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**AN BILLE CHUIDEACHTA NA MIANRAÍ, 1947.
MINERALS COMPANY BILL, 1947.**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

1. Mianraí, Teoranta is a statutory Company incorporating Comhlucht Gual Láthraeh Shliabh Árdachadh, Teoranta and Comhlucht Lorgtha agus Forbartha Mianraí, Teoranta. The Company is charged, under the provisions of the Minerals Exploration and Development Company Act, 1941, and the Minerals Company Act, 1945, with the responsibility of developing and working Slievardagh Coalfield and examining, developing and working other mineral deposits in this country. It is financed for these purposes by means of repayable advances, the limit of such advances under existing legislation being £400,000.

2. The Company has since 1941 been engaged mainly in raising coal at Slievardagh Coalfield, County Tipperary, and in producing phosphate rock in County Clare and pyrites in Avoca, County Wicklow, for use in the manufacture of super-phosphate.

3. The Company has drawn up a programme based on the advice of its expert consultants for the detailed exploration and development of Irish mineral resources. This programme comprises geological and geophysical surveying, diamond core-drilling, sinking of shafts, etc., and is estimated to occupy a period of seven years at a cost of £85,000 per annum or £595,000 in all. The object of this exploration and development work is to obtain definite information in regard to the nature and quantity of the mineral resources of the country and the advisability of the commercial exploitation of the more promising of these resources in the light of modern methods for the treatment of minerals. The proposals of the Company in this regard have been approved by the Government.

4. The Bill has two main purposes. It is intended to provide
- (a) further capital for the development and working of Slievardagh Coalfield by Mianraí, Teoranta, and
 - (b) capital for the large scale exploration and development of Irish mineral resources, which the Company proposes to undertake.

It is proposed to give effect to these purposes by certain amendments and extensions of the Minerals Exploration and Development Company Act, 1941, and the Minerals Company Act, 1945.

5. Following an instruction by the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mianraí, Teoranta has made an effort to dispose of Slievardagh Coalfield to private enterprise as a going concern but no offers to purchase were received. In view of the existing shortage of coal, it is felt that the Company should, for the time being, continue to work these coal deposits. It is accordingly provided in Section 3 of the Bill for the financing of the Company for this purpose by means of repayable advances, the limit of such advances being £50,000. It is also provided that the provisions of Sections 11 and 12 of the Minerals Exploration and Development Company Act, 1941, which deal with the payment of interest and the ultimate repayment of advances shall apply to monies paid to the Company under this Section.

6. Apart from working Slievardagh Coalfield, Mianraí, Teoranta will, in future, confine itself to exploration and development as distinct from commercial exploitation of mineral deposits. (Exploration work consists of the sinking of bores, driving of tunnels and the systematic sampling of ore. Development work

consists of shaft-sinking and drainage and general work designed to get the deposit into a condition for commercial working.) Section 5 of the Bill provides that the Minister for Industry and Commerce may, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, pay to the Company in the financial year current at the passing of the Bill and in each of the six following financial years, a grant not exceeding £85,000 for exploration and development work carried out by it either on its own initiative, with the approval of the Minister for Industry and Commerce, or in compliance with a requisition by the Minister. Grants under this Section must not be used for any purpose other than that for which they are made available.

It is intended that if the exploration and development work performed by the Company under this Section reveals information which justifies commercial exploitation the Minister for Industry and Commerce will arrange to recover from the commercial operators the cost of the exploration and development work carried out by the Company.

7. Mianraí, Teoranta was handicapped in its working of mineral deposits during the emergency not only by technical difficulties arising from the irregular and faulted nature of the deposits which it was exploiting, but also by difficulties in the recruitment of skilled miners and the purchase of mining equipment. It has incurred losses as a result of its operations during the emergency. It is estimated that at the passing of the Bill these losses will amount to approximately £414,000. This figure represents the difference between the total amount of repayable advances which will have been made to the Company together with interest accrued thereon and the actual value of the assets remaining with the Company. Since the Company will not, in future, be in a position to earn profits out of which its debts to the Minister for Industry and Commerce might be paid off, it is proposed to write off the balance of its indebtedness to the Minister as on the 30th September, 1947.

Section 2 of the Bill accordingly provides that the Minister for Finance will issue a certificate certifying (a) the value of the assets of the Company on the 30th September, 1947, and (b) the total liabilities of the Company to the Minister for Industry and Commerce on foot of repayable advances made to it together with interest thereon. By virtue of subsection (3) of Section 2 of the Bill the Company will stand released from that portion of its liabilities to the Minister represented by the difference between its assets and liabilities as certified by the Minister for Finance.

8. Section 7 of the Bill provides for the furnishing by the Company to the Minister of an annual report giving the results of its prospecting, exploration and development work during each year and also such information regarding its operation as the Minister may from time to time require.

9. Section 8 of the Bill provides that the Company shall not publish the results of any prospecting, exploration or development work carried out by it or any information in relation thereto without the consent of the Minister for Industry and Commerce. It is provided in Section 9 of the Bill that no further advances shall be paid to the Company under Section 10 of the Minerals Exploration and Development Company Act, 1941, after the date of the passing of the Bill. Section 10 of the Bill provides that after the date of the passing of the Bill the Minister shall not require the Company to carry out prospecting work under Section 13 of the Minerals Exploration and Development Company Act, 1941, nor shall he pay any grants to the Company for the purpose of complying with a requisition under this Section.

ROINN TIONSAIL AGUS TRÁCHTÁLA.

Iúl, 1947.