PORTLAND WOOL SALES.

A short while ago the Premier announced that the Australian Council of Wool buyers and its constituent parts had lifted the long standing ban on Portland Wool Sales. This means it is now up to individual buyers to decide whether they should attend a Portland sale or not.

The wording of the resolution passed by the Australian Council of Wool Buyers and agreed to by all the state organisations as reported in a letter by Mr. P.L. Lempriere to the premier, Mr. Bolte reads like this.

"This Council and its Constituent Associations, the New South Wales and Queensland Wool Buyers' Association, the Victorian and South Australian Wool Buyers' Association, and the Western Australian Wool Buyers' Association, withdraw all organisational responsibility as it affects the attendance of its members at sales at Portland, and the support of that market is to be left entirely to the individual prerogative of members of the Constituent Associations".

Portland interests had never asked that Buyers be forced to come to Portland. They have only asked that Portland be allowed to stand in its own right as a selling centre, free from restrictions of any kind. After a long fight spreading over years, this has been achieved. Nevertheless, people in Western Victoria and wool growers in particular must realise that the ending of the buyer ban on Portland Wool Sales will not automatically achieve the success of Portland as as a significant wool selling centre.

It is essential that a large volume of good Wool be sent to Portland so that buyers will be attracted to the sales which will take place. Under present conditions, Portland Wool brokers would probably only be able to mount about 6,000 bales at each sale. While this is small by Australian standards, it is nevertheless a good start-ing point from which the Portland centre can be expanded. Many now active selling centres have prospered from small beginnings.

The Australian Wool Buying trade and the Broking interests not active at Portland need to be impressed by the determination of Wool Growers to support the Portland market. There is only one way

the grower can do this, i.e. by selling as much wool as possible through Portland.   Quite frankly, I would like to see so much wool sent through Portland that the Portland Wool Brokers would be unable to sell it all at Portland with their present store facilities. This would mean some wool would have to be sold in London. This does not involve hardship for the grower as has been proved to the growers who sold 17,500 bales in London in the 1961/62 season and should have sold just under 20,000 in this season.   It is worth noting that this latter figure would have been significantly greater if the wool clip from the whole region had not been reduced by about 20% because of unfavourable season factors.

The wool producing area served by Portland produces in all, not far short of $\frac{1}{2}$ million bales of wool.

I would like to think that this year, growers will support Portland to the extent of at least 50,000 bales.   If the present store cannot handle all of this and some has to be sold in London then the Growers should not mind because this would only help to impress the wool buyers and wool brokers that the growers are determined to support Portland in the one way that really means something i.e. by sending wool to that centre.   If this is done in sufficient quantity other broking firms should be encouraged to establish at Portland, to the great advantage of Portland as a wool selling centre.

Growers should not lose sight of the advantages of selling wool in Portland. The cheaper freight to Portland is the first and immediate advantage. However, in the long term, wool growers who support Portland would be playing a significant part in helping Portland to establish as an active commercial and industrial centre. Once this happens many goods distributed from Melbourne will come to be distributed through Portland bringing further freight reductions to the producers of this region and generally adding to the employment opportunities and development of the whole district. This is a long term objective which we must keep constantly in mind.