PRESS STATEMENT:

January 29th, 1963

Statement issued by Malcolm Fraser as leader of the Woolgrowers' deputation. Other members of the deputation are:

R. McClure
D. Cameron
C. Rochfort
R. Mulsede

1. The Woolgrowers' deputation met at Nareen today to discuss the latest moves in the Portland issue and to consider further action.

2. The deputation welcomes the decision of the National Council of Wool Selling Brokers to allot sale dates to Portland within the national roster for the 1963/64 season. Even if some of the members of the National Council of Wool Selling Brokers still have reservations about Portland the Council has shown a willingness to accept the report. This is welcome.

3. The deputation deplores the decision of the buyers to maintain their previous stand despite the report; despite the wishes of the growers - as illustrated by State and Federal policy of the organizations (the Australian Woolgrowers' and Graziers' Council, the Australian Wool and Meat Producers' Federation and the Australian Primary Producers' Union) - and despite the changed attitude of wool-selling brokers.

4. The deputation regards Professor Cochrane's report as an arbitration decision and believes that all parties should comply with the decision - no one party should be allowed to thwart the wishes and intentions of the rest of the industry. The deputation hopes the Victorian and South Australian Wool Buyers' Association will recognise this when it reconsiders the matter - as Mr. Lempriere has indicated it is going to do.

5. The deputation strongly supports recent moves of the Victorian Wheat and Woolgrowers' Association and the Victorian Graziers' Association in asking the Premier to call a meeting with the Victorian and South Australian Woolbuyers.

6. The deputation is writing to the Premier and Organizations indicating support for this move.

7. The deputation hopes it will be successful and that the buyers will recognise that a particular interest cannot stand in the way of the industry as a whole. In this matter Professor Cochrane's report has been unequivocal and clear cut - Portland should be supported.

8. The deputation notes that experience of the last abortive attempt to hold a sale shows that a successful sale requires two things which were lacking on the previous occasion -

   (1) Inclusion in the national roster for selling dates - which has been agreed to for the future.

   (2) The willing support of sufficient buyers to make adequate competition. This will require the lifting of the buyers' ban. This is the one thing that is now holding up the smooth development of Portland as a wool selling centre.

9. The deputation recognises that individual buyers cannot be forced to attend Portland sales but points out that individual buyers who may want to go to Portland should not be compelled to stay away by their Association. This is the point at issue.

10. If the discussions that the Grower Organizations have asked for are not successful this deputation will have positive proposals to put to the Grower Organizations and to the State Government.
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Author/s:
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Title:
Portland wool sales

Date:
29 January 1963

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/40063

File Description:
Portland wool sales

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