

P.M. No. 6/1962

CONFERENCE WITH A.C.M.A.Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

The Prime Minister and several of his senior ministerial colleagues discussed today with representatives of the Associated Chambers of Manufactures of Australia, the current level of activity and trends in Australian manufacturing industries. The views of the Associated Chambers were presented by Mr. John N. Walker, Federal President; Mr. T.M. Ramsay, Vice President, Victorian Chamber of Manufactures; Mr. R.V. Allison, President, South Australian Chamber of Manufactures; Mr. W.A. Ashton, President, Western Australian Chamber of Manufactures; Mr. H.N. Herford, President, Chamber of Manufactures of N.S.W.; Mr. W.D. Ferguson, the immediate Past President of the Australian Chambers and Mr. R.J.C. Anderson, the Federal Director.

On behalf of Australian manufacturers, the industry representatives submitted a three stage plan, namely a short term stimulus and medium and long term developments.

The short term proposals are:

- (a) the immediate re-imposition under Article XIX of GATT of Quantitative Import Restrictions to cover the products of particular industries. This should provide by far the most important and immediate stimulus;
- (b) a firm statement by the Government of its will to safeguard Australian industries;
- (c) acceptance by the Government of the principle of anticipatory duties, and
- (d) a statement by the Government confirming that a clear preference will be given to Australian made goods by the Commonwealth Government in its purchasing policies.

For the Medium Term, the Associated Chambers suggested the introduction of certain financial measures designed to stimulate manufacturing activity.

In the Long Term, the Association asked for a re-statement of the objectives of Tariff Policy and consideration of improved protective techniques. The Associated Chambers also affirmed that an assurance by the Government of a continuing high level in the flow of migrants into Australia is essential to maintain a climate favourable to industrial expansion.

Mr. W.D. Ferguson, who is also Deputy Chairman of Chrysler Australia Ltd., referred to the position of the motor vehicle industry in Australia and the desirability for some stimulation and assistance.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Prime Minister and Mr. Walker agreed that there had been a most valuable discussion and exchange of views. Mr. Menzies said the Government would give close consideration to every proposal submitted by the Associated Chambers when the conferences arranged with other representative bodies have been held.

CANBERRA,  
18th January, 1962.