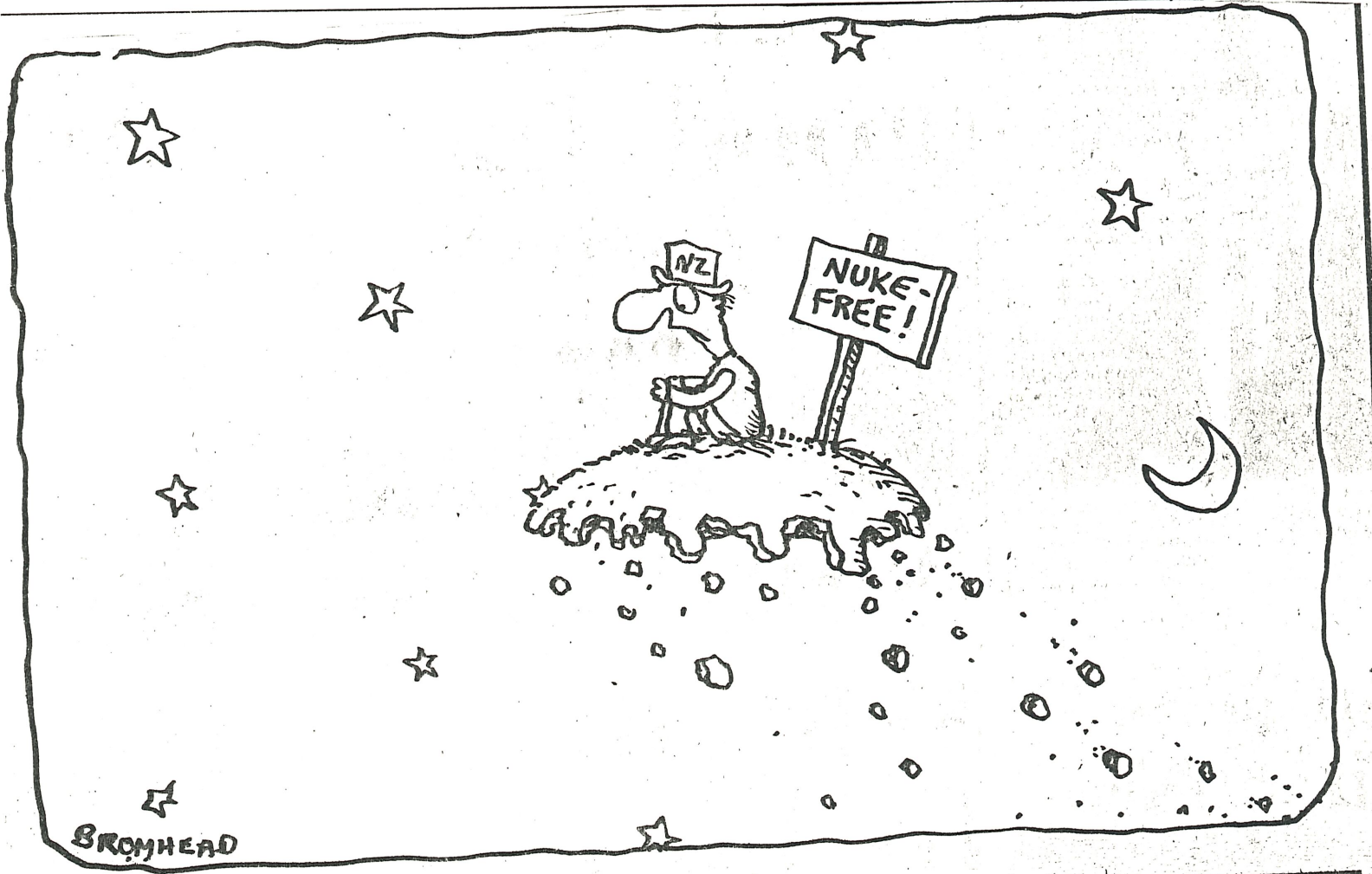


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TUESDAY REPORT

Forget the fallout

TUESDAY REPORT

Forget the fallout we'll all die of flu

By LOUISE WRIGHT

UNEMPLOYMENT, disease and lack of fuel will ruin New Zealand society if there is a nuclear war between the super-powers.

The Planning Council six-month study titled "New Zealand After Nuclear War" was released yesterday and says we would escape the worst effects of radioactive fallout and a nuclear winter.

But our main problem would be coping with the long-term effects of nuclear war, because New Zealand is not self-sufficient.

The study is a world first which examines the social, environmental and economic effects of nuclear war on a southern hemisphere country.

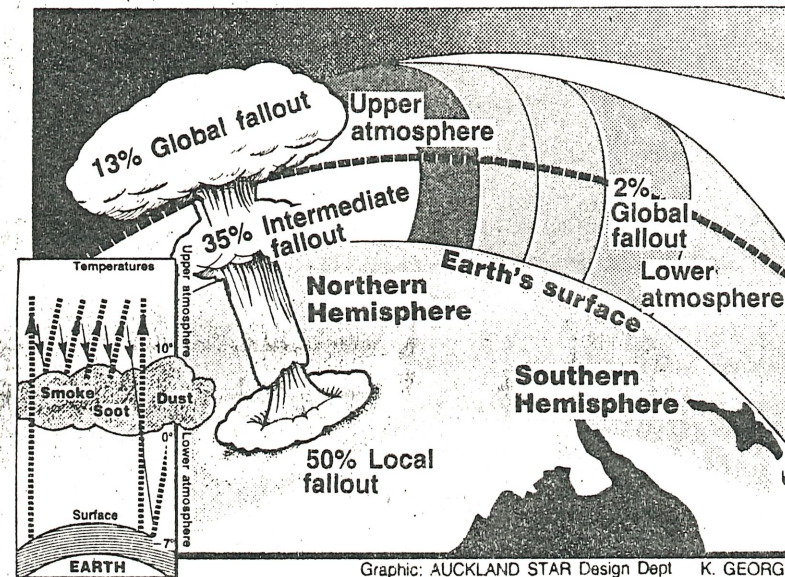
Until now, research focused on the effects from a northern hemisphere perspective.

The New Zealand report assumed we were not a target and nuclear warfare was based in the northern hemisphere.

Head researcher, Wren Green, said the amount of nuclear fallout reaching New Zealand (even if Australia was bombed) would be small. He predicted there would only be a one per cent increase in cancer over 70 years.

The study said worries of a nuclear winter in New Zealand were ill-founded. It estimated temperatures in this country would drop only a few degrees.

Early problems would surface within the health system since New Zealand depended on imported drugs



Graphic: AUCKLAND STAR Design Dept K. GEORGE

and medical equipment.

The report suggested we might return to the poor health standards of 50 years ago with degenerative diseases like arthritis and cancer running their natural course.

Diabetics, asthmatics and people with heart disease would also be affected.

As vaccines ran out diphtheria, tetanus, measles, polio and tuberculosis would reach epidemic proportions again.

Lack of oral contraceptives would lead to increases in unwanted pregnancies and demands for abortions. But medical supplies would be inadequate.

Clean water and rubbish disposal would be difficult or impossible with the loss of imported chemicals.

Transport would be severely restricted as diesel and aviation fuel ran out.

Petrol supplies would be rationed and only a small number of cars would

be on the road.

Car breakdowns could not be repaired as irreplaceable parts like batteries, spark plugs and tyres wore out.

Communication systems like electronic telephone exchanges and computers would also gradually break down irreparably.

"A single computer system failure could close New Zealand's oil refinery and reduce diesel supplies to zero."

"This would cripple coastal shipping and ferries, diesel locomotives, road transport, manufacturing and food processing," the study said.

The study recommended:

- A public education programme be set up to inform people about the effects of nuclear war

- Government plan so it knew what methods of communication it would use and whether it would rely on central direction or autonomous regional organisations.

- Stockpiling ingredients for medicines so supplies can be maintained while local manufacturing is established.

- Stockpiling diesel and petrol.

- Outlining policies to deal with refugees.

- Building protective mechanisms into communication equipment.

- Co-ordinating decision-making in energy planning so New Zealand could cope with nuclear war and a supply crisis.

- Planning to enable the financial system to deal with the effects of the initial crisis period following nuclear war.