

Someone must be to blame

This editorial appeared in the *Dominion* on 27 July, 1992. It has, nevertheless, relevance this year also and could equally apply to other centres.

ON ONE matter all Wellingtonians will agree: the weather is just not good enough.

That was driven home last week when rain, gales and floods turned the central North Island into a vast and unwelcome paddling pool, made worse because it caught so many farmers without the warnings they should have been able to take for granted. That only compounded the frustration and anger that comes from months of rotten weather.

Summer was not worth having. It rarely is, but the latest one excelled itself in total uselessness. It even omitted the customary succession of balmy spells during March and April — the ones that put insufferable grins on the faces of people not forced to take

annual leave during school holidays.

Our typical autumn days were once warm, bright and still, with a clean, pure sparkle in the air. Days to delight and lift the spirits. The problem is that there were far too few typical autumn days this year, and the weather has deteriorated since.

The city's experience over the past few months proves conclusively that global warming is a greenie-inspired delusion, conjured up to block the motorway extension. Far from fearing its advent, Wellingtonians want to know where it is.

There was snow in the week before Christmas ("midsummer", ho-ho) ... cold south-westerly winds alternating with colder southerlies through the

first half of this year ... taxpayers don't shell out good money for weather like this. The shivering public demands scapegoats. And scapegoats it shall have.

The French have always been the main cause of bad weather in the past, as anyone who has ever protested against their nuclear tests can confirm. If this is what we get when they stop, the demonstrators must surge onto the streets and demand they resume.

Treasury officials recently compared their forecasting with predicting the weather. Now the connection is clear: the Treasury has a secret detachment in the weather office. And just as the more the Treasury forecast, the worse the economy got, so the same pattern is emerging with the weather.

In a free-market economy, it is important to ask who benefits from all this foul weather: that will unerringly pinpoint those to blame. Among the culprits are firms that make blizzard-proof clothing; pur-

vveyors of gas and electricity; and the travel industry, transparently colluding with the North Queensland Tourism Board to make everyone fly away in search of the elusive summer. All ought to be ashamed of their shameless conspiracy to keep the capital cold and miserable.

Such rational economic explanations are always to be preferred to blaming impersonal forces like a Philippine volcano belching dust and gas into the stratosphere, or changes in ocean temperatures and currents like the El Nino oscillation.

One is bad news for birds, the other for fish. But Wellingtonians are real people who neither fly (too heavy) nor swim (too cold), and are too astute to be taken in by such imaginative figments. Volcanoes have erupted in the past without ruining our weather. And before they discovered this El Nino nonsense, we had proper — that is, typical — weather. Didn't we?