

Central Bank — R.C. Church and Norochcholai Coal Plant

Recently, it was reported in the media that the brains of the Central Bank had warned the government of a serious power shortage in 2004 and had urged the government to commence work on the 150 Mw Kotmale Hydro Power Project and continued to say that coal plants should come up thereafter to avert a power shortage later in 2008.

It is knave to suggest the urgent commencement of the Upper Kotmale hydro plant which will produce 150 MW when the urgency should be to urge the government to undertake the coal plant at Norochcholai which will add to the system 300 MW in the first stage.

The Central Bank should know that studies have been completed on this coal project at a cost of US dollars 9 million (Rs. 100 million) and the time period to complete the work and commission same will be the same or less than the Upper Kotmale hydro-plant. Cost wise, it is the same or less. It is therefore very clear that the Central Bank has been influenced politically or otherwise to give periority to the hydro plant overshadowing the coal plant at Norochcholai.

It is strange that this comparison of capacity, time period, cost etc., has not been studied by the bank officials. It would have been advisable if the Central Bank requested the government to undertake both projects simultaneously. That would be the ideal, for funding is already available. Whatever it be, the power shortage is inevitable unless steps are taken to set up diesel plants immediately,

irrespective of the cost and tariff increase.

Here, I consider it is not out of place to mention, to convince the Bishop of Chilaw and the R.C. Church in general, that he should change his attitude or objections for no valid or rational grounds. I take the example of Pope John Paul, our Holy Father, who at the commencement of this millennium admitted to the entire Catholic world, that the R.C. Church has erred, misdirected its flock and sought pardon for sins committed over the past 2000 years, by the church in the name of God. What a magnanimous, humble and honourable gesture. This was reported in 'The Island' on 28.11.98 quoting the Telegraph Papal Bull entitled 'Incarnationis Mysterium' (The Mystery of the Incarnation).

If Pope John Paul, head of the Catholic Church had admitted sinning over the past 2000 years and sought pardon, the obvious question is why the R.C. Church in Sri Lanka, specially the Bishop of Chilaw cannot take this lesson and offer his unconditional support to construct the coal plant at Norochcholai, seeking pardon from St. Anne, our Miraculous Lady of the succour, for misdirecting the faithful and also bringing this country to misery. It is presumed that the R.C. Church is well aware of the Papal Bull referred to above.

Hope this will move the heart of the Bishop and the Misters who objected.

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