

and hijacking on April 6. — (REUTERS)

10/4/2000 Island

Call to heed several vital issues in exploiting Eppawala rock phosphate

The Institution of Engineers said yesterday that it expects the public and the Government to give consideration to the views expressed by the Institution when arriving at a decision on the manner in which Eppawala Rock Phosphate is to be exploited.

"We are happy that our views are shared by the wider scientific community and that they are reflected in the official recommendations made by the NSF Committee" a spokesman for the association said. A committee comprising engineers and scientist from all related fields has made the following recommendations.

Considering that rock phosphate is

an exhaustible natural resource, essential for continued plant and animal life, it has to be exploited conservatively, that is, it should be reserved for the use of local agriculture. Given the extent of proven resources and the estimated requirements for local agriculture, an exploitation rate not in excess of 350,000 tons per annum is recommended.

Considering the suitability for agriculture environmental and archaeological impact cost and the economics and technology of manufacture of the different forms of soluble phosphate fertilisers, Single Super Phosphate fertiliser is recommended as the pre-

ferred form for local manufacture and use.

Given the recommended rate of exploitation and the recommended technology, the field of prospective enterprises capable of setting up operations is wide open. Local public and private sector organisations should be encouraged to acquire the necessary technology, either directly or in collaboration with regional or global partners. Fresh tenders should be called for the phased setting up of a medium scale plant for the manufacture of Single Super Phosphate fertiliser, so as to identify the best option available.