



**PRIME MINISTER**

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 370

15 November 1974

REFERENCE TO THE TEXTILES AUTHORITY

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced today that he had sent a reference to the Textiles Authority within the Industries Assistance Commission covering a wide range of men's, women's, children's and infants' clothing, hosiery and gloves. Mr. Whitlam said that this action was being taken as a result of high and rising levels of imports and an apparent total availability of such goods on the Australian market substantially in excess of previous levels.

The reference seeks the advice of the Authority on whether action should be taken in terms of the GATT Textiles Arrangement, to which Australia acceded earlier this year, to restrain imports into Australia. The Authority has also been asked that if it is found that restraint measures are necessary and that measures which may be recommended in accordance with the GATT Textiles Arrangement are unlikely to overcome the market disruption, what other measures, if any, should be taken to overcome the disruption. The Authority has been requested to report within 45 days in relation to certain shirts and pyjamas and within 75 days in respect of the remainder of the goods covered by the reference.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the questions of whether it would be necessary to have negotiations on the goods in question with exporting countries or take other action would have to await examination of the recommendations of the Textiles Authority.

Mr. Whitlam said that, although it is not clear to the Government at this stage that action on all goods covered by this latest reference is necessary, he considered it important that the Government be able to take the initiative in having investigations undertaken so that action can be taken promptly if found necessary.

The Prime Minister invited manufacturers and other interested parties to start preparing submissions now to the Authority, which would announce arrangements for public hearings shortly.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that should the need for action emerge from the report of the Textiles Authority, goods ordered overseas but not cleared for home consumption at the date of announcement of any action would be subject to the terms of the action. Importers should therefore exercise caution in placing orders overseas and in entering into financial commitments on such orders as it may not be possible to give special consideration to outstanding commitments should action be recommended by the Textiles Authority.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.