

LETTERS

July 7, 2014

Spin put on political issues



LIKE Phil Cotter (*FW*, June 30), I admired Alan Emerson's column criticising the "spin" newspaper journalists too often put on political issues, particularly with an election due.

For example, the recent targeting by political commentators, such as Fairfax's Tracy Watkins and the New Zealand Herald's John Armstrong, of Labour leader David Cunliffe was slanted journalism beyond belief.

It was the issue of a letter Cunliffe signed 11 years ago. I wonder if Armstrong, Watkins, and other leading journalists can recall what letters they wrote 11 years ago?

I can't remember what I did Wednesday morning last week. Can you?

Strangely, Watkins and Armstrong seemed to ignore Prime Minister John Key's amnesia attacks, such as forgetting owning shares in Tranz Rail or failing to remember shoulder-tapping, with a phone

call to his old school chum Ian Fletcher over the Government Communications Security Bureau head job, or unable to remember a briefing on the Dot Com raid, plus others, such as how he voted on the drinking age and asking Solid Energy for \$1 billion.

These were not involving memory recall of 11 years ago but just weeks, months, or days.

As a journalist and former editor of Straight Furrow, I am dismayed not only at the slanted subjective style but also the dearth of hard-hitting, credible investigative journalism.

In the same issue was a fine letter by Jim Hilton, asking why farmers don't swing their vote and particularly under MMP with the party vote.

As a swinging voter who has voted National, Labour, NZ First and even Social Credit and Values in the 1970s, I recommend it.

If more Kiwis did it governments would show much greater respect to the electorate and public interest.

It is disgraceful that meat and wool farmers get such low returns, commensurate with 25 years ago.

National and Labour should both hang their heads in shame.

But then perhaps in the smug arrogance of politicians, there seems little or no conscience?

Tony Orman
Marlborough

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