

Rt. Honourable Winston Peters
Public Meeting
Baycourt
38 Durham Street
Tauranga
9.30 am Saturday the 27th March 2010

“Back To The Future?”

We are approaching the half way mark of the electoral cycle. It's a good point to reflect on where we are headed as a country. New Zealand First sees this as a time when we all need to be especially vigilant, because we believe the need to protect what is worthwhile about New Zealand has never been greater.

But first some thoughts on the political scene.

We have a government intent on projecting an aura of coolness and normality. The prime minister's whole public image is based on one theme – reassurance. In a time of uncertainty he is programmed to be the calming influence. He is portrayed as the grinning, all round good bloke telling us - fret not - all is well. There are two points to make about that. First, let me respectfully remind you that John Key is a front man. He is the smiling face of a right wing government so do not be taken in. Second, if what we have now passes as normal then it does not resemble normal as have understood that word.

So what does the new normality look like?

Well, right now many New Zealanders are being hit hard:

- Many young people are struggling to get a job –any job.
- Many small businesses are struggling to survive.
- Many thousands of Kiwis have had their savings wiped out.

It's 2010 but this National government has a distinctly “retro” – 1990's - look about it. Many of its policies reflect those of 20 years ago. What are they doing in the face of the most profound economic crisis since the Great Depression? You guessed it;

- Restructuring the public sector again without any particular method or measurable savings.
- Restructuring the health sector again – and creating another bureaucratic bailiwick called the National Health Board to rival the Ministry of Health.
- Putting everything up for sale from the conservation estate to citizenship.
- Throwing thousands of people out of work and then telling them to get jobs where there are none.
- Setting up a monster called a super city in Auckland where the ratepayers get stripped of their assets and their democratic rights.

It all has a familiar look to it. It's like we have a Rip Van Winkle Government that's woken up after sleeping for the past 20 years! Nowhere is there any hint of a strategic plan or logic to their tinkering and tampering. They're like a bunch of kids who've broken into a lolly shop.

In many ways the proposal to start mining the conservation estate is a good insight in to the shallow thinking of this Government; just the latest example of NZ stumbling from one

failed economic panacea to the next.

From right wing monetarist theory that was to make us “the financial capital of the world”, through to unparalleled immigration that would rejuvenate our society and now on to mining, the latest light bulb to explode in the minds of the New Right.

Look what happened in the recent rise in world dairy prices.

Government allowed our exchange rate to inexplicably rise as well which destroyed any gain in profits, growth or investment at home and this latest notion could be even worse.

Foreigners will reap nearly all the benefits, our exchange rate will rise again and domestic manufacturing and exporters will be hammered once again.

What a stark contrast, this Government’s enthusiasm towards mining with its’ indifference to manufacturing and exporting.

Spending tens of millions of dollars on free market negotiations whilst totally neglecting the fundamental settings required for manufacturers and exporters in this country.

Nearly every month we lose part of our manufacturing base whether it's washing machines or Moro bars. Yet without a manufacturing industry in New Zealand we will be dependent on imports for even basic items. Our children will be doomed to either going overseas or to a “waiting on tables” economy – and the chance of ever escaping foreign indebtedness will be lost.

So we have a government drooling over the prospects of a lot of international mining companies having the run of our conservation estate but blithely ignoring the far more serious need to sustain our manufacturing base.

Manufacturing is where the jobs are and the opportunity to build a deeper more sustainable economy.

What started out as the government's innocuous sounding “stocktake” of the conservation estate has morphed into widespread despoliation of our natural heritage.

This mining issue is significant – if they get away with raiding our protected national parks the next thing is they will go after other protected areas – like your pensions!

Beware!

Every time some long held expectation is abandoned it will only encourage them to make further assaults on the fabric of our society. Is that alarmist? We don't think so. National has a track record when it comes to breaking undertakings.

New Zealand First does not buy the government’s attempt to propagate a sense of calm complacency. We don't have a crystal ball but it is obvious that the economic outlook is fragile.

So far New Zealand has been spared a lot of the fallout from the worldwide recession.

To their credit, the Australasian banks never did succumb to the madness that gripped

their counterparts in the United States and Britain.

But there is no room for smugness.

Globally, the bailouts of the financial systems have cost billions. It's going to take years, not months, to pay off the rescue packages and everywhere, including in New Zealand, governments are swimming in a sea of red ink.

You do not need to be an oracle to foresee tough times ahead.

So while New Zealand has not made the headlines like Dubai, Greece and Eire we are vulnerable.

This is yet another reason for people to stay alert.

In an environment dominated by debt and deficits it will be politics – not fairness or equity – that determines who wins and who loses.

So the recent threats to the Super Gold Card was just a straw in the wind of what lies ahead.

We are urging people to be alert. Because these are areas where a lot is at stake – and where things can be lost by stealth unless we are vigilant.

Health

New Zealand First recognises that health spending cannot grow unchecked. An ageing population will put more pressure on the health system care. Productivity applies in health care as in every sector of society. But great care has to be taken to improve health productivity without compromising the quality and quantity of health services. Already we are seeing arbitrary cutting in the health sector. We will be watching the health sector – because our health services are not so lavishly provided that bits can be chopped off without causing real damage.

Immigration

The absurd open door immigration policy must be ended – soon! New Zealand is a land of paradox. It is a country of opportunity – but only for immigrants. The sons and daughters of Kiwis know they face better prospects overseas. At a time of high unemployment and cutbacks, dishing out New Zealanders' entitlements to more migrants and their families beggars belief

As everybody knows, New Zealand First is the only party with a commitment to a restrictive and rigorously administered immigration policy.

You might have heard of a recent case in which the Human Rights Commission was asked to clarify whether a Sikh student should be allowed to wear a ceremonial dagger to school. A Sikh Society spokesman estimated more than 50 children and a few teachers wear the daggers. He has been involved in discussions about pupils at schools in Auckland, Hastings, Hamilton, Tauranga, Te Puke, Wellington and Christchurch. The knives are "not a weapon" and are only ever used to "fight for good", according to the spokesman. He said New Zealand had become increasingly multi-cultural and schools had to understand

the issue!

Excuse me! It is outrageous that school children should be allowed to take knives to school in this country. We have enough problems in schools without arming a group of students and for those members of the Indian community who insist on it – we suggest that they exercise their knife-carrying religious rites somewhere else – like back in India.

That's the problem with immigration in this country. We bring in hundreds of thousands of people from alien cultures and then have to put up with the cultural and religious baggage that some inflict on us. They come here and expect us to fit in with them.

And now they have a new cheerleader – Pita Sharples from the Maori Party who says we don't treat Asian newcomers well enough. We don't care if he personally wants to perform a powhiri for each plane load, but this is the same Pita Sharples who is supposed to be representing Maori in this country. Maori who are being hammered economically by the National Party behind Pita's back.

Democracy

And while we are on the subject, the Maori Party, which was democratically elected to Parliament by the way, is now questioning the democratic principle of one person one vote. During a Race Relations Day speech last week Mr Sharples spoke of being saddened by the Government's decision not to include designated Maori seats on the Auckland super-city council.

He told *Morning Report* on Monday that the concept of one vote for one person is an artificial political concoction.

So Dr Sharples does not believe in the very system that made him a minister of the Crown. It's like having an atheist as head of a church. Does he want New Zealand's democratic system changed to match some tinpot African state – based on tribal lines – with perpetually warring factions? Does he want selected Maori simply appointed to Parliament to avoid the hassles of the electoral process?

And how is it that tens of thousands of Maori are happy with one person one vote in Australia but according to the Maori Party, not happy in NZ? “That is Bovine Scatology”.

And while the Maori Party wallows in its separatist racist waffle, the needs of ordinary Maori are being ignored by the very people who are supposed to represent them.

Inequality

Only the wilfully blind would deny that there is growing inequality in our society. This will have major consequences.

Inequality will get worse not better under this government – because the tax cuts will actually give nothing to pensioners and low and modest income earners. The relatively wealthy will do well.

And competition from low wage economies as well as large scale immigration from the Third World is keeping wages down in this country.

However, if we start to take a common sense approach to immigration, foreign ownership

and free trade; we could make real progress in tackling the problem of the working poor in New Zealand.

Foreign Ownership

Loss of prime assets to overseas interests carries massive economic consequences but is still largely ignored by the old parties and the foreign-owned mainstream media.

For example, the Aussie banks were not content with sucking billions in profits from New Zealand they then tried to fiddle our tax laws to their advantage.

Doing something effective to stem the loss of prime assets to foreign ownership is important and urgent.

We are asking that the very first job of the shortly to be formed Productivity Commission should be to look thoroughly at the causes and consequences of foreign ownership and how we can reverse this disastrous trend.

The latest move by Chinese interests to grab a big chunk of our dairy industry should send shivers down the spines of every New Zealander. It represents the biggest threat to our economic security since the social and economic disasters of the eighties and early nineties. We are referring to Hong Kong-listed Natural Dairy, which is seeking to buy New Zealand dairy industry assets worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It plans to buy \$1.5 billion of dairy farms and milk-processing plants here which could be the start of an overseas buy up of the “crown jewels” of New Zealand's biggest export industry. They plan vertical integration – short hand for exploitation and control of every aspect of the business, from production through to end sale.

And those apologists who argue “they can’t take the land with them” demonstrate a regrettable ignorance of both history and unbridled commercial imperialism.

Equally sad is the blithe unawareness of how the Chinese mind and economy works. Far from respecting the Chinese as they claim, they reveal an appalling smugness of their lack of understanding which brings to mind the English saying “the malady of the ignorant is to be ignorant without knowing it.

Natural Dairy is aiming first at the farms owned by the Crafar family in receivership. If by some stroke of madness, the government allows this to happen it will be the beginning of the end.

Overseas interests have been looking at our dairy industry for a long time. If this bid is allowed others will follow.

New Zealanders will end up as dirt-scratching peasants in their own country, tugging their forelocks to overseas masters.

New Zealand First cannot stop this outside Parliament. All New Zealanders who care about their country must fight this all the way to the General Election next year.

Housing

So far NZ has avoided a housing meltdown – our housing market has stayed relatively well

ordered. Unlike the USA there has been no housing crash in New Zealand – yet. But never underestimate a National Government’s capacity to engineer a fiasco!

We do not think the government should sit on its hands if a large number of Kiwis are suffering.

So we would always support prudent, sensible and practical action in the housing sector whether in relation to the rotten buildings crisis or mortgagee sales forced on first home buyers.

If a problem in the housing sector is systemic it's head in the sand stuff to pretend the government does not have a role to play in fixing the mess because it actually caused it in the first place.

National even has the same cabinet minister throwing his hands up in horror at the problem, forgetting he was minister when building standards were thrown out the window.

Separatism

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Nowhere is that statement more apt than in the world of separatism. Creeping, crawling separatism is alive and thriving here.

We helped put together workable – sensible – and just Foreshore and Seabed legislation – that served ALL New Zealanders. That resolution has been cast casually aside by National and the Maori Party. The whole performance of going over that legislation is pointless and divisive – and an unnecessary distraction from important issues facing this country.

And now we get another example of this creeping separatism in the Whanau Ora social services policy being concocted by the Maori Party and National. Heaven knows what sort of a stew of backhanders, mates rates, nepotism and bottomless pit funding this will turn out to be.

Increasingly you are not treated as a New Zealander. You are treated accordingly to your membership of a race based ‘community.

And a country that cannot agree on its own flag is hardly a model of cohesion

Only one party - NZ Party – has declared a clear line in the sand on separatism. We are implacably opposed to separatism in all its many guises – because we see the damage going down that road will bring to everyone.

Conclusion

Whatever the political façade that is being presented, our view is that normality has not been resumed.

These are times when we all need to give a damn.

So I want to conclude my talk today with a request.

NZ First is asking New Zealanders to:

- Take an interest in politics – however distasteful that may seem.
- Be on your guard against spin and half-messages.
- Demand answers - and listen very carefully.

And when it's called for – be irate – be outraged!

New Zealand First will do our bit to continue to scrutinise what is going on.

Working together we can keep our New Zealand intact!

ENDS