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Editorial

OUR BOGS

Those who watch assiduously the electric television (and perhaps others who take their news from closer to the source) will be aware that a degree of controversy exists as to the future use of our bogs, particularly of the hundred (or so) thousand acres now developed for fuel production by *Bord na Mona*. The main argument against the fuel cutting policy comes from horticulturists, who claim that a valuable natural asset, capable of sustaining several centuries of cropping at high yield levels, is being destroyed. The counter argument seems to be that, since it is necessary to remove the upper moss peat before the horticulturally suitable wood peat is reached, this wood peat of high calorific value must also be burned if the whole venture is to make any kind of economic sense.

There appears, however, to be sharp disagreement between the two sides as to the extent of this wood peat in midland bogs. This question surely is susceptible of definite settlement?

The telecast in question did not ignore western blanket bogs: agricultural work at Glenamoy was well covered.

What was most notable though, about the programme, was the complete absence of foresters from the discussions. Leaving aside the tree stumps which make it plain, even to the most simple minded, that the boglands were once forests, and the (perhaps simple minded) corollary that these forests could or should be replaced, it is a reflection on the impact of Forestry and its potentialities in this country that such an important issue in the field of land use policy could be discussed without seriously raising the subject of afforestation. Afforestation cannot be seriously discussed in the absence of foresters.

Perhaps we have taken insufficient interest in this subject. Perhaps we have made insufficient noise. If the first is true perhaps more information would increase the interest. Perhaps Mr. T. A. Barry's article in this issue of *Irish Forestry* may help to do this.