



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 344

18 October 1974

RECEIPT OF TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY REPORT - FOOTWEAR

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced that the Government had imposed temporary import restrictions on most types of footwear as from today. The import restrictions are intended to limit imports over the next twelve months to a level 20 per cent higher than the level of imports in 1972/73, within each of the specific tariff items set out below. This would mean that imports over the next year would be at a level about 30 per cent less than in 1973/74. Imports of gum boots, wading boots and specialist sporting footwear would not be covered by the restrictions.

Mr. Whitlam said that this action had been taken following the Government's acceptance in principle of the report by the Temporary Assistance Authority of 10 October 1974 on Footwear. The Authority found that urgent action was necessary to protect the Australian industry producing footwear and parts therefor in relation to the importation of footwear falling within tariff items 64.01.4, 64.02.3, 64.02.9, 64.03.9 and 64.04.9, which cover footwear with soles and uppers of rubber or plastic, with soles of leather or rubber, with outer soles of wood or cork and with outer soles of other materials.

Mr. Whitlam said that because of the possibility of substantial existing commitments to import, it would be some time before quota entitlements for individual importers could be determined. Initially, consideration will be given to entry of goods in transit and goods in bond as at the date of this announcement, and of goods covered by irrevocable letter of credit established on or before 11 September 1974. Allocation of quotas to individual importers would only be considered after these commitments were assessed.

In order to make the allocation of any such quotas more equitable, should a balance remain for allocation after accommodating the import commitments mentioned above, Mr. Whitlam said that the base period criterion for determining possible quota allocations would be widened to include importers in 1973-74, as well as 1972-73.

Mr. Whitlam also mentioned that a reference on the long-term protective needs of the footwear industry had been sent to the Industries Assistance Commission, which had been asked to report its findings to the Government no later than 30 April 1976.

Further details of the Government's decision will be announced by the Department of Manufacturing Industry which will be responsible for implementation of the import licensing controls, in conjunction with the Department of Customs and Excise. Copies of the Temporary Assistance Authority's report are now available.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.