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Editorial

You know, it's almost unbelievable how Mother Nature will sometimes settle on one small portion of our, most of the time, beautiful Planet Earth, and then proceed to cause havoc every few days in one direction or another!!! She certainly seem to have settled in our corner of the south-west Pacific Ocean for a while, judging by her tantrums! Or maybe she likes her own weather patterns down here!!! I have already alluded in recent editorials on recent disasters of nature in our patch of the Globe, you will recall.

But let me recall the recent litany of disasters of nature in view of the most recent one, the double floods, only days apart from each other, which hit our nearby northern neighbours, the Fijian Islands, only a few days ago, with the tragic loss of ten human lives at the last report. We all recall how it started almost exactly with the New Year, with hurricane Heta destroying almost everything on Niue Island with the sad loss of the lives of a young mother and her small child.

This was followed soon by flash floods in the border regions of northern NSW and southern Queensland in Australia with the loss of two or three more human lives. This was soon followed by our own disastrous floods in the southern parts of the North Island. Fortunately, in our disaster there was no loss of a human life, although thousands of farm animals were drowned.

But my reasons for recounting what you may consider is "old news", is not so much to dwell on bad news, but to comment on thoughts brought into my mind by subsequent media news items directly involved with at least some of these disasters of nature! I am referring, of course, to how these disasters of nature will bring out both the best as well as the worst side of human nature!!!

So let's start with the worst side of human nature, which sadly usually comes out fairly quickly amid these disasters! We all read in our newspapers of even saw live video-

taping of thieves looting and stealing from flood-damaged homes and shops. Perhaps in poor, small countries like Fiji, where a large percentage of the population are dirt poor and largely unemployed with little, if any, state help, one can find a small segment of understanding for this thuggish theivery, but even the poorest humans in any country know that stealing is wrong!!! In fact, some of the most primitive people on our planet have in their culture the most stringent customary rules for punishment for theft!!! And no excuses to the Judges or a Court of Appeal!!!

So now I come to these low-life skunks in our own country who dared to pillage and theive from the flood-wrecked homes and shops and farms of the already hard-hit and suffering owners and their families. No, I make no apologies for using unusually strong language against these dregs of humankind who would do such an unforgivable thing!!! If I had my way of dealing out justice to these louts, I would hand them over to market-gardeners to work in their silt-covered acres from dawn to dusk, digging and replanting, until their aching backs made tears run down their faces, which, I'd bet, would happen before the end of their fist day at this work!!!

Then, as in most things, there is the bright side of the coin!!! So it is with Humankind, luckily!!! I was absolutely amazed and humbly proud of my fellow New Zealanders at the way they responded to the Paul Holmes flood appeal fund!!! Over two million dollars in two weeks!!! Even "Holmsi" himself admitted to some astonishment, and we all know it takes a lot to surprise him these days! Although there appeared to be several large contributions from some big companies, the bulk of it came out of the near-empty pockets of ordinary Kiwis like you and me!!! Well done, Paul Holmes, well done, my fellow-kiwis!!!

Cheerio for this month, Paul

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