The following is in reply to Mr. W. S. Harrison's letter which appeared in the "Age" on Friday, March 29th. Mr. Harrison is a woolbuyer or retired buyer.

The Editor,
The "Age",
Collins Street,
MELBOURNE

Dear Sir,

Your correspondent of last Friday, Mr. W. S. Harrison, appears to be guilty of the very thing which he sets out to correct. He implies that a partisan view of the Portland Wool Sales question has been given to the public but doesn't he himself do this? It has been an age long tactic for those opposing Portland wool sales to say "sometime but not now". It was precisely because of this opposition to Portland that the State Government held its economic enquiry under the auspices of Professor Cochrane. The Woolbuyers' Association had full and ample opportunity to give evidence to the enquiry. Despite their evidence, Professor Cochrane found in his conclusions -

1. That Victoria, as a State, needed a third wool selling centre because of the increased volume of wool coming forward.
2. That Portland, as the centre of a large and increasingly productive woolgrowing area with its modern harbour, was the logical place for the third selling centre.
3. That wool sales should take place in the 1963-64 season.

The Professor specifically said that he had judged the question strictly on the economic merits of the particular case and that he had not taken any general considerations of decentralization into account. This, of course, makes Portland's claim much stronger.

The 10/- a bale freight subsidy to which Mr. Harrison referred was to apply to odd lots for which shipping may not be available at Portland within the normal period. After an exhaustive survey of the shipping problem during the enquiry, it was concluded that, for the great majority of wool, there would be no shipping problems from Portland. However, it was always conceded by Portland interests that small lots to out of the way countries may find difficulty. Indeed, this isn't surprising as I understand that on occasion, wool has had to be freighted overland from Melbourne to Sydney to catch an appropriate ship.

Last Friday, in a carefully worded resolution, I understand the Victorian and South Australian Woolbuyers' Association re-affirmed its ban on Portland sales. By this action the buyers are challenging the authority and influence of the three powerful woolgrowing organizations who strongly support the Portland venture.

Indirectly, the buyers are also challenging the authority of the new Australian Wool Board recently established by Federal legislation to manage the over-all affairs of the industry. This Board is controlled by organizations that support Portland.
In addition to this direct challenge to the productive section of the industry, the buyers have also challenged the State Government. The Premier has made his wishes clear. Do the buyers really believe they can win this fight against the avowed wishes and intentions of woolgrowers and of the elected Government of the day?

Yours sincerely,

(S'gd) Malcolm Fraser