



PRIME MINISTER

31 May 1974

Press Statement No. 253

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY REPORT - MUSHROOMS

The Prime Minister today released the report of the Temporary Assistance Authority on Mushrooms.

On 8 March 1974, Mr Whitlam asked the Temporary Assistance Authority whether it is necessary that urgent action be taken to protect the Australian industry producing mushrooms and prepared or preserved mushrooms in relation to the importation of mushrooms in various forms.

In accordance with provisions of the Industries Assistance Commission Act, the Authority reported on 5 April 1974 that he considered no urgent action is necessary to protect the Australian industry in relation to the importation of mushrooms of a kind covered by the reference. Government action on the report had to be held over pending the outcome of the elections.

The Prime Minister said the Government noted the comments made by the Authority, particularly his comments that the nature and extent of competition between the traditional Australian pack of mushrooms in butter sauce and imported button mushrooms in brine is far from clear; that an oversupply of locally canned mushrooms had developed during 1972/73; that events since July 1973 cannot be attributed wholly or mainly to competition from imports; and that the increasing quantities of imported button mushrooms in brine are catering for a demand in many ways distinct from the demand for the Australian mushrooms in butter sauce.

Mr Whitlam assured the industry that the Departments of Primary Industry and Secondary Industry, together with other interested departments would closely monitor the situation to see whether any changed circumstances merited further action by the Government.

Mr Whitlam recalled that the question of long-term assistance for the Australian mushrooms growing and processing industry was referred to the Industries Assistance Commission at the same time as the reference was sent to the Temporary Assistance Authority. Because of problems in the industry which had been brought to his attention, the Prime Minister said that he was writing to the Chairman of the Commission asking him to accord priority to this inquiry.

CANBERRA. A.C.T