

AUCKLAND THE SUN

Let's plan now for the worst

IMMEDIATE and urgent steps should be taken to set up the publicity and planning unit recommended in the Planning Council's Report, New Zealand After Nuclear War.

Complete annihilation of New Zealand society is not inevitable should a nuclear war occur in the most likely arena, the Northern Hemisphere.

Action taken now, the report assures us, could greatly lessen the effects of such a tragedy.

The unit advocated in the report would set up a public information programme and involve the community in planning to help our society cope.

The flip-side of Kiwi ingenuity is an allergy to planning. Before World War II, as the report points out, we were years behind Britain and other Commonwealth countries in detailed planning for war-time economy.

It is astounding to read in the report that "at present there is no planning within or without Government for responding to the impact of nuclear war."

Parliamentary and local body representatives must read the report in full. It should spur them into activity. Much of the information will be new to them, previous reports having come from Northern Hemisphere sources.

Top targets

Many people reading the report will learn for the first time of EMP, the electro-magnetic pulse that, should it occur could instantly cripple our communications, energy, banking and transport, forcing us into subsistence living.

The report says EMP could hit New Zealand because three Australian communication facilities would be high priority targets in a nuclear war.

On reading this, New Zealanders may pressure their leaders to be less reluctant about exporting their non-nuclear policy across the Tasman.

While undertaking the worthwhile and vital task of working in the international community for a lasting peace, we must not blind ourselves to the horrible possibility of failure.

The Planning Council's report was funded from Rainbow Warrior Compensation Funds.

That outrage may, on one awful day, be seen to have at least one major positive result by having persuaded us to plan for what we hoped would never occur.