

16 January 1973

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, MR.  
G. WARWICK SMITH

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Whitlam, today announced the appointment of a Special Trade Representative to represent Australian interests in the forthcoming multi-lateral trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

"These negotiations" said Mr. Whitlam "are regarded by the Government as having a significant bearing not only on Australia's trading patterns but on the expansion and liberalisation of world trade in agricultural and industrial products.

"A prime objective of the negotiations is a programme aimed at improving the living standards of the people of the world, and about 100 countries are expected to participate.

"Preliminary meetings will be held over the next few months and the multi-lateral negotiations are expected to continue at least through 1974".

The Government had appointed as Special Trade Representative Mr. G. Warwick Smith formerly Secretary of the Department of the Interior who has had extensive experience in international trade negotiations. In his previous capacities as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry and Special Commercial Adviser in London, Mr. Warwick Smith had been directly associated at senior level with the operations of the GATT and the complexities of multi-lateral trade negotiations. He would be located in Canberra whilst the preparatory work for the negotiations was being carried out, and would be based in Geneva for the actual negotiations.

"There is" said Mr. Whitlam "a clear need for an experienced negotiator to put the Australian viewpoint at the highest level. In previous multi-lateral negotiations a number of countries found an appointment at this level materially assisted their negotiating position. I would expect the Australian decision to be welcomed by other participating countries as an indication of the importance we attach to the negotiations".

CANBERRA. A.C.T.