About three or four years ago several Members of the Commonwealth Parliament from the Government Parties felt that the future prospects for the wool industry might not be quite as bright as they had been in the past.

As a result of this several Members banded together to form a Government Members' Wool Committee. Nearly every wool producing area in Australia is represented on this Committee. Certain members of the Committee are members of all the different wool-growing organisations.

Mr. Erwin from Ballarat and Mr. Mackinnon from Corangamite are both members of this Committee.

From the beginning the Committee wanted to make a thorough examination of all problems related to the wool industry and in the initial stages the Committee concentrated on different aspects of research, promotion and marketing. To gain the knowledge of what was going on in these fields the Committee interviewed representatives from all the wool-growing organisations and from retailers, from manufacturers, from the Wool Bureau, from our research organisations, especially from the textile laboratories at Geelong, and in addition the Committee made extensive use of information that can be obtained from the various Departments of Government.

The Committee has felt that our research organisations are well and efficiently run, further it feels that promotion since the re-organisation largely sponsored and pushed through by the energy of the present members of the Wool Bureau has been brought well up to date.

In recent months the Committee has concentrated on the cost problem as it affects export industries and the wool industry in particular. The Committee has given thought to ways and means of tackling this if present attempts to cut inflation are not fully effective.
The Committee has realised throughout its deliberations, that one of the greatest problems confronting wool-growers concerned marketing. The Committee has not expressed any one view as to what should be done about this problem, but it has examined the proposals put forward by the different organisations and it fully supports the moves made by the Chairman of the Australian Wool Growers and Graziers Council, Mr. Scott, and by the Chairman of the Australian Wool and Meat Organisation, Mr. Hislop, who approached the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Adermann, asking for an impartial enquiry into all aspects of wool marketing. This proposal is at present before the Cabinet and an announcement should be expected shortly.

I think leaders of both organisations have recognised that this is the only way that the marketing issue can be solved without increased bitterness between the organisations. Certainly any attempt to ram or stampede a plan through by referendum, without initial work of this kind, would lead to bitterness within the industry which might endure for twenty years.

Since such friendly relations have been established by the two new Chairmen of the organisations it is important that everything be done to encourage this friendliness so that there will be greater co-operation in the wool industry in the future.

A view has been put that the Government has all the information it needs before it and that an enquiry is not necessarily needed. I would not agree entirely with this view and the fact that Mr. Hitchins, the father of the "floor price plan" and author of "Tangled Skeins" was present when the deputation visited the Minister, lends some weight to this view.

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I have read most of the published documents regarding the wool industry, including the arrangements for the 1951 plan which was rejected by growers, including the 1932 Royal Commission, and the various reports put out by the organisations in recent years. Reports of the South African and New Zealand plans have also been studied. However there are questions left that are unanswered. Before casting a vote, as a wool grower, on Australia's greatest industry I would certainly like to have the answers to the questions in my mind.

I pose one such question: At times of low prices we know that all the Australian wool is still sold at a price. We know that consumption in overseas countries is falling; we know that as a general rule at these times the various textile mills and manufacturers are reducing stocks but still all our wool is sold, barring the usual small carry-over.

It would be interesting to know who holds this wool that is not going into consumption at these times of extremely low prices. An answer to this question might help in the solution of certain marketing problems.

There are two main objectives which we hope to see come out of an impartial enquiry. The first is a solution to the marketing issue which has be-devilled wool industry relations for much too long; the second is the growth of co-operation and friendliness between the organisations which will enable the organisations to make a united approach to Governments on matters which vitally concern the industry. If this can be achieved the industry will be in a much stronger position and will be much better able to safeguard the interests of its members in the future difficult times that might lie ahead.
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