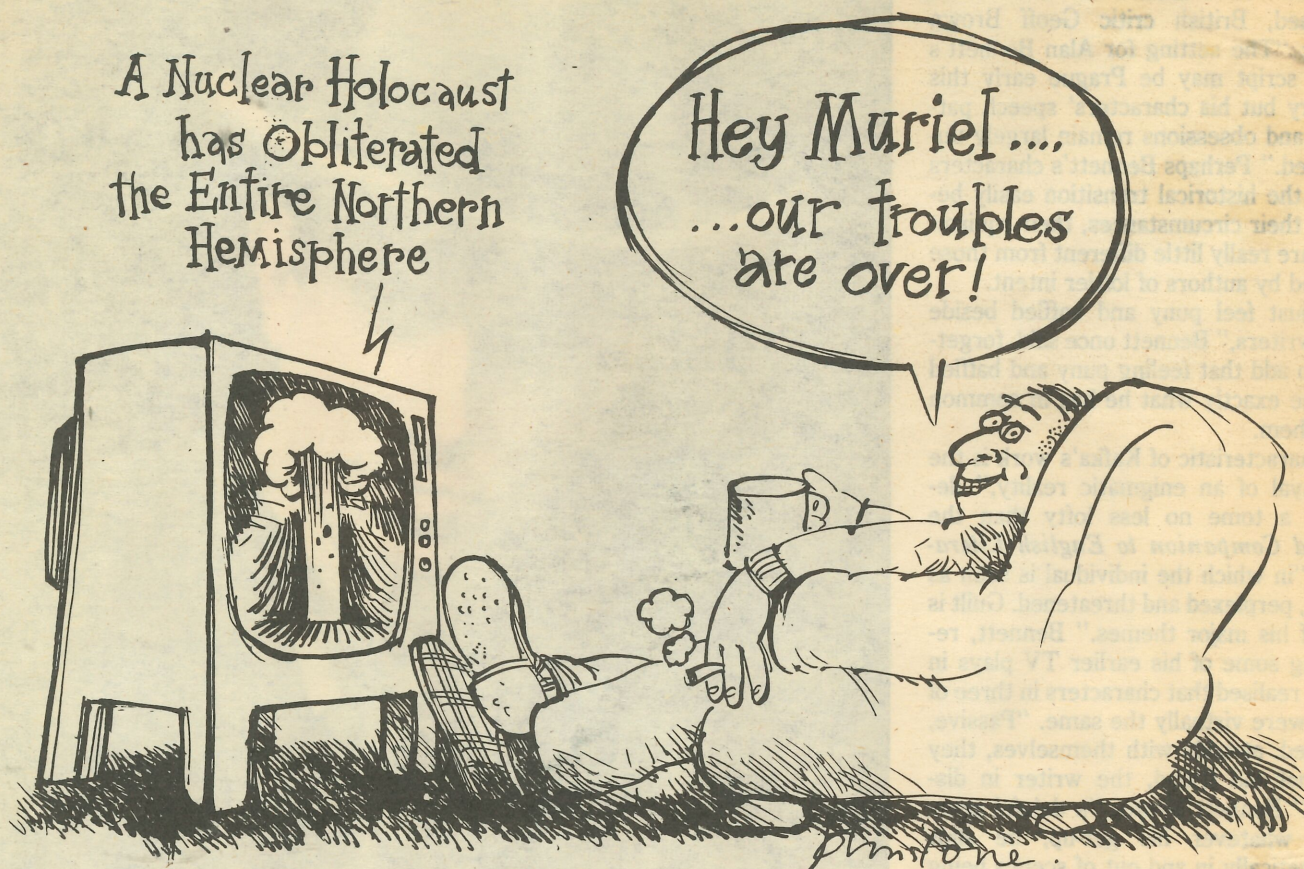


Nuclear spring singsong

A Nuclear Holocaust
has Obliterated
the Entire Northern
Hemisphere



THE RESPONSE to the Planning Council's report *New Zealand After Nuclear War* has been very disappointing. People, in responding to the report, have concentrated on its negative aspects, and have failed to perceive the enormous opportunities for New Zealand which would open up if its conclusions proved to be correct.

The report itself is somewhat to blame for this. For example, in dispelling the concept of a "nuclear winter", under which assumption we have all shivered for the last few years, the report still speaks of a "nuclear autumn". What sort of defeatist nonsense is this? If we can so readily dispatch the concept of a nuclear winter into the paper shredders of the imagination, then I see no reason why we should not move forward, or, if you will, backward, from nuclear winter through nuclear autumn and summer, and emerge, faces radiant, into a nuclear spring.

After all, things are going to keep growing here. The report says so. And we will be able to garner their harvests for ourselves instead of being forced to sell them to the rest of the world. There will be no rest of the world to sell them to and, quite apart from the fact that means there will be plenty for us, the enormous burdens of marketing will be lifted and the desperate search for new markets ended at a stroke.

To be sure, our export receipts will be somewhat affected, but then so will our bill for imports, there being nothing we can import. So the external balance of payments, or terms of trade, or whatever the appropriate index is called, will balance out at exactly zero on each side. That should bring a smile to Roger Douglas's nuclear-wintery features. And he will positively break into throaty

will have overnight, or mid-morning, or whenever the Northern Hemisphere holocaust takes place, have become a thing of the past, a phantasm of the non-nuclear nightmare from which we will have awoken.

For if there is no overseas, there can be no overseas debt. Do I hear anyone dissent from that proposition? If our creditors are obliterated, but we are still here, then that must convert us from a debtor into a creditor nation — within a millisecond or however long it takes for the nuclear exchange to occur.

Even if our creditors preserved the physical fabric of their societies intact our debts would still disappear, thanks to the benign operations of the electromagnetic pulse. For our debts exist only within computers, and all traces of them would be wiped out by the pulse.

The same pulse, it is true, would wipe out our radio and television networks. But not forever. They would simply have to be re-established as cable networks. And in the meantime there would be a revival of theatre, opera, ballet, and for the masses, community singing, the like of which this country has never seen. Community singing, we are told, brought this country together during the Depression, and there is no reason why it should not work its unifying magic again. It is somewhat surprising that the Planning Council has not found space for a recommendation to the Government about community singing in its report. Now, after all, is the time to be stockpiling the community songbooks; not after Armageddon has occurred, when performance rights to some songs may be difficult to obtain.

The report is gloomy about the medical difficulties which would arise as a

equipment. But can this not be seen as a boon also? Of course it can. Politicians from both major parties constantly belabour us about the crippling costs imposed on government by our reckless consumption of prescription drugs. Well those costs will be wiped instantly from the slate, and if that will not justify an immediate and swingeing cut in both direct and indirect taxation then I don't know what will. Psychosomatic ailments will be left to clear up of their own accord which is, after all, Nature's way. What else have we been given minds and wills and imaginations for if not to clear up the psychosomatic illnesses which are the dark side of those shining gifts?

And sufferers from complaints like arthritis or cancer will be given the chance to acquire moral stature by confronting the reality of their condition, their vision unblurred by medical palliation.

The report raises the spectre of 40 percent unemployment. This may occur. But one person's "army of unemployed" is another person's "large attendance at a community singsong". What is more, the stigma of unemployment will be lifted once and for all if almost half the country suffers from it. Farmers and artisans will once more become the backbone of the country, replacing Auckland yuppies and Wellington civil service high-flyers. And the colourful figure of the swagger will once more be seen on our roads, with immediate benefit to our national literature.

What the Planning Council report demonstrates, in spite of itself, is that there is nothing wrong with a nuclear holocaust, for New Zealanders at any rate, as long as we make sure that we take a positive attitude to it. None of that "I am Shiva, destroyer of worlds" stuff. All we