

WOOL MARKETING COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY

Statement by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies.

Late last year I announced that in view of the importance of the wool industry the Government had agreed to the request of all the federal wool growing organisations that an enquiry be arranged into Australian wool marketing methods.

After mature consideration the Government has decided to appoint an independent Committee of Enquiry comprising a Chairman and two members.

The Chairman will be Sir Roslyn Philp, K.B.E., Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland and the members will be Mr. A.M.C. Buttfield, who recently retired from the position of General Manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, Sydney and Mr. D.H. Merry, B.Com., Chief Economist of the Australia and New Zealand Bank, Melbourne.

The organisations all requested that the Chairman should be a member of the Judiciary.

The Government will be guided by the Committee itself as to whether it may perhaps be necessary or desirable at some stage to formally retain consultants to assist the Committee in the conduct of the enquiry.

The terms of reference of the Committee of Enquiry will be -

- (1) to enquire into the present systems of marketing and of promoting the sale of the Australian wool clip and matters relating thereto, and to report upon the efficacy of these systems;
- (2) to report upon the merits of any other systems or of modifications of the present systems which may be advocated to the committee of enquiry or which the committee itself considers would be of long-term benefit to the woolgrowing industry and in the best interests of the nation.

The Government considers that the terms of reference of the Committee are sufficiently broad to provide for a full scale enquiry into the problems of disposing of the Australian wool clip to the best advantage. If it should transpire however that they do not fully cover all matters of importance the Government will be prepared to look at them again.

It is expected that the Committee of Enquiry will have its first meeting early in February to consider the general arrangements for the conduct of the enquiry and the procedures to be adopted, including the taking of evidence.

In view of the great national importance of this enquiry, having regard to the key role of wool in our economy, I appeal to all organisations and others concerned with the outcome of the enquiry to co-operate fully with the Committee in the complex and arduous task ahead of it.