements that were hammered out with the unions, with Moriarty playing a key role.

The comprehensive agreement on procedures and conditions of employment for Craft and General staff, which was negotiated by the trade unions and ESB and signed in October 1975, provides a good example of how far events had moved within five years of Moriarty's arrival in the hot seat.

The objective of the trade unions and ESB in drawing up these negotiations and grievance procedures was to provide effective machinery for the conduct of business at all levels between management and staff within the company. This afforded a long-overdue mechanism by which all issues that might arise could be processed to a fair and reasonable conclusion within the organization. Both sides clearly entered into the spirit of the new climate of reconciliation that was beginning to percolate through the morass that had previously clouded all immediate hope of progress. This is reflected in the following passage from the company's annual report of

31 March 1975, which shows how much progress had been made from the ongoing strife that prevailed only a few years previously:

The procedures espoused will only become effective through the goodwill and commitment to progress of those who make use of them. Both parties, therefore, affirm their commitment to reach agreement by negotiation in all problems arising between management and staff. The unions likewise undertake to enlist the full co-operation of their shop stewards and members while ESB for its part commits its managers at all levels as a matter of policy to observance of these procedures. In this spirit ESB and the unions pledge themselves to ensure that during the period of this Agreement all representations, disputes or grievances within the company will be brought to conclusion through this agreed machinery without either party resorting to action which may interrupt the work, inconvenience the general public or affect the supply of electricity.

Pleasingly, the annual report also noted that

for the third consecutive year there was a reduction in the number of man days lost as a result of industrial action and no dispute during the year affected the supply of electricity to the community. The improvement is due to the development, with the trade unions, of effective machinery for dealing with disputes and the commitment of staff to honouring the 'peace clause' which has become a feature of all Agreements negotiated in recent years. The Industrial Council under the chairmanship of Mr Con Murphy continues its important role in ensuring that issues on which agreement cannot be reached by direct negotiation are settled without resort to industrial action.

The various comprehensive agreements negotiated with the trade unions saw Paddy Moriarty playing a key role and these had obviously poured oil on troubled waters. This was a giant leap towards harmonious dealings and brought negotiations between both parties on to a new level. Moriarty's influence was always paramount and it was often because of the respect he commanded that deals were struck when they might well have foundered in a different climate. Joe LaCumbre, formerly Deputy Chairman of ESB and a noted trade union activist and worker director, remembers one occasion following an all-night session at the Jesuit headquarters in Ranelagh when negotiations almost broke down at the last minute because of the intransigence of one delegate who refused to buy what was on offer:

Because of the sensitivities of the National Wage Agreement it all came down to the word of Paddy Mo. The unions had their dander up with the country in darkness and the level of mistrust went very deep.

However, the people sitting around the table turned on this one dissenting voice and put him in his place. The message was: 'If Paddy Moriarty has given his word that should be good enough for you – or for anybody.' It worked and in my view that demonstrated the measure of the respect in which he was held.

An attempt at wringing further concessions from Moriarty in his last days in ESB, however, was shot down in flames. This shows how tough he could be under different circumstances. The fact that his days were numbered in the company – his resignation came into effect on 6 January 1996 – didn't make any difference. The letter of reply to an earlier supplication from a worker director whose career was then on an upward curve is dated 14 December 1995:

*Dear ...*

*After getting your letter about your salary I had all the facts checked out. Even though it is the season of goodwill which normally moves me to 'flaithiulacht' beyond the call of duty – indeed to become Santa Claus for a time – nevertheless, I can't find any way that I can fit down your particular chimney. I see the fireplace strewn with all sorts of gifts that have been bestowed on you over the years with the name tag 'comparative deprivation' on most of them.*

*I think it is inappropriate for Worker Directors to be kicking every stone in the hope of finding some favourable relativity beneath it.*

*If I come back to this life again I want to be a horse with John Mulhern or a Worker Director in ESB. I am enjoying writing this letter so I had better stop and wish you a happy Christmas.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(Signed) P.J. Moriarty*

*P.S. There will be a new Chairman in the next few weeks who may be amenable to the case you put forward. I suggest that you resurrect it with him.*

Within eight or nine years, the various comprehensive agreements that addressed all outstanding issues became crucial in the new awareness that started to ferment. Several groundbreaking deals were brokered that left all categories of ESB staff much better off than before. Without any doubt the main driver in this revised, co-operative and conciliatory approach was Paddy Moriarty, who invariably bartered better monetary settlements against increased productivity. On a wider scale, not least among the trade union militants, there was an acceptance that any disputes arising in future would not necessarily be bought off with a big pay settlement.

In *The Decade of Upheaval: Irish Trade Unions in the 1960s*, Professor Charles McCarthy observed that:

By late 1971 when the management confronted the unions with their programme for reform, the whole approach to personnel matters had undergone considerable change. While more disputes were expected before the rush of problems from the 1960s worked themselves out, strategies were clearer and morale was high.

This new awareness and revised approach, undoubtedly driven by Moriarty's innovative style, was, he said, 'in marked contrast to that employed by management in the past'.

The first comprehensive agreement under Moriarty's tenure as Director Personnel was introduced to the unions in April 1973 (and formally agreed and signed in October 1975) and set as an objective a common structure of basic conditions for all staff, eliminating the difference between wage and salary earners. This was a vital plank in bringing all factions to the negotiating table but many more exciting proposals were also pushed through and these helped considerably in damping down the previous rancour. In return, the company sought as a *quid pro quo* the abandonment of restrictive practices, demarcation limits and other impediments to productivity. A joint commitment to the maintenance of electricity supply at all times was another vital clause that was successfully negotiated. This ruled out unofficial action of a kind that gave such groupings as the day workers and the shift workers the deadly leverage which they had used remorselessly in previous years. The effects of this change of policy were amply demonstrated in the disputes that followed.

The constant pruning of ESB in order to make the organization more competitive and cost effective continued and after the turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s had subsided there was another period of uncertainty following the Miller-Barry reorganization of 1984. Power cuts were back on the agenda again in February 1984 when ESB unions resisted attempts to cut the company's workforce. The kernel of this dispute centred around the transfer of 300 men from the Ringsend power station, which had been out of operation for several months, to other locations. A leading article in *The Irish Press* dated 13 February 1984 slammed both the unions and ESB for the unfolding drama. 'Paying people for doing no work while in other stations staff are earning overtime because there is too much work to be done is typical of the economic madness that has landed ESB in its present mess.' With a 50 per cent surplus in generating capacity and 2000 surplus staff on its books, the

ire of *The Irish Press* seemed well justified to the man in the street who was assured that ‘industry and consumers alike have to pay the highest electricity bills in Europe’.

A majority decision by the ESB Board on 3 September 1985 gave the green light to press ahead with a controversial reorganization plan geared towards saving £20 million in overheads. The plan involved reducing the number of districts from twelve to six, plus the closure of offices in Dublin, Athlone, Tralee, Portlaoise and Galway. A programme of voluntary redundancies was put in place and, predictably, this was vigorously opposed by the unions who feared for the future of the workers involved as well as what they saw as a downgrading of service. This response from the unions typified the industrial relations maelstrom that was ESB since the foundation of the company in 1927 and which continued as far forward as June 2004 when the closure of the country’s largest power plant at Moneypoint, Co. Clare was narrowly averted. Plans by ESB to carry out a massive €250 million upgrade of the plant in order to meet EU regulations on emissions was thrown into chaos when a majority of workers initially rejected a deal on new working practices before a subsequent ballot rescinded this decision.

Paddy Moriarty had moved on to a more onerous position in ESB, that of Chief Executive, before the upheaval of the 1970s and 1980s was finally brought under control. By then he was even more enmeshed in the tumult of everyday life within the company. In fact, he was now an extremely powerful figure who could call the shots as never before and, typically, he had the facts and figures at his fingertips to give added weight to his reasoning. He made the latest rationalization plan that followed the Miller-Barry restructuring of 1982 look inevitable – and even reasonable, given that a decent redundancy package had been negotiated – when he spoke to Shane Kenny on RTE Radio’s *Morning Ireland* programme on 4 September 1985:

*The ESB has an organisational structure that is now fifty years old. It was put together for the development phase when there was a massive programme of electricity construction, new customers to be connected, power stations to be built and transmission lines to be put in place. That phase of ESB is now over. Like every other organisation, this is an opportune time to review the company, to change it and to rationalise it with a view to reducing costs.*

The worst days of industrial unrest within ESB were now coming to an end. The annual report for the year ending 31 March 1986 struck an extremely conciliatory stance, although reference is made to a six-month unofficial strike by line crews in Cork that ‘deprived customers

in that city of electricity supply during the early weeks of the disruption'. Elsewhere there is reference to the great work being done by ESB's Joint Industrial Council under the joint chairmanship of Con Murphy and Maurice Cosgrave, a former chairman of the Labour Court. On the subject of the much-feared reorganization within the company there is only a passing reference: 'The Board approved the broad framework of the second phase of the reorganisation plan and the detailed changes contained therein are progressing in an agreed process of negotiation and consultation.'

The Moriarty era in industrial relations was now effectively over and the man at the centre of so many eventful happenings had moved on to bigger things. However, his enormous contribution in the volatile environment he confronted in 1970 is undoubtedly part of his substantial legacy to ESB and, by extension, to the Irish nation. The difficulties he faced were considerable. ESB was unique among large electrical utilities in Europe in that its own staff had responsibility for design and construction in the generation, transmission and distribution fields – consultants were not engaged. The company also arranged its own capital finance in the world markets, as well as handling the entire function of the electricity service.

The enormous strides made during the 1970s and 1980s when P.J. Moriarty and his team engaged with ESB unions to broker peace were critical in the new climate of reconciliation and transparency that finally emerged. These included the negotiation of category deals that, on the Craft and General side especially, helped speed the transition towards a single status organization. The various agreements successfully negotiated in later years included a peace clause that proved to be a highly effective bargaining tool. Similar productivity deals were negotiated for the white-collar groupings. White- and blue-collar groupings, completely separate and strongly sectionalized in the 1960s, would eventually be brought together in trust and harmony. On all sides, old barriers that stood in the way of progress were broken down.

There was to be one final strike in ESB that brought power cuts in train when the electricians decided to press their claim for a better deal in April 1991. Once again, power cuts – the demon that had so often poisoned the atmosphere in the past – were reactivated to haunt both industry and domestic consumers alike. Ultimately it was Peter Casells, General Secretary ICTU, and his colleagues in Congress, with the substantial input of Taoiseach Charles Haughey and Minister for Labour Bertie Ahern, who produced the formula that brokered yet

another fragile peace. Thus it was with a hint of understandable dismay that Paddy Moriarty spoke at the IMI National Management Conference in Killarney on 27 April 1991 when he apologized profusely 'to the people of Ireland' for the events of the previous week.

*With my hand on my heart I can declare that, for twenty-one years, I have worked very hard in trying to civilise industrial relations in ESB. In that period we have concluded many agreements peacefully. We have put in place an employees' charter, unique in Ireland. We have established procedures for dealing with grievances, for negotiation, for conciliation. On top of all that there is an internal Industrial Council to investigate and recommend resolutions of conflict. I am deeply disappointed and disillusioned at what happened recently. If I have said anything consistently for twenty-one years it is that this week's mayhem will recur again and again unless everybody agrees that the disruption of essential services is totally out of bounds and unacceptable in a modern democracy. Here, I am not thinking about laws or penalties but I am strongly advocating a return to plain old-fashioned Christian behaviour on all sides.*

The spectre of industrial relations turmoil will never vanish completely in any large organization like ESB where sectional interests and grievances can erupt at any time, as witness the brinkmanship that almost closed Moneypoint in June 2004, but even by the late 1980s the worst was long over. The company has since moved into a new era where EU legislation is paramount and, consequently, a return to the dark days of the early 1970s is unthinkable. Those were troubled times when Paddy Moriarty and Kevin Heffernan grappled with ESB unions and eventually succeeded in winning the prized garland of industrial peace.

Any evaluation of the success of ESB's industrial policy strategy and performance should allow for the fact that some measures taken to improve long-term competitiveness may have adverse effects in the short run. This was particularly noticeable both in 1975/6 and again in 1982/3 when internal productivity agreements, which had long-term benefits for ESB, caused temporary spikes in payroll costs. Increased productivity in subsequent years was, however, due in no small measure to these agreements. ESB operates in a complex environment but its payroll costs are subject to influence from general movements of wages and salaries, especially in respect of institutions where government itself oversees wage settlements.

Throughout the 1970s ESB employees, together with nearly all industrial employees in Ireland, were awarded payroll increases in excess of the prevailing rate of inflation at the expense of increased productivity to the customer. It should also be noted that the government actively pressed policies of employment on semi-state bodies such as

ESB in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These factors magnified the impact of adverse trends in the economy, decreasing the flexibility of the Board and consequently increasing the severity and length of the adjustment process.

Performance from 1983 to 1991, when Moriarty handed over the reins to his successor Joe Moran, would suggest that senior management had learnt valuable lessons from experience as it would appear that very strong control was being exerted on staffing levels, unit labour cost and productivity. This is not to suggest that there were no longer-term problems, but at least now these had been identified and strategies were being actively implemented to position ESB for the future.

The vision and dynamism of Paddy Moriarty, first in his capacity as Director Personnel and later as Chief Executive, were crucial to everything that happened in industrial relations within ESB for approximately twenty years and sowed the seeds of the peace formula that finally emerged. It took long hours, hard work, the repair of fractured relationships and much more. This was an exercise in human psychology that would have tested the diplomatic skills of a George Mitchell or a Bill Clinton. What Moriarty achieved in a fraught environment with only minimal prior experience in this field was remarkable. This was his finest hour.



## 6. *A Fine Speaker*

Kerry has a tradition for producing footballers, talkers, writers, storytellers, poets, comedians, singers, musicians, pub orators, rogues, knaves and spoofers.

Cahirciveen-born Daniel O'Connell, the champion of Catholic Emancipation, was the best talker of his day, frequently out-foxing the glitterati in the English House of Commons. Eamonn Kelly was a *seanachai* par excellence. Writers include John B. Keane, Con Houlihan, Tomás Ó Criomhthain, Peig Sayers, Muiris Ó Súilleabháin and Maurice Walsh. Poets of considerable stature include Brendan Kennelly, Sigerson Clifford, Bryan MacMahon, Liam Mac Gabhann, Dan Keane, Garry MacMahon, Micheál Ó Guithín and Gabriel Fitzmaurice. Nobody can enrich the canvas of the mind with an outpouring of words better than Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh. Micheál Ó Sé of Raidió na Gaeltachta is similarly endowed. The voluble Kerry Radio sports commentator Richard Aloysius ('Weeshie') Fogarty is never short on descriptive terminology. The singers and musicians (bodhrán players, fiddlers, pipers, drummers, accordionists and tin whistlers) are too numerous to even attempt a miniscule perusal.

Paddy Moriarty fitted seamlessly into this tradition because he was a master craftsman in the art of communication. This was his forte and he thrived in an environment that demanded interaction with an audience. He had 'the gift of the gab' and his command of language was beyond question. Equally important, he knew how to convey whatever message he wanted to impart without over-elaboration or undue embellishment. He did this in a broad Kerry accent, couched in

straightforward language that was riveting in its simplicity.

This was sufficient to strike an immediate rapport with his listeners, both individually and collectively. As a public speaker he was in the front rank and was widely recognized as such. This led to constant demands on him to address various organizations and public bodies. Through his work with ESB International, an organization in which he was deeply involved during a time of recession, he lectured widely in many countries all over the world and everywhere he went the same principles were applied. These included a mix of personal charisma, good grooming, a wicked sense of humour, fair comment, objectivity and an ability to set out clearly whatever points he wished to make. As was said of President John F. Kennedy, 'he knew how to strike the right note and he did it again and again and again'. Moriarty's speeches possessed a timeless quality; many of his utterances rang true, not just for his own time but for all time.

He was a fiercely patriotic Irish nationalist who believed passionately in the Irish people. Never once did he stand aside and see his country denigrated without protest of some sort. Even during the darkest days of recession in the mid 1980s, when unemployment was running at 17 per cent, his speeches reflected his pride in the country and its traditions. He also had the unusual facility of homing in on controversial issues and teasing them out without causing grave offence.

The Moriarty style in public speaking was astute, thought-provoking and occasionally provocative, but always objective and anchored in sound judgment. His reputation for honesty and impartiality made him widely acceptable to whatever audience he addressed. While he wasn't in the business of sweet-talking, he found his own discreet formula that enabled him to confront the facts, however unpalatable they may have been to some. There was no private or hidden agenda at work. No matter what the subject, a shrewd manipulation of words was always at the corner-stone of his approach. He knew his stuff and a pleasant speaking voice that was well practised in public debate did the rest.

Another facet of his oratory included exhaustive research and preparation. He did his homework meticulously. From his opening sentence he seemed capable of judging the reaction from those present and when he scanned a room full of people for the first time he forged a certain chemistry with his listeners. Often departing from a prepared script, he proved himself as much an entertainer as a public speaker. It was said of him – and perhaps not without some justification – that he could play an audience better than Frank Sinatra.

At the annual dinner of the south-east region of the IMI in the Tower Hotel, Waterford on 19 February 1988, he addressed the highly contentious issue of rationalization in ESB. He saw the impasse that had arisen in very simple terms:

*Time had overtaken events ... and it was time for reorganisation. We had clearly reached a watershed after three years of no growth set against a history of 3.5 per cent to 10 per cent growth yearly for almost forty years. The energy crises, mounting costs, the drive for conservation, the slowing down of world economy, all of these unmistakably point to those heady days of high growth being consigned to the memory bank.*

What happened in ESB was traumatic for many people following the Miller-Barry reorganization of 1984 but the Chief Executive was not making excuses.

*Everywhere we looked, especially in our prime markets, there was increasing competition made easy for competitors by heavy increases in electricity prices during the seventies and early eighties, consequent on the two energy crises, inflation and currency losses. It was clear to us that we had to engage in a continuous cost-cutting exercise in order to ensure that the customer got the best value for money. It was time, too, to look at ourselves for the reason that we had grown into a large bureaucracy in the good times with so much success for so long but we knew we could do better.*

His rationale was simple:

*There is one great lesson – don't wait for forty years to do a major re-structuring. Make change a continuous and permanent way of life. There are obstacles, of course, to change but better to be scaling small obstacles regularly than to have no practise at jumping.*

At the Dingle Chamber of Commerce in May 1990 he was at home amongst his own people but this did not interfere with the essence of his message. He certainly didn't spare the local moneyed classes who had allowed the town stagnate without putting anything back.

*A curious impression I have is that the merchants of this town forgot the fundamental truth of economic life – without the primary industry of fishing and agriculture, commerce would not exist in Dingle. In the main, these privileged business people acted as if being a merchant was a primary industry. Another impression is that the town never acknowledged the contribution of the fishermen to its economy. Lest we forget these men and their fathers before them had to brave the stormy seas at considerable risk. I feel it is neither understood nor acknowledged that the first and only development agency in this peninsula was a rural co-op, Comharcumbhann Corca Dhuibhne, which introduced the deep ploughing of arable land in order to help farmers increase their productive acres.*

On the subject of local initiative – or the lack of it – he had this to say:

*I would bet that there is more wealth from this place invested in the stock exchanges of the world than from any other area of comparable size in rural Ireland. Another impression I have is that wealth which was generated here was never re-invested in the creation of new, local industry. Maybe it is easier to watch the Dow Jones index or the ISEQ index than pursue the daily grind of production, of marketing, of industrial relations, of taking risks in the interest of local enterprise.*

Still on the subject of the lack of local initiative, he continued:

*Dingle and west Kerry have wasted years belly-aching to the effect that Udaras na Gaeltachta, the IDA, SFADCO and the government were all passive collaborators in keeping this area poor and under-developed. But let us be clear on one point. Economic development does not come via the route of political hand-outs. Politics are by their very nature, diverse. Political action is necessary for democracy but other structures are needed for community development.*

He outlined the steps that would have to be taken at the risk of ruffling some sensitive local feathers:

*Enduring economic and social development comes from a spirit of enterprise in the whole community, from people prepared to take risks with their own money, from leaders who generate commitment to a co-operative movement and from people who are prepared to move beyond narrow parameters and think of the common good. The times are propitious. There is a universal confidence in the air and I sincerely believe that the country is on the march. However, none of this will matter unless there is a change of mindset here in this town and in this place.*

Speaking at the GAA Centenary Symposium in Cork on 5 October 1984, the guest speaker with an impeccable track record in ESB raised the bar for the country's largest sports body and asked the membership and, especially, the leadership to jump over it.

*Today is the first day of the next century in the history of the GAA. It is the start of the future. The only certainty about that future is that it will be very different from the past. It will be different because change has been the only constant since the universe was created out of a cloud of cosmic dust. The challenge of change is there; it will always be there. Nations, organisations, institutions, individuals have to face it.*

*We will be successful and we will prosper if we anticipate change, if we adapt it to our own needs, if we mould it to our values and accept it.*

*Resistance, through indulgence in past glories or in the blind acceptance that what was good enough for our fathers ought to be good enough for us, are blind alleys leading only to stagnation and ultimate extinction. Great nations, great*

*civilisations, great organisations have all disappeared before the inexorable march of change.*

Twenty-three years on, these words have a fresh resonance in view of the decision taken at Congress in April 2005 to open up Croke Park to other sports – a debate that became bitterly divisive before a decision was finally reached. How would Paddy Mo have viewed the prospect of seeing Brian O'Driscoll touch down behind the Railway goal or Robbie Keane doing cartwheels under the shadow of the Hogan Stand? We can only speculate from the thrust of his address to the GAA symposium in 1984.

He spoke about 'shooting for the stars', about the creation of a society 'united, caring, just and peaceful'.

*To shoot for the stars requires confidence in ourselves, belief in the values and culture and philosophies we have inherited, respect for what others have inherited, respect for our laws and unselfish determination to contribute, each his own mite, to the continuous improvement of our society. Why saddle the GAA – a sporting organisation – with this vision? Why not? Why not, indeed? Because the improvement of our society, our way of life, is not for 'them' alone; it is not only for statesmen; it is not only for politicians or for churchmen or for philosophers. The creation of the vigour, the energy, the dynamic, the vitality, to make us great is everybody's concern. Every organisation must take on board a social responsibility.*

He went on to speak about 'true patriotism, good citizenship, the pursuit of excellence on the field' and the challenge of the television era 'that has pushed out the boundaries and sated us with vistas of perfection'.

Making an impassioned plea for 'the disinherited youth of our cities', he addressed the top strata of GAA officialdom thus:

*If nothing else in this centenary year of blessed memory, resolve to develop soon and implement effectively a strategy for youth. Not an old collection of pious hopes but a new action programme driven with hope, courage and an unstoppable momentum.*

Concluding, he quoted Mark Antony: 'I am no orator but as you all know me, a plain blunt man. I have neither the wit nor words nor utterance nor the power of speech.' This was Moriarty's self-deprecating streak thrown into sharp relief.

He asked the GAA how it would respond to the challenge of change, the challenge of social responsibility, the challenge of leadership, the challenge of excellence and the challenge of disfranchised youth.

Then he posed the final question:

*Will the 'wonder of it all' re-enter our lives again to replace cynicism, alienation and divisiveness? Is it too much to expect that the GAA can influence society to move again towards the core values of Fionn and his Fenian warriors – Glainé ar gcroí, neart ár ngéag is beart de réir ár mbriathar?*

A captive audience jumped to their feet and gave him a standing ovation. The points made were so fundamental and so basic that the surprise remained why nobody had previously set out such plain, common sense rhetoric in such a concise and transparent manner.

Always strong on environmental issues, he attacked 'vociferous objectors who consider themselves the sole custodians of the public conscience' in a speech to the Tralee Chamber of Commerce on 17 April 1985.

*Long before Clann Mileadh landed on the shores of Kenmare Bay, long before the Queen of Sheba built the great Marib Dam in the Yemen or before she journeyed to the court of King Solomon in Jerusalem, man had started to do environmental damage in order to gain shelter to feed himself and to create civilisation. The plain fact of the matter is that man cannot survive on this planet without adapting the natural environment to his use and that means damage to the savage beauty of Mother Earth.*

Before anybody could challenge him and his employers with environmental plunder for the sake of profit he clarified his position in the next breath, setting the record straight.

*We in ESB are very conscious that operations undertaken in the public interest have an impact on the environment. Our policy is to reduce that impact and to balance damage with the common good and enhancement as far as this is possible. For example, we have developed public recreation amenities, rehabilitated fisheries and carried out extensive landscaping at major power stations. As regards emissions from these stations our policy is to be open and frank with people and to invite independent validation of our own monitoring. We welcome public interest and we support every national effort to protect land, sea and air. Nobody in ESB has any personal stake or profit incentive to do other than balance public interest with cost control as best we can.*

Next he moved on to a favoured target: the media. Having been heavily involved in several bruising battles with ESB unions, there was nobody better qualified to speak on this subject.

*The 'old days' in Ireland were not without major turbulence in industrial relations. What is different now is that media hype projects every incident, however trivial, into the living rooms of the nation and – in the case of ESB – the gratuitous comment 'power supplies threatened' is added. If this creates sensation, who cares if it is nearly always wide of the mark?*

Dealing with changing times in the workplace and the IT revolution, Moriarty showed he had a keen awareness of the magnitude of the task that lay ahead. He conceded that 'a major administrative, accounting and financial institution' would have to be managed. He quoted a few statistics. Something like 1.2 million customer records would have to be maintained for a population undergoing constant movement in abode. These records would have to be accessible to offices throughout the country. Six million meters would have to be read each year.

These were daunting statistics, but with 1.2 million customers who had electricity for any purpose at the flick of a switch there was reason for optimism. The guest speaker brought his speech to a conclusion by recalling the words of Jim Larkin (junior) in the Dáil in 1945 when he spoke on the debate on the Rural Electrification Bill. 'It often appals me,' Larkin said, 'to think that we have just under two million people, the majority of whom are in many physical ways debarred from mental stimulation just because they have not acquired the elementary physical necessity of a decent light with which to read.'

This gave the speaker his cue to finish on a humorous note. 'I like that speech,' he said. 'It was made at a time when ESB had the questionable vision to offer me a job!'

During the mid 1980s and later, with the world economy reeling after two oil crises, the immediate manifestations close to home could be gauged from an annual exodus in excess of 100,000 young people leaving the country, a most unfavourable balance of payments, massive public debt and galloping inflation. This was a time when despair and pessimism had become ingrained into the national psyche, when there wasn't the remotest sighting of a Celtic Tiger nor even a Celtic pup. Demand for electricity had fallen to a new low that averaged around 3 per cent for the whole of the decade and this provided a potent barometer as to how poorly ESB was faring after shelling out £750 million on the construction of a new power plant on the Shannon estuary.

Despite these dismal statistics, the eternal optimist that was Paddy Moriarty never once allowed his positive vision for the future to become obscure or clouded. Far from being pessimistic about the seemingly unending cycle of recession, he was constantly accentuating the positive in his numerous discourses. It was as if he saw himself as the 'keeper of the flame', the custodian of a national morale that had been battered and bruised almost beyond repair.

Taking up this theme at the John Marcus O'Sullivan memorial celebrations in Tralee Regional Technical College on 13 October 1989, as

guest speaker, he drew an analogy between two countries then at opposite ends of the world economic spectrum: Ireland and Japan. Realistically, the gap between the two could hardly have been wider but Moriarty made the chasm seem bridgeable.

*Traditionally, reviews of Ireland's economic history started with apologising for three factors which were blamed for having constrained our industrial development: (1) being a colony without the stimulus of an independent, native government, (2) having little natural resources such as steel, coal and minerals generally, and (3) being a sparsely populated island far from world markets.*

*It is different today. We have been independent for over sixty years. Except in population Japan suffers all the disadvantages that we have. This begs the question: What is stopping us from reaching a similar plateau? Ireland has no insurmountable obstacles in the new era of information technology. Our growth as a nation will depend entirely on our will to succeed, our attitude of mind, our confidence and on the way our education system adapts to instill these positive traits in our young people. We must mobilise our strengths and resolve to do all of the things that are needed for Ireland to be great.*

The annual dinner of Tralee Chamber of Commerce on 9 March 1990 provided a further opportunity to clarify his position on environmental damage and, in particular, the often highly contentious issue of fish farming. But first, a question was thrown at him from the floor: 'How are things in ESB?' The answer: 'Great. No real cause for complaint. Excitement comes thick and fast in this business because the pace of change has compressed time.'

He admitted that problems surfaced on a regular basis but for somebody who often maintained that 'things can be critical but never serious', there was no reason for despondency. 'In the fullness of time, most problems right themselves with a little skill, diplomacy and common sense.' He carried this philosophy into the wider field of education.

*I have often spoken about the poverty of third level education where the arts, the classics and the social sciences are ignored in the curricula. Without these there is no real education for life. Sometimes, I feel we ignore our historical and traditional past because we are so ignorant about it. This persists to a point where we are almost afraid of it. Instead, we concentrate on trade and commerce which are the mere baggage of history. What moves great nations and companies and communities are not statistics and graphics and strategies but ideas and dreams that bring a lump to the throat and a tear to the eye when they are presented with inspiration and when they are compatible with a cultural main-spring. I have long maintained that education is what is left after you have forgotten everything you learned to pass examinations.*

Then that notorious black humour surfaced to lighten proceedings.



*Perhaps I should have gone to Cricklewood like so many of my contemporaries in the 1940s. Life might have been simpler. There were times, undoubtedly, when my father fervently believed I should have gone anywhere else other than where I went. To quote just one example: Labour relations troubles had snared me for a whole week and when peace finally broke out I went home for a bit of rest and recuperation. Sitting on top of a cliff one day looking westward towards America, my father threw the question at me that had been bothering him for a long time: 'Why don't you,' he asked, 'find yourself a handy job like a ganger or something and not be killing yourself with them hours?' Maybe he was right.*

The subject up for discussion, fish-farming and its associated controversies, was a serious one and could not be side-tracked. The guest speaker tackled the issues head-on. He accepted that before the hydro-electric scheme at Ardnacrusha the Shannon was teeming with salmon. Then, following the re-routing of the river, the fisheries died. ESB honoured its responsibilities in terms of re-stocking and in the building of hatcheries, which at that time cost the company over £1 million per annum. A lot of progress was reported and by the 1960s there were signs that fishing on the river would soon be back to its former glory. But wholesale netting off the coast, some legal and some illegal, ended that dream because not enough salmon were reaching the spawning beds. This was the signal for ESB to get involved in fish farming.

A passionate speech left nobody in any doubt as to where he stood. His company had no interest in 'making pots of money at the expense of the environment'.

*Our sole justification for being involved in fish farming is because we consider it our national duty to create jobs and share whatever wealth is generated with the local community. We need developments in rural areas based on indigenous resources, giving year-round employment. The alternative is a short season during which visitors will enjoy wonderful scenery and even a drop of rain but supporting only temporary workers who will go into hibernation for eight months of the year. Sadly, this is the history of the depopulation of rural Ireland.*

The vexed question of salmon farming is one that has attracted much attention around the Irish coast and ESB's involvement is a delicate issue that has, on occasion, been fraught with controversy. All too often, fierce and impassioned debate has generated more heat than light. These matters provided the guest speaker with an opportunity to debunk the arguments of the opposition by drawing his own solid, if one-dimensional, conclusions.

*Nach mór an t-athrú saoil é that, in 1990, our minister tells ESB to get its cages out of Poulaphouca Lake in case the good citizens of Dublin might find a*

*smolt in their drinking water. I believe that young salmon smolts in fresh water are like the canaries that miners took with them underground. If the canary died, the atmosphere in the mine was poisonous and the men got out. Fish kills are the most dramatic evidence of polluted water and wherever the fish thrive is, in my view, a guarantee that the water is safe.*

Speaking of a headline from the *Cork Evening Echo*, 'ESB Blamed For Floods', his response was:

*From our dam at Inniscarra to Cork city there is a flood plain on which flooding took place whenever there was heavy rain. This happened long before St Finbarr threw his spear in the ground and established a city on the tidal marshes of the estuary. With all due respects, St Finbarr was not a very bright man to found a city in such a place.*

The following day's headline in the same newspaper – 'God is to Blame' – was similarly debunked.

'There is nothing wrong with a monopoly if it is efficient and properly regulated'. In this statement, the speaker was clearly referring to ESB as he addressed the Craig Gardner Price Waterhouse 'Charting A Course' conference on 29 November 1991 in the Conrad Hotel, Dublin. What he had to say demonstrated once again his expansive mind and his acute awareness of fundamental issues.

*There is an obsession about competition. Politicians and commentators talk incessantly about monopolies, particularly those exerted by state companies. They have all been seduced by Mrs Thatcher. There is also an obsession with privatisation and there are powerful and influential vested interests promoting it. In my view, privatisation of State companies is a political question. I believe the case has not been proven that state ownership of industry is any worse than private ownership but I'm convinced that the manner in which this concept is pursued at present through ministers and government departments is a bad form of ownership.*

In a wide-ranging address he touched on several subjects, one of which was 'the diminishing work opportunities for unskilled workers and the less well-educated', which, in turn, fostered conditions that were 'exacerbated by social legislation and increasing cost disincentives to employ people'.

In pre-Celtic Tiger Ireland the results were disastrous, he claimed.

*There was a period when we thought we could spend our way out of recession by creating jobs – any kind of jobs. The feeling prevailed that it would all come right if we had the nerve to live with high rates of inflation and an uncompetitive cost structure for all our industries. The stark reality of how bad our position was came home to roost in the belt-tightening early 1980s which forced policies of fiscal rectitude upon us.*

Paddy Moriarty was an ardent admirer of Seán Lemass and Ken Whitaker. He credited them with 'dragging Ireland into the modern era'. Ken Whitaker offered the following appraisal of a man who had obviously impressed him: 'He was always good company, genial, humorous, understanding, forthright, a man of the people as well as being competent and dedicated.'

Among the many shades and designs in the Lemass-Whitaker mosaic for Irish economic development was 'the positive psychological mood which was created'. The important points were listed by the guest speaker at the Craig Gardiner conference:

*Industry was encouraged to look outwards and to be expansionist.*

*Foreign industries were invited in for their technology, their markets and their investment.*

*Rationalisation of Irish industries was encouraged and they were made to face up to the reality of free trade which went in tandem with the disappearance of protectionism.*

*Key civil servants became imbued with a positive attitude to development and civil service departments were encouraged to see themselves as development corporations welcoming change and stimulating new initiatives.*

*An emphasis was placed on education which would be more accessible to everybody and cheaper for many.*

*Education in management and technological skills was brought to the forefront.*

*The concept of social partnership was established through the means of the Employer Labour Conference and other institutions.*

*There was a spirit of merchant adventurism abroad and everything seemed possible.*

The oil crisis and the difficulties of the 1970s 'eroded that optimism temporarily', he claimed. It was rekindled briefly, starting around 1987 with the establishment of the Financial Services Centre in Dublin, the encouragement of service-type industries and, in particular, the willingness of state companies to use their resources towards diversification into new activities. These developments were applauded but he feared a return to the 'despair, cynicism and negativity' of a previous decade.

The 'obsession' with privatisation was, he said, driven 'by influential vested interests'.

*My reason for saying so is that ministers and politicians have legitimate political agendas and use state companies as agencies for the implementation of political and social policies. This may be in the national interest but it damages the commercial impetus of state bodies and their freedom for competitiveness is compromised in a free-market economy, both national and international.*

Ten years before the much-publicized tribunals had left the Irish nation bemused, sceptical and embittered, there was a man at the top in ESB who showed how well he was clued in to the realities of political life. He could see the looming dinosaur of greed and corruption in high places and he anticipated the media circus that would follow in words that had a prophetic ring.

*I have no doubt there should be laws and agencies to regulate the manner in which business is transacted in this country and that there should be punishment of wrong-doing. Until we return to the Garden of Eden there will always be people who are motivated by greed and power. We have the laws and the capacity to investigate such affairs but whatever investigation ensues should not become a national spectator sport in navel-gazing at a time when, above all else, we need enterprise, risk-taking and innovation.*

At the IMI National Forum in Killarney on 27 April 1991 Moriarty touched on various topics, including the love of place that remained such a powerful force with him until the day he died. He quoted Tomás Ó Criomhthain, the Blasket Islands writer: 'There is no land, nor nation, nor neighbourhood, from which man does not bring his roots above all.' He bemoaned the 'shamrock and shillelaghs and the mid-Atlantic copycats' that turned Irishness into what Brendan Kennelly called 'wastepaper basket sophistication'. But it was on the subject of pure-bred, old-fashioned nationalism that he struck the most strident chord of all.

*We are descended from an ancient race that has survived the vicissitudes of history through being resilient, flexible, adaptable and energetic. Centuries of emigration have created a world-wide resource of sympathetic kinsfolk – it is not only a Jewish diaspora that exists in the modern world; there is an even larger Irish one which should give us connections, linkages and advantages which we don't have at present and which we do not utilise to our advantage. I was the first of my tribe to be born into an independent Ireland. If nothing else, it was a brave new world of freedom and that was the main reason why none of the family of eight in my generation had to emigrate. I am an unashamed celebrator of the Easter Rising, however sophisticated the presentation. I would, I am certain, be somewhere else like Lowell, Massachusetts, or Newark, New Jersey or Camden Town if it had not happened.*

A broad cross section of Paddy Moriarty's oratorical prowess shows how sympathetic he was to fundamental issues. He was a natural communicator who related easily to an audience whether in public or in private – a gift that never left him.

## 7. *The Politics of Change*

*The pace of change in today's world is quicker and more unforgiving than has ever arisen in the past. For big and small companies, both public and private, the comfort of an assured future, so much taken for granted in the past, is gone forever.*

Dr P.J. Moriarty, speaking at the conference of the Association of Electrical Contractors on 13 April 1985

On 13 April 1976, almost six years to the day since he was appointed Director Personnel, some changes in the ESB executive structure found Paddy Moriarty appointed to the post of Assistant Chief Executive on a salary of £14,111. His letter of appointment contained one very relevant sentence: 'You will retain responsibility for the Personnel function.' In effect, this meant that he would be wearing two hats until his later elevation to the post of Chief Executive following the retirement through ill-health of Jimmy Kelly.

Of all the people who shaped his future career, J.J. (Jimmy) Kelly, a tailor's son from Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, stands out. He was the first ever Chief Executive of ESB, appointed after the McKinsey reorganization proposals of 1970, and his influence on the company was profound. An engineer by profession, he was a highly intelligent, ordered and committed man who designed and executed fundamental new management structures across the company with comprehensive readjustment of roles, responsibilities and functions. The principles of management then introduced by Kelly would provide a continuous fusion of all the structural changes that were to come in the company over the following decades.

Kelly and Moriarty had been close colleagues right back to the 1960s when the latter was climbing the ladder in Finance. Kelly was a

frequent visitor to the Moriarty home where he was graciously received by both Paddy and Esther, especially after his wife died. The men would frequently go for walks during their lunch break at work and embark on long country hikes at weekends. Both were committed ESB men whose professional and social lives revolved around the company. John O'Brien, an early work colleague of Moriarty's, insists that there was no question of manipulation on either side for personal gain. 'It wouldn't have been necessary to do that. I personally believe that each of them drew on the other for what he may have lacked in himself.'

It had become abundantly clear that Moriarty was heading straight for the summit in ESB and there could have been few dissenting voices when he was appointed Assistant Chief Executive. Within five years he would progress further to the position of Chief Executive. This was the Everest of his ambitions, the ultimate personal accolade on which he had set his sights from a long way back. He had no serious opposition for this post. The power invested in him during his later years was always used productively and there were never any egotistical connotations attached to his high office. His sole rationale – as he often said – was to make ESB 'the best electricity utility in the world'. The dream of achieving big things for his company and, no doubt, for himself remained paramount in the years that lay ahead but Moriarty was more than a dreamer. He was also a doer with a vision for the future.

His appointment as Chief Executive in 1981 marked a new phase. Bringing others with him on the voyage was one of his great strengths as a leader of industry. He was broadly popular among the workers who got to know him over the years – he often claimed that he knew three-quarters of them by their first names – and he could manipulate, cajole, exhort and, if necessary, harass others into doing his bidding. When the occasion demanded he was never afraid to rattle cages and if this meant confronting government ministers on contentious issues he did what had to be done. He was certainly not one to back down. Similarly, the trade union movement found in him a formidable foe and a cunning negotiator who rarely if ever accepted 'no' for an answer.

This was an amalgam that might not have worked elsewhere but, in ESB, it did, due primarily to the personality of the man who was doing the driving. Don Mahony, Company Secretary 1992–7, says that the great majority of ESB staff (numbering in excess of 13,000 at one stage) were totally on his side. 'They trusted Paddy Mo not to pull a stroke that would recoil on the workforce. He had integrity and was seen by management and staff alike as a supporter of ESB against all odds.'

While he was extremely plausible and approachable in his demeanour, there was another side to Moriarty's personality that showed itself only when he felt he had a genuine grievance. He was not one to seek out conflict of any kind but by the same token he would not hold back when straight-talking was called for. His tetchy reply to John Bruton, TD, Minister for Industry and Energy, on 18 February 1983 illustrates this.

*Dear Minister,*

*I received a letter dated February 17, 1983 from your Department stating that you require detailed information most urgently regarding the provision of cars to staff in state companies.*

*I must protest at the resumption of such nit-picking in relation to senior management when there are far more fundamental problems needing attention.*

*However, the fact is that I am the only employee of ESB who enjoys a company car. It is a two-litre Citroen, two years old and the arrangements under which I have use of it are strictly in accordance with the terms of the Devlin Report.*

*Incidentally, I have total contempt for the attitude of mind which produces such a report and creates a bureaucracy to ensure compliance with it. It is corrosive of enterprise and of the trust and confidence which should exist between state company boards and their Ministers. If the Board of ESB cannot be trusted with pay determination for its senior management, how can it be expected to exercise proper stewardship in regard to millions of pounds worth of business transactions on which it has to decide?*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(Signed) P. J. Moriarty*

The combined oil crises of 1973 and 1979 were arguably the greatest catalyst for change that beset the world economy since the Second World War. Within a span of ten years the laws of supply and demand had crystallized the eternal truth that people with total control over a product in universal demand could name their own price. And that is precisely what happened. OPEC, the major oil producers, increased their prices in 1973, threatened supply and hastened the rush to secure a product that was now in extremely short supply. This caused a severe scarcity of oil, which in turn drove up prices that spiralled out of control, bringing widespread panic. Within ten years the price of oil increased twenty-fold and sparked world recession, high inflation, currency chaos and rampant unemployment.

In an environment where oil was the main source of supply, ESB, with almost 70 per cent of electricity generation dependent on cheap imported oil, would become one of the most visible casualties. This volatile situation had far-reaching implications given that the level of company debt was already excessively high and threatening to go through the roof. Various missives from government had frequently urged the Board of ESB to bring this debt under control.

The changes envisaged by Moriarty during the 1980s were not entirely new to ESB. As far back as 1972 a government-inspired report, the Fletcher Report, had drawn attention to several areas where savings might be made and pointed to a certain level of over-staffing that existed within the company. Thirteen years later this situation had grown infinitely worse. Ironically, it was pressure from government to hire more people in order to alleviate the chronic unemployment that left ESB with approximately 2000 excess new recruits on the payroll. Eventually this aspect had to be tackled as ever more demands were made on the company to trim its sails. Moriarty, as Chief Executive, was responsible for implementing these cuts himself. It was a most unpalatable task but one to which he was totally committed.

Change, no matter what honeyed talk is used to dress it up, is always difficult to accept because it has connotations of pain and upheaval, which are never easily assimilated. Consequently, there is a general aversion to it, especially among older people who have grown set in their ways. But even those of a younger age group will also harbour reservations and inevitably view the prospect of being affected by a changed environment with considerable suspicion and mistrust. And so it was in ESB where unions and employees looked askance at what was afoot. To smooth that transition and make it work would redound to the credit of Moriarty more than anybody else.

On 10 May 1980, as Assistant Chief Executive of ESB, Moriarty was guest speaker at the Institute of Personnel Management regional conference in Galway.

*It is not at all surprising that the word 'change' figures so much at this conference because it is one of the laws of good conference organising nowadays to include some sessions which refer to the word in all its aspects – the nature of change, the necessity for change, the price of change and the threat of change. These are titles that will attract people whether their attitudes are towards understanding, accepting, negotiating on or obstructing change.*

He listed some of the significant by-products of change:



*Fire enabled man to cook what had previously been eaten raw.*

*The invention of the wheel is regarded as a watershed in man's development, yet it must have made millions of porters redundant.*

*In the Middle Ages swordsmiths and arrow smiths were in big demand and no doubt their forward planning was based on the assumption that they would never be out of a job. But the Chinese invented gunpowder and 'bang' went the future of swordsmiths.*

*My point is that mankind has always had to adapt to new ideas, new ways, new materials. It is tilting at windmills to try to halt progress. Change is the way of man's life. Think about it – over a span of approximately eighty years the world gets a complete change of people! Change is not new but what is different is the pace and depth of change.*

*The consequence of all this is a growing sense of insecurity which is at the root of all resistance to change. And the greater the insecurity the greater the pressure to exploit the changes which cause it. If the siege mentality becomes the norm the attitude it breeds is: 'What's mine I hold but what is yours is negotiable,' or 'Stand and deliver if you badly need whatever it is you want.' Change is an exploitable commodity nowadays and it is resisted until the hour of maximum leverage. I could keep you here all morning providing real life examples.*

The last sentence was a clear reference to the tough trade union negotiations in which he was deeply involved over many years and here he was obviously speaking from personal experience.

At the Tralee Rotary luncheon on 29 June 1982 Moriarty, now Chief Executive of ESB, outlined how the company was finding its way out of the morass of world insecurity that grew from the two oil crises of the 1970s. He admitted that 'this didn't happen without a willingness to accept change and to find alternative ways around our dilemma'. Within his own organization everything possible was being done to contain costs 'through improved operating procedures and higher productivity'.

*Ten years ago the world was awash with cheap oil. The oil companies were kings, more powerful than governments. And the world was happy in their care. The marvels of mass-production were creating a throwaway society where it was cheaper to buy new rather than to repair. But in ten years in the seventies oil increased twenty-fold, driving world recession with high inflation and rampant unemployment. Obviously, the first major task was to free the country's electricity supply from such over-dependence on imported oil. This led to the decision to build a large coal-burning station (Moneypoint) on the Shannon estuary at a projected cost of £750 million. Coal contracts have been concluded with companies having widely dispersed resources to increase security of supply.*

*By 1990, at least 40 per cent of Ireland's electricity requirements will come from coal and this will represent a major long-term diversification away from oil as the main source of electricity generation. Further relief appeared in the middle of the energy crisis with the providential discovery of a new native*

*energy source. This was, of course, natural gas from the Kinsale Head field. The use of natural gas in electricity generation over a short period of two years has contributed 37 per cent of the energy required for the country's electricity needs. ESB's oil-dependence has been cut from its peak level of 73 per cent to just under 40 per cent.*

Speaking at the conference of the Association of Electrical Contractors of Ireland on 13 April 1985, Moriarty was back to the need to embrace change and to face up to its implications.

*The pace of change in today's world is quicker and more unforgiving than has ever arisen in the past. New technologies are developing more rapidly than ever. The power of the computer is accelerating research, development and design in every sphere. A summary of all the basics of business is attention to customers, to people, to costs and the need to embrace a changing environment.*

On 8 June 1988 a letter was sent to all senior managers of ESB, signed by P.J. Moriarty, Chief Executive:

*I attach a paper which I sent to the Board today about change. I really do believe that we have to achieve an enormous shift of attitude to change in the whole staff of ESB in order to move faster and with more enthusiasm. Apart from the quest for quality service everywhere, to keep prices stable is a daunting challenge. There is no refuge except in what we can do ourselves.*

*I hope that you will find the enclosed document helpful in spreading the gospel. The managers and supervisors of ESB are its leaders and it is the duty of leaders to prepare their people for change. People are at least as important a resource as any other and their proper management and motivation is, perhaps, more crucial to the survival and prosperity of the business than anything else. You have to communicate incessantly to your staff directly. The attached paper is not for circulation to managers and supervisors cold but rather for handing to them after you have spoken about it and then as a basis for their talks with their own subordinates.*

Paddy Moriarty's vision for the future of ESB had an oblique dimension that had nothing to do with the company. He harboured a deep and genuine interest in the youth of Ireland and this is obvious from his many references to the value of young people. He frequently spoke about their dynamism, energy, idealism and loyalty. He saw them as the country's greatest resource and at a time of record unemployment in the mid 1980s it clearly hurt him to see this prime asset being wasted on the emigrant ship. He feared for the future of so many potential emigrants unless diversification and training could be introduced along with increased efficiency in industry: 'A whole sea-change is needed to stop the twin evils of unemployment and emigration from completely eroding our economy.'

Moriarty viewed the subject of unemployment as 'a real genuine political question in the sense that no national political party is responsible for it nor has a recipe to cure it. They should stop arguing about it'. His opinion was that 'the holy grail of full employment, i.e. full-time work, forty hours a week for a whole year with three weeks' annual holidays, can not be achieved here nor in any other country in the foreseeable future under the prevailing circumstances'. He feared that 'on the one hand there will be a relatively small technological elite while on the other hand there will be a much larger proportion of the population whose skills are obsolete and who do not have either the education nor the mental aptitude to adapt to change'.

The first Strategic Plan in ESB was prepared for the years 1983-8 and it is accepted that Moriarty wrote that plan himself. The main objectives were defined as 'the introduction of major changes in order to achieve substantial electricity price improvement'. A primary strategic step to hasten this end was 'the creation of a new framework to successfully achieve the stated strategic goals and objectives' over the following decade. It was at this point that the Miller-Barry task force appeared on the horizon.

In February 1984 Moriarty, with the approval of the Board, commissioned the leading US-based international management consultants H. Miller & Associates Ltd (later to become known as Miller-Barry) to submit comprehensive proposals on reorganization with a view to trimming down the company and making it more cost effective. To further these goals, the first major restructuring of the company was now at hand. In order to achieve cross-fertilization of ideas and to assist in ultimate acceptability, Moriarty set up an ESB task force, comprising John Duffy, Ken O'Hara, Don Mahony, John Duane and Bill Maher, who were mandated to work with the international consulting team.

With a revenue budget for 1983/4 covering payroll, materials, services and miscellaneous charges that totalled £192 million, and a fuel budget coming in at £277 million for the same twelve-month period, the need to pare back on these crippling overheads was addressed and stringent measures introduced to bring them into line. This would involve staff reductions at all levels, from the top to the bottom, and the start of the run down of the main system capital programme. Coinciding with the Miller-Barry study was the sustained growth that had hall-marked the previous five years when the addition of new generating capacity was considered as important as the operation and maintenance of existing plant. A period of non-growth in new plant capacity was now

in prospect. ESB was also facing greater market competition from other energy producers than ever before.

The joint consultant/ESB team commenced work on 13 February 1984. Their brief was to 'identify changes necessary in ESB structure, roles and relationships in order to cater for the requirements of electricity supply for the 1980s'. A fundamental starting point was a re-examination of the ESB corporate mission, 'to provide an acceptable level of electricity service to the community at minimum cost to the consumer at all times and in competition with other sources of energy'. The ESB structure was defined as 'divisional level and upwards', to include head office plus the equivalent levels in distribution districts and generating regions countrywide.

The Miller-Barry team brought the full impact of its deliberations to bear on ESB with the effects felt right through the company. Whole swathes were cut into the organization with the twelve former districts being replaced by six 'distribution regions' and similar cost-cutting measures being introduced in Accounts, Internal Audit, Materials, Manpower, Personnel and so on. It was stated that 'the excessive numbers of Districts, Groups and Areas has led to an unnecessarily large investment in stock. At present there are approximately 200 separate stores scattered throughout ESB'. As well as that, 'a simpler, leaner management structure which will provide more effective decision making' was strongly advocated. These changes carried severe implications for structures within the company and for the first time in ESB history even the top strata of management found their positions threatened.

The Miller-Barry team identified the benefits to be derived from staff and management reductions in the following terms:

The unduly fragmented nature of the present organization structure coupled with the generally inadequate span of control and other issues identified in this study have resulted in an over-managed and over-supervised company. The proposed reorganization, while adding certain key positions, envisages that, ultimately, reductions in fifty managerial positions will take place over time.

The same off-loading of staff would take place right down the line.

This was a time of painful transition in ESB when the long-established security of employment on which the company prided itself came under threat. Some positions were phased out or changed with a consequent diminution of responsibility in many cases. A number of job titles and whole areas of responsibility were irreversibly changed, several key positions were downgraded and others vanished practically overnight.

With this fundamental change of structure in ESB, none of the measures that followed were accepted lightly. Once again the unions were on the warpath but eventually the promise that no jobs would be lost and that nobody would be thrown on the scrapheap was borne out. Natural wastage with several positions not being filled as older people retired provided a convenient outflow, as did an early retirement scheme. Together these measures took over 1000 employees off the payroll in four years. Few were to realize it at the time but the Miller-Barry proposals would herald an evolution of ongoing management and structural changes that continues to this day and is an essential feature of the most successful and enterprising companies. Moriarty knew that this was a fundamental element in the pattern he envisaged for ESB and he made it happen with characteristic determination.

The spiralling recession of the early to mid 1980s led to a downturn in the demand for electricity. The need to decommission plant and reduce manpower levels was also addressed by the Miller-Barry task force. This provided further impetus in the restructuring of the company. The impact of over-capacity and low growth on design and construction activity was taken on board, as was the need for more rigorous corporate business planning. In addition, specific criteria to guide the development of proposals for change in future organizational structures were identified with ESB's top management. The deterioration in the company's financial position was becoming a matter of grave concern and was seen as a priority.

Meanwhile, Paddy Mo was faced with a new dilemma. He had to structure and implement the proposed changes and make them stick. Hard decisions would have to be made and certain people were going to get hurt. John O'Brien, Moriarty's close friend and colleague from the very early days, was one of the many casualties.

In the Miller-Barry reorganization of 1984, he downgraded my area when half of it was taken away from me although I have to say that I didn't worry about some of the things that were eliminated. I was a bit disappointed, definitely, but as I was coming to the end of my career it didn't affect me too badly. I suppose you can't make omelettes without breaking eggs. When it comes to a major reorganization not everybody is going to profit. Paddy Moriarty was the main driver of change in ESB and he stood over every decision he made, whether right or wrong.

The Fogarty Report of 1968-9 had clearly pointed ESB in a new direction and demonstrated the need for a revised organization that would cope with the challenging times that lay ahead, and the Miller-Barry

Report drove that thinking forward. Vincent Fahy, Director Strategic Planning 1983–7, who succeeded Moriarty as Director Personnel, offers the following appraisal:

The ESB was a very authoritarian institution like the civil service when I joined in February 1952 and it wasn't a corporate run business. It was run as a division of the public service when things were written in stone and there was no room for any deviation. What the bosses said, went. It was typical of the time and it wasn't exclusive to ESB. Paddy Moriarty was a great innovator and he made people enthusiastic about the changes that were coming but initially he met with a lot of resistance. Not all of management embraced his ideas because it meant a loss of power, prestige and authority for themselves. Naturally, this coloured their judgment but it didn't stop Paddy's crusade to initiate a new awareness within the company. He was a huge catalyst for change.

At this time the Chief Executive's Committee, a by-product of the McKenzie reorganization of 1971, was in place. This group included all of the executive directors of the company and was used by Moriarty to encourage teamwork and unity of purpose at the top. The members met every Tuesday morning in the boardroom and this was where corporate problems, power station issues, industrial relations difficulties and any other serious matters were discussed on an ongoing basis. The tedium of these gatherings was often enlivened by Moriarty's own irrepressible brand of humour but, according to Alf Kelly, 'he spoke the least but listened carefully to what was said'. Regardless of the side-shows on offer, the personnel of this body were broadly supportive of him and usually backed his proposals.

In the drive for greater efficiency and to encourage managers at all levels to espouse and champion change, Moriarty organized management meetings widely throughout the company at this time. At these gatherings, at least one each year, he invited a variety of Irish leaders to share their experience with the managers of ESB. These included Mary Robinson, Dermot Desmond and Martin Naughton, among others. Moriarty himself always managed these meetings and often spoke passionately on the subject that continued to drive him: changing ESB.

He expected his management team to reflect his own thinking among the workforce, to go out and preach the gospel as it was presented to them – which they did. While there were many strong advocates of progressive management policies, nobody carried the flag of change with more vigour, style and determination than Paddy Moriarty.

## 8. *ESB Overseas*

ESB's incursion into foreign consultancy, which had considerable input from Paddy Moriarty, represents a remarkable success story. It began with a relatively small investment of £25,000 and from an unknown base ESB International (ESBI) became a powerful force on the international circuit, bearing comparisons with Electricite de France, National Power UK, RWE and similar organizations.

The formation of this new subsidiary injected a fresh impetus into international consultancy and in time led to major expansion. To date, ESBI has grossed cumulative revenue well in excess of one billion euro and currently employs over one thousand people in a wide variety of overseas projects and related activities. At various times up to two thousand ESB employees, from senior managers to young apprentices, became involved in consultancy projects, mostly overseas but also closer to home. As virtually all appointments to senior management positions within the company were subsequently filled by people who had spent time working abroad, this international dimension fundamentally helped to shape the modern ESB.

The 1970s proved a difficult time for the company as top executives in the boardroom saw the downturn in the world economy impacting on the company's capital programme. By the time the recession of 1974-6 had set in, the construction of a number of planned power stations had been mothballed while some network projects were cancelled. Coupled with the first oil crisis in 1973, which caused an unprecedented downturn in the demand for electricity, the 10 per cent growth rate of April-September 1974 could not be sustained. With the national economy in spin,

the major ESB engineering departments that had driven twenty-five years of sustained expansion and growth now faced a bleak future. One of the shelved projects was the proposed nuclear plant in Carnsore, Co. Wexford, which involved a sizeable team of top engineering specialists. Allied to over-capacity within the system as the recessionary impact of increased oil prices took its toll, the long-term security of the industry looked bleak.

Among the first casualties of the gloomy economic climate were the highly skilled engineering personnel who had been an integral part of ESB's operational network since the company was founded in 1927. The prospect of laying off hundreds of men whose technical knowledge would not be easily acquired elsewhere now loomed large on the horizon. Planning for the future had been thrown into chaos as the company's annual report for the twelve-month period ending 31 March 1974 admitted: 'At no time in the past have there been so many imponderables affecting both the calculation of future demand and the sources of primary energy.' The spiral of increasing costs and the political instability that followed from the daily mayhem in Northern Ireland added new complexities to life at ESB. The OPEC-induced recession of the early 1970s and the outbreak of war between Israel and Egypt in October 1973 marked the end of an era of relatively stable and rapid economic growth in the developed world. Practically every utility in Europe was adversely affected. In Ireland queues at the petrol pumps became the norm and on a broader industrial front there was widespread alarm. With its heavy oil dependency, ESB was among the first to feel the pinch.

In response, the Board of ESB took the bold decision to move into international consultancy. Consultancy had been mooted as far back as the early 1960s and in the new circumstances the idea was again raised by Jimmy Kelly and Paddy Moriarty who recommended it to the Board. Approval followed but with some reservations. These reservations surfaced occasionally during the following years when certain government ministers expressed the fear that foreign consultancy was 'draining the life out of the organization and leading to a situation that was highly dysfunctional to the main mission of ESB'.

The Board was fully aware of the inherent dangers, as reflected in the 1987 Strategic Plan:

The main focus of the Strategic Plan is on the core utility business of producing and marketing electricity, the purpose for which the company was set up by statute in 1927. The primary objective for any ancillary venture that ESB undertakes must be profit. If the company



engages in unprofitable ventures they must ultimately be subsidised by the electricity customer in Ireland. That is not, and never will be, part of the purpose of ESB.

With hindsight, these concerns were completely groundless. The decision to export its expertise proved an inspired move, saving jobs and generating additional revenue for the company. The ESB's annual report for 1975 fully endorsed what was afoot:

Preliminary investigations have revealed a market for ESB expertise in Europe, the Middle East and Africa and the diversification into consultancy activity which in addition to securing employment for staff will earn valuable foreign currency is to be warmly commended. This, in turn, will contribute to the Board's finances and to the benefit of the customer.

Within a twelve-year span, 1975-87, foreign consultancy earned profits of £3.2 million on sales of £56 million. This substantial spin-off was of direct benefit to the electricity consumer in Ireland and to the nation's balance of payments.

In these difficult times there was a real need to seek out new horizons and, providentially perhaps, the consultancy initiative filled a gaping void that existed on the home front. Government legislation had to be amended in order to permit the company to pursue its plans to compete internationally and this was agreed with the Department of Energy but in a fairly restricted format. Within twelve months events gathered pace after the Board approved an investment of £25,000 for marketing consultancy – a relatively small sum even then.

The first big breakthrough came in Bahrain when Colum McCabe negotiated what proved to be a landmark agreement, all the more remarkable as British consultants had a virtual monopoly of work there in previous years. However, the fact that Khalid Al Khan, later to become Assistant Undersecretary (now deceased), had come to ESB for training at that time proved highly significant. As luck would have it Colum McCabe struck up a good relationship with the Undersecretary of State, Jamil Al Alawi, during preliminary negotiations and this swung the deal. The connection with Bahrain has lasted an unbroken twenty-five years and remains a platform for much of ESB consultancy work.

Shortly afterwards Alf Kelly negotiated a joint venture with UK consultants Preece Cardew and Ryder, which resulted in two large electrification contracts in Saudi Arabia. Coupled with further contracts from the World Bank, the other major breakthrough got the consultancy operation into top gear.

From the outset the consultancy work was carried out within existing departmental structures and not until 1977 was a full-time consultancy manager appointed. Colum McCabe held this position initially, followed in 1979 by Gerry Dunnion when McCabe became Director Commercial. The consultancy manager was assigned a small number of staff to look after marketing, accounts and overseas matters. All of the staff on contract work were borrowed as required from the various departments and this loose arrangement lasted until 1988 when ESBI was formed.

During the early days of foreign consultancy the main drivers of this new initiative were Jimmy Kelly, Paddy Moriarty, Colum McCabe and Alf Kelly, along with some of their key staff. Shortly afterwards Gerry Dunnion and Michael Hayden became deeply involved as they assumed positions of power approaching the end of the 1970s. The business was profitable from the start and received tremendous support within ESB as many key people were released to work overseas. These included Ken O'Hara, later to become ESB Chief Executive, and Billy O'Sullivan, who played a major role up to his untimely death in 1983. Families travelled overseas and in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia new ESB communities sprang up alongside many other nationalities. This did wonders for a struggling ESB and helped maintain the strong image that the company has always enjoyed in Ireland.

According to Alf Kelly, ESBI became 'one of the major success stories in the world of consultancy'. He quoted one example of Moriarty's supportive role and his hands-on approach:

In 1979 Paddy came with me to Al Baha in Saudi Arabia to see for himself how that particular job was progressing. The site was on a plateau 2500 metres up on a mountain ridge beside the Red Sea, where over a thousand Taiwanese were working under ESB supervision building a power station along with the entire associated infrastructure. This entailed working in the most inhospitable conditions imaginable where no roads existed and the nearest telephone was 100 miles away. Paddy went right across the terrain to see for himself what was going on. The staff and their families lived there for three years. A school was built and the curriculum included Irish, which bemused the Arabs. At the end of his visit Paddy said, 'This has been the most exciting adventure of my life.' You can imagine the positive effect of that remark on the morale of ESB staff.

During the early years Colum McCabe was Head of Distribution while Alf Kelly was responsible for Generation and Transmission:

We had to do everything starting from scratch which meant bringing electricity into people's homes (similar to the Rural Electrification Scheme in Ireland), the whole lot. After he became Chief Executive, Paddy Moriarty had to have tremendous nerve to back me in what I was doing. Even at the best of times, consultancy work took a lot of courage and he wasn't lacking in that aspect. I had to keep him informed about everything that was going on. You can hire a technician or an engineer but you can't easily find somebody with natural skill. You have to be born with that and he had it.

One of the early World Bank jobs encompassed the restructuring of the electricity company in the Philippines. This was regarded as a most important contract and when Colum McCabe had closed the deal, with considerable assistance from Mick Cronin, work began in 1977.

To make the maximum impression with the World Bank it was decided to send out the strongest possible team and Paddy Moriarty led this group accompanied by Alf Kelly, Michael Hayden and Dr Bob Cuffe, an ESB system-planning expert. They were later joined by Gerry Dunnion, who had a strong marketing background, and Chief Accountant Dermot Connaughton. Later still Joe Moran joined the group. This was novel work for all concerned but the strength and experience of the team ensured that ESB's reputation was firmly established abroad.

Towards the end of this first major phase in foreign consultancy Gerry Dunnion, with new ESB partners Saudi Consulting House (SCH), won the contract for designing the transmission and distribution system in Jubail City. Strong competition included leading US consultants and there was general surprise when ESB/SCH carried off the plum contract.

Jubail City was the biggest single capital project in the world at that time and the consultancy contract proved the largest individual contract secured by ESB to the present day. Apprehension about the capacity of ESB to undertake such a daunting assignment was assuaged by Moriarty in his usual positive style. A team led by Michael Hayden and Billy O'Sullivan was put together to carry out the job and a special new office opened in Haddington Road. This employed up to a hundred specialized staff with another fifteen based in Jubail City and all under the watchful eye of Becthel, primary consultants for the entire project. A new era had arrived and ESB had joined the premier league in consultancy.

That continued for about five years with great support from Moriarty who, according to Michael Hayden, 'actually drove it even though a lot of us were apprehensive about the scale of it. Paddy had the confidence'. When others might have been wavering in their application

Moriarty never doubted the worthiness of what was afoot. If necessary he would bulldoze through any amount of reserve and negativity when he felt he was on the right track. Sometimes this confidence bordered on arrogance and it is accepted that on occasion he took huge risks. But there were no major setbacks and most of what he attempted came to fruition in later years. He patently felt very secure about ESBI and its activities.

Always an innovator and a fearless campaigner, the Chief Executive of ESB spoke from practical experience when he addressed the John Marcus O'Sullivan memorial gathering in the Regional Technical College, Tralee, on 13 October 1989. His keen perception of events and unusual slant on potentially contentious issues, such as temporary emigration, were obvious:

*The great national 'ologón' in Ireland is about the export of graduates and skilled people. If we don't export some of these young people for a proportion of their careers we have no future as an export nation. Business trips abroad, no matter how well organised by Coras Trachtala, are no substitute for learning business at the raw end of survival in countries in which we expect to have prime markets. The temporary emigration of young people should be encouraged to become a normal career pattern. Educators must develop linkages to gain foreign work experience for their graduates. Governments and enterprises must create the economic and business climate that will attract the best of our young people to return home with experience, knowledge and contacts. Temporary emigration is a national asset. Only permanent emigration is a national tragedy.*

Growth had returned to ESB in the late 1970s and by 1980 the level of activity was intense as Moneypoint came on stream together with large transmission jobs, new consumers and so on. As a result, managers were reluctant to release staff for overseas work and the early enthusiasm tapered off. On taking over as Chief Executive in 1981 Paddy Mo had his hands full and could only devote limited time to consultancy although his support never wavered. The overseas business continued successfully but expansion was proving difficult, despite imaginative initiatives undertaken in Saudi Arabia along with work for the World Bank.

In 1983 Moriarty appointed Mick Hayden as Head of External Activities with a view to future diversification and expansion. This was to prove a difficult brief due to limited resources, growing international competition and, especially, legislative restrictions. An opportunity to overcome this roadblock did not arise until 1987 despite attempts to gain government approval in the mid 1980s.

The Middle East proved to be the mainstay of the consultancy business in the 1980s with important contracts secured in Yemen, Oman and Egypt. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were major areas with almost a hundred ESB staff working in Bahrain at one point. Mick Hayden elaborates:

Paddy made regular New Year visits and Charlie Dillon, the Chairman of ESB at that time, was also a frequent and very influential visitor. Key managers on site included Lewis Healy, Dave O'Hanlon in Bahrain, Kieran O'Brien in Riyadh and John Duffy in Dhahran.

Alf Kelly saw another side of Moriarty's influence during these early years:

Paddy's style was gradually to visit all places in the company, at home and overseas, and to talk to everyone without any formality. In this way he found out how projects were progressing and where any trouble spots were likely to arise. He never interfered in the work delegated. It was only if performance was below par that he got involved. In this way he economized with his time and he gave managers a great sense of support.

In Africa contracts were undertaken in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Lesotho, Botswana and other exciting locations. Kevin Heffernan, a national figure due to his exploits with the Dubs, was dispatched to Sudan on a consultancy assignment. He also helped to teach the locals some of the skills of Gaelic football, tasks in which he was ably assisted by Corkman John O'Neill. One of the biggest and longest assignments was in Ghana where Pdraig McManus, the current ESB Chief Executive, spent three years as local manager. Don Mahony, future ESB Company Secretary, also worked there and charts Moriarty's interest:

Paddy's reputation was greatly enhanced as a result of ESB International (ESBI) which came into being around 1988. He kept in close touch with every single project and he travelled the world to observe at first hand how the business was progressing. In the late 1980s I wrote a five-year corporate plan for the industry in Ghana and Paddy was the instigator of that. When based overseas you were on your own and you had to make your own decisions. I think we succeeded basically because of our in-depth knowledge of the business. You must remember that the ordinary consultant in industry is considered a 'generalist' but the ESB consultant was a specialist. That was a major positive and it worked out to our advantage.

During his ten years as Chief Executive, Moriarty acquired a love of travel and the foreign consultancy gave him scope to indulge his passion for meeting new people and seeing new places. He had a great attachment to the USA and when it was suggested that opportunities there

should be explored he immediately backed the idea. Initially an agent was employed – an ex-naval officer named Dave Marder – and it was later decided to post Vincent Fahy to Boston to represent ESB on a full-time basis for three years. This market proved difficult to crack but with the assistance of Adrian Foley, the head of a large legal practice in New York, a prestigious contract was signed to evaluate a set of power investments for Prudential.

The Boston office was later rationalized into the Houston practice where, with the help of James Moore and Joe Cofelice, two astute Bostonians, a profitable business base was established. In the longer term this led to power plant investments in Spain and Coolkeeragh in Northern Ireland and was the springboard in securing a major contract to manage a Canadian transmission system in Calgary, which was three times the size of the Irish system. This was a remarkable achievement for an Irish-based organization.

The work carried out in the 1980s laid the foundation for future expansion and success but before that could happen the severe legislative and investment restrictions imposed by the government had to be overcome. In 1987 the Irish economy was burdened with 17 per cent unemployment and mass emigration. Consequently, there was a desperate search for new initiatives in government buildings. Moriarty seized the opportunity and submitted a well-researched plan for new ESB enterprises at home and overseas. He then committed himself to delivering on the plan on condition that the legislation restricting foreign consultancy be suitably amended.

In a special report under the heading ‘New Agenda at ESB’ dated 11 January 1990 and published in *Business and Finance*, he elaborated further:

The opportunity to develop the latent entrepreneurial culture within ESB came in 1987 when the government requested semi-state companies to develop new businesses. At ESB we identified that we had more than our fair share of talent but were constrained by our narrow brief as well as the fact that we could not set up limited companies. Having carried out a detailed study I approached the then Minister for Energy, Mr Ray Burke, TD, and despite all indications to the contrary, we received every co-operation from his department and also from the Department of Finance. Now we have both the legislation and the structures we need.

As a result ESB was permitted to invest up to £120 million in subsidiaries, which was a tremendous step forward. This embraced the set-

ting up of proper companies and the advancement of a wide range of diverse business activities. The great political breakthrough had been achieved and Moriarty's dynamism and skill reaped the ultimate reward for ESB. All that remained now was to deliver on the plan.

At the time the major engineering departments in ESB were in melt-down following the completion of Moneypoint and prospects were looking bleak for the national electricity provider. There was a distinct possibility that some outlets might even have to be closed down or reduced to an essential core. Yet another doomsday scenario loomed.

When Mick Hayden suggested to Moriarty that the departments should be merged with the ESB consultancy to form a new 'stand-alone' subsidiary to carry out work in Ireland and overseas, Moriarty saw the worthiness of the suggestion. With flair and persuasion he sold the idea to the Board and led the tricky process of persuading staff to join the new company. Thus began ESB International (ESBI), where Michael Hayden was appointed MD and, with strong support from Alf Kelly and Gerry Breen, Head of Transmission, this challenging venture was realized.

It was difficult persuading ESB staff to join a subsidiary company. This was fundamentally a shift in direction with different conditions applying to encompass a new approach for a service organization. Mick Hayden elaborates:

Paddy played a major role in bringing the staff along and encouraging them to go down a different road. From modest beginnings the consultancy arm of ESB had now grown into a significant business with a lot of investments. We went into some of the more mature markets and started an operation in the UK as well as moving into the US markets and expanding in other parts of the world. This represented a very tough challenge due to intense competition but having the investment instrument and the new company structures was the key.

ESBI is unique in any semi-state organization due to the fact that it has been successful over such a sustained period. Paddy's role was crucial in that he took the ideas to government departments in order to get approval. These were very tricky assignments and this was where his tremendous political skills and vision came into play. He created the framework to do all of those things and was very enthusiastic about them. Today, ESBI employs about a thousand people and has carried out work in over eighty countries.

The foundation of ESBI in 1988 marked a new era, a different business culture, new conditions of employment, a change from service objectives to business goals and an 'arm's-length' relationship with ESB. This marked the end of the eighties and a platform for the future.

To deliver on other aspects of the plan that had by now been enshrined in the Programme for National Recovery, Moriarty decided to form a new business ventures unit led by Pat Haren, later Chief Executive of Viridian, the Northern Ireland electricity company. This unit dealt with investments in salmon farms and a series of industrial joint ventures as well as linking closely to a set of new financial services companies driven by Joe Maher and Joe Moran, who was a champion of consultancy during his time as Director Finance and later as Chief Executive.

By the time Moriarty had completed his term of office in 1991, ESBI was well established. A 40 per cent stake had been acquired in the first private power plant in the UK where a strong business had been set up under the dynamic leadership of Donal Curtin. ESBI was also well established in the Far East, in Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, where the man they called Paddy Mo had forged a great attachment and developed an extraordinary rapport with key figures in the electricity sector of that distant outpost. The opening up of former USSR states had begun and once again ESBI was in the vanguard.

The ESBI project manager in Vietnam, John Gunning, recalls those heady days around the end of March 1988 when Moriarty's arrival in Ton Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh City attracted all the razzamatazz of a state visit. As the Air France flight touched down on that warm March day, a fleet of black Lada limousines slowly emerged from behind the main hanger and proceeded to the point of disembarkation where an embroidered, 300-metre long red carpet led to the terminal building. A bevy of beautiful young ladies dressed in traditional Vietnamese costumes and bearing large bouquets of yellow orchids lined up on either side of the runway, while a string quartet played 'The Kerry Dances' as the man from Dún Síon walked into the embrace of Nguyen Van Luu, who had earlier led a group of his compatriots to ESB headquarters in Dublin for an extended three-month study and fellowship tour of the country. John Gunning recalls: 'As we walked through the terminal, Moriarty donned his dark brown *seanachai* hat and lit up his favourite Havana cigar.'

The subsequent days involved long car journeys to the southern tip of the Mekong Delta, to the seaside resort of Vung Tau and the extraordinary tunnels of Cu Chi as well as to a utility management presentation for executives of the Vietnamese power company. The welcoming party at each of the regional centres included former participants of the ESB study-tour programme in Ireland.



Always chivalrous, Paddy Mo's sense of the theatrical found expression one day on a river crossing when a middle-aged lady pushing her bicycle laden down with a heavy bag of rice came unstuck and keeled over. On seeing this, Moriarty instantly leapt to her assistance and reloaded the bag of rice, to the delight of the natives who responded with cheering and handclapping.

The Vietnam experience continued with a trip on a tributary of the mighty Mekong River to a peat reserve that was mostly under water, something that fascinated Moriarty and his entourage, which included John Gunning and Dermot Connellan. Assigned ESB consultants in the region demonstrated their expertise in maintenance management and execution and the progress of a large-scale workshop facility that today generates roughly \$20m in annual revenue.

A night at the Opera House in Ho Chi Minh City provided the perfect send-off for the Irish delegation and was tailor-made for Paddy Mo, who is said to have been deeply moved by a solo rendition of 'The Last Rose of Summer'. Clearly, the normally impassive Kerryman had a genuine affection for other cultures and peoples and it was natural that they should enthusiastically reciprocate his courtesy and respect.

Three years later, as Chairman of ESB, he was back in Vietnam again at the invitation of the Vietnamese government. Accompanied by Don Moore, then ESBI delegate for Vietnam, the reception accorded him on arrival at Noi Boi airport in Hanoi surpassed even the glitter of his first visit. Government ministers and officials from the Ministry of Energy hailed his arrival with a blaze of pageantry and the usual floral extravaganza. Training had by now been provided for more than a hundred managers, engineers and technicians from several locations in the Northern and Central regions and every one of these trainees had been a guest at the Moriarty home in Dublin. It was payback time for the man who was always a supreme ambassador for his company and his country. But no matter what personal honour was bestowed upon him, Moriarty's inherent sense of humour remained to the fore. One day, on observing teams of lean-looking women in loose skirts and traditional conical hats at work in the rice fields, he remarked to John Gunning, 'Christ! We could do with a boatload of them in Dingle.'

An intensive round of meetings with government ministers and institutional managers followed. These afforded ESB's top man an opportunity to indulge in dialogue and discussions on various topics, from development aid needs to future inter-utility co-operation, which included ESB sponsorship of executive management training in Irish

universities. Next day he laid a wreath at the tomb of Ho Chi Minh, the father of the Vietnamese nation. When an Irish-American acquaintance upbraided him for 'flouting the civil rights of democratic nations' with such a gesture, he responded: 'And now you want to flout mine.'

Next stop was Danang with the usual round of meetings and discussions with the local power company's chief executive, Mr Van Giai, followed by a trip to the beautiful and quaint village of Hoi An, an ancient trading port for Portuguese and Japanese traders and at one time visited by Marco Polo. The last leg was the return journey to Ho Chi Minh City where Moriarty renewed a treasured friendship with Nguyen Van Luu, leader of the Vietnam Power Company, who was formally invited to visit Ireland along with his director.

That Vietnamese visit to Ireland took place in 1995, where they signed a contract with ESBI that embraced the provision of consultancy services for a major power plant development at Baria Phu My. After the signing ceremony and toasts, the visiting delegation were taken by helicopter to Killarney and spent a week touring the Ring of Kerry with stopovers at Ventry, Dún Chaoin and Dingle. Ever since, the Vietnam link has continued to flourish under the guidance of such people as Michael Hayden, Padraig McManus and Daniel Moore.

According to John Gunning:

Paddy Moriarty is still fondly remembered as the father of the Irish mission to Vietnam along with the indomitable Pat Collins and Jim Graham. He is often spoken of overseas as a man of immense compassion, integrity and, above all, generosity. His many friends often talk about him and miss him.

It has been a long and winding road from the oil crises of the 1970s but leadership, courage and imagination have won the day. As in so many other initiatives during his time at ESB, the man who provided much of the dynamism behind this exciting era was Paddy Moriarty. He was never one to pull back when new horizons hove into view and the success of ESBI embodies his outstanding vision and confidence in the future, not just in ESB but in the Irish nation.

Michael Hayden reflects: 'One of the great legacies that Paddy Moriarty has bequeathed to ESB is the spirit of enterprise which continues up to the present day. He did this by example and by reaching out to staff in all areas. He was an inspirational figure who brought out the very best in people at all levels.'

Involvement in overseas work fundamentally changed the culture and nature of ESB and most of the senior appointments in the company

were from people who had been involved internationally. This was the greatest change that had occurred since the company was formed in 1927 and it has taken ESB into the new millennium well equipped to face the challenges of the future.

After Paddy's retirement as Chairman in 1996 ESBI went on to scale new heights, but as Paddy himself would have said, *sin scéal eile*.

*Postscript:* It is not possible in a biography of this nature to name the very many people at home and abroad who played a key role in building ESB's thriving consultancy business. These dedicated staff members often faced daunting challenges in isolated locations and under difficult conditions where they had to rely on their own initiative. They helped to build the international business and the worldwide reputation of ESBI today is testament to their unstinting endeavours.

## 9. *Managing the Company*

*Surviving in a recession requires tight financial and operating controls. The struggle for greater efficiency is everything. Anything that is excessive cannot be afforded. Lack of resolve in tackling these issues is a free ticket to the graveyard of failed companies.*

Dr P.J. Moriarty, speaking at the conference of the Association of Electrical Contractors on 13 April 1985

By 1986, as the recession deepened, the Irish economy was in trouble. Inflation, driven by the oil shocks of the previous decade and inadequate government policies, was out of control. Unemployment had reached chronic proportions. In the prevailing climate competitiveness was critical. Government debt was growing with each passing year and considered the worst in Europe. High interest rates had become a crippling feature, with 80 per cent of income tax collected going to pay the charges on the national debt. In the battle to save the Irish punt, overnight money rates were to hit a staggering 100 per cent. By living beyond its means, the Irish Republic's self-confidence in what it could do as a nation was close to being shattered, as was the confidence of international investors in Ireland.

The stark reality of the crisis was met with a determination to tackle these issues head-on and action was taken to combat the vicious circle of inflation, unemployment, non-competitiveness, high interest rates and a penal tax regime. The resolve of the NESC document in 1986; the austerity budgets of the new Fianna Fáil government from early 1987; the courageous stand by Fine Gael leader Alan Dukes in presenting the September 1987 Tallaght Strategy; union and employer sup-

port for the partnership model; the 1988–90 Programme for National Recovery – these provided the prescription to stop the rot and laid a foundation for the economic success of the late 1990s.

In the ten-year period from 1981 – the time Moriarty was appointed as Chief Executive – to his retirement from that post in 1991, massive changes occurred in the political, social and economic life of the country. ESB could not operate in isolation from these and it was widely recognized both inside and outside the company that Moriarty played the dominant role in mapping out the course that his senior management team and, indeed, the entire workforce would take over this eventful period. The extent of the change can be gauged by taking one example: overall staffing, which stood at 13,301 in 1982, was reduced to 10,096 in 1991 without any major industrial chaos.

These figures cloak considerable changes and developments. The first ESB Strategic Plan of 1983 (Price Improvement Plan) reviewed the future outlook for each sector of the business and identified the need for cost-cutting measures in all operational areas. This was followed shortly afterward by a government inquiry and report on electricity prices – the Jakobsen Report – published in September 1984, which concluded that ESB was overmanned by approximately 3000 staff. The report did, however, recognize that this was due largely to ESB having its own design and construction staff and also a relatively large transmission system plus power stations that were small by international standards for the size of the utility.

It was not surprising that the Jakobsen Report was readily accepted by management as their objective to reduce staff numbers was already clearly evident. Its conclusions were highlighted in negotiations with unions to legitimize policies of limited external recruitment and helped to introduce the new concept of a ‘voluntary severance package’.

Social considerations, however, limited the Board’s capability of reducing numbers in the way they might have done if they had had an entirely free hand. There was pressure to keep a number of peat-burning power stations in the midland region open in the mid 1980s despite the higher operational and staffing costs. Due to the older technology used there, approximately 1200 staff were required to produce 450 MW of electricity. ESB management were, however, moving to introduce best practice standards as evidenced by the fact that the more modern Monypoint coal-fired power station could generate 900 MW using only 300 staff, while the gas-fired plant in Aghada could generate 510 MW using only 150 staff.

However, policies to effect staff reductions wherever possible in each operational area were introduced. These policies were implemented simultaneously with a total structural reorganization following the commissioning of reports from McKinsey and Miller-Barry Associates. The latter incorporated a small task force of senior management from ESB who were responsible for implementing the report's recommendations. Most of the team went on to play central roles in key positions in the new organization that was to follow.

While Paddy Moriarty's early commitment to change had been driven by his vision of a company fundamentally repositioned for the future, he was fully aware from his first days at the helm in 1981 that the Irish economy was worsening. He understood ESB's vital role in the overall scheme of things. The 1983 Price Improvement Plan, another Moriarty initiative, reflected a changed environment and provided the impetus for major company rationalization to improve competitiveness and cut costs. With electricity price increases kept below inflation, reduced staff numbers, improved operations and organizational changes, more radical measures were to follow.

The ESB's payroll had peaked at 13,600 people in September 1982 but by July 1985 that figure had been reduced to 12,200 – a loss of 1400 jobs within three years. Remarkably, the cost-cutting exercise that followed the Miller-Barry Report was effected without any industrial relations action. Much of the credit for this can be attributed to the ingenuity of Moriarty as the unions had come to recognize his basic sense of justice and fair play. His use of the 'carrot and stick' approach, by giving a little in order to gain something in return, was accepted as the way business would be conducted and became a normal part of the trade-off that ensued.

Despite significant improvements, ESB was still being badly mauled by the worsening economy. Growth in electricity usage was stagnant. Wage levels, reflecting inflation and the size of national agreements, had increased. Payroll numbers, even after the reductions achieved, were too high. Debt levels, mostly foreign denominated, were rising fast, particularly impacted by the financing of the £750 million Money-point construction on the Shannon estuary. Exposures to currency and interest-rate movement were considered high risk. Devaluation of the punt by 8 per cent in August 1986 was a painful shock. ESB's balance sheet had become unsustainable.

Coincidentally, Paddy Moriarty had now reached the pinnacle of his career and was able to influence decisions that would have far-reaching

effects within the company and throughout the wider community. Five years after being appointed Chief Executive he found himself in the position of having to provide leadership in a time of economic crisis. Crucially, his obsession with change from 1981 onwards and the later Miller-Barry restructuring proposals provided the base for an accelerated attack on spending and inefficiency. Typically, and with minimum preamble, Moriarty set out to tackle these issues.

The government was by now putting strong pressure on semi-state companies to act in the national interest. However, Moriarty was always fiercely defensive of his company and its workers and was not averse to facing down ministers who felt they had the right to call the shots and influence decisions that, strictly speaking, were outside their remit. More than once, he held the line and refused to give ground. He knew too much about the industry to be dictated to by outside forces whose role was mainly policy only, and when confrontation was the only way out he showed he had the stomach for whatever battles had to be fought.

The minutes from a meeting between government officials and ESB representatives held on Tuesday, 9 July 1985, illustrate the tensions that existed. This meeting was chaired by Deputy Frank Prendergast with Deputy Robert Molloy and Senators Eoin Ryan, Brian Fleming and Brian Hillery on the government side. ESB was represented by Chairman Professor Charles Dillon, Chief Executive Patrick Moriarty, Director Strategic Planning Vincent Fahy, Director Finance Dermot Connaughton, Divisional Manager of Strategic Planning and Development Michael O'Shea and Company Secretary J.F. (Jack) Williams.

At the time, ESB's accumulated deficit was £70 million or 10 per cent of gross revenue. Naturally, answers were sought as to why this unseemly situation should exist after previous estimates had suggested that an improvement by £23 million was imminent. Professor Dillon, after acknowledging that ESB was 'particularly and painfully conscious of its worsening financial position', brought in the Chief Executive. Moriarty spoke of having kept electricity prices stable over a five-year period 'when inflation was running in the teens for much of that time', despite the fact that ESB would 'never again have the 8 to 10 per cent growth that we had in the past'. He argued that part of the problem lay with the government, who had levied rates on the company that were '£10 million per year more than what they should be'.

This raised the temperature of the meeting and the government lobby went on the offensive. They pursued Moriarty on a number of contentious issues, raising questions about the difficulties experienced in

planning strategies and why so many apparent 'errors' had been made; why a grossly over-staffed organization with 3000 extra people on its books should continue to operate in such a cavalier fashion; and, finally, why at Ringsend power station 100 men were 'drawing full salary while doing nothing'.

What emerged at the end of a long debate was that Moriarty was not for turning. He produced so many facts and figures that it was almost impossible to pin him down. In his view, ESB, with twenty-eight power stations to run, was squeaky clean in all its manifestations. If there was blame to be levied because of any particular issue it always lay outside the company's control. There was little to be done in the short term about the moth-balled power station in Ringsend where a staff of 350 men had been reduced to 100.

Moriarty explained, 'We do not foresee ourselves having to use Ringsend but we have not yet come to the decision point where we should scrap it totally because it is an inefficient plant. It is a sound plant.' Keeping the station open in the event of breakdowns elsewhere made good economic sense, he claimed.

There was much more in a similar vein but always the same pattern evolved. Moriarty fielded at least 90 per cent of the questions from the government lobby and the main thrust of their concerns were addressed in minute detail. His knowledge gave him a position of authority from which to speak. He viewed operational matters in ESB as being a matter for the Board and the executive management only. At the end of a bruising debate the government lobby had to step down.

In tandem with the renewed attack on costs and efficiency, Moriarty helped to provide a special status in ESB for corporate and strategic planning, and so it remains up to the present day. To borrow a sentence from *Planning In The ESB* by John D. Roche, 'Planning is the most effective way of achieving the most productive use of limited resources.' Strategic planning in the past had concentrated more on the technical areas, including the system-planning side of the business, but now under Moriarty it embraced every facet of the company's operation. There had to be a strategy on oil purchase, how to buy competitively, how to sell electricity at a profit and so on. Corporate planning differed in that it affected the whole of the company in terms of its structure, the possibility of privatization, the fragmentation of the company (a live issue during the Moriarty years) and much more.

One of the most critical tasks facing Moriarty and his team was to tackle ESB's over-dependence on oil. This was done not by one simple



measure but through a number of key strategic moves. The construction of Moneypoint power station, a new coal-burning utility, was a difficult decision given the huge scale of investment required. It did progress and was completed within a relatively short time for such a large-scale project. New combined cycle plants were introduced in both Marina and North Wall, and a gas-fired plant was installed at Aghada. In addition, refurbishment plans were undertaken for both the hydro and peat stations. This meant that ESB's dependence on oil was successfully tackled and managed over a period of about ten years. This difficult process involved managing significant IR issues in addition to managing local and regional interest groups, who were angling for new stations or the retention of existing ones, while at the same time maintaining the continuity of supply and the reliability of existing plant. The fact that all this was done and it went by largely unnoticed was a considerable achievement which perhaps to this day has never been fully appreciated.

Implementation of the recommendations by Miller-Barry was not easy. It involved a reduction in the number of districts to achieve economies of scale, a complete new structure for the management of the generation function (with the emphasis being put on the management of plant by fuel mix rather than on geographical location) and a severe decrease in head office staff numbers, notably a reduction of 25 per cent in senior management positions. This proved to be the most extensive cost-cutting programme ever implemented and eventually produced savings of £20 million annually. A three-year time frame was envisaged. 'Tearing the guts out of the company', as somebody said, was now given the official stamp of approval but with ESB's financial position deteriorating from year to year there was no practical alternative. The changes strongly advocated by Paddy Moriarty during the preceding years were now about to kick in.

The 1987 Strategic Plan aimed to provide a better service at a price that could compete in the energy market with the added objective of giving a competitive advantage to the company as a whole. This was to be achieved, according to the concluding summary, by 'rigorous management and harvesting of our existing assets, particularly the generation capability which must be the priority area of strategic concern over the medium term. The policies on asset management will be the primary determinant of market success and quality service.'

Moriarty and his fellow directors realized that stretching targets would have to be set for the senior management team if the objectives in the strategic plans were to be achieved. The first Corporate Plan was

developed to cover the period 1989–93. It was based on detailed analysis by each manager of his segment of the business. The conclusion was that if the overall assumptions for the grossed-up business plan were carried through and proved reasonably valid, with a 3 per cent growth in unit sales, then ESB would be in position by 1993 to achieve the following:

- Reduce electricity prices in real terms to 13 per cent below their existing levels.
- Restore the company's financial stability.
- Postpone capital investment in new generating plant to beyond 1993.
- Improve the quality and range of services to customers.
- Become a more diversified company contributing to national wealth and job creation.

The plan finished with an exhortation to management and staff: 'There is no longer any reason why staff and management cannot make ESB the best electricity company in the world.'

Mick O'Shea, a manager in Strategic Planning between 1985 and 1993, with Pat Haren (later to become Head of Strategic Planning and Chief Executive of Veridian, the Northern Ireland electricity company) – both reporting to John Duffy, Director Corporate Strategy, who remained in charge of this department until 1996 – had a bird's-eye view of Moriarty's influence, which included not just planning but every other aspect of the business:

During my time in Planning we worked enormous hours and Paddy would have worked more than that again. There was a huge public service ethos that percolated right through the organization.

When Pat Haren and myself were doing strategic plans in 1987, it was in anticipation of deregulation, which subsequently happened in the 1990s with so many competitors coming into the industry. The kind of institutional arrangements that Moriarty made at that time would have been in anticipation of these things happening down the road even after he had retired himself.

If somebody asked me what was Paddy Moriarty's role in all of that I would point out that in 1983 he wrote a strategic plan himself and it did signal that there were major changes coming on stream. He pointed the way towards what a strategic plan should contain. He was doing his best to see to it that ESB would be positioned as favourably as possible for the new era that was approaching. A strategic plan lasted until somebody out there suggested it was time to update it. Any one corporate plan might be supported by forty or fifty plans from the major organizational units within the company, in Distribution, Generation/Transmission and so on. The Chief Executive provided

guidance in all of those matters. A planning letter went out every year to each director who in turn informed the managers down the line saying: 'This is the environment we are now living in and these are the different principles that have to be adopted.' There was close interaction with Paddy Mo on all planning activities. Everything of any significance that went out of the organization between 1981 and 1991 when he was Chief Executive would have been approved and guided by him.

Moriarty didn't do it all by himself though – he was supported by a high-quality team of directors. He especially relied on his Finance Director, Dermot Connaughton, a man with an in-depth knowledge of the company's finance and accounting operations who filled many positions along the way. After Connaughton's death in 1987 another top-level executive, Joe Moran, filled this vacancy with great distinction. Much of the debris of preceding decades was now swept away. Improved efficiency at all levels became the watchword.

A three-year electricity price freeze was announced by Moriarty in 1987. This followed discussions with government and reflected public reaction to ESB prices, which compared badly with the European average. Industrial competitiveness and inflation control were to the forefront of government policy. Further periods of revenue restriction followed and it was July 1996 before ESB succeeded in getting approval for the next price increase. Moriarty was keenly aware of the importance of contributing to economic progress through competitive electricity prices. Given the difficulties being experienced in ESB at this time, nine years of no price increase was an astounding achievement.

Johnny Shine, currently Director of ESB Networks, has a clear recollection of Moriarty's input in other critical areas of the company's advancement between 1989 and 1995, which included the conversion of a large part of the main distribution network. This significant and highly technical operation involved 40,000 km of network and was geared primarily towards increasing capacity:

Paddy Moriarty recognized the need for this project and was directly involved both in the process of approval and in the initial piloting of what became a major technological change. During the 1980s he approved the establishment of the hugely significant Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems in Dublin and Cork, which provided the capability to monitor network loading and alarms as well as performing fault and planned switching by remote control. He provided the leadership and support in the setting up of a new National Control Centre and during the late 1980s he recognized that persisting with a simple sales growth marketing strategy didn't make economic

sense. He was deeply conscious of the need for strong links between ESB and local communities and he was extremely sensitive to the environmental impact of networks in order to enhance the visual amenity. He took a direct interest in the risks associated with hydro dams and was responsible for the initiation of a major review of dam safety by external experts.

The need for every aspect of revenue spending was now questioned. Plant and network maintenance programmes were critically reviewed. In Distribution, management initiated a sustained drive towards increased effectiveness through further standardization of operations and decentralization. Improvement in work standards and productivity were essential to the plan. So too was the use of technical innovation and up-to-date operational methods.

Moriarty had long been heavily supportive of computerization and when Joe Moran, then Finance Manager, was appointed ESB's Chief Information Officer he proceeded to initiate the 'Information Needs Study' – a fundamental review of system requirements across the company. It was carried out by a combined team of ESB managers in collaboration with the US consultants Arthur Andersen who had performed similar exercises in American utilities. As a result, information technology increased in status in ESB. A close colleague of Moriarty's, Frank Malin, took over the position of Chief Information Officer when Joe Moran was appointed Director Finance. Soon, a new integrated systems architecture was put in place and all systems were redesigned. The scale of change put massive pressure on the computer personnel division led by Paddy Kelly but Moriarty drove onwards and gave no respite. Tom O'Reilly was appointed to head up another arm of the customer division and the same thrust was maintained. Harnessing the growing creativity of his managers, Moriarty encouraged and supported a wide range of customer-friendly systems – all designed to expedite the collection of money. As somebody who always championed customers' needs he kept very close to these developments.

The condition of the balance sheet was a critical issue. Continuing to borrow was not an option. Falling electricity demand and the price freeze brought an urgent need to improve the balance sheet and capital spending was cut to the bone. The term 'sweating existing assets' was the order of the day and investment was permitted in extending the life of old generation plant in order to defer the need for new plant. Under Moran and his Finance and Treasury team, including Maher, O'Reilly and Aengus Murphy (who would later head up the ESB finance sub-

subsidiary FTI), restructuring of the debt was executed. New financial products enabled redenomination of loans from global to new ERM currencies. At the same time large tranches of high-margin floating-rate debt were converted to fixed rates at attractive levels.

In keeping with his overall approach, Moriarty maintained close contact with the major policies and moves in ESB Treasury. He was especially supportive of recommendations to immunize the price of fuel from currency volatility and achieved this through a variety of 'hedging' operations. Essentially, this was a strategic decision to help stabilize the cost of electricity to the Irish customer. He wrote to the Department of Finance to advise them of ESB's proposed hedging strategy. By now the Board had given their approval and it was important to convey how big a move this was. Two weeks before the first 'hedge', he decided to write to the Department once again. Obviously, he was growing impatient and Joe Maher clearly recalls him saying, 'This is such an important issue that I want to rub their noses in it so that nobody can be second guessing later on whether it was a good decision or a bad decision. We are all in this together.' It went through.

A letter from Moriarty to his senior staff on 18 December 1988, at the end of a year of progress, demonstrates his expectation of leadership from his managers. An extract reads as follows:

*The ESB has successfully come through another difficult year of considerable challenge, change and achievement. Even though we had many successes in 1988, I think that customer service everywhere is not yet up to the standard I would like it to be. Next year will be designated 'The Year of the Customer' and everyone can contribute to the acceleration of change and improvement. Those who are not directly involved with the customer can identify their own internal ESB customers and, by always adopting the right attitude towards them, the opportunity is there to make the company more efficient and cost-effective.*

*Those in customer service areas can work to change attitudes, communications and process to blow away bureaucratic obstacles and organisational barriers which confuse our customers and result in complaints. I receive complaints in sufficient numbers to know that everything is not right.*

*Things won't get better through me writing or talking about them, however obsessively. It will require leadership from senior management of such quality, of such personal example and of such enthusiasm that first-class customer service becomes the personal commitment and ambition of everyone who works here. Each one of us must concentrate on mobilising all the strengths of their particular area within the organisation so that we can say this time next year 'we have got it right at last'. Consequently, I cannot see you being able to rest much in 1989 either!*

The staff of ESB, who mirrored the views of the general public in a time of deep recession, were supportive of Moriarty even though cut-backs affected nearly every part of the organization. But another major difficulty was yet to come. Soon the government's resolve to curb the high wage increases of the past was being challenged by the public-sector unions who were conscious of the continuing levels of inflation and, predictably, ESB unions were first into the fray. Negotiations in a changed economic climate culminated in yet another strike with staggered withdrawal of labour across the company.

There was great anger countrywide at this development, given the state of the economy and the level of unemployment, and when negotiations resumed Moriarty led an ESB management team with Des Geraghty, General Secretary of ICTU, heading up the unions. An all-night session held in the College of Industrial Relations finally hammered out a deal that resulted in a pay pause of six months followed by moderate pay increases that ran over the next couple of years. All sides now realized that times had changed and that Moriarty was not for turning. It was a major advantage to government because the lead had been set in ESB and the trend of wage-spiral increments had been broken. Negotiations concluded at 6 am and the lights came back on all over Ireland.

Joe Maher recalls accompanying Paddy Mo to the Mansion House where the Minister for Labour (and then Lord Mayor) Bertie Ahern was briefed on the latest developments. The Minister looked for full assurance on the productivity improvements associated with the deal and it became quite obvious that the negotiations of that night were of major concern to government. To their credit, the ESB unions showed commendable responsibility and in the economic spin-off that followed Moriarty gained new stature on a national stage.

It is interesting to reflect on Dr Alf Kelly's considered opinion of his Chief Executive and of his managerial style. As Director of Generation and Transmission from 1980 to 1990 and a Moriarty loyalist (despite the occasional flare-up between them), he was previously Head of Project Department, which included the construction of power stations throughout the country. This was a vital portfolio that carried tremendous responsibility – if the power stations stopped functioning there would be no ESB. Like so many others who worked closely with the Chief Executive, he has only good things to say about him:

Paddy Moriarty was a remarkable mixture of a very kind-hearted man with a tremendous determination to make the company more efficient. He was able to marry the two, which was quite an amazing per-

formance. The trade unions trusted him and I would say that all the staff in ESB trusted him as well. Unless you have a guy that the unions can trust you're gone.

He was neither an engineer nor an accountant but despite all that he became the boss of the biggest engineering and probably the biggest accounting business in Ireland. Some might say that he was an egotist but, to me, that's nonsense. To be the top man in a company with 13,000 employees and a turnover of £100 million in the early 1980s you can't be a 'softie'. You must be a person with tremendous confidence and ability.

As a company, ESB always encouraged innovation and Paddy was prepared to take risks. For instance, in Marina (Cork) we connected a gas turbine (manufactured by General Electric USA) with a 'Heat Recovery' boiler to make what is called a 'Combined Cycle'. We were the first in the world to do that.

In actual fact, Ireland shouldn't have cheap electricity at all. We can't build big power stations because it's a technical risk and you can't build 1000-megawatt stations in Ireland because the system is too small. The maximum unit size we could handle at that time was 300 megawatts. We're not tied to anyone else so if something goes wrong we must be able to stand on our own two feet. If we had a huge inter-connector to England, Germany or France we could have built much bigger units at much lower cost. All of these things were telling against us and, still, if you look at electricity in isolation we were as good as any.

According to Kelly, 'John Lang started training all power station operatives with the result that the people running a turbine were top-notchers.' That kind of training is still going on and it was taken further by Moriarty in his time.

If he hadn't become Chief Executive of ESB, staff numbers would not have decreased in the way that they did. Industrial Relations would have remained a total mess. Irish industry would have been decimated. People in high places today probably don't realize that, but if we didn't build the right power plants and if there wasn't continuity of supply, Irish industry would not have grown. That definitely wouldn't have happened without Moriarty. He inherited a company that was in bad shape financially and he elevated it on to the highest possible plane. Along with Donagh O'Malley, Ken Whitaker, Maurice Moynihan and Seán Lemass he played a role in shaping the future Celtic Tiger. There is no doubt about that.

ESB wasn't keen on management training until Moriarty came along ... but he soon got people thinking about more than technicalities. He was a complex character in that none of us understood him fully. That happened because he was such a strong personality and as a

result you never got inside the outer veneer. He wasn't one for crying on somebody's shoulder or moaning over a few drinks. He had strength of character that rose above everything. He was his own man.

One could get the impression – and it would be very wrong – that Paddy Moriarty's ten years as Chief Executive were spent streamlining ESB, cost containment and reducing staff numbers. He did much more than that.

He actively promoted ESBI, which focused on expansion, as did the financial services companies in treasury consulting, fund management and customer credit, which in later years were profitably sold off. Contraction and restructuring in the parent body was therefore balanced by exciting incursions into new markets at home and abroad. This was highly stimulating for the staff of ESB and for the hundreds of people who went overseas to work at various times. Moriarty himself was always at the ready to assist in entertaining foreign personnel whenever they visited ESB – which was often.

Transforming customer service within the company was more than just another Moriarty initiative. He fervently believed that ESB was there to serve the customer and, in return, the people of Ireland had the right to expect the very best service that could be provided. He spoke with passion about rural development and the closeness that then existed between ESB crews who went out among the residents of towns and villages all over the country. He believed ESB, an electricity monopoly, had now to recreate itself as a customer-friendly utility. He developed the 'Year of the Customer' in 1989, repeating the programme in 1990, and he expected the company to commit enthusiastically to a new customer-service ethic. Customer-service workshops were held at numerous locations and the man himself spoke passionately of the need to elevate the customer at every opportunity. Often unorthodox in his approach, a favoured ploy of his was to deal with complaints face to face, often travelling to meet certain disgruntled individuals on Saturdays – not a popular gambit with most managers. Without doubt, the inherent humanity of Paddy Moriarty and his commitment to Irish society at large had a significant bearing in his personal drive within customer relations.

Another initiative, which encouraged all ESB employees (excluding senior management) to come up with new ideas, was managed by Don Mahony, assisted by Des Allen with Moriarty leading the way as usual. This 'Bright Ideas Programme' coincided with the Year of Innovation (1990) and had its genesis in a conversation with Dermot Egan of AIB two years earlier. Things gathered momentum rapidly after that. The



Moriarty-inspired programme was particularly significant because it saved the company a lot of money and added to the change programme. It also created a company-wide interest in that many staff were generously remunerated for their creativity. Don Mahony remembers, 'Paddy went all over the country with it because it was largely his idea. He was full of unusual initiatives during his years as Chief Executive.'

Moriarty pushed the strategic planning process to the fore again with the unveiling of ESB's 1990 Strategic Plan, 'Connecting with the Future'. This plan highlighted several key issues that, if managed well, could help the company secure its position over the next decade:

- The need to manage demand growth to achieve an average of 3 per cent per annum growth over the decade.
- The requirement to secure adequate gas supplies.
- Increased emphasis on training and development of management and staff.
- New methods of acquiring generating capacity and new plant technologies.
- The need for a price contract to fund future investment requirements and maintain financial stability.
- The need to manage with uncertainty regarding economic growth and unit sales growth.

The Strategic Plan was again supported by ESB's Corporate Plan 1991-5, which highlighted two key issues that needed to be properly resolved, with government agreement essential in both cases:

1. Agreement to long term pricing arrangements aimed at achieving smooth and progressive price increases from 1992 onwards, and
2. Securing adequate quantities of gas at competitive prices.

The Corporate Plan concluded that if these issues were successful then the programmes put in place would result in the success of the corporate strategy outlined in 'Connecting with the Future'.

One of the initiatives that will forever be a lasting memorial to Moriarty's vision and enterprise was the opening of the Shannon-Erne Waterway, a project that cost £30 million, with £2.5 million coming from ESB funds. Such was his standing among his Board colleagues that he was able to sell this idea and gain substantial funding as well for something that was no more than a pipe dream during the initial stages. He believed passionately in the concept of linking the waterways because he always saw ESB as serving the nation in the widest sense and

not merely fulfilling its role as an electricity supply company. And so the opportunity arose to restore the long-defunct Ballinamore–Ballyconnell canal, which later resulted in opening up a link between Ireland's two great waterways, the Erne and the Shannon.

Jim Lawrence, the engineer in charge at Cathleen Falls power station in Ballyshannon, was first to broach the subject with Moriarty. According to Don Mahony, 'Paddy saw this project as a North-South initiative and he actually pushed it through.' Apart from the electricity inter-connector between Northern Ireland and the Republic (which had been sabotaged by IRA violence during the Troubles) there were only road and rail connections between the two parts of Ireland. This obviously stimulated Moriarty's avowed political aspirations. He was, at all times, an unapologetic Irish nationalist with a practical sense of patriotism and he held views that might not always have been seen as politically correct.

Charles Haughey as Taoiseach set the ball rolling when he invited a number of leading industrialists to a meeting in February 1990. Among them was one Patrick J. Moriarty, Chief Executive of ESB. The instructions that went out from this meeting was that each person should go away and after a period of reflection submit proposals that would be considered suitable for future EU funding. Moriarty suggested that the opening of the Ballinamore–Ballyconnell canal on the Cavan–Leitrim border should be investigated with a view to providing linkage between the Shannon and the Erne. This proposal was taken on board by government and with Bernard O'Reilly, the engineer who was appointed to oversee the project, events gathered pace almost immediately. The EU, the International Fund for Ireland, the governments of the Republic and Northern Ireland and ESB all contributed their share to the required funding of £30 million. This was a flagship development that helped transform the adjoining countryside from a deprived backwater into a thriving, tourism-driven attraction.

Two years later, on 2 February 1992, Charles Haughey, making his last public appearance as Taoiseach, flew by helicopter to observe the work in progress at Ballyconnell. He was greeted by, among others, Paddy Moriarty, guest speaker for the occasion. 'Life', said the ESB chief in his address, 'is never so busy that we cannot find time to celebrate and break bread with friends.' Looking directly at Haughey, he finished his address by quoting from James Clarence Mangan's 'A Vision of Connacht in the Fourteenth Century', and went on to paraphrase the poet: 'Cathal Mor of the generous heart, may you find peace and happiness in your retirement.'

In his reply the Taoiseach referred to himself as 'one of those pompous people you see on TV from time to time'. He reflected on 'a wondrous and magnificent project', one that he was happy to be associated with. It was, he said, 'very symbolic and very meaningful in that it winds its way through a political border'. Harking back to the previous speaker's reference to his part in bringing in legislation for free travel for old-age pensioners (including himself), he remarked: 'Wasn't I the far-seeing fella. I was as cute as a Kerryman!'

Then came the *pièce de résistance*: 'It was lucky that we wrote letters to each other two years ago because if Paddy had not come over to my office to discuss this project there would now be a Dáil Commission of Inquiry on the matter.' A captive audience in the Slieve Russell Hotel laughed heartily.

During some of the most difficult years in ESB, Paddy Moriarty kept a steady hand on the tiller. He saw things in very simple terms and he wanted instant results. He once berated a colleague thus: 'I am about to set sail and if you don't want to come on board you can stay where you are and sit on the harbour wall.' He wouldn't hang around when there was work to be done and he thrived on the risk-taking involved as he juggled a whole range of issues that might have submerged a lesser man. By his own admission, 'there was never a day that I didn't get an adrenalin rush from the excitement that was going on all around me'.

Inevitably in the search for a leaner organization certain people got hurt but collateral damage was kept to a minimum. Keeping the unions on side while effecting corrective surgery where appropriate was testament to Moriarty's ability as a first-class practitioner in the art of human relations. Undoubtedly, he could have chosen an easier route, one that would have been less demanding of himself, but it was not in his nature to cut corners or seek the easy option. A single-minded approach dominated his thinking throughout his career. As far as he was concerned ESB wasn't just a job – it was a lifetime crusade.

For Joe Maher, Director Finance, 'Paddy Moriarty's natural style would be widely seen as progressive, even expansionary, but the challenges thrust upon him in the 1980s were to demand an approach that combined many ingredients. These included the urgent need to reshape the company for the immediate economic environment plus the maintenance of a sound framework in order to ensure staff morale and a quality company.' In time, the various strands came together to bring closer to reality Moriarty's oft-stated target for ESB – to make it 'a world-class utility'.

Ten years as Chief Executive provided him with a wide canvas on which some clear (and sometimes extravagant) brush-strokes were painted before handing over to his successor Joe Moran on 17 April 1991. His commitment to ESB customers remained paramount and restraint in price-control was at the core of his philosophy. Largely through his influence electricity prices in industry became more competitive and for domestic customers were the lowest in Europe. This was no small achievement.

Given that his career as Chief Executive was winding down, news of his impending appointment as Chairman spread rapidly through the company and on the night of 17 April 1991 he was waylaid when a surprise retirement party at the RHA Gallery, Ely Place, Dublin 2, left him, if not lost for words, at least visibly moved by the overwhelming response of friends and colleagues who had gathered to pay him tribute.

This was a night of conviviality and good fellowship and after the retiring Chief Executive had composed himself with occasional dabs of his handkerchief he rose to the occasion in his own inimitable style. Joe Moran was charged with doing the preliminary honours and, in carrying out his duties as MC, he made the following observations:

There are so many facets to his life that it is almost impossible to capture them all ... Kerry Person of the Year in 1991, a spectator at every possible sport, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the GAA, patron of the Arts, Chairman of the RTÉ Authority for three years; public speaker of renown on any subject in any place at any time, a man who always recognized the potential of Ireland and the Irish people, a lover of the environment, a driver for change and the need to embrace change, but, above all, an almost fanatical desire to promote ESB always. He has become like a 'godfather' to the family that is ESB. Everything he did he did it with style and good humour.

Brendan Kennelly paid the following tribute:

Paddy Moriarty has a genius for making people happy. God alone knows what magical mixture of talent constitutes that genius but we have all witnessed the beneficial results of its subtle and effective workings.

Running through Paddy Mo's genius for making people happy at their work are some of the most admirable qualities I have encountered anywhere – a sense of humour rooted in a compelling blend of knowledge and tolerance; a laugh that comes from the depth of his being; a capacity for telling stories, many of them from the Dingle area with a shrewd eye for the telling detail – the lethal comment; an incisive, critical intelligence matched only by his spontaneous kindness of heart; a capacity for paying sustained attention to difficult problems

together with a talent for sheer entertainment that would take your mind off any problem and, above all, an enduring sense that life is an adventure to be explored and enjoyed, not an affliction to be suffered and endured. It is for this last reason that Paddy gives the impression of getting younger every year.

The man has a light in his eye that is stronger than any light in ESB. He is a very special human being, one of the most gifted and likeable Irishmen of his time. No public honour could do complete justice to him but tonight goes a fair step of the way.

The recipient of all this praise and adulation looked suitably embarrassed, but there was more to come by way of a special video presentation entitled 'The Godfather', with an authentic Mafia accent doing the voiceover that would have impressed Cecil B. de Mille. This hilarious appraisal of the life and times of 'Patrick Don Moriarty' drew many a laugh from the overflow audience and would later be described as 'a horror movie' by the retiree. Understandably so, as some of his most noted achievements in ESB were downgraded in most unparliamentary language. But it was all in good fun and the whirring tape captured the mood of the occasion to perfection.

In his reply, the man at the centre of this hullabaloo made what many felt to be his best speech ever. Without recourse to notes, he rose to speak in a voice trembling with emotion.

*Brothers and sisters. Bail o Dhia oriabh. I have made many presentations in my time but this is the first occasion that I have been placed at the receiving end. This is too much; it is like St Paul's letter to the Corinthians, there is no answer to it because it is completely over the top.*

Here he was responding to the presentation gift of a beautiful oak Georgian desk handed over to him by his private secretary, Bríd Tunney. He continued:

*I don't know where to start because I have been kept in the dark about this caper. Patrick Kavanagh probably encapsulated my situation perfectly when he wrote, 'The problem that confronts me here is to be eloquent, yet sincere, to let myself rip and not go phoney in an inflated testimony.'*

He went on to speak about the 'warm glow of happiness and emotion' that he felt on being among friends 'who were so much part of my life for the past forty-five years'. He referred to his travels around the country in the previous weeks when he visited ESB power stations seeking out workers who knew him by his first name. He said he wanted to shake hands with as many of these people as possible and thank them for a job well done:

*I met men with dirty hands and greasy overalls, girls with high fashion and dangerous perfumes, persons with PhDs and computer terminals, shy people and hustlers, serious people and funny men, talkers of football and horses, of dogs and golf. What a pity I had not more time to sit by the Eastern Wall with each one of them but I sat long enough to be overwhelmed by the simple fact of how all ESB people whose hand I held for a second expressed good wishes, graciously and sincerely. I hope my expression of thanks matched their nobility of spirit.*

Then there was reference to that well-chronicled journey around by Beenbawn Road in the horse and cart on 4 June 1945 and how 'Fountain's blessing' had helped him on his way to a life of fulfilment in ESB. There was more to come:

*I don't have any story to tell except the story of ESB but I will say that I have a pride in this company that is very near to being sinful.*

His wife, Esther, was described as

*the gorgeous woman whom I met when she taught senior infants in Weaver's Square in Cork Street amidst the smells from O'Keeffe's the knackers and the squealing sounds from Donnelly's pig slaughtering house. Without her unselfishness my career couldn't have happened. Shortly after I was married I took to the road as an auditor and I was away a lot. Esther was always supportive, encouraging and loving and – most importantly – never told me how to run ESB. She was all and more than any man could ask for in a spouse and that was important because along with good health, the greatest blessing that God can bestow is a happy home. In that, I was twice blessed because Esther made that blessing a reality.*

Referring to his family, he said:

*We had five [children]. I don't think they ever saw my job at ESB as any great big deal anyway. You certainly wouldn't get a swelled head when you were often greeted by remarks such as: 'I see you are screwing the workers again' or Patricia's call to her two brothers on the first morning of an ESB strike when the lights were out: 'Get up out of that; it isn't by lying in bed in the morning that your father got the power to plunge this country into total darkness.' My uncle Joe was an inspiration. He was the first Moriarty in many generations who got a job in Ireland.*

Spotting a night watchman, Gerry McCarthy, among the audience, the speaker again turned on his inherent charm.

*He was the source of all my stories. Gerry was once asked by a priest in Castleisland as to whether a man from Cordal who was getting married might have been married already in England. The reply he got was: 'Indeed he was never married no more than his father before him!'*

The list expanded further to include an old foe, Paddy Egan, a shop steward at Ringsend power station with whom he had 'many a row'. With distinct overtones from previous industrial strife, the speaker continued: 'Your attendance here tonight embodies the strange symbiotic relationship I enjoyed with you and other "cowboys" of your generation,' – a remark greeted with considerable mirth by the audience.

Nobody was forgotten and the subsequent dialogue included a generous tribute to his secretary of twenty years, Brid Tunney:

*You wouldn't get a sentence of twenty years for committing murder. She has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the people in ESB. She made everybody welcome to my office and as far as customer service was concerned she was the real Chief Executive.*

Unable to wind down, the retiring Chief Executive called on his friend Sean Garvey from Cahersiveen to sing the unofficial Kerry anthem, 'The Boys of Barr na Sraide'. It's a rousing, plaintive ballad that tugs at the heart-strings. Six nostalgic verses followed that told of lost youth, love of home and precious childhood recollections. Paddy Mo, a man inordinately proud of his roots and who never changed his colours, could identify with that.

The official function was now drawing to a close. All that remained was the presentation ceremony along with a huge bouquet of flowers for his wife, Esther, who looked radiant as she stepped forward to the applause of the crowd.

The 'ri ra', as Moriarty called it, that followed went on until a very late hour. It was on occasions like this that Paddy Mo found his second wind. He never tired of interaction with friends and work colleagues who were obviously held in high esteem. The mantle of authority was now discarded and he became his true self, ready to share a joke and join in the banter, treating everybody with equal respect and affection. Excluding his immediate family, nothing was more important to him than the men and women of ESB.

Over the following weeks letters of congratulations started to pour in, mostly from appreciative past and present ESB personnel who now wanted to wish him well in his new role as Chairman. Government ministers and leaders of industry also expressed their appreciation. Some random samples are quoted.

Philip Mullally, Chief Executive, Irish Resource Development Trust:

I am delighted that the government had the good sense and foresightedness to invite you to become Chairman of ESB. May I wish you

continuing enjoyment and good fortune in this role and express the hope that you may be able to find time for other important national issues where your sense of vision is often badly needed.

Brendan Manning, one time Fuel Purchasing Manager at ESB, expressed the following sentiments:

You have used your talents to the very best advantage. Not every leader who gets the opportunity delivers in the manner that you have done. By any yardstick I would rank you as a highly successful professional, a man for the times, of vision, determination, style and flair.

Kevin Murphy, Secretary Public Service Management and Development at the Department of Finance, referred to the retiree's

overall contribution to national development and the very significant contribution you have made not only to the development of ESB but at national level also and especially in the areas of industrial relations and personnel management.

Dan McAuley of the Confederation of Irish Industry penned the following tribute:

You have been a truly outstanding Chief Executive of the Board and have made an extraordinary contribution to its operations and to its general standing in the community. This is very largely due to your personal leadership.

Jim Caulfield referred to 'the stimulation and inspiration you infused into every working day', while Michael Shiel, former executive director for Sales and Construction, wrote about the latest promotion being 'a well-deserved accolade for one who has done more than any other to leave ESB in the highly respected position which it holds today'. Bill Morrissey's letter carried one sentence that went to the core of his feelings: 'I am proud to have worked for and, I hope, made some contribution to an ESB which has been guided to great heights by your inspired leadership and example.'

A letter from Joe Marsa, a distribution engineer of Spanish origin who spent some years with ESBI in Saudi Arabia, included this tribute:

The fact is that ever since Miller-Barry I have harboured an enormous admiration for the work you were doing in ESB. I saw you as a colossus trying to get a good but very smug company with an enormous inertia into the latter half of the twentieth century.

I just want to say that I feel you were a man ahead of his time as far as ESB and the Irish public sector are concerned. The fact that you went all out for change and for modernization at ESB before the new



climate had been introduced to this country made your position all the more remarkable. A lot of what's acceptable now, in 1991, was considered rubbish in 1984.

To me, the fact that you visited the troops and not just the generals prior to your retirement is a fitting colophon to your trajectory in the business. In my opinion, the service you have done ESB and the country by introducing simple concepts like customer service, quality, innovation, the need for change, etc., is enormous and will only become measurable later on.

Glowing endorsements, no matter how sincere, are meaningless without the statistics to substantiate the sentiment. Paddy Moriarty didn't need the approval of anybody for what he had achieved at ESB throughout a glittering career that extended over forty-six years. His deeds will always be his witness.

As Joe Moran took up office he inherited a company in relatively good order after the Moriarty era. The upheaval that followed the two oil crises of the 1970s had found an acceptable tolerance level. Gas from the Kinsale oil field had providentially alleviated some of the earlier portents for doom and gloom. Moneypoint had been built on time and within budget at a cost of £750 million. Industrial relations was no longer a melting pot for division and unrest. Customer service had been streamlined to the considerable benefit of the consumer. Prices had held steady. ESB was now a leaner and more efficient organization that it had been at any time in its previous history. The downsizing of the company that followed the Miller-Barry restructuring of 1984 had been carried through with significant cost cutting, while the crippling debt of earlier years had been cut significantly. A fresh vibrancy and a new air of optimism were about to percolate through the organization.

The retiring Chief Executive would still wield considerable influence at Board meetings over the next four and a half years, when his wise counsel always drew attentive respect from executive colleagues around the table. His role as Chairman would test his flexibility because it was completely different to his previous function. The years ahead demanded a range of new skills and considerable personal re-adjustment.

Starting at the bottom of the ladder in 1945, he exited at the top fifty years later having completed his stint as Chairman, the office that now beckoned. Of all the leaders in ESB since its foundation, he was probably the most inspiring, innovative and imaginative.

## 10. *Chairman of the Board*

Sigerson Clifford, the bard of Barr na Sraide, wrote of his wish to put 'a noose around the throat of time', but it cannot be done. However sweet, distant images are no more than silent milestones on the road to somewhere else.

When his ten years as Chief Executive ended in March 1991, Paddy Moriarty's days at the fulcrum of power within ESB were over. Three months later he would reach the retirement age of sixty-five but his elevation to Chairman prefaced a period of interesting contrast to his previous role. As the fifth Chairman of ESB, he was handed a new dimension in authority and responsibility.

The ESB Chairman and Board of Directors are determined by the government, which appoints eight members. In addition, four worker directors are appointed to the Board by the Minister for Energy after an election within ESB. The Board is responsible to the Minister for the efficient running of the company and for overall policy within the organization. Understandably, the Chairman of the Board is accountable to the Minister for Energy in discharging the Board's overall responsibilities for policy and direction. While the Chairman and the Board are divorced from the day-to-day running of the company, the latter determines the authority vested in the executive team. In that capacity it allows the Chief Executive and the management team to proceed with company management subject to Board governance arrangements. The Board delegates authority to the Chief Executive, which allows him make decisions within certain financial limitations. At all times the Board is in full control and the Chairman is a key figure

in the continuing relationship between the company and government.

The popular consensus within the rank and file of ESB workers was that there was nobody better fitted to the role of Chairman than Paddy Mo. He had come up through the ranks and his pedigree was impeccable.

Joe Moran, the new Chief Executive, had in his previous role as Director Finance reported directly to Moriarty but now both men had to understand and implement a new working relationship. This was to be dictated largely by best standards of corporate governance and Moran recalls a number of frank discussions with Moriarty on their respective roles.

By now the new Chairman of the Board had moved away from the mainstream ESB life but the groundwork he had put in place over the previous two decades made the later initiatives much easier. Many of the principles he most strongly advocated, such as the harmonization of industrial relations within the company, became the bedrock of future practice. Although removed from the action, it can be safely presumed that Moriarty must have felt gratified about the progress being made. The 1991 Cassells initiative, which teased out solutions that eventually paved the way for a better working environment, was a pre-requisite to the dearly sought prize of industrial peace. He passionately believed in ESB workers – he called it ‘a sinful pride’ – which cannot have made it easy for him to be locked in conflict with them.

This conflict continued into the early days of his appointment as Chairman when an unexpected electricians’ strike and yet another work stoppage brought severe repercussions in train. The disappointment and dismay Moriarty felt personally is reflected in his speech to the 39th National Management Conference of the IMI in Killarney on Saturday, 27 April 1991, when he condemned the latest attempt at pursuing sectional interests at the expense of the consumer:

*Normal life in Ireland was seriously disrupted over the past week by the strike of ESB electricians. Business suffered major losses, employees lost their wages and some of them, I am sure, lost their jobs. No doubt, everybody here today expects me to make some comment on that. To say that I'm glad it's over is an understatement. We are all greatly relieved but relief does not absolve nor mitigate the inconvenience caused. To the extent that it may help to apologise to the people of Ireland, I do apologise unreservedly and most sincerely. It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the tremendous support of the government, the Taoiseach [Charles Haughey] and Minister for Labour [Bertie Abern] along with members of the Oireachtas who stood four square behind us and I also wish to thank the leaders of all parties for having agreed unanimously to a motion calling for an end to the strike.*

He then praised the many people who helped ease the latest crisis.

*Ultimately, it was Peter Cassells, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and his colleagues who produced the formula that enabled the electricians' union to call off its strike which was totally unnecessary and for which they gained absolutely nothing. I congratulate the peacemakers and thank them sincerely for the long and Herculean efforts they made to find a solution.*

The speaker went on to denounce militant groups prepared to use industrial muscle to further their own ends.

There was still work to be done during the five years of his chairmanship that stretched ahead. The role demanded a whole set of new skills and he rose to the challenge quite brilliantly, performing the full range of his duties.

Determination of strategy is a key function of the Board. The Chairman is invested with responsibility for the research, review and presentation of options on strategic matters. While final approval is the responsibility of the Board, most of these strategy meetings were in the form of day-long workshops and Moriarty had to seek clear and unanimous decisions on key matters, with full understanding of the long-term implications. In his new role, he could not now promote any strong personal views and at all times had to be seen to operate in a fair and impartial manner.

During his term as Chairman the electricity industry began to undergo major change, and in anticipation of these events the Board of ESB brought in the McKinsey group of international consultants to provide guidance on the direction the company should take. In January 1992 a letter from government suggested a break-up of the company and, in the words of Company Secretary Don Mahony, 'this caused its own trauma and set off a defensive mechanism in the Board'.

McKinsey was brought in on Moriarty's recommendation. The consultants were familiar with the electricity industry overseas and provided a vital conduit between the government and ESB. Don Mahony elaborates:

Coinciding with that initiative, Paddy got the Board very much involved in strategic planning. The era of change was now at hand in a big way, not only in ESB but also in the outside world and these issues were to become a regular feature on the agenda at Board meetings. Moriarty's chairmanship helped consolidate ESB but it also brought about major changes that were very distinct from the organizational changes under Miller-Barry. Matters that frequently came up for discussion included whether the assets of the transmission system should

be divorced from the company, whether power stations should be sold off or privatized, the restructuring of the industry in Ireland and so on. All of that process started off under Paddy's chairmanship.

The issue of ESB and the regulatory framework in which it operated was openly addressed in ESB's Corporate Plan 1993-7:

Given the crucial importance to modern economics of a reliable electricity supply every nation regulates the operation of the supply industry. In many countries, including Ireland, the regulatory function is performed by government. Regulators all over the world are now promoting structural change in the electricity industry. They are involved in questions of customer choice, competitive frameworks and price transparency. They express concern about monopoly structures and captive markets. In short, regulators are demanding more efficient use of enormous and costly inputs to the electricity industry and more effective decision-making by organisations charged with transforming these inputs into electricity. In every case efforts are being made to impose the disciplines of the open market on an industry whose traditions do not fit comfortably into such an environment.

The Corporate Plan clearly set out five components that ESB had to get right over the next five years, within the proposed organizational framework and management philosophy, if the company was going to prosper in the next century. These were:

- Generation Technology/Fuel Mix
- Investment Programme
- Attitudes and Relationships
- Diversification Programme
- Customer Service/Demand Side Management

The Plan concluded with a positive message:

ESB is equipped to confront the competitive challenges of the new era. It is moving forward from a strong position, its prices are competitive, its finances healthy and its assets productive. The company has significantly improved customer service and has invested heavily in staff training. With its new management philosophy aimed at involving and empowering employees and with a streamlined organisation engineered to the competitive marketplace, ESB can be justly confident of its future.

The conversion of 40,000 km of the main distribution network countrywide that started in 1989 continued during the five years of Moriarty's chairmanship. This massive operation entailed the conversion of the main distribution network from 10 kV to 20 kV, replacing all transformers and updating a wide range of equipment such as

switchgear, cables, insulators, lightning arrestors and so on. The reason for the change was to boost ESB's capacity to cater for increased load. Costing €3 billion, this was a far bigger project than rural electrification, even if the difference in real terms was less obvious.

Johnny Shine and John Kirby, key figures in the programme, acknowledge the support of Moriarty in the boardroom for all of these forward initiatives but his influence extended into many other areas as well. ESB consultancy in the 1990s bore the unmistakable stamp of Moriarty and he pushed this project. Quite obviously, he saw the opportunity for expansion abroad at a time of radical change at home when ESB's ability to expand was being curbed by outside forces.

His association with the ESB superannuation scheme is yet another example of his commitment to welfare issues. He had joined the company only a few years after this scheme had been set up and as Director Personnel he had driven a number of changes mainly to provide common pension arrangements for all levels of staff. As Chairman of the Board he took over chairmanship of the pension fund from Professor Charles Dillon. This was a difficult time given the serious financial deficit of approximately 20 per cent of the liabilities of the scheme. Negotiations on sharing contributions to fund the deficit were prolonged and while ESB had commenced payments of increased contributions, the final terms had yet to be agreed on the union side.

Moriarty was extremely sensitive to potential long-term damage and took a courageous if unorthodox stand for what he felt was the common good, arranging to have a letter circulated by the scheme secretary, Brendan Clear, advising all members (including pensioners) of the gravity of the situation. Not surprisingly, this created debate within the company. The matter was resolved at the ESB Industrial Council, which issued a recommendation that was accepted by all sides. As Chairman of the Trustees Moriarty chaired twelve meetings annually, adding to an already heavy workload, and he continued to act in this capacity even after his retirement, constituting a break with tradition. Joe Maher recalls briefing him in St Vincent's Hospital on issues relating to the pension fund and getting his signature on relevant documentation. Committed to the last, he never wavered in his loyalty to ESB.

Caitriona Murphy, a Board member for ten years and Chief Executive of ESB Capital Markets, sums it up:

Like most Chairs of most state-owned organizations, Paddy Moriarty, as Chairman of ESB, had little, if any, say about who might be appointed by government to fill vacancies arising on the Board. When

I was appointed in March 1992 Paddy would no doubt have done his homework. For my part, other than knowing him as a 'household' name and a well-regarded Chief Executive of ESB, the largest state-owned company, Paddy was also an unknown quantity to me. I found him from the start hugely likeable, pleasant, courteous.

He had that indefinable quality – presence – as he entered the boardroom. The respect and affection in which he was held by colleagues and by top management who attended our meetings was palpable.

The crucial relationship in any company is that between the Chair and the Chief Executive. Conventional wisdom and, indeed, modern governance norms on this side of the Atlantic deem it inappropriate for a former Chief Executive to move immediately into the role of Chair in the same company on retiring from the Chief Executive role. There were then, as now, good arguments in favour of the conventional wisdom. It takes rare qualities in the person concerned to be the exception that proves the rule. Paddy was such an exception.

As Chairman of ESB from 1991 until 1995, Moriarty and the ESB Board had a wide range of issues to manage. The concept of 'Demand Side Management', whereby management were actively devising strategies to encourage the customer to use their product sparingly, would be anathema to most companies. The rationale behind this was based on limiting large scale investment in additional power plant – by exercising this form of electricity rationing, exposure to hikes in oil, gas and coal prices was also curtailed. As it was in the national interest the strategy was implemented very successfully but it hampered ESB's own commercial development.

The future structure of the electricity industry, the transition from a monopoly company to becoming a competitor while simultaneously taking measures to proactively facilitate the competition, were huge challenges that required significant levels of political skill and sensitivity. Controlling the change process and managing all the stakeholders through that process – the government, the EU Competition Authority, the trade unions and the general public – was facilitated at least to some extent by the initiation of a tripartite process: the 'Cost and Competitiveness Review Study', which was undertaken with representatives from ESB senior management, the ESB Group of Unions and senior officials from the Department of Energy. This process was long and difficult and Chairman of Congress Peter Cassells was to play a major role in finding a way forward that was acceptable to all parties. The process of concluding the study and implementing the subsequent change agreement – 'CCR' – within ESB was painful but proved to be an outstanding success.

ESB also set up its own regulatory function to manage in-house regulatory issues and to liaise with the Department of Energy and the EU Competition Authority. The CCR process prepared the company for further significant change and the changes effected improved both operational efficiency and commercial performance. Creating greater transparency between the different business units was a feature of the reorganization of the company and this was taken even further with the signing of 'Service Level Agreements', which set up a framework for charging for internal services between the separate business units. Without this platform being laid it is very doubtful if the Network Renewal Programme that followed, involving investment of over €3 billion covering the period 2002–6, could ever have happened.

The Board had to face up to the challenge of rationalizing unprofitable activities with decisions being taken to phase out the appliance repair business, the closure of some of ESB's most unprofitable shops and the sale of surplus properties. There was also the closure of Allenwood and Ferbane power stations. Decisions were taken to sell off the interests in the fisheries businesses in Salmara and Lough Allen fish hatchery. ESB subsidiary businesses were not immune from change either, with a harsher commercial approach being set out in the policy for the governance of ESB Industrial Holdings.

New business opportunities were not neglected as overseas investment in power stations in Pakistan were approved (a prelude to investment in other countries, notably the UK and Spain). Within Ireland a spectacular success story is the formation of ESBI Telecoms, which led to the establishment of Tower Co., an ESB subsidiary company now operating successfully in a very competitive mobile phone industry.

The Board approved proposals for the refurbishment of Ardacrusha and Tarbert power stations as well as the installation of additional plant in Poolbeg and North Wall. Following improvements in the political situation the restoration of the North/South Interconnector was also approved and new trading arrangements were agreed between NIE and ESB. A gas interconnector between Ireland and the UK was also established.

In the mid to late 1980s, Moriarty had emphasized the importance of management development and training for all categories of staff. In 1991 a heavy investment was made in terms of in-house training facilities and the purchase and installation of a 'simulator' in Ringsend Generating Training School, used to train staff from the power stations. This not only demonstrates a commitment to developing in-house



expertise but it also highlights in a practical manner how part of ESB's corporate strategy of leveraging assets was being implemented. Improving the generation function's performance in ESB by securing improved availability and efficiency was identified as crucial and this investment in the simulator was made to help secure delivery of that key objective. In 1995 another key investment was made in new distribution training facilities for network staff in the Portlaoise Training School.

New technology and systems were put in place. An integrated financial and work-management system called MOCCS (Management Operations and Cost Control System) was installed. A new state-of-the-art maintenance management information system was installed in the power stations and further investment was made in the Scada system, used to manage the electricity network for the distribution function. Significant investment was made in upgrading ESB's Customer Accounting and Treasury Management systems. In addition to these measures, new IT maintenance agreements for both hardware and software were concluded with key external suppliers. Disaster plans and recovery plans were now formalized for each sector of the business.

The early 1990s witnessed a steady improvement in the economy and record levels of new connections became a feature. It became difficult to manage the trade off between managing the maintenance function for existing customers and managing the unprecedented levels of demand from new customers as both domestic housing in new towns and business technology parks spread rapidly to most parts of the country. It was evident that the strengthening of the existing electricity network, which had been starved of any significant investment in the 1970s and 1980s because of pressure to keep electricity tariffs low, was now long overdue.

A new capital investment programme to replace the networks was approved. The materials management function was upgraded with major improvements being made to ESB's supply chain management function. A new central store was created in Ballycoolin in Mulhuddart, close to a key arterial road, the M50, replacing the old facility in traffic-locked Erne Street in central Dublin. This was supported by major investments being made in smaller supply stores in Limerick and Sligo. An online, in-house designed, computerized material management information system known as MMIS replaced a manual cardex system that relied on a batch-processing system to produce weekly and monthly management information.

In the early 1990s significant efforts were made to improve cash-flow management and the debtor management system was given a great

deal of attention, with league tables to monitor performance improvements against prescribed targets. Revenue control and improved cash collection became a key priority. After a period of no tariff increases, ESB began a tariff rebalancing exercise involving price increases of differing magnitude for all categories of customers – industrial, commercial and domestic. This rebalancing exercise was required to generate additional revenue to contribute to funding the investment programme but it was also necessary to prepare for the electricity market opening and the entry of competition.

Environmental issues became much more important in the early 1990s and ESB became one of the first major companies in the country to develop and implement its own Board-approved Environmental Policy. While predominantly concerned with the control of NOX and SO<sub>2</sub> gas emissions in the power stations, it also covered the implementation of best practice guidelines across all aspects of ESB business. A key feature was remediation work before ESB exited or sold surplus land and sites that were no longer required. A dedicated Environmental Unit was established with auditing and reporting against performance standards being progressed right across the company.

ESB began to take a greater interest in renewable energy and in addition to progressing and establishing wind farms it began the process of installing improved management control systems in its ten hydroelectric power stations.

The ESB Board also had to consider the IVO process from which later emerged the establishment of two independent peat-powered stations located at Hunstown and Edenderry. A Peat Review Group was established, which ultimately paved the way for the phased closure of the midland peat power stations in Ferbane, Rhode, Lanesborough, Shannonbridge and Belacorrick and these were replaced a decade later with two state-of-the-art stations at West Offaly and Lough Ree.

Property became an important issue as the company began to look at ways of leveraging its assets. Various proposals were considered and rejected, including relocating head office to Leopardstown Road in south Co. Dublin, before a formal Property Strategy covering the period 1992–2001 was finally agreed. Investment was made in improving some regional engineering depots and customer service centres, with the establishment of Dublin North branch headquarters in Finglas setting out a new template for office accommodation.

During the period 1991–5 the pace of change in the organization exceeded anything that went before and could justifiably be viewed as

being revolutionary. New structures and new managers were appointed to all the key functions and heavy emphasis was placed on business planning and meeting performance targets. This created a new impetus and a new management culture. The new senior management team embraced the challenges that were set and succeeded in enlisting the co-operation of the vast majority of staff in implementing the policies and moving the company forward along the chosen path. The very strong and open working relationship between Chairman Paddy Moriarty and Chief Executive Joe Moran was a feature of this period. Proposals were put forward, debated and challenged and the decisions that emerged from that process, with the support of the full Board, were implemented and accepted right across the company.

Moriarty summed up his assessment of his experience in his letter of resignation as Chairman of the ESB Board, dated 28 November 1995:

*My greatest satisfaction is to have worked in a State Company during a period in which it was a key institution in the making of modern Ireland.*

There can be absolutely no doubt that he made a major contribution to that process.

In June 1995 Paddy Moriarty had completed fifty years of distinguished service with ESB. To mark this milestone the Board decided to hold the usual monthly meeting in his native Kerry. The venue chosen was the Blasket Centre in Dún Chaoin on the invitation of the manager, Micheál de Mórdha. This was a homecoming of sorts for the Chairman of the Board and the unmistakable poignancy of the occasion was not lost on him. It was the end of an era.

Later that night at a Board dinner in Lord Baker's restaurant on Dingle's main street, fulsome tribute was paid to the man. As always, he listened intently to what others had to say.

Caitriona Murphy was delegated to make the presentation:

Dr P.J. Moriarty, Chairman of the Board and Paddy to us, his friends, can count victories in many theatres of war and peace and I have no doubt that a good biographer lies somewhere waiting to do them justice. We are here this evening in this small select band to celebrate a rare milestone – Paddy's half-century with ESB.

Chief among his victories during his Director of Personnel campaign and one which I know that Paddy himself is truly proud of was making ESB into a single status organization with a human, open and participative style of management. This has served the company and its customers well over the years, notwithstanding the occasional 'rough and tumble'.

His battles have also extended on behalf of the customer and these are reflected in the Customers' Charter and the high esteem in which the company is held among those who buy our services.

He was a principal player in implementing the McKinsey Review of 1969. This assured him the intellectual propriety rights as well as performing rights when the 'rough beast' of change came round to be born again in the 1980s with the Miller-Barry reorganization.

Paddy was, and continues to be, effective as an agent of change because he has the capacity to dream, to have a vision in his head. Moreover he has been able to 'tell his story' and share his vision with those whom he needs to win over, to lead, to cajole or even to brow-beat. His way with change is also due in no small measure to his way with people – he likes them, he is interested in what fires them up and what dampens their spirits. He listens as well as talks.

Eight months later the man at the epicentre of everything that had happened in ESB over the previous twenty-five years decided to tender his resignation before his term of office had actually expired. A farewell dinner in ESB's Rooftop Restaurant was to follow in January 1996. Family, friends and work colleagues gathered again to mark his departure.

A long-time friend and former colleague, Dr Brendan Kennelly, Professor of Modern English at Trinity College, wrote and recited a poem to mark the occasion:

*Paddy Mo*

One May morning in Nineteen Fifty-four  
 I saw a blond young man  
 Striding down a corridor  
 In Head Office: watchful, confident, relaxed.  
 'That's Paddy Moriarty,' John Falvey said,  
 'He's from Dingle, sharp as they come,  
 He has a warm heart and a cool head,  
 As good as ever came out of the Kingdom.'  
 None better, I'd say. Who can forget that smile,  
 How he'll story the evening and night away  
 Spreading his light with dignity and grace  
 'Ta se ag dul in oige' – that's his style,  
 Striding down the corridor of years now,  
 Paddy Mo, who brought such honour to this place.  
 Long may you live, Paddy, long live your name,  
 And may the streets of Dublin  
 And the hills of Kerry  
 Echo with your fame.

## II. *The Final Journey*

Mark Twain's assertion that 'the only certainties in life are death and taxes' rings ever more true as one grows older. For sure, death cannot be avoided. We may try to insulate ourselves against it, avoid talking about it, keep it at bay by surrounding ourselves with material comforts but from the moment of birth the allotted time-span of human life is being counted down.

Bereavement brings its own collective trauma, a sense of loss and emptiness. For the Moriarty family it was no different when their father and husband died in St Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin on Sunday, 29 June 1997. This happened to be the day of the Irish Derby in the Curragh where, in days gone by, Paddy Mo would have been present to pursue one of the great loves of his life – horse racing. This was an environment that invariably found him at his best, trying to beat the bookies or simply enjoying the company of friends. Under whatever guise, the thunder of the big day had always made the sweetest music in his ears. His gregarious and outgoing disposition had endeared him to many and on all sides there was acknowledgment of his towering presence and outstanding personality.

His ambition to make ESB the best electricity company in the world may have taken its toll on his health according to Vincent Fahy, his successor as Director Personnel, who described Moriarty as 'the most dedicated person to his work that I have ever known'. In support of this assessment Fahy pointed out how he was known to visit ESB staff members in power stations even on Christmas Day. He was a driven man and a hard worker whose most compelling demands were made of himself.

His humanitarian instincts had always remained paramount. He believed in the essential dignity of the human person and he lived out that philosophy every day of his life. The good deeds that are accredited to him are usually spoken of in terms of saving somebody's job or helping a work colleague who might have encountered serious problems in their private life. His close friend Vincent Fahy claims that on their regular Saturday visits to race meetings his generosity was boundless:

He would give you whatever he had in his pockets. I never met anybody so generous. He had no regard for money and was never interested in his own rewards either financially or in any other way. Whenever he visited me at home, the kids would love to see him coming because they knew they would be well remunerated. He gave them jobs painting his house when they were at college and he paid them well over the odds. That would be typical. He had an immense compassion for people.

The empathy he had with everybody in ESB, from the top to the bottom, is well known. The relationships he forged right through the organization testify to his outstanding brand of chivalry, extending far beyond the workplace and into areas that were never widely known. Thanks and acclaim did not always follow but this was never a consideration.

At seventy-one he certainly did not look his age, nor did he ever conform to the popular stereotype surrounding advancing years. He remained young at heart right up to the end. Despite a very demanding job, he always made time for family and numerous non-ESB pursuits.

Away from the cares of the office he was a most engaging and uplifting presence. On social occasions he scarcely drank more than a few glasses of wine but the endless flow of banter, jollity and good humour became synonymous with the brand of charisma that he chose to inject into his public life. These were just some of the qualities that bore the stamp of his individuality. Never stuck for a word, he could charm whenever it was considered appropriate to do so, which was often. That was Paddy Moriarty as he really was, a warm and engaging raconteur who loved the company of friends and colleagues.

Paddy Mo's removal to the Church of the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook and the funeral Mass on the following morning attracted a huge concourse of people, a gathering of such proportions that many failed to gain admittance to the church. Both days provided a striking demonstration of public sympathy. Politicians, sports people, church dignitaries, luminaries of the business world and people from every walk of

life came to pay their last respects. The Moriarty family are widely known and this huge network of acquaintance was reflected in the striking funeral demonstrations that followed both in Dublin and in Kerry, where burial took place in Dún Chaoin cemetery. Once again, crowds failed to gain entry to the church in Dingle where the remains were laid in repose as the final preliminaries were set in motion. Here the same astonishing public display of sympathy was in evidence as crowds thronged the church and spilled on to the pavements outside.

Included among the mourners in Donnybrook were An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, former President Dr Patrick Hillery and former Taoiseach Charles Haughey and Albert Reynolds. Other dignitaries included Tánaiste Mary Harney; Captain Pauline O'Connell representing President Mary McAleese; Minister for the Environment Noel Dempsey; Minister for Agriculture Joe Walsh; Minister for Education Micheál Martin; Minister for Health Brian Cowan; Minister for Public Enterprise Mary O'Rourke; Dick Spring, leader of the Labour Party; Fianna Fáil TD Tom Kitt; and the former Workers' Party leader, Tomás Mac Giolla. Present from ESB were Chairman Billy McCann, Chief Executive Joe Moran and Directors Joe Maher, Ted Dalton, Michael Hayden, Ken O'Hara and Richard Hayden, along with former close colleague and friend Kevin Hefferan, an iconic figure in Dublin football. Bob Collins and Joe Mulholland were among representatives from the RTÉ Authority, of which body Paddy Moriarty was an esteemed member and a former chairman.

Also paying their respects were Maureen Haughey and her daughter Eimear Mulhern, Chief Executive of Dunnes Stores Margaret Hefferan, sports commentator Jimmy Magee and golfer Paul McGinley. VIPs from the world of Gaelic games included the former Kerry player and manager Mick O'Dwyer. The Dublin-Kerry Association was represented by several committee members and activists who had served with the deceased during his long involvement with the organization. These included Éamonn Ó hArgáin, Bart Moriarty, Ned O'Shea, Mary Kelly, Chrissie O'Sullivan and Tony Mackey.

The chief celebrant at the funeral Mass, Father Richard Sherry, was assisted by Rev. Father Tom Hickey of Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry, who had known Paddy since childhood. He spoke about his innate decency and how he always managed to keep his feet firmly on the ground: 'He was as much at ease playing bridge in Dublin 4 as he was playing a hand of forty-one down in Dingle,' and referred to his deep involvement in Irish life at many levels – in business, industry, sport and recreation – and how he could enjoy all facets of living.

The first reading was given by Billy McCann, Chairman of ESB, and the second reading was delivered by Phil Flynn on behalf of the trade union movement. The prayers of the faithful were led by John Mulhern, representing the world of horse racing, to be followed by Willie Cremins on behalf of the ESB trade unions and Bríd Tunney, secretary to Paddy for twenty years and later to become ESB's Events and Sponsorship Manager. Prayers were also read by Lís Ní Dhálaigh, representing *Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid*; Joyce O'Connor, Director of the National College of Industrial Relations; Éamonn Ó hArgáin of the Dublin-Kerry Association; David Sheehan representing Grange Golf Club; and Kevin Heffernan, who provided a deeply personal link with the world of sport and, not least, the sometimes bruising trade union battles that were waged during the 1970s and later. This was where the Morarity-Heffernan alliance so often helped broker peace at a time when tensions were running extremely high in ESB.

During the Communion Sean Garvey, a schoolteacher from Cahersiveen and a close friend, sang the unofficial Kerry anthem, 'The Boys of Barr na Sráide' – six verses composed by another great Dublin-based Kerryman, Sigerson Clifford, whose poetry was in the best traditions of the Irish balladmaker and always racy of the soil. Music was led by Aine Ní Laoithe, Eilín Ní Chearna, Seamus Begley and Steve Cooney. The well-known literary figure and former ESB employee Professor Brendan Kennelly, a close friend and erstwhile colleague, read a piece entitled 'The Attribute of Permanence' – his own vivid and moving description of childhood in a Kerry landscape. The MC was Ciaran MacGonigal.

The solemnity of the occasion was reflected not just in the crowds who attended but also in the quiet dignity of a family whose grieving was undoubtedly lightened by the presence of so many friends who came to share their burden. It was a funeral fit for a king.

Paddy Moriarty's downbeat humility would never have allowed him the presumption that his impact on Irish life would have found such an expressive outlet on the day of his funeral. In such a setting his infectious good humour would invariably rescue the situation. From somewhere in the Great Beyond he might have chuckled and said: '*Nách mor an atbrú saol e gur anso sínte ar lár ataim agus na sluaite daoine ag cuir freastail orm.*'

Tributes poured in from all quarters. A headline in *The Irish Times* read 'Kerry Sage Is Silenced'. Here, the late Brendan McWilliams touched on how Paddy had often enlightened him on the changing weather patterns of his native county. 'It was a measure of the man's ver-



satilily that he was able to produce the material evidence from *Smith's Natural and Civil History of Kerry*, a treatise written in 1756, that provided the material I sought. Be that as it may, this column, alas, will receive no more gems of wisdom from Dr P.J. Moriarty.'

The Moriarty family publicly acknowledged the support and sympathy of so many who had rallied round them in the cruel days of their bereavement by having published a poem of Patrick Kavanagh's, titled 'Ploughman'. It is a poem that tugs at the heart-strings in its quaint simplicity. Kavanagh, the Inniskeen goalkeeper and rustic wordsmith who sprung from 'the stoney grey soil' of Monaghan, would qualify as the native equivalent of Scotland's national bard, Robbie Burns of 'immortal memory'. Both were passionate about their origins, as was Paddy Moriarty. Interestingly, Kavanagh and the former ESB chief often met and chatted along the banks of the canal not far from Paddy's early digs in Haddington Road.

I turn the lea-green down  
 Gaily now,  
 And paint the meadow brown  
 With my plough.

I dream with silvery gull  
 And brazen crow.  
 A thing that is beautiful  
 I may know.

Tranquility walks with me  
 And no care.  
 O, the quiet ecstasy  
 Like a prayer.

I find a star-lovely art  
 In a dark sod.  
 Joy that is timeless! O heart  
 That knows God!

The obituary column of the *Sunday Tribune* dated 6 July 1997 read as follows:

The fact that the position of clerk was advertised at ESB in 1945 meant that a Dingle widower and father of eight would not lose his eldest child to the emigrant ship. It also ensured that Ireland would not be

deprived of a man whose contribution to the public sector here has been described as 'exemplary'.

During more than half a century with the semi-state body, Dr P.J. Moriarty was to achieve international recognition for marrying a commitment to both strong management and workers' rights.

These, along with his wider achievements were recognised when he was named Kerry Person of the Year in 1991 and on the national stage where he was awarded an honorary doctorate (LLD) from UCD in 1988. He was also chairman of the RTÉ Authority between 1979 and 1981.

In the 'Business Week' column of the same newspaper Matt Cooper paid his respects to 'the quintessential civil servant'.

Moriarty willingly dedicated his life to the public sector at ESB as Chief Executive and later Chairman and remained one of its staunchest defenders in the face of criticism. He believed ESB is too vital a public service to be entrusted to a company 'whose only objective is the accumulation of profit'.

He was not an advocate of privatization. There are many who believe that certain companies must remain in State ownership for the common good but if that is to be the case the Moriarty principles should be remembered and acted upon as a fitting memorial to one of our greatest public servants.

The thrust of many of the tributes had an underlying theme. Here was a man before his time, a colossus of industry who had taken a very successful company – but not without its faults – into the second half of the twentieth century. Moriarty pushed strongly for change and modernization in ESB long before there was any sighting of a new climate in Ireland or Britain, which made his position all the more remarkable.

In *The Kerryman*, Brian Carroll wrote:

A multi-talented administrator and manager, Dr Moriarty was chosen to chair the government's Task Force appointed to implement the Culliton Report on industrial policy and he retained strong links with Kerry where he was educated by the Christian Brothers in Dingle before taking a job with ESB. He held many prestigious posts in his lifetime including a place on the board of the Central Bank of Ireland, chairman of the National College of Industrial Relations and president of the Irish Quality Control Association. A follower of most sports but particularly racing he was also a keen golfer and a former president and captain of Grange Golf Club in Dublin.

Martin Fitzpatrick in the *Sunday Independent* wrote about 'the eternal optimist that was P.J. Moriarty', citing his total opposition to the



Early days



PJ. Moriarty, FCIS, appointed  
Assistant Chief Accountant in  
succession to P.L. Forde, 1965



Paddy's wedding day to Esther, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1953 in Dundrum Church  
(left to right) Timothy O'Sullivan, Catherine O'Sullivan, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Paddy Moriarty, Esther O'Sullivan, Eileen O'Sullivan, Auntie May Moriarty and Tady Moriarty.



Paddy and Esther after their wedding reception in the Clarence Hotel, Dublin, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1953



Paddy Moriarty, Director Personnel with Des Geraghty, former President of SIPTU



Paddy and Esther with friends including John and Mairead O'Donoghue and Michael and Eithne Colley at an ESB dinner dance, 1971



Paddy and Esther at an ESB GAA match (*left to right*) Tim Delahunty, Seán Coughlan, Esther Moriarty, Vincent Fahy, Tom Haugh, Paddy Moriarty and Tommy Fitzpatrick, 1974



Paddy presents a Long Service Award pin to his friend and colleague Jimmy McClatchie, 1975



Paddy with Jimmy Kelly, Chief Executive ESB, 1976



Paddy meeting customers in ESB Fleet Street



Jimmy Kelly, Chief Executive and Professor Charles Dillon, Chairman, with Paddy, 1976



Paddy as Assistant Chief Executive 1980





Paddy as President of the Irish Quality Control Association with Chief Executive John Murphy (*left*) and staff from IQCA, 1983



Paddy turning the sod for Sportsco facility with Jimmy D'Art, ESB Poolbeg, Dublin, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1977



Paddy Moriarty with Fergus O'Brien,  
Lord Mayor of Dublin 1980–1981



Launch of the *History of ESB*, 1986  
(Back row, left to right): Vincent Fahy, Maurice Manning (author), Seamus Conerney,  
(publisher, Gill and MacMillan), Liam Boyd, Joe LaCumbre, Paddy Moriarty,  
Moore McDowell (author), Paddy Kevans  
(Front row, left to right): Michael O'Leary, Albert Reynolds, Dick Spring, Brian Lenihan,  
Charles Dillon and Dessie O'Malley



Paddy Moriarty visits Bellacorick power station to present Long Service Awards in the Dolphin Hotel, Crossmilina. (*Front row left to right*): Martin Cooney, Willie O'Boyle, Brendan McCormack, M.J. Rowland, Dr Paddy Moriarty (Chairman ESB), Bernie Finan, John Noel Carey, Joe Moran, Chris McNally

(*Middle row left to right*): Joe Rowland, Martin McHale, Brendan Foley, Liam Sheehan, Tom Carolan, Paddy O'Boyle, Liam Doyle, Tom McHugh, Paddy McHale

(*Back row left to right*): Andy Lynott, Patrick Hegarty, Paddy McDonald, Ned McAndrew, Vincent Lennon, Jackie Judge, Vincent Courtney, Eamon O'Malley, M.J. Gillespie, Paddy Gallagher, Tom McNulty, Pdraig Mullen, Seamus Parsons and Stanley Rowe



Paddy visiting the National Control Centre, ESB, 1986



Paddy with broadcaster Liam Ó Murchu, RTE, talking about rural electrification with (back row, left to right) Noel McCabe, Michael Shiel (author of *The Quiet Revolution*), Ciara Nic Grath and Martin Conway, (front row, left to right) Delo Collier, Seamus Finnerty and Finbarr O'Shea, 1986



John Lang, President Institute of Engineers of Ireland, presenting Paddy with fellowship of the Institute, 1987



Paddy as Chief Executive of ESB with President Mary Robinson on a visit to ESB, 1988



'Anois Teacht an Earraig' by Breton sculptor Renard Goulet, RHA – unveiled in ESB Head Office by An Tánaiste Brian Lenihan, 1989



Paddy – Kerry Person of the Year 1990 – with his brothers, sisters and their spouses  
*(Back row left to right):* Bill Barry, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, Paddy Moriarty, Mick Devane, Nais Moriarty, Donal Moriarty, Joe Ó Muircheartaigh, John Davis.

*(Front row left to right):* Cathleen Barry, Helena Bean Uí Muircheartaigh, Esther Moriarty, Eileen Devane, Bridie Moriarty, Eileen Moriarty, Enda Bean Uí Muircheartaigh and Maura Davis.



Deal signing in Japan



Paddy at official opening of ESB Credit Union in 1982 with *(left to right)* Frank Flynn, President, Paddy Moriarty and Sean Malone, Treasurer/Manager, Credit Union



Paddy being conferred with a Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by T. Kenneth Whitaker, Chancellor of the National University of Ireland, 24 March, 1988



Paddy with wife, Esther, uncle Joe O Muirheartaigh and his wife Enda following conferring of Honorary Degree from NUI, 1988



Eye on the ball, County Louth Golf Club, 1989



Paddy showing golfer Ronan Rafferty a new trick

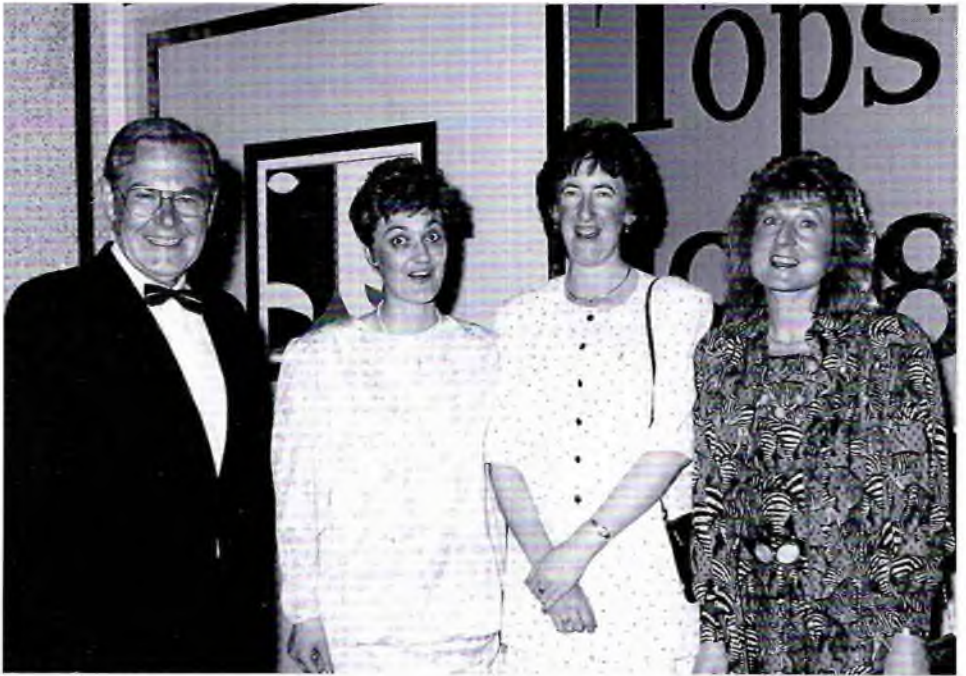




Paddy with wife Esther taking the shade in Estonia, 1989



Paddy with his brother Micheál on All-Stars Tour of Australia, Perth, 1986



Paddy with the Organising Committee of the ESB winning Tops team 'Baile Atha Cliath to the Future' in 1988 (left to right) Paddy Moriarty, Margaret Graham, Therese Farrell and Brid Tunney



Paddy's favourite country – Vietnam, 1990



Paddy as Chief Executive in 1990



Paddy with President Hillery accepting Gradam an Phiarsaigh Award, 1990



Paddy Moriarty, Chief Executive with ESB Director Ted Dalton (*left*) and Sean Curry, 1990



Paddy entering Number 62 Upper Mount Street on his last day as Chief Executive – the same door he entered when he joined ESB in 1945



Paddy Moriarty as ESB Chairman with Chief Executive Joe Moran and board members (*from left to right*) Colm McCarthy, Denis Holland, Billy McCann, Eddie O'Kelly, Eamon Kelly, Sean Geraghty, Caitriona Murphy, Rynal Coen and Joe LaCumbre, 1991



Paddy at the National Concert Hall with (*left to right*) Chairman, National Concert Hall, Nick Robinson, President Mary Robinson, Dr Veronica Dunne, Paddy Moriarty, 1991



Paddy with Pádraig Ó hUiginn, former Secretary Department of the Taoiseach



Paddy Moriarty (Chairman) and Joe Moran (Chief Executive) with Mairead Dunleavy, all dressed the part, watching musicians Paul Stafford and Jerry McCarthy at the official opening of ESB Museum House Number Twenty-Nine, 1992



Paddy Moriarty as Chairman of Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid with (left to right) Micheál Ó Cinnéide, Cardinal Ó Fiach and Noel Treacy TD, Minister of State for Science & Technology, 1992



Paddy with An Taoiseach Charles Haughey and members of Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid, 1992  
*(Left to right):* Micheál Ó Cinnéide, Tomáisín Ó Ciobháin, John Mahony, Chairman OPW, Áine Uí Laoithe, Noel Lynch, OPW, Edna Bean Uí Chinnéide, Pádraig Ó Muircheartaigh, Niamh Bean Uí Laoithe, Cathal Ó hEochaidh, Lís Ní Dhálaigh, Breandán Mac Gearailt, Pádraig Firtéar, Leachlainn Ó Catháin, Micheál de Mórdha



Paddy with Micheál de Mórdha, Micheál Ó Cinnéide and An Taoiseach Charles Haughey and members of Fonduireacht, 1992  
*(Back row, left to right):* Pádraig Ó Muircheartaigh, Micheál de Mórdha, Micheál Ó Cinnéide  
*(Front row, left to right):* Niamh Bean Uí Laoithe, Lís Ní Dhálaigh, Cathal Ó hEochaidh, Áine Uí Laoithe, Edna Bean Uí Chinnéide



Paddy with guest from US and (left to right) John Duffy, Jim Byrden, Dr Alf Kelly, and Paddy Moriarty, 1992



Paddy visiting Mr Al Khadi, Sceco East, Dhahran with, to his right, Bertie Ahern TD, Minister for Labour.





Paddy with legendary Kerryman, journalist and sportswriter Con Houlihan



Paddy Moriarty, Chairman, Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid, making the keynote address at its official opening, 1992



Paddy presenting winning trophy to John Mulhern at Leopardstown Racecourse in the early 1990s



Paddy with winning team (*left to right*) Paddy Moriarty, Eamon Curran, Jack Wyley and Frank Malin



Paddy's retirement in March 1996 as Chairman of ESB  
 (*Left to right*): Frank Malin, Kevin Heffernan and Paddy Moriarty



Paddy's retirement in March 1996 as Chairman of ESB  
 (*Left to right*): Paddy Moriarty, his daughter, Emer Moriarty, James Wrynn and Loreto Wrynn

negativity of thought and the destructive industrial mindset which prevailed in the early 1990s.

Even at the heart of turmoil caused by the power station strikes he seemed incapable of losing faith in the men and women of ESB with whom he had worked for over 40 years. 'For my money there are none better,' he told senior industrialists and bankers who attended the annual conference of the Irish Management Institute at Killarney in April 1991. Then he went on to talk of other people, ordinary people, their language, culture and achievements. He took his audience down what he called '*Botharín na Smaointe*', the little road of memory, to show Ireland's enormous economic and social progress. He remembered the bad days.

Joe Moran, his successor as Chief Executive of ESB, paid him this tribute:

During an illustrious career spanning over fifty years in public life, Paddy Moriarty made an enormous input not only to the growth and development of ESB but also to the progression of modern Ireland. He had a unique empathy with people and he retained a huge commitment to the enhancement of community life both in local and national terms. His contribution to ESB and to the country by initiating simple concepts like customer service, quality control, innovation, the need for change and so on is enormous and will only become measurable later on.

Con Houlihan, a fellow Kerryman and an eminent journalist, whose bust in bronze found a place of honour in Paddy's office in Fitzwilliam Place, a reminder of the close friendship between the pair, had this to say in *The Irish Times* on 4 August 1997:

Paddy Moriarty grew up in a generation that got nothing easy but in a world that handed on a priceless legacy. He was lucky in his birthright; all around him were the archetypal images that Jung deemed so influential – the sea, the contrast of mountains and fertile valleys along with the mixture of two languages that were spoken with colour and precision. He made the most of his good fortune. At the funeral Mass I was reminded of the epitaph that Samuel Johnson composed for his friend, Oliver Goldsmith: 'He touched nothing that he didn't adorn'.

A full-page obituary tribute in *Kerry's Eye* dated 10 July 1997 contains the following passage:

The laying to rest of Paddy Moriarty at Dunquin on Friday was, in essence, the burial of a chieftain. In the elevated cemetery overlooking the Blasket Islands, the final tribute was paid to a man who had done so much for his native west Kerry which he loved dearly. The accordion

playing and *sean nós* singing evoked a spirituality that enhanced the graveside prayers in which the mourners joined. The parish priest of Ballyferriter, Fr Hickey, placed the first shovel of earth on the grave which was then filled in by relays of family members and close friends.

In the same newspaper under the heading 'Paddy Moriarty: An Appreciation', the following extract appeared:

Virgil's words on mortality, *Sunt lachrymae rerum*, might be a commemoration appropriate to the scholar that was Pádraig Moriarty. Equally apt, however, would be the following:

I am a young jobber both foolish and airy  
The green hills of Kerry I came for to see

These are the opening words of *The Dingle Puck Goat*. For Pádraig was a great intellectual who yet never lost the common touch nor forgot his humble roots. He was a colossus with feet firmly planted on both shores. His interest in Irish culture and in the Irish language in particular is well known. Whenever possible he set off for Brid Na Shuilleabhain's of *Cois Abhann* or some other guesthouse of the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht, visiting his beloved birthplace of Dun Sidhean on the way where in his youth he enjoyed the idyllic beach, the nine-hole golf links, the scenery, the story-telling, the harvesting and, of course, the 'Wran'.

The *Worker Director News* of July 1997, an organ representative of the ESB unions, acknowledged 'the many differences that arose on various policy issues' with Moriarty but paid tribute to his sense of justice and fair play.

As Chairman of the Board he always insisted on a full, open debate and in no way inhibited the discussions on various topics. He was fair and humorous and never allowed acrimony to sour the atmosphere while at the same time ensuring that business was done. Most importantly, he was a great champion of ESB and the people who worked within that organisation.

Mr William A. Attley, General Secretary of SIPTU (Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union), from his office in Liberty Hall, issued a news release that touched on the many facets of Moriarty's engaging personality.

Paddy Moriarty was an exceptional person who combined the best enterprising spirit with public service and in doing so he led ESB to become one of the largest and most dynamic companies in Ireland. He did this by harnessing the many talents of the workforce in a spirit of

partnership. Indeed, he was one of the first senior managers in Ireland to recognise the necessity for social partnership and inclusiveness. He sowed the seeds for the completion of the historic agreement, the Cost and Competitiveness Review (CCR) that has already generated large profits for ESB. His experience with trade unions and his respect for everyone and anyone made him a person that trade unions could do business with successfully. He had no time for privatisation or for those public service managers who would use their position for self-aggrandisement. He will be sadly missed.

Further tributes came from as far afield as China, Oman, the USA and Vietnam where Dr Moriarty had lectured extensively and made many friends. The Business and Community Relations Manager at Scottish Power in Glasgow, Hammy Smillie, was equally profuse in offering his condolence.

The funeral from St Mary's Church, Dingle to the cemetery in Dún Chaoin attracted huge coverage in the Kerry newspapers. Pictures in *The Kingdom* show the remains being shouldered from the church watched by crowds that included the Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue; Gerard Collins, MEP; Father Pat Ahern, Artistic Director of Siamsa Tíre; Councillor Jack Roche, a member of Cork County Council's Irish Committee; Pádraig Ó Siochrú from Cairde; and Leachlainn Ó Catháin, Chairman of Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid.

'Soft Atlantic Breeze Welcomes Home A Great Son of Kerry' was the headline in *The Kingdom*, framing a stunning picture of Dún Chaoin cemetery with the Blasket Islands and Inis Tuaisceart rising from the Atlantic swell in the background.

The mid-afternoon sunshine warmed the soft Atlantic breeze that wafted in over Inishvickillane towards Mount Eagle at the rear of Dún Chaoin cemetery as the remains were laid to rest among those who meant much to him in life: people like Peig Sayers, a literary notable from the Blasket Islands, and Kruger Kavanagh, a colourful publican from Dún Chaoin. Aine Ni Laoithe's soft graveside singing of 'Caisleán Uí Néill' along with Eilín Ní Chearna sounded beautifully melodic in the wild untamed landscape. This traditional farewell seemed appropriate for a man who remained inordinately proud of and loyal to his native place and to everything that characterized it. His attachment to the concept of patriotism in the way that it encapsulated place, locality and identity was legendary and never wavered for one moment.

At the funeral Mass concelebrated in Eaglais Naomh Mhuire by An Canónach Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, PP, Dingle, assisted by Father Tom Hickey and retired Canon Jackie McKenna, the local respect for the

former ESB chief was clear as mourners packed the 135-year-old church to capacity.

As the funeral procession wound its way from the Mall up the Main Street and around to St Mary's Church in Green Street, locals stood in bowed silence. This was the church where Paddy was baptized, where he made his First Holy Communion and where he was later confirmed. The very stones of this place had a resonance with him and a palpable sadness pervaded the occasion as the hot midday sun shone brightly down on the pall bearers, including his brother Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh. A few elderly women, visibly moved, stood in the porch of the church as the cortège approached.

Mary O'Rourke, Minister for Public Enterprise, paid tribute to the man who died 'after a lifetime of extraordinary achievement', while former editor of *The Kerryman* Seamus McConville referred to him as 'one of the greatest Kerry men this century'.

Towards the end of the funeral Mass in Dingle, Eilín Ní Chearna sang 'Bruach Na Carraige', a haunting Irish lament, and then a nephew, Colm Ó Muircheartaigh, read from a reminiscence written by his uncle in which he recalled his love of Kerry and his home townland of Dún Síon. Then came the final prayers as the coffin was borne outside to the waiting hearse for its last journey to the cemetery in Dún Chaoin.

In the traditional manner that is common to these parts the funeral encircled the cemetery three times, with Paddy's brother Náis leading the cortège. On the coffin lay the deceased's wide-brimmed fedora hat that he loved to wear on special occasions. All that remained was the burial ceremony with family, friends and relatives in close attendance. Then the crowds dispersed to go their separate ways, leaving behind the mortal remains of a man who, along with Seán Lemass and Major General Costello, must rank as one of the builders of modern Ireland.

Fittingly, the waves rolled lazily across the blue expanse of the Blasket Sound on that beautiful summer's day to the ruined homes of Muiris Ó Súilleabháin and Tomás Ó Criomhthain, the islanders who wrote the Irish language classics *Fiche Bliain ag Fás* and *An tOileánach*. Much later, Micheál Ó Guithín, Peig Sayers' son, compiled a further account of Blasket life entitled *Is Trua Nach Bhfanann an Óige* (A Pity Youth Does Not Last).

Today the Moriarty grave, enclosed in rough native stones and with small flowers springing through the dark earth, carries the simple inscription 'Pádraig Ó Muircheartaigh, 1926-1997' - a humbling monument to a man of rare power and intellect.

Patrick John Moriarty, worthy son of Dún Síon, could not possibly wish for a finer setting as the wind and the waves sing his parting requiem in the land he loved so dearly and that always held a special place in his heart.

To borrow a phrase of Tomás Ó Criomhthain: '*Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís*'. His likes will not be seen again.





## APPENDIX A

### *Appreciations / Tributes*

#### *Brendan Donoghue, ESB*

What struck me forcibly about the late Paddy Mo was his willingness to solve the personal problems of any and every member of staff and their families. This, despite the fact that he headed up one of the largest and most complex organizations in the State, and also chaired many key committees and bodies outside the company.

On one occasion I worked with him to sort out the housing problems of the daughter of a lady cleaner. This included setting up a meeting between the lady and the Lord Mayor. On another occasion we worked together to resolve a housing problem for the widow of a deceased employee.

I still recall a note he penned on correspondence passing through him from our division: 'an organization like ESB should have a heart'. The outcome of this one sentence was the conversion of No. 12 Lower Fitzwilliam Street into six apartments for occupation by elderly deserving ladies.

Given all this, it is not surprising that he knew the Christian name of practically every colleague and addressed them as such. His loyalty to his staff was total and if any colleague was perceived to be unfairly treated – woe to the perpetrator.

In this short note I have not attempted to do justice to Paddy Mo but simply to indicate a couple of traits which I found really amazing in a man in such a responsible position and with so many other important strings to his bow.

#### *Dermot (Derry) Egan*

Paddy Moriarty often still meanders in and out of my thoughts, smoking a cigar, telling a story, watching a match or gazing in wonderment at something that captivated his interests on a particular day. I often, too, find myself talking to

others about him and the many and various experiences we shared over a forty-year period.

Paddy always held and retains a special place in the Egan household – he was a very special personal friend, godfather to our son Brian, much loved by my wife, Noreen, and greatly admired by the rest of the gang. He just had a great gift of connecting so easily with everybody.

Our careers ran on similar lines for a while especially during the period when he was Director Personnel of ESB. I held a similar role at AIB. We shared books, papers and articles, went to conferences and prepared and criticized each other's presentations. Paddy was a wonderful traveller, totally at home and comfortable in his skin wherever he was. On a free afternoon at a conference in Venice, Paddy, Esther, Noreen and myself set off to find a small church that had wonderful Titian paintings. Unable to find the church in the labyrinthine small streets, Paddy immediately took charge. He stopped in his tracks a hurried, very smartly dressed man (complete with briefcase) with a typical Paddy Mo greeting, 'Come here a minute,' in rolling Kerry tones. While the rest of us looked on, Paddy's great consultation group grew in size from this one person to ten all poring over Paddy's maps talking vigorously and pointing in several directions at once. Finally we all trooped off together, found the church, loved the paintings and Paddy enthralled them all with his Kerry accent, expressive looks and beaming smile. It was a pity none of them spoke a word of English or Irish!

Paddy loved all sports and particularly loved playing golf. We went on golf holidays to the US and other foreign destinations but Paddy especially liked playing the wonderful links golf courses of Ireland. Aside from the Kerry courses he had a special *grá* for Baltray and came to visit at our chalet in nearby Clogherhead on many happy occasions. Paddy loved language and was never short of a pithy phrase. On one occasion we were due to play in an open four-ball in Baltray and we met up firstly at the chalet in Clogherhead for a cup of tea. We were sitting on a veranda when the final member of our four-ball drove up. He was a very good golfer off his handicap, was dressed in a black polo-necked jumper and black pants and looked pale and serious. Paddy took one look at our fourth man and said, 'Here comes the hired gun.'

He had a great sense of continuity about him, linked to the past, grounded in the present and enthusiastic about the future. He liked to *ceilidh* and drop around to the house for a visit just as was done in smaller towns and communities many years ago. He sometimes missed out on his visits due to unplanned television appearances regarding industrial relations issues in the ESB. On one such occasion I recall Brian Farrell trying to pin Paddy down on a particular issue. Brian finally, in some exasperation, asked Paddy to give a straight Yes or No answer to a very tricky question. As Noreen and I waited anxiously to see how our friend Paddy could deal with this he, of course, responded with the famed Kerry ingenuity in difficult circumstances: 'Well, Brian, if I answered Yes or No to that question it might lead to the wrong impression.'

Paddy was above all a wonderful friend, in the hard times and good times.

As godfather to Brian, our son who was tragically killed in an accident, he was his hero and Brian loved pointing out his godfather on television programmes. He was truly a rock at that very bad time.

I really welcome his visits to my mind and thoughts and each time they happen I find myself smiling and feeling just so lucky to still have such a friend.

Paddy Mo  
*by Miriam O'Meara*

There are moments  
In our lives  
If we're lucky  
When we meet  
Someone  
Who holds out  
A hand  
A smile  
A story  
That help us on our way.  
Paddy Mo  
Was such a man.  
His smile  
His eyes  
The way he sat  
Interested  
In what you had to say  
His laughter  
As he told a story  
Listened to yours  
A hand  
That reached  
In such a way to stretch your hand  
Into the distance  
Of who you could become  
So Paddy Mo  
Mo chara  
Thank you for the smile  
Your kindness  
Your talking  
Your listening  
Your hand that stretched to mine  
And many others.  
Thank you  
For the Hansel that you gave  
Mo chara

### *Conor O'Flynn*

The mid 1960s was the beginning of a wonderful friendship between two families – the Moriartys and the O'Flynn. I first met Paddy Moriarty at the Ballybunion Golf Club while he was on his annual holiday with Esther and the children and I was there with Mary and our children.

Tom Allen, manager of the club, asked me if I was fixed up. If not, there was a chap there who would like a game. This chap turned out to be Paddy Moriarty. We played eighteen holes and during the game found we had a lot in common. We were both ordinary people with a country background, sharing an appreciation for the normal things in life and a love of Ballybunion.

We arranged to meet that night and introduced our two wives, Mary and Esther. It was an instant hit which started a wonderful friendship.

Following that holiday, Paddy and Esther invited myself and Mary to Dublin to the All Ireland game that September. Who should be playing but Kerry!

Our friendship grew every year. Ballybunion was the hub of the friendship for the last two weeks in August each year. The families' age profile matched each other pretty much – Emer Moriarty, Con O'Flynn; Maeve Moriarty, Jim O'Flynn; Patricia Moriarty, Mary O'Flynn; John Moriarty, Liz O'Flynn; Dermot Moriarty, Kate O'Flynn.

Over the years Paddy was a great advisor to me in my own business, Sun Products. I could always bounce something off him and would inevitably get a point of view that I, being too close to the situation, would not see. We were both involved with the Irish Potato Marketing Board – a government organization set up to promote the growth and export of seed potatoes.

Paddy and I kept in close contact and enjoyed life up until his untimely death in 1997. Mary, the O'Flynn family and myself still visit Esther and meet up every year with the Moriarty family.

### *Ken Whitaker*

My memory of Paddy Moriarty goes back to when he was a junior executive in the ESB, living in 'digs' on the north side of Dublin. I was in my early years in Finance and I came to know him through a mutual friend, Owen Roe O'Neill, later to become Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labour. He was always good company – genial, humorous, understanding, forthright, a man of the people – as well as being competent and dedicated, qualities which were to stand him in good stead in his outstanding management career with the ESB.

He came from a breac-Ghaeltacht area of Co. Kerry and loved the Irish language. I was surprised to be complimented by him on an article – 'Éisc agus an Ghaeilge' – I had written for *An tUltach*. He remained loyal to his friends over many decades, as well as being a model family man. It could well be said, in the words of a fellow Kerryman, '*ní bheidh ar leithéidí arís ann*'.

## APPENDIX B

### *Industrial Relations: Some Testimonials*

The people who forged a working relationship with Paddy Moriarty between 1970 and 1985 when the industrial relations maelstrom at ESB was at its fiercest and tensions were running extremely high are those best qualified to offer an opinion on the man and the dictates of conscience that moved him. On all sides it is accepted that he was a shrewd operator, that he handled himself well, that he had an obvious sense of fairness and that he commanded respect at different levels, but there was much more to him than the sum of all those parts.

The bruising battles often waged behind closed doors in smoky rooms with people on both sides playing for high stakes undoubtedly impacted on Moriarty's stress levels, though many will say that he thrived on the tensions and tumult that it brought in train. He was not a worrier by nature and would be unlikely to bring his work problems home with him.

Trade union activists who faced him regularly across the table at negotiations had reason to observe the breadth of his vision, although they often found themselves at loggerheads with him on several points of principle. On one occasion when he tried to promote a percentage pay cut to the workforce similar to that which management had embraced voluntarily, he got his answer in no uncertain terms from the back of the room in a broad Dublin accent: 'Paddy, we could live happily on your pay cut!'

These people, many of them steeped in militant trade unionism, are in a unique position because they could justifiably claim to have been in the opposing camp. Remarkably, none of them ever regarded the man they called Paddy Mo as an implacable enemy. On the contrary, he was viewed mostly as a friend and colleague who held an opposing point of view from which he could not realistically retreat. Similarly, Kevin Heffernan, his trusted lieutenant and second in command from 1972 onwards, saw him in all his moods and foibles. Their close friendship provided a platform for Moriarty's clever strategies and his all-consuming love of ESB.

What then was the real story behind this man who is credited with having moulded a new and enlightened era, not only in industrial relations within ESB but right across the entire spectrum of management, who brought the concept of worker participation on to a new and more enlightened level? His legacy to ESB and to the nation are inextricably linked.

### *Kevin Heffernan*

*Industrial Relations Officer, later Manager Industrial Relations, ESB*

I worked with Paddy initially when he was in charge of Research and Audit and I was in Sales. Several years later when a vacancy came up in Personnel, I got the job.

His personality and character were always paramount in the industrial relations area and he brought a totally fresh approach to the business. He was always looking well into the future rather than functioning on a day-to-day basis. He understood the strengths, abilities and qualities of the ESB staff and he wanted to take them on board and work with them rather than against them. I think he acknowledged early on the great asset that was there within the staff – and we did have some tremendous people at the time. His objective was to develop that and to make the greatest use of it for the company and for the nation. He saw ESB as having a critical role in the nation's wellbeing. I suppose you could say he was a crusader for ESB.

Before Paddy Mo became Director Personnel I have to say that Personnel would be the last place that I would have wanted to be. It was a place removed from the rest of the organization. It was 'over there' somewhere and if you were passing through that door you were always going with some difficulty or other and you stayed away from it as much as you possibly could. When Paddy came in it took on a totally new aspect. He brought with him a pioneering, gung-ho approach in which he put it to the staff and the unions that there was a big job to be done here and he more or less asked each individual: 'Are you man enough to face up to it?'

He didn't break the strike culture in ESB by simply giving in to everything the staff wanted. He broke it because of the positive approach he adopted in relation to the staff and also in relation to the well-being of the company. He was widely accepted because of his sincerity and the fact that he was a tough man as well. He was absolutely nobody's fool, regardless of whether it was the Taoiseach of the day he was dealing with or the departments or the unions. Paddy was never a soft touch. He was extremely shrewd and he had extremely good foresight. He could anticipate happenings and so he prepared for them in advance.

The fact that the 1960s marked a huge escalation in ESB strikes wouldn't have been peculiar to ESB at that time. Charlie McCarthy, who was a professor in Trinity College, described this era as the 'winter of discontent' because of the widespread industrial unrest that prevailed.

When workers were taken off the ESB payroll, as happened occasionally during strikes, there was an understandable increase in tension. However, this strategy proved very effective in a lot of cases. Some people applied a work-to-rule which really meant that there was a part of their work which they wouldn't do. I remember one time when the fitters decided they weren't going to do any welding. We said, 'Welding is part of your day-to-day activities and if you don't do it you're not doing your job and you are taking yourself off the payroll.' This was not the same as being sacked. It simply meant that they were being removed from the payroll until such time as they resumed their proper duties. Did it poison the atmosphere? It didn't improve it, I suppose, but it worked. Some would say it boiled down to whether you could submit to blackmail or not. Work-to-rule was always a blackmail situation.

Paddy was great in those circumstances. He would always stay with negotiations as they progressed and he would never be removed from the action unless he was out of the country, which didn't happen very often. Once we had determined our strategy we would go from there. He was never interfering in the sense that you felt an intrusion or that he was looking over your shoulder. He was just part and parcel of the whole thing.

There was something like nineteen trade unions in ESB and, obviously, there were some tensions and rivalries between them. This was undoubtedly a contributory factor to the turmoil that prevailed.

Paddy Moriarty was by far the biggest player in industrial relations in ESB. There is no doubt about that. When he became Director Personnel there was a whole sea-change in staff relations at every level and in every way. Later, he set up annual salary rates and he moved the pension scheme so that everybody was on the same status (previously there had been two pension schemes). To harmonize two distinct pension schemes was a huge undertaking, especially when there was no pressure on him to do it. He just decided that equity demanded justice and he broke down barriers all over the place. He did away with the distinctions between manual and white collar workers. He decentralized responsibility in that he made local managers responsible in the first instance. He engaged the heads of all departments in matters that affected their particular staff and their activities. He was way ahead of the game. He was totally committed to the dignity of the person and the dignity of the worker. The human, open and participative industrial relations aspect was what he aimed for in ESB.

Overall, I think what Paddy Mo left to ESB was a confidence in its own ability. The confidence and the status that he developed made it a better place for people to work in. It was recognized as such and he also helped to make it a more efficient organization. He was a major public servant, in the same way that one would talk about Ken Whitaker. I would put Paddy in the same league. He was a genuine patriotic nationalist. You could say he was a patriot in the truest sense of the word.

The shift workers' strike in 1972 allegedly provided Paddy with a desire to 'crush' the workers, according to Bernie Finan who is a great pal of mine still.

Paddy was too shrewd to try and 'crush' anybody. The shift workers spent a lot of their time watching and listening to machinery – a very important task in its own way – but it gave them a lot of time to conjure up all kinds of things. They got up to the most tortuous ways of manipulating the system. The 'double doubler' was a case in point. It worked like this: the fellow coming off a shift cycle at 8 am was due to go back on duty at 12 midnight but the man coming on in his place would call in sick, which meant that the man who was due off at 8 am would have to work an extra shift, for which he got double-time. The man coming on at 12 midnight would also get a double shift. It was basically a scam. Negotiations went on for about nine months to get rid of it.

Paddy took to industrial relations like a duck to water. Interpersonal matters was where he excelled and this was his forte. He was brilliant in that field. There were an awful lot of things in his philosophy that were groundbreaking and were picked up by other people. I would say there were elements in the ESB template of industrial relations that were successfully applied elsewhere. This gave the unions a basis to seek an equality which at the time was rare between white collar and manual workers. He was always trying to break down divisions. Very much so. He was a marvellous communicator. He could take a sheet of blank paper and write a thesis on it and there wouldn't be many corrections in it later on.

What did he bring to the table? He brought a notion that inequality should be eliminated. In his view the worker was worthy of his hire but the worker was also expected to deliver. Another aspect of his thinking was that the worker should be trained to deliver at his best. Paddy foresaw a lot of the economic developments that followed and where ESB would have to go and he sought to prepare the organization accordingly. He was an optimist forever. He won over a lot of people through his personal magnetism and the respect that he earned. If you had a case he would respond and if you didn't he would adopt a totally different line. He understood the adversarial nature of the business and accepted that you had to deal with it. He was rarely caught on the wrong foot. He was not vindictive and he never took anything outside the door.

He was a man for all seasons, very interested in everything that was going on in the company whether it was social, educational, welfare, dramatics, music, the arts and so on. His breadth of interest was so wide it was almost incredible. He was extremely knowledgeable about all these things and he could still be the bookie at the golf outing.

He had a fantastic sense of humour. He saw humour in people and he could capture it and recount it later on. He was marvellous company and a wonderful observer of the human condition. Did some people resent him? I'm sure they did but most were extremely loyal to him and thought an awful lot of him as an individual. He inspired a tremendous sense of loyalty so I assume that in the nature of things wherever he had enemies they would be bitter enemies. At the level he was dealing, if you were clashing seriously with him you were clashing on the fundamental operation of the organization and it wouldn't be surprising if you found yourself out of the action.



The engineers ran ESB initially. The Chief Engineer was the boss. The Chief Accountant was next door. There were four or five engineering departments as against one or two non-engineering departments. Then the whole structure started to change and Paddy was the first from a non-engineering background to come through.

As far as I am concerned Paddy Mo was a very good leader who was never afraid to take the shots when the going got tough.

### *Bernie Finan*

*A shift operative at Bellacorick power station, Co. Mayo, for thirty-five years; a leading member of the Shift Workers' Association and shift workers' negotiating team; a member of ATGWU, suspended due to his part in the 1972 strike; he subsequently joined National Engineering and Electrical Trade Union*

During the 1960s it became obvious to us in the power stations that ESB would have to move away from the stagnant position that had prevailed for many years. Our working conditions at that time were quite primitive and the question of equality was being smothered in a two-tier superannuation scheme, one for white collar and one for manual workers. Discrimination ruled in several areas and people in privileged positions were quite happy to maintain the status quo. In 1972 we looked for an upgraded pay structure with a grading system similar to what the white collar workers enjoyed. This led to a very acrimonious situation, which was resolved much later. We also looked for a shorter working week and this was conceded in the early 1970s. A comprehensive agreement between the Board and the unions in the mid 1970s, following the appointment of Dr Paddy Moriarty as Director Personnel, took care of some further matters. After that, things began to happen.

I was a member of the Shift Workers' Association and we staged a major unofficial strike in 1972 that threatened to stop the country. John Gillespie and myself were fined £10 each and suspended from office for carrying out the wishes of our members. The unions would claim the strike was resolved because they failed to recognize our pickets but I believe the main factor was Paddy Moriarty's acceptance that we were the authentic voice of the shift workers and that we were a force to be reckoned with. He also recognized that none of the groups involved in the conflict, neither ESB, the unions nor the shift workers, had a monopoly of wisdom. There would have to be compromise all round if we were to move forward and he accepted that. Once there was relative calm restored in ESB things improved under the stewardship of Dr Paddy and over a period of years many of our aspirations were met.

The Shift Workers' Association was set up in the mid 1960s with two representatives from each station. Early meetings were held in Croghan, Co. Offaly, and later we would usually meet in Athlone for convenience. Our presence came about because we felt the official trade union movement was not giving us the kind of representation we deserved. As an unofficial grouping we

were considered a maverick organization but we exerted the kind of pressure that was necessary to get results. Previously we were going nowhere. Along with John Gillespie, Paddy Egan, Noel O'Connell and Liam O'Sullivan, I was at the coalface of negotiations with Dr Paddy for roughly twenty years and while he was often tough and non-compliant up to a point he definitely took note of our position.

Very often when sitting around the table we found we had more of a problem with certain trade union officials than with Moriarty. Definitely, it was through him that we made any progress at all because he knew full well that if continuity of supply was to be maintained it was vital that a good working relationship be established with all categories. Under his leadership ESB became a civil organization and a good place to work. He set the machinery in motion for improvement on several fronts. Pre-1970 there was tunnel vision in ESB because regional and district managers ruled the roost. If they said 'No' the Board members were quite happy to go along with it.

There was no point in taking on Moriarty in a tight situation. My tactic was often to pretend that I didn't understand him fully but one day in the corridor he put his fist up to my head and in no uncertain language told me he knew the game I was playing. He had complete control and you wouldn't have a snowball's chance in hell of out-manoeuvring him. At the same time, there was very little bitterness at the table with him. One day himself and John Gillespie from Gweedore (who was a native speaker) got hot over something and both of them continued a heated discussion in Irish! Being able to abuse each other in the native tongue seemed to defuse the situation. Then they both cooled down again fairly quickly.

In 1972 we led our members into the aforementioned unofficial national strike that brought the country to the verge of shutdown. This was when the combined forces of ESB, the trade union movement and the government were ranged against us and set out to crush us. With a team of volunteers ready to man the power stations feelings were running very high. The only way we had left to scupper their plans was to call off the strike, which we did. Nobody expected that to happen but our tactic worked and it served our purpose well as we found out in later years. We got results in due course because Moriarty knew that people who were prepared to bring the country to the brink were capable of anything. From that day onwards he got a better grasp of the situation and things moved forward. He recognized that many of us had no ambitions to advance our standing at the expense of our colleagues or the Board. He seemed to respect us for that.

Up to then our take home pay was very small. My job was to operate the boiler and turbines that generated the electricity. It was a very important job but wages and conditions were poor. Many retirees on fixed pensions were dying in abject poverty. In fairness, things improved rapidly under Moriarty.

To me, his legacy will be remembered in these terms. He transformed ESB from a 1920s organization into a twenty-first century reality. He recognized justice where justice had to be served. The human factor was also paramount. Let

me quote just one example. Two ESB men, John Loftus and Martin Heffernan, along with John Loftus' young son, were drowned in the River Deel in Crossmolina sometime around the mid 1970s. Dr Paddy came down to the funeral by helicopter and after attending the Mass he said to me, 'Keep a discreet eye on those two families and if they need any help in the future, let me know.' There was no need to take him up on that offer because both women raised fine families that were a credit to them.

That was typical of Moriarty. He was a humanitarian first and foremost. On numerous occasions he saved people's jobs when nobody else could do it. In fact, there were some people working in ESB who wouldn't have got a job anywhere else. The alcohol awareness programme he set up did a lot of great work and helped many men get back on their feet again. When you met him socially you weren't meeting a high-powered executive, rather you were in the company of a friend and colleague who was full of mischief and prepared to discuss any subject under the sun. I can recall one function we had in a Sligo hotel when we finished up in a rugby scrum at around four in the morning with Dr Paddy in the middle of it. He was stone cold sober but the same couldn't be said for the rest of us.

### *Joe LaCumbre*

*Deputy Chairman, ESB; an electrician by profession; a former trade union activist and worker director*

Paddy Mo was a particular hero of mine, as he was to most of the people in ESB. He was acceptable to everyone. His wonderful sense of humour never deserted him no matter what the circumstances might have been. One of his first greetings to me when I got involved with him in industrial relations was, 'Welcome to the circus. Remember, to be a good circus performer you are expected to be most adept on the trapeze, extremely confident on the high wire and when you are required to ride two horses at the same time you've got to be equally good at that, too.'

At the time, industrial relations in ESB were difficult but sometimes the personalities involved were part of the problem. Paddy had that marvellous ability regardless of the company he was in to make the necessary adjustment and make people feel comfortable in recognizing their position. We had our disagreements during his rise through the company, both in the boardroom and in industrial relations, but that's all they were – disagreements.

In all the time I knew him he showed himself to be an extraordinary man. Here's one example. In 1987 there was a very serious dispute in ESB and the lights were actually out when we finally got a settlement at the College of Industrial Relations in Ranelagh (run by the Jesuits who stayed up all night making us cups of coffee). Each trade union had its own entourage and the level of mistrust went very deep because of the sensitivities of the national wage agreement. Quite understandably, the unions had their dander up with

the country in darkness and, unfortunately, there was one person who refused to come on board. Eventually, at around 4 am, a deal was finally tied up when practically all of the union delegates turned on that one dissenting voice and said, 'If Paddy Moriarty has given his word that should be good enough for you – or for anybody.' To me, that showed the measure of respect in which he was held. From an early stage of his career in industrial relations it was recognized that here was a man the trade unions could do business with.

He had his own particular charisma and there was a very human dimension to him as well. Very quietly and without any fuss things were often done for people in trouble that went way beyond the call of duty. That applied in all kinds of situations – deaths, tragedies and so on. This showed another side of his personality and it typified his approach. Basically, he was a kind and generous man.

In my opinion he was one of the great visionaries of any era and he was away ahead of his time. In ESB things were very adversarial and the tolerance level was often stretched too far but, eventually, it all fell into place. This happened for a lot of reasons, one of them being the innovations that came on stream through Paddy's influence. Even today I see experts of various hues promoting some 'new discovery' or 'new way' of doing business when Paddy Mo was actually doing that twenty-five years ago.

Was he ruthless? He wouldn't have been as successful as he was unless he had that hard side to him. His logic was if being ruthless was a necessary evil he made the call as it had to be made. It didn't mean that he was a ruthless person. He was very political and the connections he had in the political world were extremely important. He was able to juggle the company's concerns and at the same time deal with the political pressures and the business pressures.

I came across some people who would assume that I was publicly associated with Moriarty but I could stitch it into him as well. In ESB all it takes is for a few people to have a pre-conceived opinion and the opportunity to promote it to have it grow wings. Quite often those opinions were based on fiction rather than fact.

I came in and ran as a staff representative with a certain view of the world but Paddy always tried to school me. He wouldn't subscribe to any 'Chinese walls' or that just because you came from a staff background you were a different type of animal. He gained a huge level of acceptance from the unions and he responded in kind. That was where mutual trust came into play. It could have been a disaster if it didn't work but it did.

The construction of Moneypoint power station was an enormous undertaking in the mid 1980s and Paddy was central to the whole strategic approach. Political interference was at a far greater level than it is now but he handled it well. He had his own wily way of dealing with everybody but at the same time keeping the company's concerns at the head of the queue. He brought a level of professionalism into the organization that wasn't there previously. He was a class act.

*Jimmy Tinkler*

*ESB Branch Secretary ATGWU 1960-90*

I didn't come into the job with rose-coloured spectacles because I knew most of the personalities involved beforehand, 'warts and all'. In 1970 I was given a full-time assistant, Denis Blanche, who is now with the Industrial Council, and we moved on from there. There was a revolution in ESB when the Old Guard went out and Paddy Moriarty came in as Director Personnel in 1970. He had another Kerryman with him, Johnny Counihan, who was as cute as a fox, but Paddy was the more flamboyant of the two.

He didn't get off to the best start with the unions when he used an unfortunate phrase at one meeting. He said, 'We are in the business of industrial relations, not in the business of blackmail.' That didn't go down well but he learned from it. Eventually he saw the light and he calmed down. He did settle problems, no question. You could have a row with Paddy but you never went out half-dead. I had terrible rows with him but I can't remember what they were now.

Industrial relations in ESB was a disaster area right up to the time that Moriarty came in. It was an absolute shambles because management took the view that their job was to hold the line at all costs. To me, it seemed that the Board's relationship with the government was considered of far more importance than their relationship with the employees and the unions. That was a recipe for disaster. Paddy realized from the beginning that ESB had to be run professionally and take responsibility for its industrial relations, the same as it did for power stations, line management and everything else. Besides Paddy and Johnny Counihan, the people who made the biggest impact were the key negotiators like Kevin Heffernan, Lorcan Canning, Mick Kelly, Henry Mathews and Ricky Nally.

The day workers' dispute in 1968 finished up in a major strike. Many of the people involved were tradesmen who worked on the maintenance side and did all the dirty work during overhauls and so on. They had a genuine grievance. I was in Cork on union business and felt I had been stabbed in the back when a number of strikers on picket duty were jailed for non-payment of fines. There was uproar and on my return I went straight to the Bridewell and handed in a letter for the minister. I told the men, 'We've been betrayed.' The end result was total humiliation for the government after ESB paid the fines and the men were brought home by taxi.

The Day Workers was a genuine grass-roots movement but for reasons best known to themselves they chose to form their own unofficial association. Naturally, the unions resented that approach. Management's attitude always was 'Just keep them talking'. That was what the reaction was against. A minority of day workers didn't want union discipline but they had some very clever fellows in their front bench, people like Tony Ryder, Gerry Darcy and Eamon Stafford. In time, acting on advice from myself, they held a ballot of their members and they all joined a union.

The shift workers' strike in 1972 was a different matter. Moriarty refused to buckle and the position became serious when the lights went out. Mick Blair described the shift workers very well when he referred to them as 'a bunch of false prophets'. Their attitude was 'We can stuff the government, we can do this, that and the other' but they couldn't deliver to their members and that was why they failed. They antagonized everybody in ESB. Jack Doyle from the old Pigeon House station (known as Union Jack) organized more unofficial strikes in his day than anybody else and when he stood up at a later meeting of the shop stewards in Liberty Hall and said, 'I support the union view on this,' there was dead silence. Nobody could believe it!

After a meeting with Paddy Moriarty in Limerick sometime around 1975 the unions agreed to the setting up of a line school in Portlaoise. This was a tremendous step forward and a great move on his part. Previously the attitude among engineers and managers was 'We can get a linesman in any farmer's yard in the country' but Paddy never subscribed to that viewpoint. He wasn't an engineer – and that was slightly resented, too, I would say – but in my view he was cuter than most of them. Setting up the line school proved you could do business with Paddy Mo and it has been a great success ever since.

Over a period of years, a number of comprehensive agreements were successfully negotiated with the unions and that was a vital element in eventually bringing peace. Paddy masterminded all of that. He created a structure within ESB that was conducive towards harmonious relationships between workers, management and the unions. While he was no pushover he was flexible enough to see the justice in a lot of disputes and he softened his approach accordingly. He sorted out industrial relations and he made people proud to work in ESB. Morale was very low before he got involved and there were a lot of square pegs in round holes.

Paddy Moriarty was a huge player in straightening out the mess that was industrial relations in ESB. He recognized that negotiating is a skill of its own and he understood that aspect. His strength as a negotiator? I think it was that he looked at a problem and said, 'What is the solution to this?' rather than, 'How little do I have to concede?' He looked at the bigger picture and he expected the unions to do the same. He was a tough negotiator and you got nothing for nothing out of him but if you had him on the wrong foot he would back off. He knew that if you kept defending hopeless cases nobody would believe you when you had a good case. Sometimes, he was known to have talked his way down from an untenable position in order to deal with us and this was used to his advantage. He refused to import a British civil service mentality into this country.

I was involved during the setting up of ESB's Industrial Council in 1970, which started the machinery for resolving industrial relations problems. Con Murphy, who, like Paddy, came from a small farming background, did a lot of great work in his capacity as Chairman. He was a very clever man with all the knowledge that came from eight university degrees as well as the cuteness of a west-Cork farmer. We had some great tussles with him.

Where necessary, Paddy Moriarty took on the unions but occasionally he was misinformed. This was where we would tell him that he was listening to the wrong people and he was flexible enough to recognize immediately when he had slipped up.

The long-standing tradition of industrial unrest which he changed was undoubtedly his greatest legacy to ESB and to the country. He didn't see himself or the unions as the front line troops for the government or for any other organization. His job was to run ESB; their job was something else. He saw himself as part of a management structure whose job was to run the company with the co-operation of the staff. He recognized that unions are not just people who serve claims and cause trouble. Unions don't create trouble; trouble must be there to start with.

### *Michael Shiel*

*Author of the landmark ESB publication The Quiet Revolution, which tells the story of rural electrification; an engineer by profession; executive director for Sales and Construction*

My overriding impression of Paddy Moriarty is of the breadth of his vision. He applied the philosophy of John F. Kennedy to much of his work: 'Some men look at things as they are and say why? I look at things that never were and say why not?' That was his approach. He would burst through red tape in order to get to the heart of the matter. He was a great man for creative thinking and he wasn't too concerned about protocol in his haste to get the job done. Sometimes, this would mean cutting a few corners along the way. If he wanted to close a job he closed it.

During the Rural Electrification Scheme, with which I was very familiar, he had an input as a member of the Chief Accountant's staff and he travelled all over the country as an inspector, meeting people on the job. He had a wonderful rapport with people and he would talk to them about anything.

When I was Commercial Director for Sales and Construction, Paddy was Director Personnel and so we met regularly at meetings when we sat around the table every Wednesday morning for about ten years as members of the Chief Executive's committee. This was where I found him to be very practical. Normally, accountants are known for their 'closed minds' but Paddy's approach was very different and very positive. He always had some fresh ideas to toss around.

When he became Director Personnel in 1970 he was handed the industrial relations portfolio, which was a dreadful job with numerous hidden problems. However, he seemed to ride them very well. Whenever industrial relations became sour – as often happened – he would come back with another idea. He'd sit back and say, 'We'll have another look at this.' He had a good enquiring mind and a positive, constructive approach. He never fell into any deep troughs, as far as I could see. He bounced back a lot.

In the various planning strategies that unfolded over the years when he was Chief Executive his contribution was always fresh and original. I had great

admiration for his techniques and his positive attitude. I always came away feeling better for having met him. While he was part of the accounting system early on, he had an engineering mind.

Along with being a good talker he was also a good listener with a solid, creative response. When he took over industrial relations you would notice a change of approach almost immediately. The breadth of his vision became apparent straight away and he would talk to union leaders and politicians off the cuff.

His legacy to ESB? Put simply, I think the company was a lot better for having him on board. He brought a broader vision to bear on many problems and he acknowledged the huge resource and assets that were there in terms of staff. He saw people as being every bit as important as keeping power stations going. He used to say, 'A power station could close because of a technical fault but it could also close because of a personnel row.' He was very conscious of that. Problems involving people were very important to him. He saw people as a vital asset that had to be handled properly.

He spoke a lot about the human resource within ESB and it was his job as Director Personnel to maximize that resource. He structured industrial relations to the benefit of both the company and the employees. He was a visionary and he left his mark on the country more so than a lot of politicians.

His legacy to the country revolved around his constructive approach to the bigger picture of running an important company like ESB and the identification of its place in society. He saw that as part of his mission in life – to have ESB functioning as efficiently as possible for the overall good of the country and the community. His door was always open and he wanted to maximize ESB to the benefit of the economy and the nation. He wasn't petty and he had a broad view of events. In my experience he never left any bad taste behind him. Invariably, he applied the principles of Dale Carnegie to everyday life and he never caused any grave offence. He was a true Irishman.

### *Sean Geraghty*

*Worker Director 1988–2003 and prior to that chairman of a group of unions on ESB's Joint Industrial Council*

I got to know Paddy during the 1970s. I can recall him saying to me one day, 'Remember, you never win everything 100 per cent. You never screw the opposition because some day the other fella will win and you will want to salvage something.' That kind of flexibility summed up his whole approach to industrial relations. The solution that often followed would be what good unions might hope to achieve in a fair and balanced society.

Before his arrival ESB was a corporation-type job but he took it into the 1990s and beyond. He was the architect of the first comprehensive agreement and he laid down structures that covered annual leave, the hiring of temporary staff, conditions of employment, sick leave and so on. He helped set up the



Joint Industrial Council, which became the internal arbitration machinery on industrial relations within ESB. The key people, as I recall them, were Paddy Moriarty, Charlie Dillon, Kevin Heffernan and Lorcan Canning.

Paddy could be very stubborn at times and on a few occasions we had to go to the Labour Court to get a settlement because of his intransigence. I remember one occasion when a certain member of his team who shall be nameless clashed with John Hall, the then Chairman of the ESB Officers' Association (ESBOA), which was a house union with a wide membership. Hall was an Englishman and he was referred to publicly as a 'blow-in' which didn't go down well. The timing was wrong, with the RTÉ cameras in attendance. That was a mistake.

In 1968 we had the unofficial day workers' strike, with Tony Ryder – later to become a Board member and a member of ESB's Industrial Council – one of the leading lights. This strike was caused by a build-up of tension and a number of strikers on picket duty were locked up in Mountjoy. Christy Murphy, a supervisor in Poolbeg, was one of those jailed. That was the catalyst for the whole of ESB to come out on strike.

In 1984 we had another big strike at Poolbeg station and we were out for fourteen weeks. I was one of the leaders of that stoppage myself and at his retirement function Paddy referred to us as 'terrorists'! The top management structure was all very enclosed pre-1970 but Moriarty changed a lot of things when he took over. He was never a remote figure and he would buy a round of drinks at the drop of a hat. In later years when he became Chairman I think he felt a bit lonely and isolated up in the second floor without the earlier involvement, which he obviously missed. I don't think he was a wealthy man and he wasn't as well paid as people thought. What he had, he spent.

In 1977 the concept of four worker directors was adopted and the first appointees were Tony Ryder, Jack Wylie, Denis Hatch and Tommy Gilmartin. This was a government initiative but most people felt that instead of starting at the top they should have started at local level. The Minister for Labour at the time, Michael O'Leary, wanted to be remembered for his contribution to industrial relations at national level but his plans backfired.

Some of the older people were quite comfortable with the way ESB was structured, not only in industrial relations but in every other respect as well. Paddy wasn't satisfied and in time he became the only Board member to gain an honorary membership of SIPTU. That was recognition far beyond the worth of any piece of paper.

The strike by the Cork linesmen in 1984 was the most vicious strike of all in ESB. The Board stopped a lunch allowance and that triggered it off. All the men were members of the ATGWU and they wouldn't allow the lights to go up in Patrick Street. A number of managers' homes were picketed and the upshot of this was that five men were sacked. It went to various courts including the Labour Court and the strikers were offered a reasonable deal, which they refused. It was wrongly presumed that the four worker directors voted against them. Even at that late stage Paddy Mo was willing to try and accommodate them but

the men wouldn't listen and went unrepentant to their doom.

There was another side to Paddy that I liked. He brought an openness to the company that wasn't there previously and you always felt he was telling you the truth, particularly when it was on a one-to-one basis. He wasn't playing games. He won the respect of all factions and, while he wasn't always easy to deal with, once a deal was done that was it. His word was his bond. You don't get to be Chief Executive and you don't get to run a big company like ESB without laying down the law.

At the end of the day he was a civil servant without a civil service mentality. He was a political animal. His humanitarian instincts often surfaced and it is well known that he saved some guys who should have been sacked or disciplined. You couldn't take liberties with him, though. He created a mood within ESB and he was way ahead of his time. Con Murphy, Kevin Heffernan, Lorcan Canning, Jack Finnan and Rory O'Donnell were big management people in industrial relations along with Moriarty. On the union side Jimmy Tinkler, Denis Blanche and Frank O'Reilly come to mind immediately.

Paddy Mo's legacy to ESB centres around the policies that he laid down, the working agreements that he negotiated and the medical provident fund that he set up. Anything that benefited staff would have his wholehearted support. Whatever impacted on the workers was his concern. He will be remembered for the atmosphere he created and for the way he treated people.

He ran the biggest state company in Ireland and he ran it very efficiently. The unions didn't want Moneypoint built because it closed Ringsend with a loss of 300 jobs and we were selfishly thinking of our own patch, while Paddy was thinking about the bigger picture including diversification. He opposed us on that. The guys at Ringsend seemed to think that the station was built for themselves and their sons. Realistically, the country couldn't have done without Moneypoint and I would have to give Moriarty credit for pushing it through.

The key to his success was, I would say, flexibility. That and his natural flair for dealing with people and getting consensus. A sense of honesty was also paramount. He was essentially a very good diplomat and an honest man.

### *Jack Finnan*

*Industrial Relations Officer, then Deputy Manager Industrial Relations and Manager Manpower until retirement in 1990*

Right from the start of his career as Director Personnel it was clear that Paddy Moriarty saw the need for a strategic approach to his new job. My recollection is that he asked the previous management to continue for some weeks while he read himself thoroughly into his new brief and prepared himself for the future. It was out of this information, analysis and reflection that his first approach to the unions on a new co-operative partnership emerged.

Much of the past trauma had been on the knife-edge of industrial relations and he foresaw that his personal efforts and visibility would mainly be in that

field. Nevertheless I believe he saw, too, that the whole area of Personnel, including the softer issues of manpower development, training, equality of opportunity, welfare, superannuation scheme improvement and so on, were vital in advancing staff relations over a wider front.

He was a firm advocate of the importance of E.H. Schein's 'psychological contract' between staff and their employers and I remember him making a speech on this to the IMI back in 1971, which was reported as being significant in the national media at the time. His speech stressed the vital nature of the various expectations of each side, not expressed in letters of appointment but which involved the whole pattern of rights, privileges and obligations between workers and organizations and are powerful determinants of behaviour.

In his formulation of personnel policy, which constituted the basis of the comprehensive agreements that were to follow, he not only had the vision of these in his head but a genius for dictating the policy documents. These were invariably models of completeness. As L.J. Barry, the then Chief Accountant and his one-time immediate boss, said: 'Words poured out of him like water out of a tap.' This was, of course, only one aspect of his communication skills as he was a very persuasive speaker, either in public or interpersonally. Indeed, communication was almost an obsession with him. I remember being amazed when, after a two-week holiday in Russia with John Lang, John Reihill and their three wives, he circulated to all managers in ESB his 'Russian Journal'. This was replete with detailed descriptions of scenes and events visited, historical references, literary allusions, personages met and personal observations. Not only that, but he offered a loan of his photographs to anybody who would guarantee to return them safely. It was a tour de force and Boswell would have nodded approval.

My contacts with him were in the main on industrial relations. I really think that he got, in that modern term, a 'high' from the cut and thrust of negotiations and clash of characters that this activity usually involved. This was true whether he was actively involved in the most important crises or, as in other cases, merely swinging in his chair in the back room as we in the front ranks came back to him at intermissions to tell how things were going at the table and who said what. He never tired, no matter how long the sessions, and early hours in the morning often saw the management team finishing up in the Coffee Dock in Jurys Hotel to discuss how things had gone.

Paddy Mo was also a very good tactician. I remember how, one late night after fractious negotiations had stalled, one union representative came into our management side meeting and announced that their group (comprising approximately twenty members) was going to sit in and occupy head office until they got an acceptable deal. After some consultation among the managers, Mo said he was going to talk to the group and he brought me in with him. He told them how he'd heard the news and advised them to make themselves as comfortable as possible for the night. But, he added, if they were leaving the building to get provisions, to make sure they gave their names to the watchman at the back gate as it was part of his duty to book everyone in and out of the building after hours and it was important that his register be kept

right. We withdrew. Some ten minutes later it was clear that his relaxed reaction had borne fruit as the sound of marching feet passing our door towards the exit indicated that wiser counsels had prevailed. The militants of a few minutes earlier were on their way home to their beds!

Of course, he didn't always win. Once in an issue with ICTU involving serious negotiations, as we were breaking up for the day and after arranging to meet on the morrow, he offered Donal Nevin, Secretary of ICTU, his latest effusion on a formula to settle (he was an inveterate concoctor of compromise formulae). 'Paddy,' replied Donal Nevin, 'I learned many years ago – as you obviously did, too – that the man whose bit of paper is being debated holds the advantage in industrial relations. Thanks very much for your offer but I'll bring my own bit of paper tomorrow.' Paddy Moriarty smiled. He recognized a worthy adversary.

During his tenure as Director Personnel it was a pleasant organization to work in. We often worked long hours but it was in a supportive and blame-free environment. His objective, if things were going wrong, was how we'd make them right. He believed one should, where necessary, quickly own up to a mistake, which could only bring a rejoinder from the higher authority to 'Try not to repeat it the next time.'

Paddy Mo was a great decision-maker and once he made a decision there was no turning back. I learned at an early stage that if you could get to him before he arrived at a decision he would listen open-mindedly and go with what he considered reasonable. But if he had made up his mind on a course of action the hoods would come down over his eyes if you started to introduce other issues in an attempt to distract him. Taken to extremes that, of course, can be a failing and none of us is without fault. It may seem a trite comparison but I thought his attitude on decisions and determination in following them through made him, as he was, a great putter in golf. Once the line had been determined that's where the ball was going.

He loved interaction with people and claimed to be able to greet thousands of ESB staff by their first names following his many jobs which brought him to all parts of the organization. He particularly loved to meet those whom he would deem 'characters' – the unusual or the quirky. He liked to hear people's views and, like a good footballer who makes space and time around himself, he seemed to be able in a busy schedule to find time to listen. Once in a taxi ride when we were on a consultancy assignment in the Middle East, I heard him immediately engage with the expatriate driver – he asked his name, where he came from, the hours he worked, how long he'd be staying and, lastly, what he thought of the place. The answer to the latter was: bad – no drink, no women, no churches. Mo, of course, followed up: how would he rank his deprivations? That was his style. It was never his way to slump in the back seat brooding on the past or the next official engagement.

He had a tremendous capacity for work, combined with an ability to carry his responsibilities without apparent stress. I remember him telling me when he was Assistant Chief Executive to Jimmy Kelly and also Chairman of RTE

that he found it so easy to do both jobs that he wondered if he was doing them right! And yet the word at the time was that he was one of the best chairmen that RTÉ ever had. His ability to be on top of a job and yet remain light-hearted must have been the secret of his success. On one occasion, when he was visiting electricity utilities in North America and had left Kevin Heffernan and myself tangling with some problem in Poolbeg that was building towards a crisis that might threaten supply, we got a telegram after a few days that read: 'How goes dispute? Will Great White Father return by short route?' Things had eased and Heff and I concocted a reply telegram that went as follows: 'No – stay in wigwam. Tall stacks in Poolbeg emit smoke signals of peace.' He enjoyed that but we often wondered what the telegram people made of our cryptic exchanges.

Of course he made mistakes and there were some failures – but not many. Sometimes, firm adherence to decisions once made could be counter-productive but his overall success far outweighed any negatives. There was, perhaps, some element of over-expectation on his part of a major positive response from all staff following his unveiling of the new personnel policy in the early 1970s. It is significant that the 1973 goal – 'the continuing development of an effective workforce to meet the needs of the company in a working environment that is human, open and participative and which provides an equitable reward system and opportunity for personnel development' – had to be amended the next time around with emphasis on the obligation of staff reciprocity. Some old-time managers would say that the 1970s moved too far from hard to soft line but those of us who worked with Moriarty in Personnel would beg to differ.

Finally, Paddy Mo was innately kind-hearted, his instincts were good; he'd qualify for what in Ireland would be called 'a decent man'. Such was his own self-esteem that he was never afraid or ashamed to say what motivated him. I think he did this most tellingly in his speech to the IMI in Killarney in April 1991. He apologized to the country for the strike that had occurred in the previous weeks causing power cuts and he spoke feelingly about his own upbringing in Kerry, his pride in the way the country had developed and the difference between now and how his forebears had fared. I wonder what impact that heart-on-the-sleeve speech had on his perhaps business-weary audience!

His legacy to ESB is surely the whole change of tack in management-staff relations that he initiated and the improvement that followed in train. That it didn't solve everything and for all time is not surprising. New men have to manage new developments but he blazed a trail that is still being successfully followed in ESB to this day.

## APPENDIX C

### *Extra-curricular Activities*

If there was one quality that distinguished Paddy Moriarty during his long and illustrious career in business it was his nobility of spirit. Never one to say no to any worthy cause, he spread his talents around generously.

It is accepted that Moriarty was a figurehead of national proportions and that was one of the main reasons why he was regularly approached to front various worthy assignments. Invariably, he provided a listening ear but, more importantly, he got things done. Helping the cause of rural Ireland in whatever way he could came very easily to somebody who was, by nature, deeply attached to his roots.

At all times the *modus operandi* employed was straightforward and uncomplicated. He was a practical patriot who kept the greater good of the community to the forefront. If he could further the advantage of some struggling group who nurtured a vision or a dream, his first instinct was to get involved. If the venture had Kerry connections and especially if there was a possibility that Dingle or the west-Kerry Gaeltacht would become the beneficiaries, his support was assured.

#### *The Blasket Islands*

Getting himself embroiled in the eleven-year saga of conflict that erupted over the Blasket Islands in the mid 1980s provides a typical example. From the outset he must have known that a difficult road lay ahead when he was elected Chairman of *Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid*, a position he held for seven years. This organization was launched in Dun an Óir Hotel in Ballyferriter in November 1986 after an advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal* sought to sell a number of holdings on an island 'off the west coast of Ireland'. The asking price was \$900,000.

Coincidence played a part when Micheál Ó Cinnéide, a young student from Baile an Mhurthaigh who was studying in Harvard University, spotted the advert and on enquiry was informed that the land in question represented seventeen of the twenty-five holdings on the Great Basket. Alarmed by what he was told, he immediately communicated with family members and friends at home who set the wheels in motion to resist any such sale.

This proved to be the genesis of the movement that resulted in the establishment of *Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid* – the Basket Island Foundation – an organization whose members campaigned vigorously to have the Great Basket turned into a national historic park. In adopting this stance the *Fonduireacht* people found themselves at odds with a rival body, later identified as the vendors who had advertised in the *Wall Street Journal*. Up to that point the presumption locally was that an ex-air force pilot from Alabama, Taylor Collings, who had purchased seventeen holdings on the main island in 1970, was selling out. However, it then transpired that in fact he had offloaded his interest in 1972 for a reported £25,000.

From this uncertain base the *Fonduireacht* activists (with government support) took it upon themselves to overthrow private ownership rights in what they felt was the national interest. They wanted to save the Great Basket Island for the nation but in taking up this position they were leaving themselves anchored in a legal vacuum that brought huge conflict and costly litigation in train. This resulted from the manner in which various classifications of ownership on the island were treated in a government Act that was later found to be unconstitutional. The legislation, which had the support of all members of the *Dáil* and Senate, fell because this Act, signed on 7 June 1989, sought to acquire by compulsory purchase seventeen holdings only on the main island without disturbing the eight remaining landowners who were either natives or descendants of native stock.

From the very beginning, Moriarty proved a key figure in the campaign to turn the Great Basket Island into a national historic park. Even when in failing health he attended regular meetings, without even a piece of paper in his possession because, as somebody remarked, 'he carried everything in his head'. All the meetings were conducted in the Irish language. An interpretative centre that stood on 47 acres overlooking the Basket Sound, which cost £3.6 million, was a first vital step forward but the real struggle, one that would be played out in the highest court in the land, was still to come.

What evolved was an ill-fated attempt at usurping private ownership rights in pursuit of an idealistic concept that was both culturally and aesthetically sound but was enshrined in legislation that could not be sustained when challenged in the High Court and later in the Supreme Court. Central to this decision was the manner in which different categories of ownership were treated in the aforementioned legislation. Regardless of whatever lofty idealism was being pursued, private ownership rights were found to be sacrosanct.

As soon as the identity of the new owners was established, after several years of stalemate, the gulf between both groups widened considerably when

for the first time personalities came into play. Moriarty was one of those personalities; Charles Haughey was another. Ranged on the opposite side of the divide were equally substantial figures.

A bruising High Court battle that extended over fifty days with two further days in the Supreme Court established that the government Act of 1989 was 'unconstitutional' in that it had introduced 'a dubious classification with ethnic and racial overtones'. The court had no doubt that the plaintiffs (who sued the State) were being 'unfairly treated' compared with persons who owned or occupied lands or resided on the island before 1953.

In their action against the State, the plaintiffs claimed there were seven islands in the Blasket Island chain and that if a national park was to be an appropriate development it should comprise ALL of the islands. The State argued that the only reason that it wanted the Great Blasket declared a national park was because of its unique literary and cultural importance. This proved a costly mistake that produced a legal bill in excess of £2.5 million, which was later passed on to the Irish taxpayer.

The most obvious mistake made by *Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid*, who were not directly involved in the costly litigation that ensued, has been put down to 'pure sentimentality'. Lorcán Ó Cinnéide, a prominent committee member, claimed his organization was reluctant to seek a compulsory purchase order against native stock (or their descendants) and instead homed in on the seventeen holdings that belonged initially to Taylor Collings and which were later sold. This set in train the sequence of events that was ultimately responsible for having the government Act overturned in the courts.

In July 1999 a decision was reached in the Supreme Court that effectively scuttled the dream of *Fonduireacht an Bhlascaoid* – at least temporarily. The former Chairman's absence through ill-health meant that the defence had lost a key witness and the State's prospects of gaining a favourable judgment receded accordingly.

The verdict handed down rocked the concept of a national historic park to its very foundations but one year later dialogue was initiated through the establishment of the Great Blasket Island Forum under the direction of Martin Nolan from Kerry County Council, who acted as an independent facilitator. Following the deliberations of the forum, a recommendation to government resulted in the establishment of the Great Blasket Island Management Group under the chairmanship of Séamus Mac Gearailt with Micheál de Mórdha acting as Secretary. In a new climate of reconciliation, government funding of €8.5 million was committed in principle to support the development of access and conservation work, provided agreement could be reached between all interested parties. Easier said than done because bridging the chasm that existed after so much earlier turmoil would prove to be a most difficult task.

In July 2005 the government announced its intention to proceed with the purchase of the main island when a sum of €1.7 million was allocated by way of compensation. The timing was perfect and coincided with an earlier ultimatum from various landowners who were becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack



of progress and threatened to pull out of any impending deal. The decision to proceed with the acquisition was made public by Environment Minister Dick Roche and successfully defused mounting tensions – but only temporarily.

In June 2006 all earlier plans by the State relative to the purchase of the Great Blasket Island for the nation were threatened with imminent collapse when a letter received by island landowners from the Office of Public Works appeared to reject all previous agreements. This presumption was later denied by the OPW who stated that their letter was ‘misinterpreted’.

Currently the situation is unresolved. What is certain is the general consensus that the integrity of the site should be preserved and arrangements made to improve public access to the island. Under a long-term management plan, the OPW hopes to conserve the writers’ buildings, restrict visitor numbers, build new piers, conserve wildlife and apply for UNESCO world heritage status. Whether the elusive goal of a World Heritage Site is ever achieved is by no means certain but if it happens the earlier upheaval will be seen as part of the final solution. Without a shadow of a doubt, Paddy Moriarty would dearly wish to be seen as part of that solution.

## RTE

*Bhí an Muircheartaigh ag feidhmiú mar Chathaoirleach ar an tÚdarás um Craolachán Náisiúnta d’RTÉ ó 1979 go 1981. D’éirigh sé as an bpost sin nuair a ceapadh é mar Phríomb Fheidhmeannach ar Bhord Soláthar an Leictreachais i 1981. Is cuimhin le Nollaig Ó Gadhra, ball den Údarás ag an am, an chabhair a thug Pádraig le linn an ama seo: Moriarty served as Chairman of the RTE National Broadcasting Authority from 1979 to 1981. He relinquished this position when he was appointed Chief Executive of ESB in 1981. Nollaig Ó Gadhra, a member of the Authority at the time, remembers Paddy contribution during this time:*

I first met Paddy when he was appointed Chairman of the RTE Authority at the beginning of the 1980s, an eventful time in the country and in broadcasting also. During the campaign for a better Irish language service I got to know Paddy well and found him to be a reasonable, kind, considered and realistic person who was loyal to his roots and background in Corca Dhuibhne. He understood that the development of the Irish language on television depended on the political arena as it seemed to him that the ordinary community of Irish speakers would not in any way make waves about the situation.

Paddy began to discuss other aspects of television and RTE with me on an informal basis. He invited me to his house, usually on Sunday mornings when he had completed his week’s work and I was in Dublin at Conradh or other meetings.

People will hold various opinions about the success of Moriarty’s Authority as regards fulfilling their vision, the appointments they carried out and their development of Irish radio, television and, of course,

Raidio na Gaeltachta. Section 31, the censorship directive, created a difficult situation and Paddy was opposed to it but understood the unanimity in the Dail on both sides about its application. His involvement in *RTÉ* came at a time when there was a lot of suffering and political pressure but his accomplishments were many and he was a kind, hard-working man who understood the world. *Beannacht dilis Dé leis. Beidh cuimhne air go ceann i bhfad.*

### *National College of Ireland (formerly National College of Industrial Relations)*

Today the National College of Ireland has its cultural hub in Dublin's dynamic IFSC, the geographical step from its previous location in Ranelagh reflecting the major transitions and developments undergone by the college in the last sixteen years.

One of the first transitions in NCI occurred in 1990 when the first lay director was appointed to the previously Jesuit-run college. Paddy Moriarty was elected in April 1991 to the position of Chairman of the college. Despite many other demands on his time, he took on the role with enthusiasm and deeply held commitment.

The early 1990s were turbulent times in the college as long-time serious financial and structural issues began to emerge. For somebody whose oft-quoted mantra was 'Things can be critical but never serious', it is clear that Moriarty's enthusiasm and business acumen were ideally suited to find a solution. He was always strong-willed in the face of difficulties and his strength was enormously powerful in enabling those involved to find ways of realizing the issues that had to be faced. He never shirked the naming of issues and was firm in calling on those involved to face and take up their proper responsibilities.

President of NCI Joyce O'Connor remembers:

The college was technically insolvent from about 1990 onwards and when Paddy came in he provided the impetus for what was to come. Paddy was very focused and he saw that you could not address the money situation exclusively without going much further. He was totally supportive at all times and within a few years we had gone from 500 to 2,000 students.

Moriarty's most outstanding characteristic was his vision for the college. He had an unshakeable belief in the potential of all people, whatever their background and circumstances, and he was dedicated to shaping NCI into the type of college that would provide the opportunities and environment necessary to enable the release of that potential. He never gave up on that vision, despite the many obstacles that inevitably arose in the major transitions undertaken by the college and he managed to do the business with humour and to celebrate the achievements made. Paddy's keen sense of the role of education and the challenges, demands and needs in the educational arena at the time

were important in steering the college towards the development and implantation of the mission, as relevant today as it was when he was chair.

Joyce O'Connor sums up his contribution thus:

He was a tremendous supporter of the college who could always see a solution to every problem. He set the governance and the credibility of what we were doing. There was never a question that you couldn't succeed. Working with somebody like that was a fantastic experience. We had very difficult days when it seemed the college might close but we rode out all the storms and Paddy was crucial to all of that. He had a wonderful sense of his own identity and a tremendous capacity for the development of public service. The pride of race and the value he put on being Irish were paramount. He held the position of Chairman up to the time of his death and even in the last months his spirit never diminished. Through his vision, leadership and personal presence, the seeds of the college's current unique niche in Ireland's third-level sector were sown and our success wouldn't have happened without him. He provided outstanding leadership at a time when the idea of people going back into education wasn't the norm. He was an inspirational figure and an amazing man.

### *Kerry Airport*

From humble beginnings in the late 1960s when it could only cater for small aircraft (less than thirty-seaters), Kerry Airport has progressed to become the biggest and most successful regional airport in Ireland today. Located near the tiny village of Farranfore off the main Tralee-Killarney road it has most of the infrastructure associated with a much larger facility, including 200 metres of runway.

Denis Brosnan, later to become Chief Executive of the hugely successful Kerry Co-Op Group and now Chairman of the Irish Racing Authority, joined the Board in 1989 at the behest of government with a view to revitalizing the entire project. 'At that time,' he says, 'the popular view was that Kerry Airport was going nowhere and I was co-opted on to the Board to see what could be done about building a much larger airport. EU funding towards a new runway came in at £6 million and we needed to find a further £6 million. I had known Paddy Moriarty for a long time and when I invited him to join the Board he didn't hesitate for one moment.'

A substantial cash injection from ESB was the first initiative that helped to get the project off the ground. For this Moriarty could claim the credit although he never did. But action speaks louder than words and in double-quick time he succeeded in gaining ESB support to the tune of £200,000 by way of share capital. ESB also helped in other ways: by laying a number of 38 kV lines across the site where the runways were being built and in relocating some of its high energy lines in order to achieve this objective.

'Obviously, ESB played a major role in helping us deliver the airport,' says Denis Brosnan. He continues,

I remember Paddy saying to me that his love of Kerry helped him persuade the Board of ESB to part with £200,000. That might have been a small investment to them but, to us, it was very big money. More than that, Paddy had a great love for rural development. He said to me many times that ESB ought not alone be providing electricity, it should also be supporting causes that promoted the development of rural Ireland. His philosophy was: 'Let's do more for rural Ireland.' He was a superb business person who made a major contribution through all of that era, first of all in getting the airport built and later in getting it up and running. He brought huge business skills, a lot of calmness and rational thinking to bear in everything he did. He knew his own capabilities and he brought that into the boardroom as well. He seldom missed a Board meeting.

The first big plane that flew into Kerry Airport was a charter Boeing 757 jet from Spain. That was about 1994 and the landing caused great excitement with all of the Board members (including Moriarty) turning out for the occasion. This enabled the Board to start moving forward and selling the airport further afield.

Moriarty's involvement provided him with an outlet where, in the company of kindred spirits, he welcomed the challenge that lay ahead. Denis Brosnan sums up: 'Myself, Paddy and other Board members were not interested in doing things by half measures. Our view was that Kerry was the tourism capital of Ireland and that it should have an airport worthy of that status.'

Eighteen years on, Kerry Airport is living testimony to their courage, dedication and first-class business expertise.

### *Horse Racing*

Paddy Mo's involvement in the horse-racing industry stemmed from a keen interest in the sport and had overtones from his enthusiasm for greyhounds. As children, the trek to and from school wound its way through Baile an tSagairt racecourse where an annual two-day meeting for 'flapper' horses took place every August. This particular venue was also the scene of an occasional competition for greyhounds that might not be considered good enough to venture as far as the track in Tralee.

For many years, ESB's front man was considered one of the 'horsey set' and he was an obvious choice for recruitment when it came to drawing up a government-inspired plan that involved all elements of the sport. Ultimately, Horse Racing Ireland, the nerve centre of the industry (based in Kill, Co. Kildare), came into being as a result.

Denis Brosnan, Chairman of HRI since 1991 and a leading figure in the Irish bloodstock industry, provides the background:

Getting to know Paddy as a business person and a fellow director with Kerry Airport gave me the opportunity to use his skills in another area when he readily agreed to take up a position on the Board of Leopardstown Racecourse. This is the flagship racecourse in Ireland owned by the Irish Horse-racing Authority and located within seven miles of the centre of Dublin and Paddy, no doubt thinking back to his youth when he often attended Dingle races and liking all things Irish, was very happy to come on board. The aforementioned Kerry Airport was a much smaller operation with none of the complications that went with a major facility like Leopardstown which is not only a race course but incorporates a whole lot of other establishments as well.

Moriarty's appointment as Deputy Chairman of Leopardstown Finance Committee was of vital importance within the company and he served in that capacity from 1995 up until his last illness. The part he played in shaping this modern facility has been given permanency by naming one of the most prestigious annual events on the track as the Dr P.J. Moriarty Chase.

Leopardstown enjoys the premier position on the horse-racing circuit in Ireland and is patronized by approximately 180,000 race-goers each year. Weighed against a total race-going population of 1.5 million people annually this puts the enormous value of the facility into perspective. It is the leading track for both national hunt racing and flat racing.

The operation of such an enormous facility, which includes not only a race course but also a golf course, a number of nightclubs and a leisure centre, is a very complex business. The Moriarty years were extremely fruitful, Brosnan says.

During Paddy's time we saw the Champions Stakes become a leg in the World Series which embraced ten race courses around the world, one in each country, all coming together and this was a tremendous step forward. All of my dealings with Paddy were as a Board member and there was none better. He was calm, he was encouraging, he missed nothing, he was interested in everything. I never once saw him criticize openly. He would always encourage management around him to get on with the job rather than being critical. Obviously, that was the way Paddy Moriarty got the best out of people.

### *Coláiste Íde*

Coláiste Íde, located in the former home of Lord Ventry beside Dingle Harbour, had been a boarding school for girls run by the Irish Sisters of Mercy since the 1920s and news of its impending closure in 1993 was viewed with alarm by the local community. Interestingly, Paddy Moriarty's two sisters, Eileen and Máire, had spent four years studying at the college in the company of approximately 130 other students from all over Kerry during the 1930s. The college had by then assumed a permanence that was almost taken for granted but as the century drew to a close a very different scenario unfolded. By 1993

its future was placed in jeopardy when it became known that the Mercy nuns could no longer muster sufficient members to run the place satisfactorily. In September of that year a decision was taken to oversee a phased closure of the college to take effect by June 1996.

Shocked by this prospect, some members of the local community in west Kerry met in October 1993 with a view to keeping the college open and run by lay people. Cairde Choláiste Íde (Friends of Coláiste Íde) was formed with that remit in mind.

In July 1994 the initial proposals of the group were forwarded to the Mercy Order and a revised submission was made in November of that year. Three months later, in February 1995, these proposals were rejected. This decision was upheld by the Order's executive in May 1995. Derry Sheehan, one of the leading activists, takes up the story:

We were unable to obtain any reasons for this rejection and the underlying feeling within our organization was that the Mercy Order, which was undergoing a process of reorganization at that time, was not giving our proposals the sympathetic hearing that they deserved. Perhaps the people looking at our submissions did not have the power or the courage to change from a stated position.

In June 1995, Dr Paddy Moriarty agreed to launch a video depicting the importance and viability of Coláiste Íde at the Teachers' Club in Dublin and during that presentation he questioned us closely as to our plans and aspirations. Within a few weeks he had spoken to the Mercy Central Leadership Team and having previously worked with the Order on certain projects they respected and trusted him. This was a very important step forward for us.

In due course, the Leadership Team informed him that they had a task force in place who were looking at all options relating to the college. There was agreement that if our proposals satisfied him they would be considered along with all others. At this point, Dr Moriarty enlisted the services of Joe O'Toole, Secretary INTO, and Brendan Ruddy, Financial Officer at the National College of Industrial Relations, to help him appraise our situation and to recommend any changes that would make our proposals more amenable to the Order. This group examined our proposals in detail and suggested some changes in their presentation. They then submitted their report to Mr Des Lamont, Financial Adviser to the Mercy Order.

In April 1996 Moriarty informed Cairde Choláiste Íde that he had secured agreement with the Mercy Order to lease them the college for a period of two years and eleven months, subject to a few legal loopholes being tied up (presently, the college is on a 35-year lease). On 17 June 1996 there was a formal announcement of the handover. On 27 June, almost twelve months to the day before he died in a Dublin hospital, Paddy Moriarty was elected Chairman of Cairde Choláiste Íde Teoranta.

Derry Sheehan concludes:

Because of the respect that people had for his integrity and good judgment, Paddy Moriarty was the only person who could have got us a hearing with the real decision makers within the Mercy Order. During our meetings with him he impressed on us the ethos, the culture, the heritage and the quality of the institution we were about to inherit. That this great man took the time and trouble to help a group of inexperienced if enthusiastic people realize their dream is ample testimony to his undying love for his native place. The courtesy he showed us at all times, his diligent approach to the project and his meaningful advice provided an uplifting experience for all of us. Without him we could not have succeeded in our quest.

### *Siamsa Tíre*

The story of *Siamsa Tíre* goes back to the early 1960s in Tralee. The whole idea of presenting a long defunct Irish rural tradition through the medium of song, dance and stage was the brainchild of Father Pat Ahern, a young curate from Moyvane, Co. Kerry with a genius for artistic innovation. His guiding hand was to transform a very humble and basic ideology into a worldwide phenomenon.

It started when a small group of young people, members of St John's parish choir, began to experiment with a visual treatment of Irish music and song at rehearsals in the CYMS hall. An old butter churn, still in good working order, was located in Co. Galway and this was used to demonstrate how butter was made in the old days. The rhythm of music added a distinctive touch.

Father Ahern recalls: 'We went on to twist sugan ropes, to milk invisible cows, to feed invisible calves and chickens, all to music, singing, dancing and movement. We did some nice choral arrangements.'

A clip on RTÉ television caused an upsurge of interest and this led to four half-hour programmes on an Irish music theme. Two years later the show had progressed to the school hall of the Mercy Convent in Tralee where the setting was a farmyard complete with thatched cottage. The response was sensational. Shortly afterwards an invitation arrived to play *Siamsa* for three nights in Dublin's Peacock Theatre. Demand was so great that on the third night the sell-out show was transferred to the Abbey. That was in 1970.

The setting up of rural training centres led to the establishment of a full-time performing company and major tours followed in the US, Germany, Paris, Brittany, Canada and Australia. Closer to home a huge project was being mooted and the construction of a new theatre, costing £1.6 million and based on the ancient ring fort concept, began in February 1990.

Anything that embraced the rustic traditions of his youth would have been tailor-made for Paddy Moriarty's enthusiasm and he was delighted to accept a position as Director of *Siamsa Tíre*. He attended his first Board meeting on 3 April 1987 and he remained a director up until his death. He joined the Board

of Siamsa at a very important juncture in the company's development with the building of a permanent home for the National Folk Theatre (as it became known) coming on stream.

Father Ahern remembers:

Bobbie Buckley, our Chairman, felt that a man of Paddy's stature would be a tremendous asset to the Board and when he approached him he readily agreed, saying, 'It would be a great honour. Ye have a good product.' He advised strict control over development expenditure and he felt that we should wait until 90 per cent of the funding had been raised before signing contracts. He was against appointing a fund-raising firm and felt the project was worthy of support from central funds. He was close to Charlie Haughey and his view was that an approach to the Taoiseach might well bear fruit – which it did. He was the one who had the vision to go after government funding.

The ESB Chief Executive agreed to chair a sub-committee of Siamsa Tíre, which was set up to spearhead a fund-raising drive at local and national level. At a meeting of this sub-committee held at ESB headquarters on 25 January 1990 he outlined his plans for accumulating a development fund of £200,000, mainly through securing pledges of support from various business sources. On behalf of ESB he pledged a sum of £10,000 per year for five years.

Typically, Moriarty knew the ropes and he had the contacts within government and elsewhere to get results. The target of pushing a concept like Siamsa Tíre to its very limits came easily to him and the daunting obstacles that had to be surmounted merely stoked his infectious enthusiasm.

### *The Kerry Association in Dublin (formerly The Dublin-Kerry Association)*

Founded in 1951 through a chance meeting between Tom Murphy of Farranfore and Tim O'Donnell from Camp, the Kerry Association in Dublin has maintained an unbroken presence in the capital ever since. Down the years this organization has maintained a welcoming base for generations of young Kerry people who found it necessary to migrate to Dublin in search of work. Indeed, it often happened that membership of the association provided the first comforting reassurance for many a young boy and girl who might otherwise have found themselves lost amid the bright lights.

Given his deep love of home, it was in the natural order of things that Paddy Moriarty should gravitate towards the Kerry Association. He was elected Chairman for three successive years, from 1962 to 1964, and he held the post of President between 1991 and 1994. But his involvement went way beyond any of those positions. Bart Moriarty, a long-time member and Treasurer of the association for fourteen consecutive years, from 1962 to 1975, describes his namesake from Dún Síon as 'a tremendous guy who brought his own distinctive style and business experience to bear in everything he did. There was nothing he wouldn't do to help a good cause.'



The many people who worked with him in various capacities, like Peggy Crowley, Chrissie O'Sullivan and Maureen Boland, will endorse the positive contribution that he made. Whether it was in chairing a meeting or running a dance or a concert to help some worthy cause, or merely participating in the regular leisure activities of the organization, the Moriarty presence was always considered more than a mere token gesture. It was a given principle of solidarity and commitment. Never one for going through the motions or fulfilling some official function purely for the sake of it, he threw himself wholeheartedly into whatever was afoot.

Undoubtedly, one of the high points of his social life came when he was presented with the prestigious Kerry Person of the Year award at the annual Oíche Chiarraí in Jurys Hotel, Ballsbridge on the night of 8 February 1991. Sponsored each year by the Kerry Association, this event has attained a significance that is reflected in the stature attained by the various dignitaries who have been honoured down the years.

Paddy Moriarty fitted seamlessly into this tradition of sporting, literary and business excellence. Finding himself at the centre of attention came easily to him and when the great majority of those people, representative of all walks of life, reflected his own values it made the ensuing presentation ceremony all the more pleasing for the recipient. He was observed sitting contentedly at the top table chewing on a cigar as the great and the good excelled themselves in singing his praises. This was an activity in which he was well practised and, consequently, his impassive exterior did not betray any outward signs of emotion. Under various guises he had heard it all before.

Chairman Éamonn Ó hArgáin described him as somebody whose willingness 'to proclaim his heritage, his love of the Irish language and all things Irish is well known and appreciated'. Garda Commissioner Patrick Culligan referred to him as 'a fine person, a great man to know and a great man to be associated with'.

The Association's PRO, Ted Corcoran, who acted as MC, introduced the various speakers, among them Most Rev. Dr Diarmuid Ó Súilleabháin, Bishop of Kerry, who said of the night's guest of honour: 'The power of this man has gone out to all the nations, literally in kilowatts, carried on the national grid to the whole country and even beyond it. He has provided a very human face to ESB.'

The best speech of the night was delivered by Dr Brendan Kennelly, Professor of Modern English at Trinity College and a former ESB employee, who spoke about 'a visionary and a Christian' who through his work had ennobled the essential dignity of the human person. He concluded:

The ancient and proud spirit of Kerry is shrewd and perceptive, wise, determined, tenacious, intelligent, humorous and humane. That spirit is possessed by Paddy Moriarty. Indeed, he embodies it in glorious abundance. Long may it inspire and sustain him as he has inspired and sustained in his own quiet and dignified way so many ordinary people.

*Beannacht Dé ort a Phadraig.*

## *Greyhound Racing*

Like many people born in Kerry, Paddy Mo had a keen interest in greyhounds and horses from an early age. His father, Thady, was a lover of the ‘longtails’ and stories are told of how his dog – and he always kept a good one – would often be fortified with a mouthful of whiskey before racing, with the intention of ‘warming him up’. This meant that the liquid would first be swirled around in the mouth to achieve body temperature before spitting it into the open mouth of the greyhound. A fraught enough exercise, apparently, because all too often the administrator would become the beneficiary rather than the dog! When that happened, the excuse proffered to the owner was that the whiskey had ‘gone down the wrong way’.

A few years after his arrival in Dublin, the young Moriarty became an owner and the first animal to be registered in his name was a greyhound named El Greco, after the famous Greek painter of the sixteenth century. This dog, a bitch, was reared in his wife Esther’s homeplace in Ballycasheen (outside Killarney), and according to Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh ‘had the looks of a real oil painting’. But seemingly the good vibrations stopped at that point because the dog failed consistently to impress in trials. Eventually, a decision was taken to offer her for sale in one of the auctions that were held regularly at Shelbourne Park.

Micheál brought the dog to the sales in the hope of gaining some recompense because by now it had become abundantly clear that this particular specimen was a flawed enterprise. She did set a record that day by becoming the only lot on offer that failed to attract even the minimum bid of half a guinea.

Micheál left Shelbourne Park in downcast mood but, quite unexpectedly and contrary to all the norms of propriety, he succeeded in selling the dog on the street for the sum of ten shillings. While the purchasers, two middle-aged gentlemen, were glowing in their appreciation of the dog and convinced she had a future, they showed no inclination whatsoever to raise the initial offer and so a deal was struck. Obviously, the logic applied by the vendor revolved around the principle that half a loaf was better than no bread. Undoubtedly, the genial Micheál would have been well able to dredge up an Irish *sean-fhocal* that might capture the essence of what was afoot.

Some thirty years later Moriarty and his fellow ESB colleague Kevin Heffernan became joint owners of a few greyhounds but enjoyed only mixed fortunes in terms of racing success. However, it was the cut and thrust of night-time action at Shelbourne Park, Harold’s Cross and elsewhere that attracted the patronage of two good sportsmen who were not overly concerned about the prize-winning stake. Seamus Graham, then as now one of the leading trainers in the business, looked after the dogs and one named Australia Star was possibly the best that raced under the joint ownership of the two ESB executives. This name was considered appropriate because Kevin Heffernan had just completed a very successful trip Down Under as manager of a team of Gaelic footballers who had beaten Australia in Compromise Rules.

Greyhound racing and the ‘buzz’ that went with it was very close to the

heart of Paddy Moriarty. He was a true sportsman who could accept victory or defeat and losing money to the bookies – as happened quite regularly – did not upset him greatly. Participation was everything and a good night out at the track would rank high among his list of leisure pursuits.

### *The GAA*

In 1971 the McNamee Commission on the GAA initiated the setting up of a Central Development Committee (Ard-Choiste Forbartha) at national level with the expressed aim of streamlining the organization through the creation and execution of a long-term development plan. The report of the commission led to a comprehensive review of all aspects of the organization and of its work and provided a vehicle that was geared towards long-term strategic planning.

An important recommendation was that three members of the committee (out of sixteen) should be nominated by the then President of the GAA, Pat Fanning. The thinking behind this initiative was to involve a number of professionals outside the ranks of the GAA who had a knowledge of and an empathy with the association. The hope was that these people would bring objective management skills and experience to bear on the administration side of the GAA. This practice has continued ever since, to the great benefit of the organization.

The director of this new body was Muiris Prendeville, a native of Castlemartyr, Co. Cork, and a civil servant in the Department of Finance who had previously acted as Secretary to the McNamee Commission on the GAA. He provides the following synopsis of what evolved:

One of the main functions of the Development Committee was to improve GAA administration at all levels, the term 'administration' being used in the broadest sense to include education, leadership, management, training and planning. An annual programme of Development/Planning Conferences and Training Courses was put in place during my stint as Development Director and was acknowledged to be a major influence on the mindset of GAA administrators at that time.

On the recommendation of Fanning, one of those appointed to the original Development Committee was Paddy Moriarty and his input was considered very important to the evolving process. Muiris Prendeville continues:

His position in ESB (the most successful semi-state body in the country), his Kerry background, his sincerity, his personal charisma and his ability to bring people with him meant that he was greatly admired and respected by GAA people everywhere. Accordingly, his views carried tremendous weight and were always given careful consideration. More often than not those views were acted upon and adopted at our meetings.

The initial Development/Planning seminar, sponsored by Allied Irish Banks, was held in Coláiste Mhuire, Parnell Square, on 25 October 1975 and attended by a wide cross section of top GAA officialdom. This was Moriarty's first administrative contact with Croke Park and he was not one to waste the opportunity. Already he had made an impression with his crusading enthusiasm and it was on his recommendation that the keynote address was delivered by Jimmy Kelly, Chief Executive of ESB, who spoke about 'The Logic and Essentials of Development Planning'. Moriarty himself, who was then Director Personnel at ESB, spoke in detail on the more specific terms of how to develop a plan for the GAA.

His speech, which ran to over 5000 words, demonstrated very clearly the breadth and clarity of his vision for the association. One of the views expressed was that the prime objective of the GAA should encompass 'a strengthening of the national identity'. This would include a wide range of activities to include sporting, social, cultural, educational and citizenship.

The speaker went on to identify the key areas in respect of which a strategic plan could be formulated: Organization, Resources, Marketing/Communications and Sundry Activities (to include ground development, sponsorship, social centres and amenities).

The Moriarty address went much further, identifying the need for a national coach, a marketing manager and various field workers to cater for club development, grounds/social centres, youth promotion and hurling.

Further meetings would hear much more from him on this and other related subjects. He advocated the promotion of a national lottery, diversification into revenue earning activities that would include restaurants, sports shops, sponsorship, licensed social centres, catering and property development. Several of these issues were subsequently addressed and continue to be of tremendous benefit to the GAA.

This strategy that would have been considered quite radical in the mid 1970s. Muiris Prendeville sees this approach as typifying an attitude of mind that always accentuated the positive. He says: 'I would put him in the same category as Ken Whitaker who was one of my personal heroes. The possibility of failure down the line did not even enter into his sub-conscious. To my knowledge, he did not fail in any of the numerous enterprises that he took on board.'

### *Royal Hibernian Academy*

by Tom Ryan, President

I was elected President of the Royal Hibernian Academy in October 1982 and my first task in that capacity was to climb over the rickety wooden paling that bounded the Ely Place street frontage of incomplete concrete buildings that Matt Gallagher had intended to complete as a home for the Academy. Since his death and, later, the collapse of the building firm that bore his name, the place had seen no significant addition to its parts and, apart from occasional use as

a builder's yard, had lain derelict and deserted for twelve years. The hopes of the RHA to develop their site appeared unlikely of fulfilment. That hope was, for me, given an objective with my election as President. I believed that an effort to complete it should be made.

Ted Nealon, then Minister for the Arts, was interested and supportive and was able to procure the then significant figure of £100,000 from the 'Fund of Suitors'. With this we could attract the interest of a group of Dublin businessmen who, in common with Ted Nealon and later other benefactors, shared a view that the provision of a modern exhibition gallery in the centre of Dublin was a worthy cause and likely to evoke a sympathetic response from the wider public.

Paddy Moriarty was one of the first to join this supportive committee. He, like the others, was convinced that Matt Gallagher's benefaction should be completed in fulfilment of the donor's intentions and they shared his motive: to provide an amenity for the Arts in Ireland, a home for the RHA and a civic adornment to the city. Paddy soon indicated his willingness to further the committee's efforts. His contributions were practical.

The completion of the building was a joint effort with both parties seeking financial support from diverse areas – the RHA from fellow artists, sympathetic supporters, art auctions and exhibitions, and the committee from the business community. Mutual contacts were, perhaps, more intimate in Irish commercial life twenty years ago than they are now and this network proved efficacious in attracting support for the project. In this regard Paddy Moriarty was particularly effective. I often accompanied him to meetings as a sort of tutelary figure representing the Academy. Whether the bankers took as much notice of my mute solicitations – I left the talking to Paddy – as those of the powerful Chief Executive of ESB is a matter of conjecture. At all events, the dual approach was mostly successful.

Paddy's areas of benefaction strayed outside his particular bailiwick; good causes especially attracted his interest and he was on umpteen committees. When illness temporarily laid him low I was led to portray him in caricature, prostrate in bed, his head turned towards the large picture window behind which a jostling crowd waved placards inscribed 'Get well quick!', 'We need you!' and 'Help!'. Paddy Moriarty was proud of the ESB and regarded it as the premier Irish semi-state body. Many of his extramural activities enhanced the institution and any agency or event that had the likelihood of doing so attracted his interest.

One day I met a friend of mine, Donal O'Sullivan, in Baggot Street during his lunch break from his job in ESB. Donal was interested in art and the conversation turned to Seán Keating and his Ardnacrusha pictures. There were, he said, many of them about ESB premises. Would I like to see them? I said I would. We found pictures on walls, in cupboards, behind partitions. It was a revelation but one that, I could see, was not especially regarded. When I got home I wrote a paper on the collection, which I felt was not only a small national treasure but a particularized one. I expressed my own regard for Keating – he

was my teacher – and pointed out that in these works he had recorded both the birth of ESB and the entry of Ireland into the industrialized world of the twentieth century. The collection was not only a tribute to the painter, it was also a lasting memorial to the man who had originated the idea of hydroelectric power and seen its implementation through, Dr Thomas McLaughlin.

The commission was the largest ever given to an Irish artist and the first such commission by an agency of an independent Irish state. This institutional collection was something that no other Irish corporate body possessed (bar ‘Irish shipping’, a collection which was sold off) and in that unique patrimony ESB had good reason to be proud of it.

Paddy was greatly interested, especially when, on responding to his invitation to discuss the matter, I suggested that all the works – including the ones then in Ardnacrusha – be brought together, cleaned and exhibited. He agreed to this and suggested the Board’s fine Georgian house on Merrion Square or the offices on Fleet Street for the exhibition. ‘No, no,’ I said, ‘I have a much better idea: the RHA building is sufficiently finished, we’ll have it there and we’ll get Justin Keating, the painter’s son, to open it.’ Paddy agreed and the ESB Keating–Ardnacrusha Exhibition was held at the RHA in Ely Place. I also proposed that the Board institute a medal and bursary to be called the Keating–McLaughlin Medal; this has been awarded ever since at RHA annual exhibitions and is as much a tribute to Paddy Moriarty as it is to the artist and the engineer.

I think Paddy Moriarty was greatly taken with this incursion into the area of the visual arts and with the involvement of ESB in the completion of the RHA gallery.

## APPENDIX D

### *Travel Diaries*

*This journal has no pretensions to being literature. It is just shorthand notes for my good friends who shared my experiences so that, 'Oft when in their couch they lie/ In vacant or in pensive mood /They flash across that inward eye/ Which is the bliss of solitude'. P. Mo.*

#### JOURNEY TO RUSSIA, JUNE 1978

*Thursday, 1 June 1978*

John Lang, John Reihill and I, with our wives Marion, Anne and Esther, left Dublin at 11 am, bound for Moscow via London where we joined an Aeroflot flight. Our journey took us out over the North Sea across Denmark and over the Baltic with Sweden very close on our left. We reached the Russian mainland at Riga and flew east to Moscow. The flight from London was 3 hours 20 minutes.

The plane had a very mixed passenger group of many colours and nationalities, most of whom were tourists. We had an average meal and it was almost impossible to get a drink. Russia looked from 30,000 feet like any other land – it was densely wooded with not as much cultivation as I would have expected. But then we were far north. As we lost height things became more recognisable: long straight roads with few cars, canals and what seemed good farmhouses.

The International Airport is 40 km from the city. When our plane came to rest Vladimir Arutunian was at the steps to welcome us. With him was Serge. They had a bus which whisked the six of us to a VIP lounge where we waited in luxury, looked down on by a great bust of Lenin, while our luggage and passports were being sorted out. Ordinary visitors do not get this treatment but have to endure interminable bureaucracy. Presently we were joined by two young ladies, Inna and Tanya, who were to be our guides until Sunday.

Luggage cleared, we were driven in two very large black cars (Russian-made

but of the 1950s American Dodge design) to our hotel – Intourist – near Red Square, 100 yards from the Kremlin walls.

Inna talked about all we saw:

‘That monument is to commemorate the heroic people who defended Moscow.

‘Here they stopped the Fascist Tanks – 20 km from the Kremlin.

‘Catherine II moved her palace to St Petersburg in the 18th century but custom decreed the czars should be crowned in Moscow. The Court travelled by road in carriages and a palace was built for each night’s stop – that palace is the last on the road.’

We have three suites in the Presidential Floor – the top one of twenty. In ours we have a drawing room downstairs with TV; up a short stairs are dining room and bedroom. We are on the corner and have wonderful views of the city. On one side is Gorky Street and on the other Red Square. As I write I am looking out at the giant red star over the Kremlin tower and below the eternal flame over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It is a long way from Dún Síon and surely beyond my dreams when I set out on 1 June 1945 to take up a job in ESB at £2.9.7p. – the first leg was in a pony trap.

We reassembled at 9.30 am and went to the National Hotel for a meal with Vladi and Sergi. It is an old baroque hotel and we were taken to a private room in which our table was prepared. It was a cold table with many varieties of fish and meat. I had already tasted black caviar, which comes from the sturgeon, but I never saw red salmon caviar. There was beef, ham, chicken, sturgeon, smoked salmon and plenty of Georgian wine and Armenian brandy. We were hungry and ‘wired’ in, only to find it was the first course. It was followed by steak for some and sturgeon for others. We dined until midnight – service good and courteous at a table decorated with the Irish flag. After a short visit to John Lang’s room for refreshments and argument about ‘the system’ we retired at 1.30 am, arranging to reassemble at 9 am.

*Friday, 2 June 1978*

I had a call at 7 am and I went out walking on my own. I walked around the full four sides of the Kremlin. A very cold Siberian wind blew but even at that hour there were many groups of visitors out – from the country I would think, as they had a healthy brown of the countryman and his look of innocent wonder. With them I saw the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier – it has a sculpture in bronze, a flagstaff with flag furled and laid on the grave. I joined the crowd at Lenin’s Tomb to watch with wonder the changing of the guard with four high-stepping handsome young men in royal blue uniforms with gold braid and high boots. It would be hard to describe Red Square and all the domes, turrets and minarets which surround it. There are no shops and very few cars. People are comfortably dressed although drab and, for the most part, they are plain. They seem happy at their work. The streets are very clean and there is no graffiti. Men and women clean the streets much at the same pace as in Ireland but with better effect. I wandered through high streets and low and felt entirely free and safe.



Since I arrived here I have not seen a police car or an armed policeman – I have scarcely seen any ‘law’. The limited, ‘tourist’ view I suppose I have had so far has impressed me – but I will defer judgement of this great experiment which changed the world.

Our two black Cheka limousines were waiting and with Inna and Tanya we took off on a two-hour tour of Moscow. It was still a very cold day. Traffic was light and it was easy to get around. Cleanliness and magnificent buildings are the two distinguishing features together with very wide ‘prospekts’ – streets, named from Marx, Engels, Lenin, the Revolution, October, etc.

There were many fine sights: the stadium to house the Olympic Games in 1980 (there is a controversy about whether it should be roofed), the view over all Moscow from the Lenin Hills, the Bolshoi Theatre, the giant statue of Karl Marx.

Our last call was to the home of Leo Tolstoy. He was of the landed gentry and he lived well judging from his house and its furnishings. ‘There were two czars in Russia at the one time – Nicholas II and Leo Tolstoy,’ said Inna.

We had lunch with President Merkhulov of the Russian Oil Industry. He is a fascinating man in his sixties – he fought all through the war from 1941, first against the Germans and then against the Japs in Korea. ‘We knew after Stalingrad that our strength was so great nothing could stop us.’ He was the second of fifteen children born of peasants 100 km from Moscow. The army sent him to university after the war. On leaving he kissed me on both cheeks!!

At 4 pm we visited the Kremlin. This fortress was built on a hill overlooking the Moscow River in the 12th century. It was on the trade route to India and China. From this grew the city which today has over seven million people; it is limited to that size and no new people can come to live there except by exchanging house with someone. The Kremlin is now the centre of power of the Soviet Union with all the main organs of government within its walls. The walls are built of red stone and at each corner is a tower topped with a giant red star. There is a great square within, Cathedral Square, on which there are five large cathedrals – all now museums. Over the bell tower of Ivan the Great a great red flag flutters. There are fine examples of old Russian architecture and wall paintings. The Armoury has a breathtaking collection of gold and silver vessels, jewellery by the Court Jeweller Fabergé, clothes and fabrics, ceremonial coaches from 14th to 19th century.

We were taken to ballet at the Bolshoi Theatre. The regular troupe is on tour and tonight’s performance was by a troupe from Alma Ata, capital of the Kazakhstan Republic in the south-east. The theatre has six tiers above the parterre. In the centre is a box the height of tiers two and three. It seats about fifty people and it is in the most ornate gold with red drapes and gilt armchairs. It is left empty in reserve for party dignitaries in town. ‘All are equal ...’

The production was a modern ballet about war. The principals were good but the others were not well drilled. The production was excellent and the music from an 80-piece orchestra was wonderful. At the interval we left our box and went to the dining room where we had a table reserved – caviar and champagne was the proletarian fare we had to endure!

I asked our guide a few questions:

Q. Any unemployment?

A. No.

Q. What if people don't want to work?

A. He who does not want to work does not eat – we have no benefits for unemployed.

Q. Any violence or drugs?

A. No – but we have a drink problem.

Q. Is there much divorce?

A. Yes, 30 per cent.

Q. Do many just live together?

A. Some – not many – marriage is popular.

Q. Are weddings big?

A. Yes, very, there will be 150–200 at mine in July.

Q. Who pays for party?

A. The man's relatives.

Q. How many children in each marriage?

A. One, at most two, but State is now encouraging many more. Any woman who has more than five is conferred with the highest honour – the Order of Heroic Motherhood. But abortion costs only 25 kopeks (20p).

Q. Any religion?

A. Among older people but it is a crime under our constitution to make fun of a person who believes in God.

Q. What is your future husband?

A. A dentist – he does not want me to work.

A very nice girl, but very loyal to the motherland and would never be critical. Last item of news: there are no petrol pumps in the city – they are all out beyond the city boundary.

Under new energy conservation laws one man must be appointed in each firm to take personal responsibility for energy efficiency – it will be a punishable crime for him to waste energy.

*Saturday, 3 June 1978*

Meeting time today was 11.45 am, so Esther and I started out at 9 am to go on a trip on the metro – underground – about which we had heard so much praise. It exceeded its reputation for being the world's best. It was built in the 1930s and the underground stations are like cathedrals. They are finished in marble of different colours and they contain works of art – sculptures, stained glass and murals. There are no tickets – 5 kopeks in a slot at the entrance entitles you to travel anywhere. The stations and platforms are spotless. The hub of the metro is under Red Square and lines radiate like spokes of a wheel. One outer ring line joins them all. Trains run promptly and great crowds were travelling on Saturday morning.

After half an hour we surfaced to see the city outskirts. Esther conversed in French with a man who directed us. It was good to be seeing a non-tourist

area without guides. The streets were clean and there were many gardens, small parks and playgrounds. We asked many people the way and even though we did not speak the language they were all most friendly, courteous and helpful.

We saw a convoy of thirty buses driven by army drivers taking kids for their holidays in summer camps. Each bus had a red flag and had its headlamps full on. It is the law that all traffic must stop until these convoys have passed.

We hailed a taxi to take us to the nearest metro station, to get back to the hotel. The only incident was that we got separated in the metro – the doors slammed before I got on and I will never forget Esther's face as she was sped away. However, she got off at the next station and we met again. It was a good try!

With our party assembled we set off to visit Lenin's Mausoleum. Tourists get preference over Russians but nevertheless we had to join a mile-long queue which took us one hour. I will consider later this cult of wanting to see Lenin's embalmed body lying in state – it is enough to say that the tomb is open from 11 am until 3 pm each day and that the daily average number of visitors totals 8500 – mostly all Russians. Ten thousand visit on Saturday and Sunday. The dead Lenin looks just like his pictures. Stalin used to be in the tomb also but he was removed in the Khrushchev era. He is now buried with many other famous people beside the Kremlin wall with a dignified headstone and bust. On the wall are plaques commemorating people whose ashes were buried there also. Among them is Albert McManus, a foreign revolutionary, buried in 1927.

As we queued along the Kremlin wall we saw thirteen blocks of polished red granite set on a plinth about three metres apart. They identify the thirteen 'Hero Cities' of the USSR – those who suffered the most and fought the best in the last war.

We saw the married couples come to place their flowers on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier and to be photographed. Every couple do this and can also visit Lenin without having to join the queue. Wedding cars are decorated as at home except that all the ribbons are red. I asked to have the inscription on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier translated: 'Your name is unknown but your deeds are immortal'.

After our visit we toured the Tretyakov Museum of Russian Art. Russian art dates only from the 17th century. Until then it was all religious icons. The gallery was large and our guides were splendid. What impressed me most, however, was the crowd – thousands of Russians, all shapes and ages, one hesitates to say all classes, but I could identify muscular manual workers, bronzed countrymen, professional people and kids galore. They were all keenly interested in the paintings and were questioning the guides closely. I never saw such a crowd looking at art in Ireland or England. But here it is of the people. There is some tremendous dynamic in this country and an obvious commitment to Mother Russia. I will try to analyse it when I have seen more.

With Vladi and Serge, Esther and I visited the GUM [department store]. It is probably the world's biggest shop but it is not laid out like a supermarket, rather it is many aisles of individual shops off four main corridors under a glass

roof. This was built before the Revolution in an ornate style – it has not changed since. I suppose when the State owns all retailing outlets there is no need to advertise or have expensive display windows. The crowds were large and Muscovites seemed to have plenty of roubles to spend.

The famous Moscow Circus is a state-sponsored art form with its own schools [set] in a permanent circular building which seats 3000 people. There is also a new circus with all modern technology of stage production. Many people prefer the old circus as it has all the atmosphere of the sawdust ring. There is no use trying to describe the acts – one breathtaking act followed the other in competition for daring and apparent risk. It was artistically produced – the band was large and good, the girls beautiful and graceful. There were hilariously funny clowns and the show closed with a magician who made ladies disappear before our eyes. Bunches of flowers were thrown to the artists and applause was long and loud.

The circus is to ordinary Russians what soccer is to the Englishman or GAA to the Irish – it is a place to be visited regularly with the stars as famous as national figures. It has an old tradition and it is growing in popularity. Every city worth the name has its own permanent circus.

*Sunday, 4 June 1978*

We assembled at ten o'clock. John Lang and I opted for a 40 km trip to the country to see the Archangel Palace. By now the sun had come out and the day was much warmer than the others. At one place it was a surprise to see a large ship sailing over the road – the Moscow ship canal is across the motorway. With a system of canals Moscow is connected through the Volga and other big rivers with five seas.

Archangel Palace [Arkhangelskoye] was started in 1703 by Golytsin who was a major statesman under the czar. The palace was designed by a French architect after the style of Versailles with terraced lawns and classical statues. It is built with local stone, plastered and painted yellow. Before completion it was bought by a rich nobleman, Yusupov, who was descended from the Tatars. He had thousands of acres of land and owned 20,000 serfs – male, as women were not counted. He was a patron of the arts and he commissioned many great artists whose works are now on view in the palace. Most of them are in the large classical style. There are gala pictures of the Emperor and family, mythological paintings from Greek and Roman literature, and historical subjects like the meeting and feast of Anthony and Cleopatra.

The palace was damaged in 1812 by Napoleon's army. The serfs, who hated Yusupov, smashed much of the statuary. It was restored again and back to its former glory by 1820. When the old man died his sons took all the works of art to St Petersburg and let the palace go to ruins. It was restored after the revolution and all the treasures brought back. It and the forest which surrounds it are now for the people's pleasure. Again it was noticeable that the visitors were from all social groups and took a keen interest in the history of the building and its artistic contents. They question guides animatedly about details and

the overall impression is that the ordinary Soviet citizen has a care and feeling for art and for his country's history.

We were home at 1.45 pm by which time the others had also returned from their visit to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. This contains the best collection in the world of French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings – Monet, Gauguin, Picasso, etc. It was owned by a rich businessman and of course it became the property of the people after the Revolution.

Lunch lasted until 5 pm in the National Hotel. There were so many courses I lost count. Our plane was delayed and we flew in darkness to reach Yerevan, capital of the Armenian Republic, at midnight local time.

On our journey south I had time to review events from Thursday to Sunday. 'Travel broadens the mind' and without it, it is too easy to hold wrong views about nations and their peoples. Wherever you go, you see people like ourselves going about their business, cleaning streets, tilling land, searching frantically for the right shirt in a shop, pushing prams – the same the world over. In Moscow I found people friendly and courteous. The older people, men and women, have great faces – strong and wilful, like Brezhnev's – maybe it is because that generation got it so rough with revolution, civil war and a Great War in which Russia lost 20 million people.

There is enormous construction going on everywhere – apartment homes, factories, roads, bridges. Also old palaces, churches, monasteries, 'nunneries' (the local word) are being restored with great taste and care. People look happy, not at all as dour as those of East Berlin where I visited a few years ago. Clothes are on the drab side but people are not badly dressed. The impression I get is that the country's thriving and full of purpose. It is a strange land made up of so many separate nations yet so single-minded and united. Even in the worst days of harsh rule under the czar or Stalin the people had a great sense of 'motherland' – they defeated the two greatest armies the world ever saw, Napoleon's and Hitler's. They seem committed and patriotic.

The pay structure is interesting. Manual workers earn more than 'intellectual' workers (research staff, etc.) – the standard is 2000 roubles for a manual worker doing heavy work and about the same for an experienced research engineer. Depending on performance a bonus of up to 80 per cent of salary is paid every quarter. A rouble is about 75p. A month's rent in a three-room apartment is 20 roubles. An all-electric apartment for five costs 8 roubles a month for electricity. Private telephones are scarce but both public and private calls are free. So, too, are all repairs to house and equipment. 'Good' workers get free holidays.

Tax is 13 per cent no matter how much you earn so there is a definite incentive to earn more. There are many millionaires in Russia – the top scientists and doctors and tradesmen who can do extra work as private enterprise. Anyone who has the money can build his own house in the country but speculation is stopped by pegging house prices – you cannot make a profit on the sale of property. Likewise all prices are pegged and there is no inflation. Workers get about a 4 per cent rise every 4–5 years and without inflation this represents a real improvement in living standards.

All social groups live together in apartment houses which are run by an elected committee of residents. Everyone does a few hours duty a month – in charge of playgrounds, on security duty, etc. Unacceptable behaviour is tried before a ‘Comrade’s Court’. There certainly is peace, order and cleanliness all around – we never felt more safe.

*Monday, 5 June 1978*

‘A rose-red city half as old as time’. This was written about the ancient city of Petra in Persia. It could have been about Yerevan. It has been established from a clay tablet found in archaeological digging that the city was founded 2700 years ago. And as I looked out my window at 7 am I saw that the whole city is built in a red stone. Our hotel is in Lenin Square and his great monument 30 feet high presides over a square with fountains and four massive buildings built in Greco-Roman style of round arches and Doric columns. Our hotel is one of them.

Our cars arrived at 9 am with three local guides and we went on a tour of the city and saw the many monuments celebrating Armenian history. Since the dawn of history it has been a troubled land – on the route between East and West, the only Christian country among its Arab neighbours, it was constantly fought for and ravaged. Its last great sorrow was in 1915 when the Turks decided to solve the Armenian question finally by massacring 1.5 million people. With Georgia and Azerbaijan it joined the Soviet Union in 1922 and is now one of the fifteen independent republics making up USSR. There are 3 million people in Armenia – 80 per cent are of the Armenian race. In all, there are 20 million Armenians in the USSR.

The country was Christianised by Matthew and it has remained so ever since. It is an independent Church usually called Gregorian after its first head, Gregory the Illuminator. The head is called the Catholicos and his residence at Echmiadzin near Yerevan is known as Little Vatican. The present head is on good terms with Rome where he has a representative. We visited the various churches in Yerevan which are still used for worship even though they date from the 7th century. Some customs of pagan origin are yet observed, for example live sacrifice of animals and birds accompany prayers for favours from God. We met some priests and they are very with it in dress and appearance.

Summertime in Armenia is hot but not so this year. Today was very wet and cold. The whole country is about 5000 feet above sea level and the mountains are still covered with snow. About twenty miles away we can see Mount Ararat, where Noah’s Ark landed after the deluge. Legend has it that Noah shouted ‘Yerevats’ which meant ‘land has appeared’; this is the origin of the city’s name.

We drove 40 km to Lake Sevan, the largest high-altitude lake in the world. It was mostly through barren country, which is intensively farmed by collectives on terraced mountainsides and irrigated valleys. It is rugged and picturesque, a proud land steeped in history. Our guide had us enthralled with stories of love and romance, of war and plague. The Armenians are a happy people full of fun and humour, friendly and hospitable. When I proffered a tip to the car driver he politely refused. He said in broken English, ‘It is not needed only that

you get a good opinion of Armenia and go with happy memories of us.'

Armenia is famous for its wines and brandy ('Tamara brandy, the drink of love'). Our arrival in Sevan was toasted with pink champagne – it costs about the same as wine here. It was followed by a lunch which took three hours of endless courses. We arrived back to our hotel at 6.45 pm.

Even though the people are more easy-going than in Moscow the place abounds with flags and monuments and exhortation to the achievement of the 5-year plan. Everywhere there is evidence of great construction, particularly housing. For a city of 900,000 people there are 1500 schools. 'It employs teachers and children who do not have to travel to school,' said our guide. A school, a gymnasium and a playground are part of every housing scheme.

The official language of the Armenian Republic is Armenian – an old language with 36 letters in the alphabet. In one of the museums we saw old, illuminated bibles, not unlike the Book of Kells. Also a piece of wood supposed to be part of the Ark.

I watched (rather than understood) TV for an hour this evening. It was entirely about industry, construction and agriculture. It contained many interviews with workers who seemed strong and heroic. It is all part of the ethic of work and of the supremacy of the proletariat. Again and again I notice great pride in the country and its achievements. Certain freedoms may be limited but 'freedom is an abstract concept which probably never worries 90 per cent of the population', said Tanya. I suppose the eternal question for man is to balance the philosophy of civil liberty with the needs of catering for the well-being of the majority. Lenin had no doubt on how that balance should be achieved and all over this land his memory is being perpetuated in statues, in street names, in excerpts from his speeches on hoardings and in the promotion and sale of his books. Public relations for Lenin and for 'scientific socialism' must represent a major State expense.

In Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Baltic Republics there is more private enterprise. Georgia, particularly, is noted for disregarding the rules. This is a relic of the Stalin era – he allowed them more latitude than anywhere else but it is being gradually brought under control.

We met a guy from Newcastle tonight in the bar. He and a few mates are building a chemical plant. In a while we were all singing 'The County of Armagh' and 'I'll take you home again Cathleen'. At the foot of Mount Ararat.

It was a great visit and particularly interesting was to see the independence of one distinctive ancient culture within the USSR side by side with pride and commitment to the nation as a whole. On our tiny island our squabbles seem petty and stupid by comparison.

*Tuesday, 6 June 1978*

We were called at 5 am to catch a plane to Leningrad. As usual we had VIP treatment and were ushered through without any problem. We took off at 7.30 am on a fine bright morning, first over the Caucasus Mountains which in the morning sunlight stretched out below clad in a dazzling sheet of white. The peaks are high and rugged, even more so than the Alps or Rockies which I have

also traversed on a bright morning. At 16,000 feet Mount Ararat stands out as the highest peak in Asia Minor. Presently we come to the Steppes that are not unlike Midwest US from 30,000 feet – as far as the horizon the land is flat and laid out in large rectangular plots like a checkerboard, so different are the colours of crops. Further on, the country becomes typical irregular farmland with various size fields in rolling countryside. It gradually changes as we move north to being mainly forest and woodland.

Smoking is not allowed on internal Soviet flights, nor do they serve meals. We land at 9.45 am local time after a flight of 3 hours 20 minutes. Our passage through the airport is fast and efficient and we are quickly aboard our two Cheka limousines bound for Hotel Leningrad. It is a new hotel opened in 1970 on the banks of River Neva. Its public areas are spacious and each floor has a large lounge, bar and snack bar. Our suite consists of bedroom, dining room, sitting room, study, with a bathroom at either end. Our sitting room contains radio, TV, piano, fridge and sideboard with cutlery and dishes. It is air-conditioned – it needs to be as the weather is fine with temperatures in the 70s.

I am now looking down on a wide bend of the Neva River and opposite me is the Navel Academy, a blue and white 19th century building looking like a piece of Wedgwood china. Beside is moored the cruiser Aurora, now a national shrine – it fired the blank shot to signal the storming of the Winter Palace to start the October 1917 Revolution. Hydrofoil cruising boats dash about the river and between the islands. Leningrad is built on the delta of the River Neva and it is called locally ‘the Venice of the North’.

Two local guides arrive and we take off – a party of ten – on a short general tour of the city. Leningrad was the capital of Russia until 1918 and with an autocratic and indulgent monarchy the building of palaces and fostering of art were priorities. There are fifty palaces in the most ornate style. Despite the Revolution, the Civil War and a siege of 900 days by the Germans, all the main historic buildings are fully restored. This work still continues and there is a great understanding that they are now people’s treasures. Leningrad looks a Western city and it is truly magnificent. Every palace, square and monument constitutes a separate ensemble, all designed in character and sympathy. The skyline abounds in gold dome, tall spires and wonderful gala statues. The streets are spotlessly clean. Tourism is big business here and we notice many groups and tours. To Russians it is a place of homage, the birthplace of their Revolution.

After dinner we walked along the banks of the Neva. At 11.30 pm it is still bright – June is the month of white nights, it hardly gets dark at all. On the river there are many pleasure boats with sounds of revelry wafting ashore on the hot breeze.

*Wednesday, 7 June 1978*

Someone told me before I came to Russia that a favourite security trick is to phone you at 2 am when you are least alert. The voice speaks in Russian and if you reply in Russian you are regarded as a security risk. At 2.30 am this morning my phone rang and I recalled what I had been told. It was a lady blather-



ing on in Russian – the only word I recognised was ‘roosky’ and I was reasonably sure she was not from County Leitrim. I replied ‘Pog mo thoin’. I’m sure there is some man away in the Kremlin now with *Dineen’s* dictionary trying to break the code. There was one compensation – to look out and see the ‘white night’ as bright as about 9 pm in Ireland.

It is now 6.30 pm and we are going to the Kirov Ballet at 7.30. It has been a wonderful hot day and I am looking out on a calm Neva. Across is the Naval Academy with its slender spire and behind it is the gold spire of the Peter and Paul Fortress, the first building in Leningrad started in May 1703. It is now Leningrad’s Historical Museum; built in czarist times, it was a notorious political prison. Straight ahead down the river is the Gulf of Finland and from here I can see three bridges with slender arches. The left bank, as far as I can see, is a line of houses three to four stories high. All the pre-war city is limited to that height and it is only away in the far hazy distance that I can barely discern the outline of high rise apartments. As a result, in every direction I look I can see domed churches of gold, slender spires, mosques, gilt roofs and treetops.

I have seen palaces and mosques and temples and monuments from Cork to Cairo, from New York to Manila and more besides. But Leningrad is incomparable. With no high rise buildings, it is a big sky city – you see it all the time as a backdrop to a symphony in stone – one item after the other more breathtaking than the next. The city is just a living museum. Many parts were ravaged by war but they are now restored in flawless workmanship with no concern for cost. And it is all open to the people from all lands. This city is, of course, above all the pride of all Russians. The city under the czars forged the Russian nation and later gave birth to the Revolution. It is beyond belief how a generation dedicated to eliminating all that the monarchy stood for in terms of social and economic philosophy has had the courage to respect anything that was good in the former regime and grant those leaders their rightful place in history by keeping their monuments and statues.

At 11 o’clock we went by hydrofoil craft downriver towards the Gulf of Finland for about an hour and disembarked at the Petrodvorets Palace – summer palace of the czars. It was damaged by the Germans during the war and it was fully restored within three years. There is probably no palace in the world to rival this in scale and grandeur. You enter the park to look along an avenue of water for about 400 yards lined with fountains ending in an extravaganza of water jets, the centre of which is a large gold statue of Samson holding open the mouth of a shark from which there is a jet of water 50 feet high. There are fountains all over the park one more exotic than the other and all mostly coming from mythological figures in gold leaf. There is even a life-size bronze tree with thousands of leaves from which tiny jets play. And there is, in the centre of a large pond, a rotating sun with waterjets for rays. It is a park of palaces and wonders and words do not do it justice.

If possible the afternoon visit to the Winter Palace – the Hermitage – was even more astonishing. No words could do justice to the priceless art collection from all lands which is housed there, nor to the resplendent décor of the

palace which contains it. Even pictures hardly express the feeling of looking on beauty and richness in many artistic forms – floors, walls, ceilings, murals, porcelain, glass, chandeliers, tapestries, priceless stones and much more.

And to the Ballet Kirov tonight – a memorable occasion too. The theatre rivals all the palaces for beauty and we were in a box very near the stage (I got a strange pleasure from evicting an Englishman and lady from our seats). It was a new ballet based on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* – music by a French composer, Maurice Jarr, choreography by Roland Petit, also a Frenchman. The prima ballerina playing Esmeralda was one of Russia's greatest – Euteeba; and the hunchback, Quasimodo, was played by Abdyen – surely another Nureyev. Applause was loud and long and many curtain calls were taken both at the interval and at the end.

One final comment – it could only be autocratic czars with no concern for cost who could have commissioned everything we saw today, most of them presents for favourites. And equally it could only be an autocratic government with similar disregard for cost who could restore them flawlessly after the ravages of the last war. It would be beyond the resources of an Irish government, if not also beyond its courage and imagination.

Saw Brazil and Spain play a scoreless draw in the World Cup – and to bed at 11.30 pm.

*Thursday, 8 June 1978*

Started the day at 11 am with a visit to St Isaac's Cathedral. This stands at one end of a square about the size of Croke Park. Opposite is a palace and the other two sides are built in a matching style. On the centre is a solid marble column about 100 feet high topped with a giant statue of Peter the Great.

St Isaac's Cathedral was started in 1818 by the decree of the czar to commemorate the victory over Napoleon. It took forty years to build and 400,000 serfs worked on the project with no pay, only board and lodgings. It is a dome cathedral with the dome of gold which has not been replaced since it was first done, so good was the workmanship. The inside literally takes the breath away, so ornate and priceless are the gold-leaf decorations. There are no seats – standing room for 14,000 people but used only for royal ceremonies. The stained glass windows were done by German masters as the art was not known in Russia at the time. From the centre cupola hangs a pendulum which demonstrates the rotation of the earth. Most interesting of all were the drawings of construction and models of scaffolding. There is also a scale model of the cathedral, perfect in every detail – it took an unknown serf twenty years to make. Serf he may have been but a master craftsman also.

For the afternoon we went 30 km south to the small town of Pushkin which is a historical museum in its own right with a 2000 acre park in which there are palaces, lakes, fountains and wonderful woods with meandering walks. Here we visited the palace of Czar Paul the 1st, who reigned for five years before being strangled in a coup in which his son, Alexander, was involved. He was mad but he built a fantastic palace for himself. It is semi-cir-

cular and contains priceless paintings, antiques and marble statues from the Roman Empire.

The area was occupied by the Germans from 1941 to 1943 and they left the palaces in ruins. From the photos now on view what the Germans did was an act of unrivalled barbarism and it is no wonder that you hear the regular derogatory word 'fascist'. Before the Germans arrived all the paintings, statues, tapestries and other valuables were moved to Siberia for storage. This happened in every part of the country threatened by occupation. The work was done entirely by women but as major statues were too heavy for them they had to be left behind. These were smashed by the Germans. The removal of valuables was a mammoth task and so was the cataloguing and storage necessary to ensure that all would return to their correct location. Palace restoration in Russia is now a major scientific and artistic occupation. The workers are referred to as 'masters' and their achievements rival the work of the original masters.

In most Russian palaces the floors are so valuable that visitors have to wear soft-soled shoes. This is not possible in the Hermitage as 5 million visitors pass through each year.

After the Paul Palace we had an outside look at the massive Winter Palace of Catherine the Great. It also was destroyed and is now in the course of restoration. After a leisurely walk through the woods on a hot sunny afternoon we returned to our hotel at about 4.30 pm, leaving us time for some shopping in the Berioska – the duty-free hard currency shop. These shops really take the Oscar for bureaucracy. You select an article and a young lady prepares a docket converting the roubles into whatever currency you have. You get a docket for each article you select. You then take a batch of dockets and join a queue at the cashier desk where all the calculations are done again before you pay. You return and show your dockets all over the shop to collect your little parcels. The assistants are nice and friendly, but usually take their time.

At 7.30 pm we went to the Kirov Theatre again, this time for Russian opera which alternates nightly with ballet. We were in the second row of the parterre in individual armchairs of blue velvet. This theatre is exactly the same design (but a little smaller, it seats 1860 people) as the Bolshoi in Moscow. Whereas the Bolshoi is decorated completely in gold and red velvet the Kirov is in gold and royal blue velvet.

The opera was *The Czar's Bride*, music by Rimsky-Korsakov. The czar was Ivan the Terrible who, by a simple process of poisonings, stranglings and mysterious deaths, worked his way through eight wives. When he needed a new bride his army, of which the people lived in great dread, rounded up all the comely maidens in the land for his inspection. It had a whole lot of other plots involving poison, love potions, madness, murder and intrigue. There were four acts separated by 25-minute intervals during which champagne and food was taken. Champagne is 2.50 roubles (£1.85) a bottle.

I am no judge of opera in general or Russian opera in particular but I enjoyed this very much. I thought the voices were great and the costumes were rich, colourful and of many shapes and designs. One act with a cast of seventy-

five (I counted them) was an extravaganza of colour and light. Rehearsal must have been very thorough as the presentation had a military precision. I suppose my enjoyment was all the greater as I had Serge and Tanya to translate and explain. It was another memorable occasion.

*Friday, 9 June 1978*

Home today. Assembled at 9.30 am and headed for airport in convoy of three cars. As usual Serge and Tanya arranged everything and we had nothing to do except sit around until boarding time. They have been with us since we arrived and we were sad to say goodbye as they made us very comfortable and looked after problems, real or imaginary. Serge is a slender, sensitive young man with dreamy eyes – he is among the most courteous men I know and he has a quiet sense of humour. He works with the oil company, has two children, does not drive a car and is about to buy a home. At present he lives with his in-laws, a common Soviet practice. Tanya is a guide with Intourist. She is small, blonde and sparrow-like. She is a university graduate in Foreign Languages – history and art – and she knows everything about everything. She is an educated woman with flawless manners and while she dishes out the party line sometimes she does it with great charm.

We had a forty-minute stop in Copenhagen and now out over the North Sea I have time to review the past nine days and come to some preliminary conclusions. (We were given VIP treatment everywhere we went and we did not have to endure any bureaucratic irritations. It made our visit fantastically enjoyable but it insulated us from getting a more realistic view of everyday life. So conclusions have to be tentative and tempered by this.)

– Except for the loos at Lake Sevan in Armenia, every place and everything we saw was clean and spotless. I have seen dictatorships in East Germany, Portugal, Singapore and the Philippines. They have all one common trait – they keep the place very clean, far cleaner than we do under our free democratic system.

– ‘Culture for the masses’ is a reality and the State is not miserly in the resources it allocates nor in its recognition of artists and masters.

– Russia is a country of ordinary people hustling their way through life just the same as ourselves. They seem happy and contented, well fed and well clad, if a little drab. I don’t know how much their freedom is constrained and I don’t know that it concerns too many of them.

– Russia is a country of slogans and public messages on a giant scale. They are not obtrusive as they are tastefully done – the political poster is a sophisticated art form. I liked the poster ‘Be fit, work and don’t moan’.

– Lenin was obviously a man apart but after nine days he has begun to haunt me. His statues are everywhere – standing with outstretched hand rousing the masses. His face is on every hoarding and his writings are everywhere in books and pamphlets, all for free. I wonder would he who preached ‘all power to the Soviets’ have agreed with the great cult – almost deification – with which his successors have surrounded his memory.

- I saw no evidence anywhere of anyone thinking there was a God (other than Lenin) - religious worship is permitted but only the old attend church and practically no one gets married there.

- Where else would you find the hotel porter playing classical music on the piano while he waited for you to get your luggage ready, as happened to John Reihill today? Not so much that he could play but that he felt free to do so there.

- The masses are undoubtedly better off than in the Western world at present with its great unemployment problems. What is the price? I don't know, frankly, from my limited experience. I am prepared to concede now that the system has got something which Western democracies lack. I like the appeal to the sense of 'motherland' and commitment which leaders invoke. Whether the response to this is positive or cynical, I have no way of knowing.

- While Russians have a tremendous feeling for buildings and art, they have none at all for gardens or lawns. We saw none anywhere that would even compare with Stephen's Green.

We had a fantastic holiday. Vladimir Arutunian from Nafta (GB) in London who accompanied us all the way is one of nature's greatest gentleman. As for my travelling companions, Anne, Marion and the two Johns, not to mention the mother of my children, Esther, the week was all the more memorable for their good humour and crack.

## TRIP TO THE USA, 1979

*Wednesday, 14 February 1979*

We landed at Tampa 8.15 am American time. Tampa is a neon-lit American city located on Tampa Bay, an inlet from the Gulf of Mexico. We drove across a long causeway to St Petersburg, which is on the gulf. Jim Donovan had reserved a Hertz car and we were taken to the car park in a luxurious bus driven by a very young girl. Our car was waiting and we drove off without meeting another person. I often saw five people engaged in the same operation in London!

Our hotel, the Ramada Inn South, had lost our reservations and they found rooms for us at the Ramada Treasure Island. It is a resort hotel on the beach - marvellous. It was a warm and balmy night. I fell into bed at 11.30 pm local time ... 20 hours since I left Dublin.

*Thursday, 15 February 1979*

We drove to the headquarters of Florida Power, arriving at 9 am. Tampa and its twin city, St Pete's, are unique for their low-rise buildings - one-storey mostly. The striking feature is the variety of architectural styles with the influence of every style I had ever seen in a hodgepodge which has no coherence or sympathy except in being predominantly one-storey. And there is an abundance of trees, palms, beaches and coconuts. The place is very clean and affluent.

Tampa is an old industrial and fishing city. The shrimp boats of Florida are

famous. I have nostalgic memories of Rosemary Clooney's 'Shrimp boats are a-coming'.

In 1910 St Pete's was a village until a doctor who had travelled the world then proclaimed it the most suitable climate in the world for 'retirees'. He also sold real estate and his dream has resulted in the biggest retirement community in the US. The houses, particularly on Treasure Island, are magnificent, fetching about \$100,000.

I forgot to recall that I was up at 7 am and went jogging on the beach for 45 minutes. I met the dawn shell pickers, each armed with a little plastic stick, turning over small shells looking for rare specimens. I asked an old guy, 'Are they valuable?' 'Naw - it's just something to do.' There were also old guys fishing for sea trout and flounder and I chatted to them all and found them very friendly: 'You Irish?', 'Have a good time.' The sun was rising in a great dull red ball over the gulf. It was warm. I have seen sunrise over the Rockies, the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, Honolulu and now the Gulf of Mexico and it was beautiful everywhere. God be with my youth when I saw old Mr Sun peep up over Bull's Head on Dingle Bay as I brought home the cows barefoot through long dewy grass every summer morning. I was carefree and happy and I often wonder should I have stayed there! 'The thoughts of youth are long-lost thoughts'.

Back to Florida Power. Their headquarters is the most magnificent I ever saw and we were received royally. We spent the morning getting presentations from different executives and they spared no trouble. It was board meeting day and we were the board's guests at lunch. It was a simple salad lunch but with a great variety of fruit and vegetables. No drink of any kind is served in the boardroom. We were at separate tables - one of us at four different tables with three board members.

We were very impressed with the courtesy of all we met. I was travelling in the lift from Floor 9 when a young man got in at 6 and got out at 7. As he left he said, 'Sorry to interrupt your journey.' One hears pleasant remarks like this on all sides. In fact they pride themselves on their great southern charm.

Mac McGee, VP, took us to his yacht club at 5.30 pm for a drink. It is like a large hotel and as you come into the bar there is a hot tray from which you help yourself to a piece of roast meat on a little skewer. Membership is \$100 a year and there are hundreds of sail and motor boats moored. It is very exclusive and blacks are not admitted. In fact there is very little mixing of races in Florida. Mac reckons he only saw three white women in his whole life with coloured kids. He is a craggy man, once a Democrat but now a Republican; as he says: 'The Party left me - I did not leave them.'

After a general tour of Tampa and St Pete's we got home at 6.45 pm. A rest and shower later we walked out for a meal at 8.30. Walking is dangerous as there are no footpaths - it is a motorised society. We settled for The Jolly Navigator and had an excellent meal for about \$14 each. I always think the US is the cheapest place to eat well.

*Friday, 16 February 1979*

Up at 6.45 am for a jog on the beach. It was almost dark and there was only one other man out, walking briskly and shaking his hands wildly. There were few shell pickers and fishers. But the strangest fisher I saw was the pelican. I had never seen one before – it is quite large and flies with the slow speed of a swan. Many get caught in nets and get hooked but an old man here runs a hospital for sick and injured birds.

Having said our goodbyes at 4.30 pm, George Greene drove us to our weekend resort in Innisbrook. This is an imaginative development set in 1000 acres of woodland and 25 two-storey blocks set well apart so as not to be visible from one another. Each is made up of separate apartment 'condominiums', 900 in all, which individual people own and furnish. Their residence is limited to 2-3 weeks a year and for the rest the apartments are rented by the company. Each block of four lodges has a pool and there are three golf courses – Island, Copperhead and Sandpiper – a total of 63 holes through wooded fairways with a lot of water. Mike Souchak is the head pro. A little bus tours the roads continuously to take you to the many restaurants and bars in the estate. It is a really high-class, well-run establishment.

Mac McGee and his Irish wife Maureen (better known as Tinker) joined us for dinner at the Sandpiper – it was good and we had a great time. Tommy Williams, 'man of a thousand songs', strolls around playing a twelve string guitar to sing requests. He sang 'Danny Boy' and 'Galway Bay' word-perfect. It was a great night of company and good food.

After the McGees went home we visited the Copperhead for the midnight show. It was minimum order of \$3 per drink and it was about two-thirds full, mostly men. The show was a group of four men and a girl, Griffith, Smith & Co., playing music of the fifties and sixties. Adrienne is a small, shapely blonde who is as dynamic and not unlike Judy Garland. Her 'Clowns' and 'Come to the Cabaret' were great. It was all a harmless show which we departed when the dancing started at 1 am.

Phoned Esther earlier to find Dublin had been snowbound since we left. In making the call I had a long chat with a lady in the international exchange in Pittsburgh. I don't know why Americans have a certain poor image abroad as here they are friendly, helpful and courteous to a degree which surprises me.

*Saturday, 17 February 1979*

Awake at 7.15 am. The morning was dull and misty and cooler than the previous days. I had my usual run through the park this time and not on the beach. This land was virgin swamp before it was built some ten years ago. Much of it is still in its natural state with tall pine trees, cottonwoods and orange trees. There are swamps which are now fenced off as they contain 'crocks'. The wildlife is abundant – peacocks roam the paths and the grey squirrels are everywhere. All the golf fairways are watered and the greens are the greenest I ever saw. The grass is straight and prickly.

We met at 9.30 am and had breakfast in the Copperhead (all the facilities

are far apart and the circulating tram is handy for getting around). Breakfast was self-service and we took our time. All the courses were booked out from 7.30 am so we wandered around. We visited the clubhouses of the three courses in turn – Copperhead, Island and Sandpiper. Both the first two are rated in the top forty in the US. The rules are that you have to take a golf buggy for each two players. It seems a little indecent to be dashing around this beautiful land in buggies – it is surely all against the sport of golf and the need for exercise to play golf without walking. It does not make it any faster either – a round takes four to five hours. We watched a lot and, on average, the golf was bad – it was plop, plop in the water all the time. We rented a bag of clubs and spent an hour on the practise ground. Frank had a go and nearly killed a poor man washing his car. There were a few young pros practising and they looked impressive; also a young pro-ette, who hit a long ball.

Tarpon Springs is a small town of about 20,000 on the Gulf. It was Greek (and still is); emigrants started a sponge industry about 1850. The sponge is a live coral which grows on the seabed. It was taken up by divers and there was a thriving industry until the artificial sponges took over. The sponge industry is still here but only as a tourist attraction to take people out in boats.

Pappas is a famous Tarpon Springs restaurant. The original Pappas came to the US in 1905. He joined up at the start of World War I and was cook for General Perching. After the war he opened a restaurant here with his family. The 4th generation Pappas is now feeding people excellently in Tarpon. The meal was excellent – fish and steaks with Greek salads ... about half the cost of a Dublin meal and probably a quarter of the cost of the Mirabeau and every bit as good.

Our evening was very pleasant. The Florida Power people are very conservative and religious. They speak a lot about fairness and equity to their customers and we saw how much they invest in customer service. They work very hard and generally go to bed about 10.30 pm. So we finished our meal at 9.40 and we were back at Innisbrook by 10 pm. We spent two hours at the Copperhead before retiring.

*Sunday, 18 February 1979*

It was a bad omen that Mick could not hire a car to go sightseeing and to take us to the airport at 2 pm. We decided to spend the last two hours at the pool as the sun had come out and it was warm.

I had a good swim and then lay out flat on a deckchair. It was then it all started. I got the most awful pain in my right side, a sharp spasmodic pain. It lasted the whole day and it dominated everything. From Tampa to Houston to Austin to El Paso I had pain. I walked continuously on the planes and off as it was the only way to get relief.

A short council of war was held in El Paso, Texas, when we met Jim Donovan at 10 pm. It was decided to take me to hospital immediately – to tell the truth I could not care less what happened, I was so worn with pain. From here on everything was wonderful. 'Let's give you a pain shot first.' At 11 pm they sent for a technician who had gone home to return as the doctor wanted to do



all the diagnostic tests immediately. I had injections and drips and X-rays and at about 1 am the doctor showed me an X-ray indicating a stone between the kidney and bladder. He was a Canadian, most helpful and courteous. He discussed everything with me and explained how Dr Vann would do some probing in the morning. I was dopey and when the lads came to see me about 1 am I could only identify four blurs. I was glad when they put me to bed. I had a very bad night and got sick several times.

*Monday, 19 February 1979*

The pain was only dull now as I had many 'shots' during the day. My room-mate is a Mexican aged fifty-six who had a bad hand accident working cotton ginny. Four years ago he lost all the fingers of his right hand, also on a ginny. He has twenty-two grown children and it seems that all of them, with their wives and kids, spend their time here. Nurse had to limit visits to four at a time. Some are gorgeous women and it is like a carnival. They speak only Spanish and do so continuously. A deacon (of what I don't know) came and said long prayers over each of us: 'You all go with the Lord and mind your families ...'

All the rooms are semi-private and the service is first class. There is no end of nurses - Texan, Negro, Mexican and all the colours between. The big difference from my experience of an Irish hospital is that here they will tell you everything.

I am in bad humour and slept well until 6.30 am when I was called and prepared for my 'probe'. I was taken to the theatre at 7.30 am, put to sleep and when I awoke at 8.30 I was presented with a little stone in a glass bottle - job done. I was very sore and everything was painful. However at about 4 pm I was sitting up and taking notice and by 6 pm it was almost forgotten.

*Tuesday, 20 February 1979*

For the past few days time has slid by so that I don't know the days - was it Tuesday morning I had my operation? I think so; this is the same day. I am sore and sorry but was it not a blessing it did not happen me in Bahrain. At least here in El Paso they had everything to do a good job.

My friend Domingo Sarinana beside me is raving a little today. He is complaining about the damn cotton ginny: 'You have taken my hands!' But it will be okay shortly as the family will be in and it will be carnival time.

I had a lovely bunch of flowers from the power company and a visit from the CE's neighbour, who works as a volunteer in the hospital. I have so many nurses I lose track. It is sobering that nobody knows where Ireland is. 'Is it near England, Paris?' Domingo talks about Acapulco, Austin, LA and Vegas but he was never there. He pointed out one son with pride, saying, 'This boy was in New York.'

The history of El Paso briefly is that in 1536, forty-four years after Columbus discovered America, a family led by Cabeza de Vaca crossed the Rio Grande at El Paso - the Pass. Twenty years later the first European settlement was started by some missionary priests. It became a trading post in 1848 and the American army settled an outpost there. This is now Fort Bliss,

the biggest training centre in the world.

El Paso is on the Mexican border and just across the river is the city of Juarez. Both are Spanish cities; persons of Spanish language or surname comprise 60 per cent of the population. El Paso was the baddest of the bad in the heyday of the Old West. They all did a bit of shooting here: Billy the Kid, Butch Cassidy, Wyatt Earp ...

*Wednesday, 21 February 1979*

Today I am officially discharged from hospital and my three colleagues collect me. I am still sore and a bit weak but I'm sure tomorrow will see me much better. Mick has hired a car and he is managing very well. You cannot walk in this country – there are no paths and the only way is to drive a car. Every place is so far from every place else and with no public transport it is a car salesman's paradise.

Our hotel is the Granada Royale – a most unusual one. It is built around a square, eight storeys high. The square has a glass roof and there is a balcony around the four sides on each floor. Very modern glass lifts rise on the sides of the square. At present there is a concertina playing honky-tonk. The rooms are fine and spacious comprising bedroom, kitchenette and sitting room.

I had to get some prescriptions, so with Mick as driver we set out in search of a shopping centre. I noticed that there was no rush to get in the front with the driver! But fair dues to him, he is doing fine, albeit with a share of expressive language.

Next door to our hotel is the Rustlers Inn where we dine well. The steaks are large and succulent and served only with salad and baked potato. We were in bed at 11 pm. I was unable to go on a trip with the boys at 8.30 am (Thursday) so I went back to bed.

*Thursday, 22 February 1979*

I slept well until 11.30 am and awoke with all pain gone and feeling great. I phoned Esther but did not tell her about my problems. With time on my hands I decided to visit Mexico – the city of Juarez and the twin of El Paso. I hired a taxi with a Mexican/American cabby, Phili Jiminez, a small Sammy Davis Jr type with a wooden cap. Very chatty and helpful, although in telling me I did not need a passport to get out he nearly got me in jail (as well as in hospital).

Juarez is just down the road past a large cloverleaf road complex and we just drove in to another world – poorer, far more populated and less well maintained. But it is a live bustling place with carefree kids playing soccer in parts or 'hi-li' in large alleys. We saw the largest bullring in the world, many wonderful old cathedrals, monasteries and apartments with white walls and red barrel tiles. Also small white adobe buildings and houses with every variety of Spanish architecture – arches, pillars, hanging flowers, etc. The engines at the main railway station are steam and of a 1920s vintage. Cars are beat-up and many are strange assemblies like a Volkswagen I saw with a Rolls' bonnet. We visited the

red-light district where life is cheap at night and not very expensive in daytime either if the need is great.

With my guide Phili we visited bars and cafes and stopped at the old City Market where I did all my shopping. It is like the bazaar anywhere – you never give what is asked, you offer less, walk away and come back. It was a good find and I got a few nice things.

The backdrop to Juarez is the Sierra Madre range, while the backdrop to El Paso is the southern tip of the Rockies. About ten miles separates the two ranges and between them is a solitary hill with a cross on it since 1536. Here meets three states: Texas, New Mexico and Arizona; also here meets two nations, the US and Mexico. People here proudly point out that there was a thriving Spanish colony here long before the so-called Founding Fathers landed in New England.

It was great to visit Juarez but getting out of Mexico was a surprise. At the border post the guard said, 'You're from where? You've got no passport – go in the office.' I did and found about 200 other illegal immigrants, all Mexican – wet-backs they call them as they swim the Rio Grande to get across. I told my story through a window: 'My passport is in my hotel, here's my ID card ...' 'Sit and we'll call you.' After 30 minutes I realised that about 200 would be called ahead of me and they were calling them very slowly. I approached what looked like the boss and I talked him into an unusual deal. I had to leave my ID card with him and he placed me under the parole of the taxi driver (who also had to leave his ID card) for two hours to visit the US to collect my passport and return to be properly 'signed into' the US. On my return he simply said to an aide, 'Stamp it and send him on his way.'

I discussed Mexico with some Americans later and they were not optimistic for its future despite the great resources of oil it has. The trouble is that there is no middle class, only the very rich minority who exploit a large uneducated majority of impoverished people. Americans feel it will always be this with corrupt, unstable politics. 'Sunt lacrimae rerum ...'

At 5.30 pm Bud York and wife Naomi called to take us to Bill Bostik's home for drinks before going out to a meal as our guests. Bill's home was a one-storey ranch-type large house. It was the usual American home except that the games room was something we had not met before. It had a jukebox, a pinball machine, a full-size pool table and all the flashing lights of a casino. We spent an interesting two hours there before going to the Guarada Penthouse for dinner. It was the usual high-standard American meal and cheap by our standards – less than £6 each.

My one great disappointment was the Rio Grande. I had thought of it as a great river which separated Mexico and the US. But at El Paso it is only a drain, all the water having been dammed further back for irrigation. Further down towards the Gulf of Mexico it becomes a good large river again but in the middle it is now dry!

*Friday, 23 February 1979*

Home today. Took off from El Paso, went to LA at 9.40 am. Beside me sat a captain with Continental Airlines who flies a DC-10 from LA to Chicago. He lives in Fort Worth, Texas and his name is Jack McGowan. He explained all the country we passed: New Mexico, nearly all desert where the first atom bomb was exploded; Arizona, with the cities of Tucson and Phoenix, and its green watered land growing all kinds of vegetables; the Colorado River with its lush fertile lands; the Sierra Nevada mountains; Death Valley, 200 feet below sea level, where the temperature reaches 130-140 degrees; the Mojave Desert, stretching to the snow-capped mountains which ring the LA Basin; and LA itself with 9 million people stretching beyond eyesight.

### TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA, 1979

*Saturday, 24 November 1979*

However often I travel, the prospect of a long trip to a new land excites me. I woke this morning with anticipation of my visit to Saudi Arabia and the disturbances reported in the holy city of Mecca only made the sense of adventure all the keener. Even though I know that the cities of Saudi are now as modern as anywhere in the world the country has for me all the mystery which is conveyed by the impassive gaze of a Bedouin tribesman on the back of a camel with a rifle slung on his shoulder and only his eyes visible from behind a great headgear and flowing white robes.

The trip also calls to mind tales of long ago, of Muslim hordes with flashing scimitars pouring out of Mecca with the religious zeal inspired by their great prophet Mohammed, a zeal and military power which brought conquests all the way to Europe, Africa and the East. These were the thoughts which seemed to seep into my consciousness all day from Dublin to London to Jeddah, which is a city of about 750,000 people on the Red Sea on the west coast of the Saudi Peninsula.

As we left London it was a clear frosty day at 1.30 pm with a view for great distances. Soon the white cliffs of Dover gleamed in the sun like a great priest's collar separating rich cultivated land with the colours of autumn from a dark green placid sea. Soon over France and cloud with nothing to see until we came over the snow above the Alps. What a spectacular sight, a jagged vista to the horizon clad in a cloak of white gleaming and glinting down to deep valleys yet green before the great snow of winter. To us who know the awesome power of the man-made atom bomb it is still impossible to imagine the stupendous force of nature which fashioned the Alps in a time only God can recall.

Strange that white has been the most frequently noticed colour today. 'There will be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover' was the enchanting tune of my youth with Vera Lynn but I only saw the cliffs today. The next great sight was the Alpine grandeur of rugged whiteness. And the first conscious

sight on standing on the door of the Tri-star at Jeddah Airport was of many Arabs in long white robes all the whiter in the darkness of the night. For it is now 10.30 pm local time as we landed having flown south along the coast of the Red Sea looking at a city of a million twinkling fairy lights.

We were met at the Airport by Irish Ambassador O'Toole and Frank Fennell, our manager at Al Baha. The ambassador had done an act of great courtesy to leave an official function to greet us. Frank drove us to the Hotel Meridian past a great complex of flats built to cater for a housing shortage but still empty after two years because Arabs are not apartment dwellers and cannot be persuaded to take their wives out of the traditional house surrounded by a wall. Who would want to live in a Ballymun in Jeddah? Jeddah is on the road to Mecca, the holy city forbidden to non-Muslims. About two million pilgrims pass through here each year to worship at the sacred mosque which was the scene of the incident of the past few days. No one seems to know much about it other than that the group who stormed the mosque were from the desert which is inhabited by the most ferocious of Muslim sects. We will hear more maybe.

*Sunday, 25 November 1979*

We called to the Irish Embassy at 10 o'clock where we had a large business discussion with Ambassador O'Toole. I learned a lot about Saudi, the difficulties and opportunities. Frank then took us on a tour of Jeddah. Its predominant colour is grey sand. New buildings adorned without any apparent planning or consistent style. Architectural style is almost completely modern Western without any real Eastern influence. Many buildings are being demolished to make way for new developments and there seems no concern for heritage or preservation of the past. Very old and ornate buildings of Turkish origin with magnificent carved wooden doors are being reduced to rubble. There is road and flyover construction everywhere as we drove north towards the Red Sea. Along the waterfront there are many large sculptures, modern in style, some made of old iron pieces of machinery welded into most abstract shapes. They sit thirty feet high on flat desert terrain and from the distance seem like the two Colossi at Luxor in Upper Egypt.

We reached the Red Sea at the site of a vast new University for Marine Biology. An artificial lagoon has been built enclosing a great area inside the coral reef which extends along the coast about 200 yards from the sandy beach. It is as deserted as Inch but the water is lake-calm. The sea is not red but the bluest green I ever saw. It is like the pictures on holiday posters. We walked along the beach and picked exotic shells and coral – far more wonderful specimens than we could take back to Ireland.

The cars are as many and as big as in the US. Saudis are mad drivers and there is a constant din of horns. It is not unusual to see two large cars engaged in a neck-and-neck race with no one giving way. No wonder the desert roadside is littered with wrecks. On our way we called to the New Asia Construction Co. who are contractors in Baha. Two most courteous men from Taiwan met us and we spent an interesting hour with them. They told us how the Saudis

started their construction boom using Western workers. The next phase was to use cheaper labour from Taiwan and Korea. The third phase, now starting, is to use cheaper labour still from Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. The Chinese see their future here diminishing.

Foreigners here cannot own property and the New Asia Company has rented a villa for 250,000 riyals a year (£45,000). It was the home of a police chief. The drawing room has a cushioned seat all round the walls with movable cushions so that one can make one's own arm-rests. It is simply decorated with a few paintings and a few tables in the centre. It is a typical middle class residence. Every Saudi, at eighteen years of age, is entitled to an interest-free loan of £50,000 from the government to build a house provided he has a site.

I wondered what cohesive force keeps this Kingdom together, spread, as it is, over vast deserts from Red Sea to Persian Gulf. The explanation is simple: King Abdul Aziz united the country by force in the 1930s. He adopted a simple policy of marrying the daughter of the chief of each tribe he subdued. He begot many sons whose descendants are now princes numbering thousands spread out all over the Kingdom, owing loyalty to the monarchy from whom they get vast salaries. Wealth amongst the princes and the businessmen is on a scale we cannot imagine and their palaces are everywhere, magnificent in style and surrounded with lush green trees and exotic flowers.

A short siesta from 3 to 4.30 pm and we are on our way to the ambassador's residence. There is no one at home except workmen and we stand an hour at the pool. Before dinner we visit Peter Ryan, an Irish emigrant who is on this coast for many years and doing well as he can afford houses in Dublin and Greece.

With us for dinner at the embassy are the Irish from Kent's of Clonmel. They have contracts here. Also present was Paul Bodkin, a Rathmines man and an architect who works here.

As we left for home after a great evening of good food the armed guard at the embassy is sound asleep on a packing case with his gun beside him. I will be very sceptical in future of news which says 'The armed guard was overpowered ...'

*Monday, 26 November 1979*

'There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet ...' So chants the muezzin at dawn today and every day since 610 AD when Mohammed started to preach his religion in Mecca. It is chanted from the minaret of every mosque at dawn, at dusk and at four other times, calling the faithful to pray. Wherever a Muslim is in the world he faces Mecca, the geographical centre of his religion. Millions of pilgrims make the visit there and in Jeddah there are thousands of cheap apartments provided by the King to help the travellers.

It was at the Grand Mosque in Mecca last week that a revolution was attempted. A group led by a man who claimed to be the 3rd Messiah entered the Grand Mosque, the holy place in which there were 50,000 pilgrims. They tried to close all doors and asked the pilgrims to support them. They failed and most of the pilgrims escaped. The siege then started and lasted for four days,

during which the whole of Saudi was on full alert. The dissidents surrendered today and their fate is certain. Today the King issues an edict after consulting the religious leaders. They quoted the Koran: 'He who tries to sow dissension among you shall be beheaded'. And that's that in Saudi.

We left Jeddah by car at 11 am. It is about 250 miles to Al Baha. For the first 150 miles the road is through desert. It is a regular autobahn as good as anywhere in the world – a three-lane dual carriageway. The desert is monotonous arid land, not sand but gravel and large stones. It is very hilly. The roadside is strewn with crashed cars and the traffic is heavy until we come within twenty miles of Mecca. Here we have to do a detour around Mecca on the 'Christian Bypass' as it is a forbidden city to us. Along the way we see the occasional village of Arab tents and large herds of goats and sheep. They have very poor grazing but this does not matter as the animals are needed only for sale to pilgrims to Mecca. To do the pilgrimage right it is necessary to sacrifice an animal and by all accounts Mecca is no pleasant place during the pilgrimage time in November when two million animals are slaughtered. The act of sacrifice is a direct repetition of Abraham who was allowed by God to kill a sheep instead of offering his own son.

Al Baha is on a plateau which rises by a vertical escarpment of 8000 feet from the desert. The road must be the greatest in the world. It winds like a corkscrew for some thirty miles through sheer cliffs and over breathtaking gorges – a Connor Pass impossible to imagine. You round a bend, look straight up at a gigantic bridge hanging in the sky and you wonder how you will get there. On top is the city of Taif, summer residence of the King and government. We pass the home of Sheikh Yamani – a palace. We lunched in the Sheraton Hotel, a giant 20-tiered wedding-cake building atop a hill.

Leaving Taif at 3 pm we were stopped in a line of traffic at a roadblock. Alf and I got out to walk to the head of the queue. We spend two hours waiting for Frank to reach us and we had time to study many Saudis. Even though held up they were very cheerful about it all. They were friendly towards us and I communicated with many by handshakes and 'Hello, OK.' The Army and police are not very efficient at searching, particularly as the vehicles had goats, sheep, chickens and every merchandise imaginable. They just looked at our passports but we were not so lucky at another roadblock twenty miles on. Here our cases were searched and literally turned upside down – I had to open a box of cigars. When it was all over they were all smiles and sorrys but up to then their attitude was surly and unmannerly. We were glad to get to Al Baha at 7 pm where Ann Fennell had a fine meal ready. She is our hostess for our four days here and a charming one she is.

Before closing down for the night I return again to the Muslim religion, thinking of the very hard code it impresses on true believers. Many times yesterday we saw groups of men facing east going through the praying ritual. At nightfall a most dramatic sight unfolded. On a low hill about 500 yards from the road was a tall figure in prayer. He was silhouetted against the darkening red horizon of the departed sun while overhead the sky was black with a million stars. The

shape changed regularly as he lifted his hands or knelt to kiss the ground.

The prophet indeed enjoyed a harsh life on women. I have not yet seen a Saudi woman's face, they wear a black dress and black veil. At fifteen they are betrothed to a boy whose mother selects the bride. Ann Fennell told me of weddings to which she was invited. Men and women stay apart and the women eat only the men's leftovers. Each separately perform ritualistic tribal dances and though there is no alcohol the dancing and rhythm raise them to a high pitch. A man can have four wives and can divorce quite quickly. But his being a Muslim is constitutional also as a way of life. It is an extended family in a tribal system and young and old from several generations live in the one home.

*Tuesday, 27 November 1979*

This morning I met all the ESB staff and inspected the new power station. At 2 pm I went east on a long safari with Maurice King and Chris Keogh. We inspected the transmission station and lines and passed through many valleys of terraced fields. This time of year they are brown and dry but after the January rain they are plentiful with corn, vegetables and grapes. They quickly become luscious green. But now the whole landscape is arid as the moon.

The good road south to Bil-jarsi winds around little hills which are strewn with large rocks sculptured into fantastic shapes. There are the ruins of ancient fortifications everywhere, each with a high square tower. There are many explanations given for these towers, the most likely being that they are Turkish from the days of the Ottoman Empire. Another is that they were local tribal sanctuaries. The most romantic is that the towers mark the route taken by the Queen of Sheba on her historic trip from Great Yemen to pay homage to King Solomon. But this is unlikely as the ruins are not that ancient.

We turned off the main road to travel on a rough road home from the mountainside leading to the great escarpment. Again the view was awe-inspiring from the top as we looked down for 8000 feet to the coastal plain which straddles for eighty miles west to the Red Sea. The rough road wound its way down and at the peak of the mountain we travelled on a piece hardly the width of our Chevrolet, with no walls on either side and a sheer drop thousands of feet whichever way you looked. No place for the person prone to vertigo.

On the mountainside were young girls dressed in black herding goats and sheep on terrain which had scarcely a blade of grass. The girls were not veiled and waved and shouted at us. In the country areas apparently the women are not as concerned at being seen by men. There was a large tent under which were families and many lambs – here man and beast depend on each other to survive; 'I know mine and mine know me.' The silence on the escarpment was biblical.

Halfway down we met a roadblock. This road leads to Jizan, home of the self-proclaimed New Messiah who stormed the Holy Mosque last week – which explains the road block. Two of the soldiers were praying, a third was washing himself, getting ready to pray, while two more squatted on a mat. They dealt with us courteously but with no haste. We had many handshakes and salutes before we were free to go on our way.



*Wednesday, 28 November 1979*

It is easy to forget that here in Al Baha we are living at an altitude of 8000 feet – that's two and a half times higher than Carran-toohil. The air is thin and the weather lovely at 90°C. Any prolonged exertion brings shortness of breath and panting if you are not fit.

We started at 9.15 am on a day's inspection northward into the mountains. We took two Chevy Blazer engines in case of breakdown as we will be over 100 miles from base in the roughest terrain in the world. The roads are as if they were drawn round and round the slopes of Mount Brandon up to the top by winding hairpins with no fence or protection on the lower side. They descend into valleys only to rise again to climb another mountain. The rock is soft shale and the surface is not tarred. As a result there are clouds of brown dust from each passing vehicle. The surfaces are rocky and rough and it is like riding a bucking bronco. Without a tight safety belt you would hit the roof every ten yards.

The valleys are now ploughed ready for the spring sowing after the January rains. The fields are level terraces extending up the mountainside ranging in size from mere gardens to half an acre. The crops are alfalfa, corn, vegetables, tomatoes, some oranges and grapes. The villages are small, some even with a mosque. They are very dusty places. Many of the homes are two-storey, cattle being kept in the lower level. The Saudis are great masons and clay-wall stone houses are built with an incredible even surface. Some houses are painted in many colours with crude decorations. The doors are wood with wrought-iron decoration covers. Ironwork seems a great custom and all trucks and lorries have elaborately designed rails and sides.

The Saudis are very friendly and every passer-by gives a faint salute. Everyone here has transport – Toyota and Datsun pick-ups. Petrol is cheap. Driving on these mountain roads is hairy with Saudis driving their pick-ups with the abandon of kids in bumper cars.

Paddy MacRory was our guide and the party was made up of Alf Kelly, Des Ward, Maurice King and I. Pat knows every house in the region and never missed a turn in this complicated network of roads. He is a dry Northern Ireland man with a love/hate attitude to the Saudis. 'These bloody Saudis should be banned from driving,' he says, as we miss a young guy in a Datsun at the edge of a precipice. Next minute he is extolling their virtues as a race.

We had our picnic at midday atop the escarpment looking down 8000 feet onto the coastal plains of closest cities, fifty miles to the Red Sea. It is a site for a picnic with few equals; the temperature is about 80° with a fresh wind in our faces rising up to the cliff face. There is total silence but for the swish of the birds – crows maybe – who rise and clear in the rising air above. There are vultures circling overhead and we spot the occasional eagle high in the sky hovering, diving and circling. They are truly majestic birds with a tremendous wingspan.

Three Arabs stop by to view the scene. One was an official from the Ministry of Agriculture. He spoke English and we enjoyed his company. His friends just stood by grinning and scheming. We invited them to join us in our meal

but they graciously declined and we soon knew why as we heard the plaintive nasal chant of the muezzin. Our Arab friends departed to pray and we saw them no more.

Paddy MacRory found a stone in the mountains one day with a fern-like fossil in it. Ever since he has been searching for more. He took us to a place which involved climbing above the steep road, mostly slope, for about 100 feet. There was an out-crop of rock – a kind of marble – and we started to hammer at it to prise lumps free. Chinese were erecting poles merrily and they descended on us chatting excitedly. They must have thought that we had found the mother pearl of gold or precious stones. Our journey was not uneventful – we found a few fossils.

There is a Chinese camp not far away and we called to see them. They are the line workers on our job. It was siesta time and they were in bed. The camp is a plywood one. The only wardrobe is a rope from end to end across which clothes are draped. The grounds are primitive but they are clean and when the Chinese emerged they were spic and span and healthy. It seems they eat well on rice and chicken and are very hard workers, getting a lot done to a high quality. Dog meat is a delicacy in Taiwan and here in Saudi dogs are despised. There are no really domesticated dogs, only half-wild, large, brown vicious-looking beasts. The Chinese lure them to camp and feed them well until they are ready for the feast. They are due to be finished in this particular camp in two weeks and it looks like they are preparing a treat – there are a few well-fed dogs around. Beware of a Chinese in Saudi, guys: 'Please join me in a few really nice cutlets ...'

It would not be possible for me to write down all we saw. Goats, sheep, cattle of Indian breeds, canals, villages on the edge of the very precipice, terminal mountainsides, smiling Arabs, wonder-eager children, colourful robes, women toiling in fields, men building ... all in all it was a day which, for me, had few equals. My fellow travellers were great company and Paddy MacRory is an excellent, knowledgeable guide, if not a fearless driver.

Home at 5.30 pm. We dined on delicious fillet steak. I will write to Egon Ronay to say 'You have omitted Fennell's in Al Baha from your good food guide.' After a short visit to the social club, where there was a bridge tournament in progress with the Chinese, I returned to base, tired, contemplating how well the Irish and Chinese are getting on even though I suspect both sides engage in a little '*Uisce fê Thalaimh*' in playing bridge.

## WHERE THE NILES MEET

16-23 March 1983

Tuesday was a busy day – a meeting with the worker members at 9 am, the board meeting at 10 am, the senior management meeting at 2 pm and a dash at 4.30 to catch the plane for Amsterdam en route to Khartoum.

It was 8 pm Wednesday when we landed, dark and cool. Joe Moran, Bill Humphries and Don Mahony were at the foot of the steps to greet Gerry Dunion and I. They were accompanied by Achmed Babbiker, 'Mr Fixit', a young, handsome Sudanese who bypasses all the red tape. He deposited us in the VIP room where we drank poor tea while he cleared our baggage through customs.

We arrived in the Hilton Hotel which was the same as a modern hotel anywhere in the world. It would have to be tomorrow before I could get my impression of the country or the city of Khartoum as the journey from the airport was through dusty dimly-lit streets crowded with people in multi-coloured garments.

I awoke at 7 am on St Patrick's Day to look out on a most wondrous sight. The hotel is on a peninsula where the Niles meet. To my right is the great Blue Nile all the way from the Mountains of the Moon in Abyssinia, while on my left is the even larger White Nile meandering through the desert from Lake Victoria in Uganda, and here they meet to flow north past Abu Simbel, Aswan, Luxor and the remains of the great Egyptian civilisation to reach the sea at Alexandria. For a moment I recalled the incident on a boat at Aswan Cataract in 1981 when Esther and I drank water taken from the river to the thought, 'He who drinks the waters of the Nile returns to the Nile.'

As far as I can see in every direction there is rich cultivation made possible by irrigation. Across from the hotel is Tutti Island, at the confluence of the two rivers. In the centre is a village all of dark brown single-storey houses made of mud bricks. White-clad workers toil the fields, a woman leads a cow to the river and two turbaned fishermen on a small boat lazily cast their nets. In the distance is the city of Omdurman from which the silver dome of the Mahdi's tomb glistens in the bright sunlight. It is hot and dry and there is a great silence about this place. I have noticed it before in the desert in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It is as if the harshness and timelessness of the desert imposes silence on nature. Even the great rivers here before me seem dead, hardly moving, being suffocated by the boiling sun and soaked into the never-ending sands.

The purpose of my visit is to close the seminar for the top management of the National Electricity Corporation. There are about forty present, including three ladies in traditional dress. My talk got a good reception and a phrase I used has already gone into the folklore: 'Paralysis by analysis'. It seems that my colleagues have made a great impression.

The seminar was held in the Grand Hotel, the first hotel in Khartoum, built in 1901 and recently refurbished. It is state-owned and magnificent. The walls and columns are brown brick and the floors are tiled by the most famous Italian craftsmen. We held an Irish reception at the poolside on St Patrick's night and it was truly a scene from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Someone had found two tricolours which hung from trees.

The night was cool, the stars sparking, the pool was blue and the Sudanese, some in their white robes, were enjoying themselves on the best of Irish liquor. Less than 50 per cent drink and those very sparingly. I sat beside Minister Suleiman, a most interesting man. The meal was like all meals here, plenty of

many things but well short of haute cuisine. Afterwards we went to the O'Sheas – a young couple working for a firm of architects. The party was in the open for all the Irish and some English in Khartoum. It was raucous and beery and not the sort of image the Irish should want to make in modern Africa.

With Joe Moran, John Geraghty and Achmed I set out to visit Omdurman. Having read Alan Moorhead's *Blue Nile* there was a great sense of anticipation at walking in a land where the Mahdi, Gordon and Kitchener fought their terrible war of vengeance and brutality in the middle of the last century. In Khartoum I had seen the palace where Gordon lived and made his last stand, to be beheaded and his head presented to the Mahdi. On the roof he stood with his telescope hoping to see a relief expedition come around the river. It arrived two weeks too late.

And we are now in the home in which the Mahdi lived when in Omdurman. It is two-storey, mud-walled with many rooms. What stories the walls could tell of this strange man. In his mid-thirties, he proclaimed himself the Mahdi, successor of Mohammed, and like a sandstorm in the desert he gathered momentum as he moved, preaching observance of strict religion and savage death to all enemies and infidels.

His hordes routed and massacred all armies sent against him. His rule lasted for twenty years, until his army was defeated by Kitchener in 1899. He himself died in 1885, surviving his great enemy Gordon by only six months. The cause of his death is unknown; some say one of his harem poisoned him, others say that he died suddenly. At any rate, Sudanese people consider him a messenger from God. That he was brutal is without question but so were his enemies. It is hardly to Kitchener's credit that he had his body exhumed, beheaded and cast into the Nile. This is the house and the tomb in the courtyard where it all happened. There are many visitors for it is Friday, the Sabbath.

The souk in Omdurman is like that of any other Eastern city – hot, crowded and smelly. The climate is so dry that nothing rusts. Water is scarce. We see long lines of asses with tanks made of oil drums collecting water from a government pump to sell it in the villages. Achmed took us on a trip across the desert to a village 'with goods smuggled from Libya very cheap'. The Jonesboro of Sudan! It is one long dusty street of stalls with a traffic jam. The goods are cheap and shoddy. The colourful fabrics are polyester from Japan.

On the way home we saw the field – the desert – and noted the battle of Omdurman was fought nearly 100 years ago. It is hard to imagine now the massacre on that September day. The Sudanese and the Khalifa were mostly armed with spears and old guns. The British gunboats on the Nile and the artillery decimated them and many thousands were slain. Had the Mahdi decided to fight in the desert away from the Nile it might have been otherwise. But Allah had ordained that he should defend Omdurman. But who cares now about a great battle won in colonial conquest, it is hardly a pimple on the skin of this vast and timeless land.

Everyone says that the Sudan has great potential. There was talk about it becoming the bread-basket of the Middle East. Now they have found oil in

that inhospitable swamp in the south which covers one-fifth of the country. What the future will bring is hard to predict. The Sudanese are a friendly easy-going people. Although the northerners embraced Islam they boast that they were never conquered by the Arabs. Our man said to me with disdain, 'The Saudis ate locusts before they found oil and their children will eat locusts again.' The Sudan government started a mighty agricultural project in the Gezira, the eastern province near the Red Sea.

I hear it is a failure when no one wants to work for wages in a regimented way. 'I can till a small patch to give food to my family. I can sit all day under the tree and think, or play with the children or go hunting, why have to work from 9 to 5 to get TV or car?' It is the same the world over, the pressure of the transition from old, traditional ways. They say the country is mismanaged and corrupt to the top. I don't know if Khartoum saw better times in the days of the Raj. It is shabby, needing a good coat of paint, road surfacing and hygiene. Otherwise it is colourful, vibrant and overwhelmingly good-humoured. Inshala!

## VOYAGE TO OMAN AND VIETNAM, 1988

*Saturday, 26 March 1988*

Nothing strange in a night flight on BA London-Muscat. My travelling companion was red-haired Dermot Connellan from Poolbeg, a man of direct thought and positive action. Ideal to travel with to Vietnam as he had worked there for nine months on the UNDP project - much praised by Mr Luu, director general of Power Company No. 2. Dermot was steeped in the history of Vietnam and what with his briefing over a very pleasant meal and Jim Graham's previous infectious enthusiasm for Vietnam and its people, I was filled with anticipation. We landed at Muscat at 2 am local time to relax for two days with [my daughter] Emer and Eric before taking on the next flight of 10 hours to HCMC via Bangkok.

I found, of course, that Mr Osman Baig of ONEC had so many business meetings [arranged for me] with important political clients that it was a business holiday only. However, I had time to show Dermot the capital area of Muscat, Muttrah, which for me is at the pinnacle of taste and sensitivity in areas of modern design and construction of new urban centres. The scale of buildings, roads, public works in a short ten years is beyond simple description with style and form comparable to an Islamic mood of quiet elegance and reserve. Better than elsewhere in the Gulf where many new cities are transplanted high-rises from Chicago or New York.

*Sunday, 27 April 1988*

Courtesy of Mr Baig's driver and large car we travelled on Sunday with Emer to Nakhl, a wadi with hot springs and the bountiful gardens of a well-irrigated narrow valley; an ancient riverbed still comes to its full power in the torrential

rain and flash floods which arrive unannounced at very irregular intervals. Today, however, and normally, it is a quiet babbling brook of warm water emerging from the rock face further up the wadi. *Falays*, man-made little canals, take the water to a hundred gardens of palm trees, date-laden, orange, juniper and ever-present bougainvillea flower.

The place is a paradise where we sit for a few hours, taking the sun and dining well on Irish smoked salmon. As ever, Emer is full of knowledge of the work and customs of Oman, on the society, its pressures and subtleties and its continued fascination for her. Birds sing and large dragonflies buzz about the water and a million pinkeens of all shapes and colours provide a natural aquarium in the ebbing pools. The muezzin calls for prayer at 3 pm and individuals in groups and singly can be seen, facing Mecca, touching the ground with devout heads. Our driver is fasting totally during daylight for one month ahead of Ramadan and declining any of our delicacies; he says he will pray for the few hours he will await us.

A relaxing day from 12 am, our first meeting being at 7 am, is as a prelude to the Muscat/Bangkok/HCMC leg tonight at 11.30 pm. Almost forgot to mention Dub Martin Sweeney at the Intercontinental with his lovely singing of 'She's my Lady, I'm her Man' – in honour of Emer's forthcoming happy event.

*Monday, 28 March 1988*

Nothing could prepare me for the descent to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) over the Mekong Delta. The great river, which runs the whole length of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, branches into nine fingers to make the Delta, a patchwork of regular small fields individually irrigated since old God's time to be the granary of South East Asia. Successively plundered by invading colonists from the dawn of time, Chinese, French, Japanese, Americans, and all resisted with ferocity by the Vietnamese, as I read somewhere 'with the hatred of 20 million coolies!' Looking down on this rich well-cultivated peaceful country now, the mind wanders over the vicious wars of my own time with names Dien Bien Phu and Mai Lai, of the great secret massacre by US troops fresh in the memory, of films *The Killing Fields* and *Platoon*. Will I notice scars or will white faces be suspect and not welcome? Dermot says no, so I will suspend judgement.

Landed and eased gently through emigration by a welcoming party of Mr Bon and Mr Khoa as well as my old pal John Gunning here for ESB with UNDP for three years. Here we are in the land of the lotus flower in the Year of the Dragon in which there will be a great surge in the birth rate despite the official attempts at population control. Children born in the Year of the Dragon turn out rich and lucky, and to hell with overpopulation talk, it's hot anyway at siesta time!

In Manila your first impression is of the thousands of Jeepers, the decorated old US army jeeps used for public transport. They are like items from the St Patrick's Day Parade and they race for passengers. In HCMC it is the cyclos, the pedal-driven rickshaws. They are everywhere in thousands, the driver up high on the back and everything as payload – sacks of rice, beautiful girls with

parasols shading them from the sun, whole families, a woman with a pig or a clutch of ducks. It's how HCMC moves, on the cyclos, a few of which are motorised but mostly hard-peddalling young men, many Sean Kelly macho types who race and cause accidents. There are millions of cyclists and many small Hondas. It is like a great anthem, busy, bustling, hustling, ladies selling feather dusters, many pavement bike repair businesses, locals with heavy loads, noise, humour, beauty in abundance, gay parasols of promenading owners, beggars, kids being breastfed while the mother window-shops. Is this a Communist city? If so it is communism Viet-style, for nowhere in Russia or East Europe have I seen such individual free enterprise capitalism – the last place of buccaneering capitalism, as an Aussie called it. And much happier than East European cities and, above all, none of the grey drabness – colour is the most significant first impression.

We are booked into the Rex Hotel, a stately edifice in the heart of town, built in 1968. It is very clean, the rooms are spacious and the air conditioning works in my room – I need it in a temperature of 30°C with high humidity.

We are the guests for dinner of the Minister for Energy from Hanoi – a very small man, looks about thirty, but is, I'm told, fifty. There are many courses and we use chopsticks. We start with little pieces of pork, chicken, beef, fish of all sorts which we take from a centre bowl and dip in sauces of different peppers and curries. Prawns follow with a hot tomato sauce, then steaming little spring rolls, minced meat wrapped in white cabbage. The bread rolls are white and crisp. All this takes many hours as there are many speeches followed by toasts to Vietnam, Power Co. No. 2, ESB, co-operation, friendship – any excuse to drink more wine, beer or Cointreau. I was very careful and finished really having had a very small meal. I am determined to lose weight here. To bed by 10.30 and slept like a fat baby, so tired was I from a very long trip.

*Tuesday, 29 March 1988*

Breakfast at 7 am and collected at 8 am to visit Power Co. No. 2 head office where we met our old friends from Dublin: Mr Luu, Managing Director; Mr Binh, Deputy; Mr Tung, Deputy; Mr Bon, Deputy. This was a long business session, difficult because of the interpretation – although it gives you plenty of time to gather the thoughts. We learned all about the problems typical of Third World countries, no money, teeming population, no real infrastructure, but all compounded in Vietnam by the devastation of war which only ended in 1975. There is also the problem that the US has an embargo on the export of spare parts for the power station and equipment they built in their time here. Despite the problems PC2 head office gives the impression of effective management and it is clean and impressive.

We were taken to the computer centre and what can I say other than that Heath Robinson was here. It is really a miracle. They could not import an IBM370 from anywhere because of the US embargo so they got bits and pieces here and there, put them all together without any manual and away we go. Because they have only a very old paper mill here in Vietnam the quality of all

paper here is terrible – like poor quality brown toilet paper. But it all works and they get out a million bills a month! Incredible and you should see the key-punch room, noise and ancient machines behind each of which sat as pretty a girl as you will ever see on the road between Belmullet and Geesala. We break for lunch at 11.30 and return to our hotel for a snack and siesta.

At 1.30 we are on the road again to Tu Duc power station and workshop. It is about 10 km on Route 101, famous in the Vietnamese War. All around are relics of that war, old army trucks, transporters and at the airport many wrecks of helicopter gunships. The final leaving was in a hurry.

Our first call is for tea to the office where I resume acquaintance with Mrs Han who was interpreter with one group in Dublin. Every visit everywhere starts with a sit-down for tea, coffee and fruit – mango, papaya, mandarins and grapes; a civilised way to ease into work. Dermot Connellan is in his heaven here in the workshops and power station for he meets many of those he trained while he worked in Vietnam. I was surprised at the quantity of the lathes and equipment and with the complex jobs being done – a case of necessity knowing no limitation. There were many women also at equal work and equal pay. Dermot says that progress has been excellent since he left last year. That is not always the case in Third World countries – unhappily the departure of the white man is often the start of decline and I have that confirmed from many nationalities I have met around the world on development work. A power station is a power station and seen one, seen them all. This one is clean, well managed and since refurbishment has had high availability.

From all sides I hear of the great work done by John Gunning, Dermot Connellan and Kevin O'Malley. Speech after speech has been made about them and all I can add is that I am proud of how good they performed as ambassadors of Ireland for quality technology, a commitment to the client, PC2, and above all courtesy and friendliness. If we never made a profit on our foreign work it is worth it for its promotion of Ireland in lands where it is not known to exist among many millions of people.

Tonight we were guests at the Academy of Music for a special performance in our honour. As usual, the evening started with tea with the director, Professor Quang Hai, graduate of Leningrad University Academy and his deputy, graduate of Kiev, Mr Binh and wife, Mr Bon (Jack Palance we call him), Mrs Hanh and husband *agus a lân eile*. There are 700 students in this academy, learning voice and all the classical musical instruments plus Vietnamese instruments. Of the latter played in the performances were 32-string and 16-string sitars, also a bamboo flute and believe it or not a one-string sitar, unique to Vietnam but capable of all the notes and pitches of any string instrument through manipulation of a tensioned level with the left hand. The pieces were mostly Vietnamese folk tunes, a Schubert piece and a short concerto, 'Hail to Liberation', written by the director and performed by a 22-piece symphony orchestra. I am no Ian Fox but I enjoyed the evening very much. The male violinists performed solo with all the machismo of a Hungarian gypsy fiddler and the tenor had a fine voice and blessed with good looks and charm. A student



from the academy was placed fourth in the Tchaikovsky piano competition in Moscow last year. Talking to the director it was evident that, musically, Russia was his spiritual home.

In two days here have I formed some impressions? Well, the French laid out a fine city although it badly needs a coat of paint and a lot of urban renewal. Our hotel is on a fine square with on one side a magnificent rococo palace, now housing the People's Council, in good condition, plastered yellow with white colonnades. The old Imperial Palace, stormed by tanks on the last days of the 1945 withdrawal, is a typical French palace in fine grounds. Our Lady's Cathedral, still open as a Catholic church, is a twin-tower spectacle. There are wide tree-lined boulevards and ornate buildings, shabby now among the unimaginable masses who have shops, workshops, everything, in the ground floor and on the pavements outside. And there is the abandoned US Embassy, a windowless, bombproof citadel with a helipad on the roof. 'We won't leave Saigon,' boasted a US ambassador, 'until that tamarind tree falls.' The last message to the Pentagon from the US ambassador in 1975 was, 'I'm cutting down the tamarind tree.' An amazed audience in the operations room in Washington could only wonder, 'What's the goddamn man saying - he's mad.' *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

*Wednesday, 30 March 1988*

Called for at 7.30 am to travel to Tien Giang Province, to the city of My Tho, 70 km south through the rice paddy fields of the Mekong Delta. The road is narrow, two lanes, full of bikes and cycles as well as trucks of all ages and sizes. It is a busy harvest time in the rice fields with the crop, growing in water until five days ago, stored in sheaves in the fields, now bone dry. Some are threshing the rice by hand with flails; others are drying the grain along the roadside, others winnowing it with hand-powered little machines. The workers are mostly women, all in their conical hats and pyjama suits, black bottoms and any colour blouses. There are date palms, watermelons, sugar cane and fruit trees of all species. Fields are very square, bounded by irrigation channels.

There is thick jungle vegetation in places and it is easily seen how useless a high-technology army was in such terrain which stretches to the horizon in every direction. In fact there is no horizon as the land is flat as the sea and long distance visibility is nil with the enclosure of thick vegetation on the roadside. All along the road are wayside stalls, some with nothing to sell except cigarettes or watermelons or reed mats. In almost every field is a vaulted tomb, some with many, all usually white and some with elaborate headstones. Vietnamese peasants bury the dead on their own land and this ancestral bond with the land is what makes them defend it so stoutly. There are many pink villas, from the French days I suppose, but houses are mostly huts of coconut branches. They look flimsy but are well-kept and clean.

The town of Longan which we pass through is as crowded as HCMC and there are stalls everywhere. Here I see the first horse in Vietnam, a miserable nag under a cart too big and a load too heavy for his spindly legs. Everything

here is overcrowded, the cyclos, the porters with huge loads on a bamboo pole across the shoulders, the taxis, pick-ups – all have loads beyond their capacity.

My travelling companions are Mr Binh and Mr Quan, my interpreter. Mr Binh was a Vietcong soldier and a big man in the Liberation. His brother was prime minister until he died last week. I asked him to tell me the story of the Liberation. With that, and his comments on the passing scenery, the miles sped by although progress was slow enough with the traffic. Mr Binh was very open about the struggle and seemed to bear no grudge against the US. He told me how the government had changed in the past eighteen months to encourage the people.

Previously, a farmer had to sell all his grain to the government and there was such dissatisfaction with prices that production was low. Now the farmer can sell in the market but must pay 10 per cent tax. If he produces a second crop he pays no tax on it. Before the industry was owned by the government but now private enterprise for people is encouraged. The biggest problem is lack of funds to create jobs and there are many unemployed, or underemployed as they say. There are 600,000 people homeless and they hustle for a living selling cigarettes and trinkets. They sleep rough and beg on the streets. That said, I have seen no sign at all of hunger, malnutrition or child neglect. All along the countryside kids are happy-looking and caringly tended by adults and older children.

We reach the Tien Giang Distribution Centre where Mr Bac hosts the usual tea party with fruit. This is a fine building and I admire the excellent woodwork of doors and office furniture made from teaks and hardwoods in Mr Bac's factory. We catch our first sight of the great Mekong River about 1 km wide to an island of 5000 inhabitants dividing the river here in two.

We cruise for 45 minutes to the island landing pitch. We pass stake weirs with nets to catch large river prawns. All along the banks are large clumps of tree branches fixed to the riverbed. It seems that the prawns cling to these in order to avoid being washed away by strong currents; they are fished every three to four days.

On the island we visit a coffee house where we take shade from the heat now growing to 95°F. We drink coconut juice from the gourd just taken from the tree and we sample green and pink fruits like apple which grow everywhere in abundance. There are precarious paths through pools of stagnant water in which prawns are farmed. The fruit falls from the trees into the ponds and this is their food. I shiver at the thought of prawns reared in such terrible water but I'm assured that they are never served except when boiled!

I have seen snake farms before and I don't want to see another but I must and worse endure the trauma of having a large python wrapped round my shoulders. Back by the same route where I notice many blown-up bridges and rusting watchtowers – relics of a war thankfully in the past.

*Thursday, 31 March 1988*

At 8 am we were taken to the export produce show. The building was the Opera House in the days when the French could afford to bring the best from Europe for a season in Saigon. The French first came as missionaries in the

19th century and word got back that it was a country rich in rice, tropical fruit, sugar cane and rubber trees. Colonisation took place about 1884 and from then until World War Two the country was run entirely for the benefit of France. The Vietnamese were in total slavery and you will hear horrific stories of brutality to peasants in the plantations. 'Coolies' were used to race with rickshaws and they were whipped like racehorses by the riders.

Cities like Saigon, Hue, Haiphong and Hanoi were laid out on the grand scale and built to last for 1000 years of French glory. But the Opera House is now a showroom and the paint has long peeled from the ornate wrought iron of a thousand balconies on wide boulevards. The produce for export is of high quality and cheap but there are not many varieties of products – a lot of lacquer-ware, wood carvings and embroidered cloths. We looked, admired and bought a little.

Then we went to the HCMC Distribution Centre to meet the manager, Mr Nghia, who took us to lunch on Lotus Island on the Saigon river, known to cynical passengers as the Club Mediterranean. The swimming pool is dry and the place has a look of benevolent neglect. The meal was excellent – we started with spring rolls, this time wrapped in rice paper; next came giant prawns, followed by hot soup with meat and vegetables. Beside the wide river, with the world that is HCMC passing by in sampans, ferries, barges and skiffs, it was pleasant and relaxing.

All our friends today were former Vietcong who fought the Japanese, French and Yanks in turn for over thirty years. They are such courteous men and so friendly in their behaviour that it is hard to convince yourself that they were the world's most fearsome fighters. Many were in the jungle for thirty years and, as one said to John Gunning, 'It was terrible with thousands dying of malaria and fighting all the time.'

In the afternoon all the management of Power Co. No. 2 was assembled for a talk from me on 'How to manage ESB'. It is easy to address a group here because the pause for interpretation gives time to think and carefully select the words. There were questions galore and by all accounts it was an experience they never had before. It lasted two and a half hours and I stayed clear of such capitalist thinking as 'In Search of Excellence'.

Tonight we held a reception for all the staff who trained in Ireland – a reunion. It was a great evening: a fine dinner and many Vietnamese rock-songs and stories. Dermot Connellan did us proud with 'Loving Johnnie' and John Gunning with the 'Rose of Tralee' and 'Danny Boy'.

*Friday, 1 April 1988*

Departed 8 am for 'underground city' 45 km north of HCMC. When the Vietcong liberation war commenced in 1948 they started to excavate a maze of underground tunnels, apartments and storerooms. There were kitchens and first-aid posts. About 150 km of tunnels were excavated and the clay is so dry and firm that it is like concrete. There are no supports. Only a small person, as all Vietnamese are, can crawl through and the whole plan is so intricate that

the US Army was never able to locate the extent of the city. About 10,000 troops lived here, next door to the US Army base. The ventilation and means of dispensing smoke to avoid detection is ingenious. We saw only a few samples for the good reason, perhaps, that the citadel is being kept in working order still by the army.

The area in which this citadel is located was known as the Iron Triangle, which was under constant bombing for many years. The US pacification plan was to move all the peasants to fortified villages but this alienated them on account of their ancestral bond to lands in which past generations have been buried. The awe-inspiring thing about this place is the sweat of thousands over twenty-five years who excavated 150 km of tunnels by hand and brought the earth to the surface in small bags to be scattered in the fields. And they did it unknown to the French and Americans. Such is the Oriental patience, endurance and long-range planning!

After siesta we visited the lacquer-ware factory where they had fantastic goods selling very cheap. Tonight Mr Chung, deputy manager of Tu Duc power station, was our host at dinner. Another relaxing evening – all are because the Vietnamese are very informal and like to enjoy themselves when they are out. The only thing different in the meal was that course number five was a boiled chicken, head and all, sitting in a bowl of soup and vegetables. With every meal a large bowl of aromatic herbs is served. Each is different and has some medicinal property. This is for blood pressure, this for the tummy, this to increase a mother's milk! And many more little patches of these special herbs can be seen being cultivated like watercress along canals. Turning out the light at 10.45 pm on Good Friday 1988 in a land very different from Dingle where we usually spent this day, as kids, collecting cockles in the Short Strand before going to the Easter ceremonies.

*Saturday, 2 April 1988*

Away at 8 am for the province of Dong Nai, 70 km south-west from HCMC. This time I'm accompanied by Mr Tung, deputy director, and Mrs Hanh as interpreter. There are one million people in this province and there are only 35,000 electricity customers. The largest city is Bien Hoa and here we visit the distribution centre where the deputy director tells us all about his trials and tribulations. He is a nice man and his staff were very friendly. They brought us to the ceramics factory which employs 3000 staff. The work was done with the most primitive equipment and it was a revelation to see the size, range and quality of the products. They are also very cheap and are shipped to thirty-five countries. I bought a very large vase, about four foot high, and I hope it survives the journey home. It cost \$100.

Lunch was at the Bien Hung Restaurant, the usual six courses, but I'm getting very good at sampling everything and eating nothing. Speeches and toasts and crack – it is easy to forget the need for an interpreter and when you get the hang of it conversation can be very good. The Vietnamese are great gas – always ready with a joke and I have yet to meet a surly one.

The bikes are the real marvel – I would say that they carry 70 per cent of all the transport in this country. I saw one today with boxes so high that the driver could not see over them – he had to constantly look from side to side. There is plenty of water and people seem to be always washing themselves.

At 1.30 pm we are off for a weekend of relaxation to the seaside resort of Vung Tau or Cap St Jacques as it was called in the swinging days of French occupation. Here all the wealthy had expensive villas and there are six large hotels. Ours, the Tao Binh, is excellent. I have a fine suite on Floor 3 looking out on a busy, noisy street. Mr Tu Ngoch, director of the local ESB office, entertained us at dinner and the menu was crab soup, fresh crabs, chicken, prawns and the ubiquitous aromatic leaves. Papaya was dessert and there were the usual speeches and toasts.

After dinner we all went to the dance. Hotel dances are a great thing in Vietnam but the music is in a time warp. It stopped in the fifties and I could swear the guy playing the sax was Mick Delahunty. We heard 'Tennessee Waltz', 'My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean', 'Whatever Will Be Will Be' *agus alân eile mar iad*. Vietnamese take their dancing very seriously and many go to dancing classes.

They are very graceful with many jazzers doing tangos, sambas, quicksteps and old-time waltzes with *Come Dancing* precision. We had had enough by 9 pm and went for a short walk before bed. I thought Sacred Heart lamps were things of the past but here they are used in their hundreds to light pavement stalls as there is no street lighting.

Before dinner we had a short tour to the Strawberry Beach, the most upmarket end of the resort in the days of the colonisers. The villas fronting the sea were magnificent – they all belong to the state now and the general aspect of the place is of neglect and decay. Many state organisations use these villas now to give employees the perk of a week-end at the seaside. Power Co. No. 2 has one which houses twelve people but a large residence with 110 rooms is being built and all ESB staff are invited! Offshore here, about 10 km, are the oil rigs. Russia is doing a joint development with Vietnam. All the crude oil is exported to Russia to pay for arms and imports. How much of the oil money will ever reach 65 million is a question. There are many Russian workers in the hotel and I'm told that generally they are not liked – Linsos, they call them.

There are a lot of Aussies here buying fish for export. Prawns, shrimp and crab are here in abundance and it is a big trade carried on at two levels – exports from state companies and black market exports mostly at night to Thai boats which come offshore laden with electronic rubbish to exchange for fish. The videos, TVs, music centres, computers then get into the street black market in HCMC which thrives alongside the state-run businesses.

The official exchange rate is about 500 dong to the US dollar but the black-market rate is 2100 today. So where will it then go? Inflation is high and people working for the state are squeezed – those in private enterprise can cope but they say that corruption and pressure abound in all directions ... this has to be with an economy in this city largely a black one.

*Easter Sunday, 3 April 1988*

Up at 7 am and to Mass at 8 am. White-robed nuns were conducting choir practice for 500 children, four to fifteen year olds. Boys on one side, girls opposite. They were well disciplined, all concentrating on the hymns written on blackboards all round the church. The singing was great and after twenty minutes Mass started. The church was full and the Mass was sung entirely. It was an impressive Easter ceremony and even the 'unbelievers' from PC2 who came with us said that they enjoyed it. Vietnam is 20 per cent Catholic, the rest Buddhists. When we later visited the Pagoda of the receiving Buddha there were many people lighting joss sticks at shrines. The priests in saffron robes have shaven heads and it is hard to know their sex.

On our way to the beach we see a giant statue of a Vietnamese hero who repulsed the Mongols and became King. On a high headland presiding over the whole of Vung Tau is a mighty statue of Christ the King. Our destination, the beach, is black with people. A place is reserved for us – our group includes three drivers, Mrs Hang, Mr Tung, Mr Khoa, a photographer and two ladies from the local ESB. We have deckchairs and sunshades but we are packed as tightly as at a football match. There are sellers of cigarettes, cockles, prawns – anything you want. Ladies with the bamboo pole on the shoulder with a charcoal fire to cook as you fancy. Kids were everywhere and carried large car wheel tubes to rent for the sun.

All human life is here on the beach and in the sea. It seems unpolluted except for the thousands in it! We sunbathe and enjoy the crack until noon when we return to the hotel for lunch – long and sumptuous. Cockles, steamed bass baked in a wrapped rice paper with all sorts of herbs, crab soup, little fish, then slices of beef and liver cooked in boiling hot water on the table with herbs and carrots, mango, tea and toasts. Well fortified with fruit, we say goodbye to Vung Tau at 2.30 pm and reach home at 5 pm.

I intended to go to bed early but on the rooftop lounge I met Mike Byrne and wife from Perth, here processing seafood, Ron Cox from England and his Vietnamese wife, and two Vietnamese. An American writer, Georgia, had returned from Campuchia and she regaled us with stories of the Pol Pot genocide and her other escapades for the past three days. The news and talk was so good that it was 6.30 pm in no time.

There are so few foreigners here that they seek each other out on every occasion and everybody knows everyone else. The Linsos are the only ones who keep to themselves and by all accounts they are not popular, despite all the missionary and economic aid. The Vietnamese have a joke: French – a lot of heart, no money; Americans – plenty of money, no heart; Linsos – no money, no heart.

John Gunning and I had dinner with Eugene, a Swiss priest here in charge of the UN programme for orderly departure of Vietnamese to US and elsewhere. He also looks after 20,000 Cambodian refugees in Vietnam. He is a much travelled man in all the problem spots from Africa to the Philippines and it was fascinating to learn from him the realities of world politics and the corruption in Third World countries. All in all it was a fantastic weekend.

*Monday, 4 April 1988*

Left at 8.30 am, accompanied by Mr Bon, in two cars heading for Da Lat city, 350 km away in the mountains north-west of HCMC. It is very hot and humid and our car, an old Merc, has no air conditioning. It is also of very inadequate power but the driver graciously tells me he is driving slowly to allow me to see more. Our destination is 3500 feet above HCMC, which is at sea level. As we climb the steep inclines the agriculture changes from rice paddies to uplands of rubber plantations laid out in neat rows, line after line. The French planted these and they now belong to the state and, surprise, some belong to private persons in this socialist country with capitalist profit everywhere. The latex is bled from the bark between 5 and 9 am and one person, usually a woman, tends to 300 trees.

Then we reach the uplands of coffee and tea bushes. There are many picking tea leaves into straw baskets on their backs. The coffee bushes are in flower now and it is as if whole stretches are covered with snow. The roadside is a technicoloured parade with flowers of all hues – jasmine, orchids, bougainvillea, hibiscus, bird of paradise, roses, vines and many more with no names. The mountains are volcanic and there are many strange shapes – one called Venus has twin peaks of unmistakable shape and perfect symmetry.

We stop in Dinh Quan, a small one-horse town, to say hello to the ESB manager Mr Danh, who has 300 customers and 60 staff. We are now in high mountains of deep passes, jungle, ravines and small rivers. The people here are dark and coarse, an ethnic minority of about 250,000. The Kho, who were natives before the Annanites, or Vietnamese, descended from God knows where thousands of years ago. We pass through Banana Pass and in front of us is a great stone park of sheer rock, the name of which is 'She who waits for her husband'. This is a great country for legends; the lady waited so long for her husband to return from the wars that she turned to stone. The emperor had to have the best tea so he starved his horse and then let him loose in a special tea garden. He ate many tea leaves and was killed before they were digested. The tea leaves were then recovered and made tea which delighted the emperor.

We have lunch at Bao Loc with the local manager Mr Minh. We let the heat of the day pass gently before we start the final leg to Da Lat. We stop to see a substation site and we talk to the natives trading their tea bushes. There are a few pink new houses but accommodation is mostly straw-roofed wooden huts. The area seems prosperous but the work is hard and many loads are carried on bikes, on buffaloes and on the backs of men and women. All the smiles and friendliness are always there.

Da Lat is the capital of the Lam Dong Province of one million people and it is a beautiful place 3500 feet high. Cool and temperate, surrounded by jungle, lakes, flowers and waterfalls.

The chairman of the People's Committee of the Lam Dong Province, Mr Khanh, came to see me at 6 pm. A short, elderly man over seventy I would say. We both made long speeches of friendship, cordiality and co-operation and we all dined until 8 pm. A short walk along the lake, through the market square,

past the sacred-heart lamps and it is time for bed at 9.30 pm. I now have to crawl into my mosquito net because they would eat you alive here at night I'm told. I've taken my tablets and here's hoping!

It is 6.45 am Tuesday and I am looking out on Da Lat in bright sunshine but cool as a May day at home. The roofs are red tiled and the buildings yellow and white. A church spire, beside the large building of the People's Committee, stands over a bus market with an abundance of vegetables, fruit, spices and cooked meats. Away amongst shady woods are chateaus reminding us of how life was here for some in the days of the colony.

How the Vietnamese walk is a study in itself. Small they are, but they walk erect, head held high, shoulders back, arms swinging and feet slightly turned out. Whether on the roads, streets or inside there is a pride and determination about their bearing, no slouching or drooping shoulders. Even the women burdened with two loads on a pole walk with a rhythm of short steps in time with the bending of the pole. I'll have to enquire from Mr Bon if carriage and deportment are taught.

*Tuesday, 5 April 1988*

Slept very well under my mosquito net. Up at 7 am, had breakfast of two fried eggs and tea, then we were taken to the famous Vale D'Amour with the Lake of Good Wishes beside it. There were many tourists around although our hotel was deserted; I met two guys from the Isle of Man and three from California – all having a great time. Vale D'Amour was like any holiday resort, indeed like the Gap of Dunloe with jarveys and hustlers for pony rides. Instead we went on a small paddle boat, Mr Bon and I. He is a great travelling companion and storyteller.

We visit the market which is large and stocked with every product you ever heard of. People here are very independent, far less gregarious than other Vietnamese. Many are the dark, swarthy 'hill people' we met yesterday. It seems that these tribes are a law unto themselves and stretch across Kampuchea, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand like the Afghans across Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan.

Our stay in Da Lat was far too short and at 10 am we set out on the dusty road home. As we look back my last sight is of two different beliefs – a tall slender spire topped by a crucifix and a tall column topped by a red star of Socialism. These two juxtapositions are everywhere in Vietnam.

At Bao Loc Mr Minh is waiting for us and we lunch with him again – the usual run of courses. He is a great man for the crack and when I come back he says it must be for a real party with 'me singing'. The manager of this state restaurant is a very courteous ancient man. He was so pleased at my compliments of his food that he presented me with two kilos of tea and coffee beans.

Off again and stop briefly at a waterfall through which we can walk. It shoots so far out from an overhanging rock that there is a park behind the wave of water. This territory abounds in idyllic spots such as this. We stop to look at some weird volcanic boulders heaped precariously on top of one



another with a huge stone Buddha atop a mountain. On our way again to Kiem Tan to visit a coffee plantation whose owner is a friend of Mr Bon's. Mr Quang is the man and he has it made. His home is up a mile of dusty *bobreen* and what a house – handmade, inlaid furniture, a dining-room table laid for twenty diners. We could only stay for tea, fruit and beer and Mr Quang was courteously disappointed. He is manager of a 1200-acre coffee co-op and he has 300 acres of his own. He is Catholic and in his courtyard is a mighty statue of 'St Mary', as my interpreter calls the Blessed Virgin. The chairman and two members of the People's Council for the district were here. They were very young, well-dressed men and again I was struck by this juxtaposition of religion and communism, state enterprise and private enterprise. After seven hours on the road and many stops we arrived back in Rex Hotel at 5.15 pm.

Tonight we had a dinner given by Tu Duc power station. There was a big wedding on and music was loud. We had the usual round of speeches and toasts. Fairly exhausted by the time we hit the hay at 10 pm.

*Wednesday, 6 April 1988*

This morning was free for shopping but I didn't want to go as I have done enough already. My little elderly Mr Truong nevertheless called at 8 am and away we went on foot, hot and sweaty through the crowded streets. The markets are on the pavements and each person has a small range of goods; cigarettes, fans, watches and rubbish generally. A polite form of begging is to have a bathroom scales to weigh anyone who feels like it. I have been weighed many times just to give a few 'dongs' to somebody. All the weights are different. I hosted a lunch in our hotel for the management of the Power Co. from 12 to 2 pm.

At 2 pm we went to the Power Co. where we saw the video which has been following me everywhere – of dinners, lunches, speeches, scenery, etc. They intend to pass it to me as a souvenir of my visit which will be very nice. We started a business meeting at 3 pm to draw up a memorandum of agreement and this took until 5 pm. The translation means that all business takes twice the time but it is no problem as the interpreters are good and we have got the hang of our hosts' humour. It is easy to relate to them, they are simple, direct people.

Tonight we had a big dinner to say farewell. It was a magnificent floating restaurant on what was once an American frigate on the Saigon River. There was a band playing fifties music and the courses were many and delicious. This was really the night for speeches – everyone spoke and proposed a toast. By now they know I'm no drinker and excuse me for not throwing back the full glass of vodka or brandy or snake wine. Mostly I drink lemon juice and I take no ice to be careful, but when I say 'no ice' they always think I want it hot so I get a glass of lemon juice made with boiling water.

Every man in Vietnam smokes incessantly, between courses and during courses but I have rarely seen a woman or girl smoke. We say our farewells to Mr Binh, Mr An, Mrs An, Mr Ai, etc. but the rest we will see again tomorrow. Dinners usually finish about 9.30 pm, after which John Gunning, Dermot Connellan and I retire for an hour to the rooftop terrace of Rex Hotel. It has

become a very precious hour each day as we have the opportunity to talk naturally rather than in staccato sentences for interpreters. Strange how Irishmen in such a situation revert to telling stories about Mayo and Roscommon and Kerry. My two companions are good company and they are both known to many people here – even to kids on the street. Dermot Connellan is ‘Mr with Red Hair’ and there is hardly his like in the whole of Indochina. I would never have believed that the small team we had here would have made such an impression – so many people have told me about them and their supportive, helpful attitude. They can be let out!

*Thursday, 7 April 1988*

At 8 am I went on another tour on a cycle with Mr Quan and Mr Truong – as they are small they shared one bike. The streets were crowded and it was a rather hairy experience with cars, bikes, everything flashing past. The rule for pedestrians is never to hesitate crossing the street as everything that moves can then take evasive action. It is an existence of perpetual narrow misses as there are thousands of bikes on every street. We visited the Ho Chi Minh historic museum and I was educated on the fight for freedom ranging back as long as our own.

We had a short visit to the office to sign the firm draft of the agreement with speeches and pictures. Mr Luu, the managing director, presented me with an ornamental tortoise shell. It is beautiful but I must leave it to John to ship home as I would never get it past customs in Oman.

Twelve noon to 2 pm was packing time and the two ladies on my corridor insisted on helping me. They tied up the parcels and lifted all the cases down to the lorry – they are tiny ladies and I worried that the large parcel would fall on one of them with fatal results, but they were strong and tough. A very large retinue of cars accompanied us to the airport, which was bedlam. We got VIP treatment but it still took an hour to get through immigration and booking. The Vietnamese are very emotional and the farewells were energetic events of hugging and hand-shaking. The days in Vietnam went by like a breeze and I enjoyed every minute of it.

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## *Biographical Record*

Patrick J. Moriarty, FCIS, FIEI, FIPM, LL.D

- Born:* 18 June 1926 in Dún Síon, Dingle, Co. Kerry
- Family:* Paddy Moriarty married Esther O'Sullivan. Their five children are Emer, Maeve, John, Patricia and Dermot
- Qualifications:* Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries  
Fellow of the Institute of Engineers in Ireland  
Fellow of the Irish Management Institute  
Member of the Institute of Public Administration  
Conferred Honorary Doctorate (LL.D) by  
University College Dublin
- ESB:* Joined ESB in 1945 and served in a variety of senior positions  
Appointed Director Personnel in 1970  
Appointed Assistant Chief Executive in 1981  
Appointed Chief Executive in 1981  
Appointed Chairman in 1991; served for a five-year period
- RTÉ:* Served as Chairman of the RTÉ National Broadcasting Authority for a three-year period, 1979-81
- National College of Industrial Relations:* Appointed Chairman of the National College of Industrial Relations in 1991

- Irish Quality Association:* President of the Irish Quality Association
- Irish Management Institution:* Member of the Board of IMI
- Central Bank of Ireland:* Member of the Board of the Central Bank of Ireland
- Blasket Island Foundation:* Chairman of the Blasket Island Foundation
- Culliton Report:* Chairman of Task Force appointed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce to implement the Culliton Report.
- RHA:* Member of the Board of RHA
- Kerry Airport:* Member of the Board of Kerry Airport
- Siamsa Tíre:* Member of the Board of Siamsa Tíre
- Leopardstown Racecourse:* Member of the Board of Leopardstown Racecourse
- Dublin Kerry Association:* Chairman of the Kerry Association in Dublin  
from 1962 to 1965  
1990 Kerry Person of the Year
- The GAA:* Appointed to Development Committee to improve GAA administration in 1971
- Coláiste Íde:* Member of Special Committee to defer the closure of Coláiste Íde
- Grange Golf Club:* A keen and accomplished golfer, playing off 5 handicap; former Captain and President of Grange Golf Club

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The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial statements. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses, income, and transfers. The text suggests that a systematic approach to record-keeping is essential for identifying trends and managing the business effectively.

In addition to record-keeping, the document highlights the need for regular reconciliation. This process involves comparing the internal records with external statements, such as bank statements, to identify any discrepancies. Reconciliation helps in detecting errors, fraud, or omissions early on, allowing for prompt correction. The text also mentions the importance of reviewing the records periodically to assess the overall financial health of the organization.

Furthermore, the document discusses the role of internal controls in ensuring the accuracy of financial data. It suggests implementing a system of checks and balances to minimize the risk of errors and misstatements. This can include separating duties, requiring approvals for transactions, and conducting regular audits. The text stresses that strong internal controls are crucial for maintaining trust and transparency in the financial reporting process.

Finally, the document concludes by emphasizing the value of clear communication in financial management. It advises that all financial information should be presented in a clear, concise, and understandable manner. This involves using appropriate accounting terminology and providing detailed explanations for significant items. The text also notes that regular communication with stakeholders, such as investors and creditors, is essential for maintaining their confidence in the organization's financial performance.





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OWEN MCCROHAN grew up on Valentia Island, County Kerry, where his mother ran the local post office. Surrounded by water and with no link to the mainland other than by ferry-boat, there were few distractions. A night out at the local cinema, where films like *High Noon* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* drew rapturous applause, became the highlight of the week. 'Growing up,' he says, 'the only ambition I ever seriously entertained was to win a South Kerry championship medal and own a good singing goldfinch.'

Seeing at first hand the scars that followed from mass emigration to foreign parts helped foster an obsession to remain permanently on home ground. 'I held an aversion to leaving home because over many years I had observed the devastating effects of emigration on the local community. I saw men grow old coming and going to England and this left an abiding impression on my young mind.' A job at the local Cable Station staved off the evil day but only for a while.

In 1966, when the Cable Station closed down with the loss of thirty-three jobs, he transferred to the London headquarters of Western Union International. Much later he returned to Valentia before moving permanently to Dublin.

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