FOR PRESS:

Release by Malcolm Fraser:

LABOR'S PROMISES: WHEAT EPISODE RECALLED

When a political party or a candidate makes election promises, those promises must be backed up with facts when under challenge.

In a recent declaration during the Bendigo by-election campaign, the Labor candidate Mr Kennedy promised primary producers a return to the "orderly marketing system" as established by the A.L.P.

This referred to the policies of Labor when the Party was last in Government before 1949.

Mr Kennedy's promise had a ring of irony about it, because it was the Labor Government which in 1945 concluded a wheat deal with New Zealand that caused years of bitter reaction from the wheatgrowers of this country.

This was the sale of 18 million bushels of wheat to New Zealand at a price — 5/9d. — a bushel — that was well below the ruling world price at that time.

Details of this remarkable piece of "orderly marketing" were disclosed only after persistent questioning of the Labor ministers by the then Opposition.

Mr John McEwen, then in Opposition, and now of course Minister for Trade and Industry, led the move to have details of the deal made public and to seek financial redress for Australia's wheatgrowers.

During the currency of this wheat deal with New Zealand the world price for wheat climbed to 17/- a bushel, and later even beyond that level. Compare this with the 5/9d. negotiated by the Labor Government with the then New Zealand Labor Government at the time:

Effect of this "orderly" marketing was to keep down the return to growers from sales of their wheat instead of allowing them access to the higher world prices.

In 1947 Mr McEwen denounced the Government's actions as "barefaced lying, suppression of facts, evasion and equivocation and brazen and shameless deception".

Reminded in Parliament of the deal during last week, Mr McEwen recalled that it was the Opposition of which he was then a member which brought the facts of this deal to public notice.

"I hope Labor will never be in a position to control 'orderly marketing' along these lines ever again," Mr McEwen told Parliament.

Compare this Labor policy with the Government's own policies in this field.
The Government and the wheat industry have faced the industry's problems side by side, co-operating to ensure the success of measures introduced to cope with the present world wheat glut and thus preserve the stability of this great industry.
VIVIENNE.....

I will 'phone you to either clear this press statement or to have it altered.

It is for all electorate papers.

If it is to be usable by the papers, it would need to be typed, copied and sent by mail by the most speedliest, urgentest process. It would have to get away in the earliest possible mail if the intricacies and inexplicabilities of the GPO machinations are to be thoroughly defeated.

I wish you luck and Godspeed.

--Syd.

Sent express delivery 2/5/69
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This referred to the policies of Labor when the Party was last in Government before 1949.

Mr. Kennedy's promise had a ring of irony about it, because it was the Labor Government which in 1945 concluded a wheat deal with New Zealand that caused years of bitter reaction from the wheatgrowers of this country.

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Details of this remarkable piece of "orderly marketing" were disclosed only after persistent questioning of the Labor ministers by the then Opposition.

Mr. John McEwen, then in Opposition, and now of course Minister for Trade and Industry, led the move to have details of the deal made public and to seek financial redress for Australia's wheatgrowers.

The then Labor Government was forced to dip heavily into public funds to the tune of some £7 million to make amends in some way to Australia's wheat growers.

During the currency of this wheat deal with New Zealand the world price for wheat climbed to 17— a bushel, and later even beyond that level. Compare this with the 5/9d. negotiated by the Labor Government with the then New Zealand Labor Government at the time!

Effect of this "orderly" marketing was to keep down the return to growers from sales of their wheat instead of allowing them access to the higher world prices.

In 1947 Mr. McEwen denounced the Government's actions as "barefaced lying, suppression of facts, evasion and equivocation and brazen and shameless deception." Reminded in Parliament of the deal during last week, Mr. McEwen recalled that it was the Opposition of which he was then a member which forced the Labor Government to "beat a retreat" on the deal, and to restore some justice to the wheatgrowers. "I hope Labor will never be in a position to control 'orderly marketing' along these lines ever again," Mr. McEwen told Parliament.

Compare this Labor policy with the Government's own enlightened policies in this field. The Government and the wheat industry have faced the industry's problems side by side, co-operating to ensure the success of measures introduced to cope with the present world wheat glut and thus preserve the stability of this great industry.