This week I would like to talk with you about President Nixon’s major initiative for peace in Indochina...emergency financial assistance for woolgrowers...an Australian wool carpet success at EXPO '70 in Japan and a misunderstanding of the proposed wool marketing authority.

President Nixon’s bold new initiative for peace in Vietnam, and Indochina generally, is I believe a strong and statesmanlike bid to arrange negotiation of a meaningful and honourable settlement for both sides in the South East Asian conflict.

The President’s five-point offer to the communists, made with the concurrence of all nations fighting on the Free World side in Indochina, is both moderate and reasonable.

It is a most significant call for peace and one that should be given fullest attention by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. However, it is doubtful if the other side will feel able to respond to enable positive progress to be made toward a permanent and peaceful settlement of the war.

I believe that if Hanoi refuses to negotiate about the President’s ceasefire plan it will be quite clear...even to those who may sympathise with North Vietnam’s aims...that the North will have no part in what is the only way to begin ending the war.

Briefly, the five main points in the President’s plan are for an:

1. Immediate ceasefire by both sides to extend throughout Indochina under international supervision.

2. Broadening of the Paris peace talks to include Laos and Cambodia, as well as North and South Vietnam.

3. Negotiation of an agreed timetable for complete withdrawals as part of an overall settlement.

4. A political settlement that meets the aspirations of all South Vietnamese.

5. Immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners-of-war held by both sides.

By these five points I believe President Nixon has taken a
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substantial step forward in his quest for peace in Vietnam and Indochina.

The President's approach reflects our Government's policy that we should stand firm for the right of all South Vietnamese people to determine for themselves the kind of Government they want.

But it is obvious that the only kind of settlement that will endure is one that both sides have an interest in preserving.

The President makes this clear in his statement: "We have no intention of seeking any settlement at the conference table other than one which fairly meets the reasonable concerns of both sides."

The aim has always been, and should be, for peace in the world where every nation can be free and independent, with no fear of foreign or outside aggression.

Initial payments of emergency financial assistance from the Commonwealth are now being received by woolgrowers.

So far about 800 cheques, totalling more than $600,000 have been posted to growers in all areas who had lodged early claims for assistance. I have been told that payments will continue to be made daily.

Of the payment cheques posted so far, about 30% are for the maximum grant of $1,500. These payments are being made to woolgrowers who have suffered a large shortfall in wool incomes between the periods June 30, 1969 and June 30, 1970.

This is in line with details of the scheme announced to Parliament on August 19 this year.

You will recall that the scheme was introduced by the Government because woolgrowers, suffering from the effect of a drastic fall in wool prices in 1969-70 and a severe drought, were in need of financial assistance.

Arrangements have been made so that there will be only minimum delay in making initial payments to woolgrowers.

However, it is clear that many woolgrowers who are eligible for a financial grant have not yet submitted returns.
I would urge these woolgrowers to send in their applications as soon as possible and not put off applying until the closing date in November. Eligible woolgrowers who did not delay in lodging applications will receive a prompt interim payment.

Application forms can be obtained from Post Offices and should be forwarded to the Secretary, Department of Primary Industry, Box 2528W at the G.P.O., Melbourne.

An excellent example of the superiority of Australian carpet wool over synthetic fibres was revealed in Parliament this week.

At EXPO '70 in Osaka, Japan, the Australian pavilion used a carpet woven from pure Australian wool.

The American pavilion used a carpet made of synthetic fibres.

It was recorded that in excess of 11 million people went through the Australian pavilion and that about 15 million walked through the American pavilion.

In June, the American synthetic carpet was worn out completely and was replaced.

Now at the termination of EXPO '70, the second American synthetic carpet is worn out and, I am advised, is of no further use.

On the other hand, the original Australian wool carpet, which bore the traffic of more than 11 million people is in good order that it is to remain in use in the Australian pavilion which has been given by the Australian Government to a city in Japan.

I see this vignette as a clear example of the superiority of pure Australian wool over man-made synthetics for use in carpet manufacture.

Finally I would like to clear up a misunderstanding about the proposed Australian Wool Commission, or marketing authority. Constituents who called on me at Parliament House this week told me they were concerned because they had heard that the total purchases by the Commission would not exceed 10% of the wool clip. This is not correct. I stress, it is wrong. The 10% was only a recommendation by the Crawford Report. The recommendation was not accepted. The facts are: "The Government has decided that no quantitative or financial limits should be placed on the amount of wool that can be purchased and held by the
Commission, as any limitation could adversely affect the operations of the Wool Commission."