

The histmer 19 Sept. 1987

APOCALYPSE REVISITED

In March 1982 the Commission for the Future released a substantial report on the consequences for New Zealand of a northern-hemisphere nuclear war. A response of the government of the day was to abolish the commission, for this and other sins, and to summarily dismiss me as the report's principal author.

There have been subsequent New Zealand studies, most notably those of the New Zealand Ecological Society (1984) and the Royal Society of New Zealand (1985). In 1985 I published privately an updated version of the commission's report which incorporated information on nuclear winter not available in 1982, and an analysis of possible contingency planning.

As an assistant director of the Ministry of Civil Defence during 1984-85 I was unable to persuade the National Civil Defence Committee to address seriously the issue of contingency planning for nuclear war.

Now in August 1987 the New Zealand Planning Council has released another report which draws substantially the same conclusions as the commission's study, including recommendations for future contingency planning. In my view it adds only detail to what was already known in 1985, or indeed in 1982.

I commend this Government for commissioning the Planning Council study, but would like to see some acknowledgment of the work and sacrifice of the Commission for the Future, and most of all some political decision-making to fill the present vacuum.

George Preddey
(Wadestown)