

The Power Struggle

The president of the Chamber of Industries, Armyne Weerasinghe in an interview with 'Business Today' said that the present electricity crisis is not a surprise, nor is it unique to Sri Lanka. Other countries in the region, for instance India, continue to have power cuts in several states within the country.

'In view of the development that has taken place over a period of time, Sri Lanka's power generation capacity needs to be substantially augmented in order to keep pace with the progress being made in the industrial and commercial field. Although the power generation capacity has been increased through hydro and thermal inputs, there is a large gap to be covered in order to meet the ever increasing demands.'



However, he says the problem with the situation in Sri Lanka is that there is no proper planning and management on the subject. There are two aspects to the present problem (a) long term solution to develop capacity and (b) short term solution to get over the immediate crisis.

The short term crisis should be handled by facing reality creating public awareness about the actual facts and soliciting the support of the private sector and public to conserve power and increase self- generating capacity. Power conservation can be encouraged through a rebate for savings in consumption, and self-generating capacity can be increased by encouraging imports of generators through duty free imports and other concessions which must easily be made available."

"The long term solution to the problem is to encourage the private sector to set

up thermal power generation since the hydro power possibilities if any, are limited." The private sector involvement in power generation which is inevitable should be structured in such a way that it would be attractive to the private sector to move into this area of investment. A master plan needs to be drawn up and publicized in which the role of the private sector can be clearly defined, encouraged and guaranteed."