

# ***Grey Power Whakatane***

## ***June 8 General Meeting***

Our June 8 Meeting, which featured our guest speaker – Winston Peters, attracted an audience of nominally 300 people, both from our membership and the general public, below is a transcript of his presentation.

### ***Rt Hon Winston Peters***

Grey Power public meeting  
Auditorium,  
The Liberty Centre  
Whakatane  
1.30pm, 8th June

#### **Speech to Grey Power Public Meeting**

**Common sense policies –  
and they always have  
been**

Before I start I want to talk  
about Edgecumbe.

Residents have been hit hard  
with floodwaters. For those of us not affected it is hard to imagine how devastating that can be. Edgecumbe is like Kaikoura – a regional town that has suffered from an unexpected event. Edgecumbe residents and businesses like those in Kaikoura need common sense policies that maintains them till their incomes are restored and they are back on their feet. We are sure most New Zealanders would not begrudge them this.

#### **Immigration**

For a long time, New Zealand First has been a lone voice warning of the consequences of mass immigration.

In the past 12 months others have finally thought that it was safe to agree: Treasury, the Reserve Bank, MBIE, ANZ. They weren't called racist or xenophobic. But we were and still are.

We've been warning about the downside of immigration for years. No country can take net 72,000 people a year – a town the size of Rotorua, and most going to Auckland.



Compare the UK government's net immigration target. For a country of 65 million people the UK target is 100,000 net.

The PM says he's not concerned. He said: "I think it shows the attractiveness of New Zealand to a lot of different sorts of people from overseas." How inane, arcane and absurd that is.

And of late he has resorted to straight out deception claimed that 72,000 is actually a case of new Zealanders returning home. Again, that is totally false but it demonstrates the level of deceit the defenders of this insane immigration target are prepared to go to.

And now a growing number of New Zealanders are becoming concerned.

## **Law and order**

Dairies are getting held up every day of the week all over New Zealand. What does National tell them? Stop selling cigarettes. Again, another absurdity. Cigarettes are a legal product. One of many products that dairy owners rely upon to keep their business viable.

Should banks stop dispensing money if they feel threatened by robbers. What about liquor stores? It was the government that turned tobacco into a soaring black market item. It was the government that cut back police on the streets and the number available to arrest criminals. Now they're suggesting the shopkeepers are to blame.

Only when New Zealand First applied the pressure and they couldn't ignore the breakdown in law and order in many communities did National decide to boost police numbers. These extra police are still not enough and they're spread over four years.

And nowhere the number we need. Way below the 1800 we pledge to train as soon as is possible. In 2005-2008 we got an extra 1000 more frontline police and 235 back-up staff.

## **Housing**

In 2007 John Key said there was a housing crisis. He had all sorts of solutions. He got into government in 2008. And did nothing. He even denied there was a housing crisis. So, we've had nine years of no housing relief but a growing population.

Nick Smith as Housing Minister has been worse than useless. Why he wasn't sacked a long time ago probably demonstrates the lack of talent in the National Party caucus. He shrieks about consents as though they're houses. But no one can live in a consent. Only 7200 new houses were completed in Auckland in 2016. It needs double that number each year. National is losing big time over Auckland housing.

Auckland house owners are drifting to the regions, like Whakatane, where there's a great climate, friendly people and cheaper houses. But that drift is hurting other towns. House prices are rising everywhere. Rents are rising. All caused by a government that has been hands off. But you wouldn't think that if you read today's Whakatane Beacon where your local MP is boasting about what the government is doing about housing. All around these government MPs is housing chaos which is making the news daily and yet your MP seems to be oblivious to it.



## **The true economic situation**

National tries to deceive the public into believing they are a safe pair of hands at the wheel of our economy. It is a myth born out of deceit and arrogance. They trumpet having a surplus. But it is a surplus created through slashing and the artful shuffling around of funds. They cut funding to health by \$1.76 billion since they came to office through to 2015. They provided DoC with \$53 million less funding each year from 2008 until 2015. They froze police budgets since 2010. They froze education funding and then cut it each year from 2011 to 2014.

You can see the true state of our society all around Overcrowding - stress – pressure – largely stagnant incomes and a housing crisis.

- Hospital and medical services under intense pressure and surgery waiting lists that are growing longer. Doctors fees going up.
- Understaffed schools and kids doing their work in the corridors.
- Overloaded roading and public transport infrastructure swamped by population growth.
- A growing gap between rich and poor that is getting worse and with levels of homelessness and child poverty rising.
- 91,000 young New Zealanders who haven't got a job, and aren't on a training course
- Immigration at ridiculous levels – 72,000 net a year settling here permanently a year. That's a city the size of Rotorua each year.
- Major law and order problems with insufficient police and crime rampant in some of our towns.

## **The facts on GDP growth**

The National government boasts about New Zealand's GDP growth rate of 2.8%. But New Zealand's population has been growing at 2% annually, mostly from overseas. So, 2% has to be deducted from GDP numbers before any real growth can be claimed.

## The NZ Super

In recent times every Phil, Dave and Bill have had their say on NZ Super. No wonder people are confused.

Last election, in they wanted to age up to 67. This done a somersault. for the retirement election National touch NZ Super. flopped as well. up to 67 \_\_\_\_ by never position on NZ



Challenge them

Super is unaffordable. It is affordable. New Zealand First has always stood for Super at 65, at no less than 66 per cent of the net average weekly wage, universal, without means testing.

2014, Labour said bump the retirement election Labour has They're back to 65 age. Before the last said they wouldn't Now National has flip They want the age 2040. NZ first has compromised its Super.

when they say NZ

## National, Labour - Track Record

Look at the long line of back-flips by National and Labour over NZ Super. In 1984 Labour promised no change to superannuation. A year later they imposed a surtax. In 1990 National promised to remove the surtax. But they didn't. They increased it to 92 cents. Labour announced they would lift the age of entitlement to 65 and National followed up, not over 20 years as they promised but over eight years. In 1996 National promised to maintain NZ Super and then after breaking the coalition deal with NZ First in 1998, cut super from 65 per cent of the net average wage to 60 percent. NZ First post 2005 set super at 66 per cent of the net average weekly wage and then brought in the Gold Card to make that 66 per cent go further. In 2008 National promised not to change superannuation settings. First they stopped government contributions into the NZ Superannuation Fund, or Cullen Fund, And second, then started taxing the Fund. If National had kept contributing \$2 billion a year to the Cullen Fund it would now be worth \$50 billion, instead of \$33 billion.

## Secret to affordability

The secret to maintaining NZ Super's affordability is increasing the size of our economic cake, restoring productivity, and controlling immigration. This is achievable, but not with present and recent policies. We have unlimited economic potential. But we cannot sustain the large number of immigrants who are coming here. With a stable population and increased productivity, the affordability of NZ Super will increase further and raise our living standards. It's as simple as that.



The main key to superannuation is increasing the country's economic productivity. New Zealand has huge untapped economic potential. Even with highly conservative 2.5 per cent economic growth our GDP will exceed \$500 billion by 2050. As an economic commentator in the NZ Herald (John Gascoigne, March 16, 2017) stated: "New Zealand's world leading national superannuation scheme which provides all New Zealanders with retirement income security must be left intact. "The real imperative is national wealth creation." New Zealand First agrees.

## Water exploited

Water has become an issue that concerns many New Zealanders. It is a huge issue around the world. New Zealand's pure, clean water is being taken by overseas companies - Fiji Water, Coca-Cola, Suntory Holdings, Oravida - for a token fee. Many of you in the Bay of Plenty are only too aware of the bottling plants here. The sale of Otakiri Springs bottling plant to a Chinese company is worrying many. Let's get one point clear. New Zealanders should be in charge of our water, but governments have not been good custodians of this precious resource on our behalf. Bottling companies have snuck under the radar. They've been granted consents for a few hundred dollars and hold the rights for decades. But who owns the water? The former Prime minister claimed no one did.



He said governments operated under a principle (in a near 50-year old law), that water did not belong to anyone, and could not be sold by the Crown. However, his government did exactly that when they partly privatised the power companies – which rely on water for power generation. Giving foreign companies open access to New Zealand's water resource – virtually in perpetuity - is plain stupid. The PM's comment, "No one owns water," is like saying: "No one owns oil; no-one owns coal." Could New Zealanders go offshore and help themselves to something out of the ground for free?

New Zealand First says water exporters should pay a royalty to the Crown with 25 per cent of the royalty returned to the region from where the water is extracted. We tabled an amendment to the Minerals Act to charge a royalty on water. National opposed it. National just does not care that big corporations are taking our water, and making millions out of it. We get nothing. National has also allowed "water sales" to grow. Consents are now being bought and sold. They are changing hands from \$50,000 to \$500,000.

Businesses that have been allocated a quantity of water to use, but no longer need it should not be selling it. That consent must come to an end. Any business seeking to use a large quantity of water must apply through the appropriate authorities. Consents should not be tradeable.

## **Health**

DHBs all over the country are having to watch every cent because of under-funding. There is a desperate need for more theatres, waiting rooms, beds. DHBs have been told to cost cut. Staff don't take holidays, jobs remain unfilled. That's no way to ruin a health system. You all pay your taxes.

## **Overseas students**

National are fixated on short-term, look-good gains. Dollar signs are all they see. So, we have overseas students coming in thousands who can get visas to work here. They have put a squeeze on the job market. They've helped push down wages. Many of these overseas students work here for next to nothing. They're only hanging on because they want to apply for residency. A carrot of staying in NZ permanently was attached.

Today we have private training industry institutions turning out graduates from chef courses who can't boil an egg. When these students find they have been given fraudulent documents by crooked agents in places like India, they just get booted out of the country. And Mr Joyce says: Tough luck guys; thanks for the money. Bye!

## **CONCLUSION**

New Zealand First is a party which stands for equal opportunity for all.

We are a party which believes in looking after our citizens first, young, old, and in between.

We are not into spin or rhetoric.

We are working for the best interests of New Zealanders first and foremost – and we have common sense policies.

*Whakatane Grey Power Association Inc.*