



“Losing Our Birthright”

Rt. Hon Winston Peters Leader NZ First

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Public Meeting, St. Patricks Hall, Panmure, Auckland
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It's good to be back in Panmure and thanks for coming.

Panmure once had a bottle neck of traffic crossing the old bridge to Pakuranga until a new one was built in the early seventies. That I remember with affection because I worked on the new bridge and for a while was the Laborers' Union Delegate during the summer holidays. It helped pay the costs of law school. The day after becoming the union delegate the Italian company offered me a job in the office. I declined knowing that on day one I'd be in the office, and the union would need a new delegate, and on day two I could be fired from the office. The companies appalling industrial practices would continue. Sometimes you can smell a rat a mile off.

But we're here today to talk about the serious threats we face to our land, to our beaches and to New Zealand assets.

The course of New Zealand history is about to change or more correctly, revert back to further attempts at past failed policies.

We are gradually losing our sovereignty and the right of New Zealanders to own our land, our shores and our economy. Unless we act soon future generations will curse us for what we let this National-led government do to our country.

SELLING OFF OUR LAND

First – much of our country is being sold off to overseas interest's right under our nose.

Foreign interests are speeding up their campaign to gain more than a foothold over the dairy industry – the jewel in New Zealand's economic crown.

For years NZ First has been warning New Zealanders about the dire consequences of unchecked foreign ownership of land and other strategic assets. Sadly those warnings have gone largely unheeded.

Now it seems that the collapse of the Crafar dairy farms empire has finally brought it home to people just how urgent the issue of foreign ownership is. The Crafar fiasco means that 16 farms in just one sale could easily end up being owned overseas. They will be added to all the other land alienated from local ownership.

More than 150,000 hectares has been lost to foreign ownership over the past five years alone.

Why is this wholesale alienation of so much of our country happening?

We should put no confidence in the Overseas Investment Office, which sounds important but is really a handful of people with a large rubber stamp.

Land ownership is not a two way street.

For example: Japanese can buy our land but we are not allowed to buy theirs.
 Chinese can buy our land but we are not allowed to buy theirs.
 They are not to blame, we are.

Where is our Prime Minister on this critical issue? Well, he has said he is “concerned”. Fantastic!. What leadership! The Government has no actual policy – just some mumbled words – a bit of spin but no commitment or determination to stop much of our country being sold. This level of irresponsibility borders on economic treason. Selling our land to absentee foreigners, in nearly all the examples available, creates nothing – it adds no value, it does not lead to more jobs. What it does mean is that much of the fruit of our land – the profits – goes abroad. This is not an economic policy – it is madness.

Look at the countries where there is large scale foreign ownership. Without exception they are economic basket cases and their people exist to serve their foreign masters.

The foreign ownership of NZ companies and land is a great hole in our economic bucket. Just twenty five years ago 19% of our share market was foreign owned. Today that 19% has become 70%. Unless we stop this we will be strangers in our own land. And our children and their children will curse the silly, naive generation who sold their legacy because, as the numbers show, the loss of our companies and land to overseas ownership is ongoing and regressive. If we do not draw a line and stop this creeping alienation the fate of so many of us is assured – as landless and share less peasants. There will be more and more Crafar scenarios and company takeovers in the future unless action is taken now. Chances are you, the public, will never hear about them.

NZ First has always fought the takeover of New Zealand and when we are back in Parliament we will change government policy and start taking our country back. We will impose strict limits to absentee foreign ownership of land and company share ownership, and use the Superannuation Fund to start buying strategic assets back.

FORESHORE AND SEABED

Now to the foreshore and seabed, a priceless jewel now owned by all the people of New Zealand in the form of the Crown.

You see our sovereignty over our waters is about to change as well. So much nonsense has been spouted on this issue that the facts have been drowned by political spin doctors and separatists with a keen eye on the main chance. The most basic fact of all is that today the foreshore and seabed is owned by the Crown on behalf of all New Zealanders. This has always been the legal situation and confirmed by acts of Parliament.

Let us be very clear. The 2004 Foreshore and Seabed legislation did not take one square metre of property off anybody - it simply confirmed that ALL New Zealanders owned the foreshore and seabed. This ownership extended to everything – including mineral rights – and any benefits commercial or otherwise were supposed to go to the people.

The foreshore and seabed legislation does not include the fish in the water. They are covered by Fisheries Law. They are a separate issue.

But soon the foreshore and seabed will belong to “nobody”. New Zealanders will lose much of their birthright in a cynical ploy to keep the National government in power. Gradually this part of New Zealand will be opened to claims of customary title and general Treaty claims. The Maori Land Court can make customary title into freehold title.

The purpose of the Maori Land Act, which the court administers, is to "promote the retention of (Maori) customary land in the hands of its owners, their whanau, and their hapu, and to facilitate the occupation, development, and utilisation of that land for the benefit of its owners". That is fine for the land.

But what do proposed changes mean for the Foreshore and Seabed?
Proposed changes which the National Party never mentioned before the last election.

Proposed changes which the Maori Party in 2008 never campaigned on.

It means that existing Crown ownership of the foreshore and seabed will pass into the history books. Much of New Zealand's foreshore and seabed will be effectively privatised and pass into the hands of one group of New Zealanders – courtesy of the Maori Land Court. It is the biggest change to publicly owned property in our recent history. Where customary title is not granted, coastal Maori may gain control by rights of veto or access.

And sadly – there's more.

What happens to the wealth of minerals, oil, and gas below the foreshore and seabed?

The National Party is dreaming if they think their changes will not eventually lead to much of the foreshore and seabed being controlled by coastal corporate Maori and warring iwi factions who will spend the next hundred years fighting over it and lodging countless Treaty claims. If the current trend is not checked we can see a day in the future where many New Zealanders will be working for foreign owned farms, foreign owned businesses and for Maori corporate coastal interests.

The Great Migration from New Zealand will continue. Thousands of ordinary New Zealanders will go on fleeing to Australia or beyond, leaving behind groups of foreign owners and Treaty travelers. Look at the latest figures showing Kiwis fleeing to Australia in droves.

This issue is not the fault of ordinary Maori.

In just 20 years the majority of Maori fishing benefits have already passed into Non Maori hands.

If you are Maori, put your hand up.
Which one of you got even one snapper from the process?

You have been deceived and lied to about ownership of the foreshore and seabed.

There has never been a court ruling that said Maori owned the foreshore and seabed. Nearly all of our countries 200 mile limit came to us by International Treaty.

The court judgment in the Ngati Apa case, in Marlborough, said that some Maori might have a case but it could not think of any case that might succeed. Ngati Apa's case should have been fixed. But not this way.

Ordinary Maori will get nothing from the new property grab – the spoils will go to the unelected leaders and fatcats.

Do not think for one minute that public access to the beaches, the foreshore and seabed will not change. It will change under race-based private ownership. There will be no public consultation. There will be nobody representing the public interest at the Maori Land Court.

And another fact that everybody keeps brushing under the carpet. The Maori Land Court judge who first came up with this ownership is now a high up official in the Maori Party and its main adviser on the foreshore and seabed.

New Zealanders protested against mining in our conservation estate. National's proposals for mineral exploitation in our state parks are dwarfed by the race-based privatisation of our foreshore and seabed.

You are simply not being told the truth about this issue. Because there is a worst case scenario that nobody dares talk about in public. And that is who will eventually own the foreshore and seabed.

If a government is stupid and treasonous enough to allow the sale of prime dairy farms to Chinese interests, it will most certainly allow chunks of the coast and seabed to be sold off.

Once it is privatised it will be gone forever. And only Maori will be permitted, under law, to take part in this privatisation.

NZ First regards it as our duty to keep reminding New Zealanders about these issues. Let's keep them out in the open so that everyone knows what is going on.

And we must again remind you to look at what governments do and not what they say! Since this National-led government and its cling-ons came to power it has thrown open the doors to separatists and Treaty travellers.

Look at the record. On Waitangi Day this government allowed the Maori Party's separatist flag to fly alongside the New Zealand flag. A Maori Flag that less than 1000 Maori got to have a say on. Thousands of New Zealanders – of all races - who died under the New Zealand flag to uphold freedom and democracy are trampled on by political expediency.

Then, the National government allowed the Maori Party co-leader to sneak off to the United Nations to sign a declaration on indigenous peoples' rights. Previous governments had been advised not to sign this declaration because it opened the door for separatist decisions at every level of government. The National Party never told you of this before the last election.

And you might have noticed it is busy lighting fires under other issues to provide a smokescreen to cover its infamy. John Key and his henchpeople are happy to have the media and the public arguing about the venue for the Rugby World Cup because it takes the heat off more important issues.

THE AUCKLAND SUPERCITY- PRIVATISATION

Within a few weeks nominations will close for the Auckland Super City. When the Super City starts in October, 70% of its real business will be controlled by, not the new Super City, but appointees of Government. That's why the man in the yellow jacket has gone quiet. He and John Key are counting on you not knowing until it's too late.

This change is not about democracy but about the assets which the Super City will then own. Those assets are well in excess of \$30 Billion. You own them now, but will you own them in the future?

Take your water supply for example. Changes to the Local Government Act 2002 now ease the way to privatise Water Services by changing the provisions for Contracting Out and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). They are occurring in a vacuum of information and in the absence of an independent investigation in to the pricing practices of NZ's seven private water supply contracts. Contracting out is extended from 15 years to 35 years and councils are no longer required to control the management of the service.

What this means is:

- 1) Benefit of ownership and control disappears from the real owner, you the ratepayer, for half a lifetime
- 2) Ownership transfer in all but title will occur
- 3) Councils will have shed or lost capacity, experience and skills to confront a private contractor price gouging, to construct a case in contract law to break the contract, and to provide the personnel to again run the supply themselves.

- 4) Privatised objectives are reached in secret.

Is this just words without substance? Answering that question is not difficult.

New Zealand's recent Experience of Privatisation is not good.

- 1) Take Power. The rising cost plateau promised in the 1998 changes in fact resulted in costs sky rocketing
- 2) Take Telecommunications. Since privatisation in 1990 New Zealander's have been the victims of 20 years of price gouging
- 3) Take Banking. Since the sale of BNZ, a tax payer owned bank in 1992, bank costs have sky rocketed
- 4) Take Railways. New Zealanders were robbed on the sale of a then profitable NZ Rail in July 1993, and victimized again when the soon bankrupt service had to be purchased back in the name of the tax payer.
- 5) Take Air New Zealand. A similar story. Privatised, then soon belly up, and again rescued by a buy back by the tax payer.

A local government New Zealand representative has described water control as "a bit of a non issue". Really? Which planet has he been living on because it can't be this one. Worldwide from Australia to France this form of water control has seen numerous disasters with rate payers and tax payers having to bail out the operations and buy back full ownership. In every case at significant loss.

However, the real issue for all politicians and public servants is this.

If privatisation is your pleasure then why not ask the owners to decide. They happen to be the rate payer, tax payer and most certainly neither Mr Hide nor My Key. In short, why is this issue not going to a local referendum rather than decided behind closed doors which has always been an invitation to corruption?

Make no mistake NZ First is coming back to stop this nonsense but it won't be until next year. Until then we must keep on mobilising the people of New Zealand and Auckland to stand firm against the theft of their heritage.

This disastrous history of change began 25 years ago when Parliament abandoned people in favour of blind ideology.

We urge you – whatever your political beliefs – not to let this government go on taking your future away.

Past generations kept our coastline and sea for us, kept control of our economy for us, built and kept our assets for us. kept alive the hope that we might one day be a united country able to confront and match the best in the world. kept these things for future generations.

Today here in Panmure, less than 3 months from the local body elections, and less than one year from the next general election surely we cannot accept anything less
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