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Island

The Coal Power Plant — the truth

There are several points in Tissa de Silva's article, which bears a different view point. I think the CEB is perfectly right in organising a seminar to ventilate the subject. So much mis-information has been generated by various parties including University Professors who have never been a thousand miles of a Coal Power Plant, that cautious re-assessment is certainly within democratic orbit.

Party leaders left or right do not have a monopoly of truth, and time will surely show what a wrong and costly decision it is to jettison this power plant, in the face of dire warnings by Power Planners. Did not similar groups, including Catholic nuns demonstrate against the Kandalama Hotel. Today such critics are faithful and admiring occupants.

Mr. Tissa de Silva says we should consider importing electricity by cable. One wonders what Mr. de Silva's specialty, but this is a perfect howler, given the security situation in North, where his electricity cables are going to be laid across the sea at Dhanuskodi. Is he aware that India itself is short of electric power?

Too many people have misguided conceptions of Coal Power Plants. Our neighbour India generates 79 per cent of its electric power from Coal, and the USA, perhaps with the most stringent air pollution standards is the second largest consumer of coal, just behind China.

It is easy now to gloss over this grossly incorrect decision. But come the power cuts of 6 to 10 hours, and the venom will be turned on those responsible. The

Catholic Church will indeed bear the brunt of it, but those who directly suffer will be many millions of Sri Lankans who will just have to cope with the imposed burdens. We are also delaying the supply of electric power to over 5 million Sri Lankans and jeopardising the security of supplies to those who have a connection.

It is a politically expedient decision, and certainly not a democratic one. A democratic decision means the greatest good of the greatest number. This is a selfish decision to satisfy a few with disastrous consequences for the whole country.

May wiser counsel prevail eventually once the heat of elections is laid to rest!

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