

Cabora—new energy hope for S Africa

AS South Africa faces growing oil and energy crises, new hope could come from the giant Cabora Bassa project nearing completion in Mozambique.

Addressing the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce this week in the Carlton Hotel, hydro-electric authority and former LTA chairman, Dr Henry Olivier, said the 1,400km twin transmission cables to Apollo, Irene, near Pretoria were a year ahead of schedule and would be completed by mid-next year.

South Africa should be injected with new hydro-electric

power from the Zambezi River by mid-1975. The 170-metre-high dam, largest in Africa and fifth largest in the world was 80 percent complete.

It would generate about three times the present power of Kariba at an agreed price to South Africa of 0.3 cents per kilowatt hour.

Dr Olivier said the average cost of the production of power now in South Africa was 0.6 cents per kilowatt hour.

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With this increasingly cheap energy source now at the country's doorstep, South Africa could look forward more and more to hydro-electric power as a yeast factor in baking the economic bread.

Dr Olivier discussed the possible short and long term roles of hydro-electric energy in Southern Africa:

- The energy is cheap and reliable;

- It avoids the capital expenditure in thermal plants;

- Allows for husbanding of coal resources;

- The project would inject some 8 percent of the energy then to be generated in South Africa and would allow "breathing space."

- Relief of present energy crisis from the oil shortage and its political repercussions,

- Hydro-electric power is "clean" and does not pollute like oil.