

Extract from Hansard

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT OFFER TO ASSIST IN
FINANCING OF WOOL PROMOTION

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon.
Sir Robert Menzies, in the House of Represent-
atives on 10th October, 1963

The Government has decided to assist the wool-growing industry to finance an expanded wool promotion campaign. The decision to do this has been taken after consideration of a request put to the Government by the Executive Committee of the Australian Wool Industry Conference. The Government is willing to match £1 for £1 any additional funds which wool-growers are prepared to contribute by way of levy for wool promotion.

Mr. Curtin (Labour N.S.W.) - Another hand-out.

SIR ROBERT MENZIES - This is a serious topic. I wish I could be allowed to make this statement without interruption. This is a matter of great interest to all wool people, if not so much to woolly ones. I repeat: The Government is willing to match £1 for £1 any additional funds which wool-growers are prepared to contribute by way of levy for wool promotion. Honourable members will appreciate that this means that if wool-growers agree to increase their levy for promotion, which is at present 10/- a bale, the Commonwealth will contribute an amount equal to the additional funds provided by wool-growers as a result of an increase in the levy.

The Government's offer to match additional funds contributed by wool-growers for wool promotion will apply for a period of three years. At the end of that period the Government will review its assistance in the light of the circumstances at that time. The Australian Wool Board will be asked to report to the Government annually on the operation of the wool promotion programme.

Although the Executive Committee of the Wool Industry Conference has also suggested that the Commonwealth should assist in providing additional funds for wool research, the Government has decided to defer consideration of this particular request for the time being. In making that decision, we took account of the fact that substantial reserve funds are at present available for financing wool research. At the same time, however, we have noted that these reserves are being depleted and we will review the position after the Australian Wool Board has taken over the administration of wool research and has had an opportunity of examining future financial requirements. The Commonwealth is at present contributing the equivalent of 4/- a bale for wool research while wool-growers themselves contribute at the rate of 2/- a bale. The Commonwealth will, of course, continue to contribute on this basis.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a major decision by the Government and it has been taken in the light of the special circumstances applying to the wool industry and having regard to its competitive position with other fibres and its significance to the Australian economy.
