

Spending

'must

be pared'

By

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in Timaru

Cutting back eligibility for social welfare benefits and encouraging Pacific Island New Zealanders to return home to retire may be part of National Party policy come 1990.

Spending 'must be pared'

PRESS, 8 MAY 1989, PAGE 3

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Acknowledgements

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In a sharp signal that the National Party would slash social welfare spending if it won the Treasury benches in the next election, the Rangiora member of Parliament, Mr Jim Gerard, told delegates to the party's Canterbury-Westland divisional conference that Government spending must be pared.

His ideas for reducing the Government department vote included:

- Not paying the domestic purposes benefit "as of right."

- Speeding up implementation of recipient contributed superannuation schemes.

- Offer Pacific Island New Zealanders a "portable" superannuation package qualifying them for a slightly reduced payment if they wished to return to their homeland to retire.

While a National Government should never forget those in "genuine need" it should send signals to beneficiaries that "bludging" off the Welfare State was not as profitable as working hard for a living. These policies would create a better New Zealand but could sentence National to several years in Opposition, he added.

He said National's previous intentions to introduce a savings-based superannuation scheme within 20 years should be introduced in half that time.

That scheme "will be negotiated to offer a por-

tability package for those that qualify here for national superannuation to receive a reduced rate in the Islands," he said.

He advocated alternating the present qualification for the domestic purposes benefit.

Mr Gerard believed the payment should be made only "if genuine need is established and no-one will get it as of right."

Mothers younger than 18 years should look to their families for support of them and their children, he said.

Also, "the missing father" should make larger contributions to the benefit pool.

Automatic entitlement to benefits would be a thing of the past, Mr Gerard thought.

These signals sent out by a National Government would slow down the trend of people becoming dependent on the State.

Since 1984 those on the domestic purposes benefit had increased more than 30,000 to 84,000.

Successive Governments had given people the wrong signals, he said, which had taken people down the wrong road; the road to State dependency.

"I don't blame the bludgers — they have been encouraged by successive Governments because they see signals and the easy reward."

The Labour Government's guaranteed minimum family income was a "classic example of bad policy locking families into a poverty trap."