

Norachcholai Coal Power Plant ^{17/04/01} —the Bishop's stand ^{Island}

The letter from the Bishop of Chilaw, indicating the inflexible attitude of the Church regarding the location of the proposed Coal Power Plant must come as a great disappointment to all those interested in the economic development of this country. It is especially painful as we are in the throes of a power crisis, and it requires little imagination to realise the huge damage that will follow in the next few years because of these short-sighted actions.

The Bishop says the Coal Power Plant is not in the interest of the people of Puttalam, and wants it to go to Hambantota. One objection is the huge transmission loss all the way to the Western Province, where the bulk of the consumption will take place. But what if the Mahanayake says that it will harm the majority of Buddhists in Hambantota, a line he can well take following the good Bishop's precedent.

It seems Coal Power Plants have been

demonised thanks to ill-informed Professors, Bishops, and Environmentalists. I was glad to see that Mr. Norbert Manatunga has dropped the four Professors from his band of supporters, presumably after I pointed out that the Professor of Botany's theory of climate changes to Sri Lanka from hot water floating on the sea was a scientific howler.

Let us see what is happening in Tamil Nadu, a state close to us, in which I am sure a good many Roman Catholics live. Many Coal Power Plants have flourished there for decades, and I trust the Bishop will make a visit to see for himself what these Power Plants do. I can list them as follows:

• Neyveli 1, 11	2070 MW
• Tuticorin	1050 MW
• Mettur	840 MW
• North Madras	630 MW
• Ennore	450 MW

It will be seen that all these Coal Plants are

bigger than the 300 MW we are planning, and total over 4500 MW. New Coal Power Plants under construction or planning;

- China Light & Power (Madras) - 2 by 506.5 MW
- North Chennai Stage 2 - 2 by 525 MW
- Nagarjine - 2 by 507.5 MW
- Trisakthi - 2 by 500 MW
- North Chennai Stage 3 - 2 by 525 MW

Whilst we are hobbling along putting up with Power crisis after another, we can see how even a State in India goes ahead. I suggest to the new Chairman of the CEB that he take his detractors on a visit to Tamil Nadu to see for themselves that these Power Plants are not the demons they are made out to be.

In fact, it confers economic progress, but some will argue that some seek to be thrive in poverty and ignorance, and their hidden agenda is to perpetuate these conditions. I hope I am proved wrong in this by subsequent events.

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