Malcolm Fraser said that the Prime Minister announced on January 25th the terms of reference and the personnel of the Wool Committee of Inquiry. The terms of reference are:

1. To inquire 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 by the Committee of Inquiry or which the Committee itself considers would be of long-term benefit to the woolgrowing industry and in the best interest of the nation.

The Chairman of the Committee is Sir Roslyn Philp, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, and the other members of the Committee are Mr. A. H. C. Butfield, who recently retired as general manager of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, Sydney and Mr. D. H. Berry, chief economist of the Australian and New Zealand Bank, Melbourne. The Committee will be assisted in every possible manner by the resources of the Government.

Malcolm Fraser said he was very pleased that the Committee of Inquiry had at last been appointed and would now be able to get down to the important work that lies ahead of it.

It is worth noting that the Chairman of the Committee is a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland. This was in accordance with the wishes of all organisations who all expressed a desire that the Chairman of the Inquiry should be a Judge.

He said that he believed that the Committee would have been appointed earlier except for the difficulty of obtaining personnel of the highest calibre at relatively short notice. Ever since the Government had agreed in principle to the holding of the Inquiry, shortly after the joint approach by grower organisations, the Government has been looking for people to appoint to this Committee.

He said, as he understood it, that the first people approached were unable to undertake the task because of prior commitments. This really delayed matters because the Government had to approach other people. In regard to these things it is easy enough to think of people who could do the work, but it is not always easy to get someone of the highest calibre who is available at relatively short notice for such a task. If it had not been for this difficulty
the Committee of Inquiry would probably have been in action well before this.

The Committee will be meeting shortly to discuss the conduct of its business. After which it would make known its methods of receiving evidence.

Malcolm Fraser said he hoped all woolgrower organisations had prepared most carefully the evidence that they wished to put forward because this enquiry was of the greatest importance, not only to the wool industry but also to the economy of Australia.

It has been said by some people that the Inquiry is unnecessary because all the evidence is readily available. After a study of the position over three years on the Government Members' Wool Committee he said that he still felt that there are many facts which are not readily available.

There was a Royal Commission in 1932 whose terms of reference were so vague that the result was that no real and comprehensive study was made of the industry's problems at that time. Further, the joint organisation which disposed of the whole Australian clip during the last World War under an appraisal scheme would not give a real indication how such a scheme would work in peace time, because during the war time scheme the Australian and British Government contracted to buy the whole clip. This is a very different position from one in which the clip is sold to many different buyers in every country of the world.

Furthermore, the N.S.W. Royal Commission into marketing practices was merely an examination of certain specific faults and malpractices in the present system. It was also an examination to determine whether or not any section of the industry had the right to try and close the Goulburn wool sales. It was not an examination into the auction system as a method of selling wool, nor was it an examination of alternate methods of selling wool.

There is probably more evidence of a reserve or floor price scheme than of other methods of disposing of wool, but as all growers know there has been great controversy within the industry itself on this problem. One side has fought for it, some others have opposed it bitterly. Neither side appeared willing to accept the evidence and the statements of the other at face value.

It was because of this that the Organisations came together to ask the Government to hold the inquiry so that an impartial body would be able to set out the facts in an impartial manner which all growers would regard as authoritative. This is a great task for the Committee.

Because of the knowledge that he has of wool marketing, but especially of the gap in the knowledge which he believes to be readily available
Malcolm Fraser said he would not predict what the findings of the Committee may be.

However, he believed that as a result of the Committee of Inquiry there will be substantial improvements into marketing of the Australian wool clip. He said that it was his earnest hope that all growers will support the Committee and its work, it is vital to the future of the industry.