



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 398

6 December 1974

TEXTILE FLOOR COVERINGS - REFERENCE TO THE TEXTILES AUTHORITY OF THE INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced today that he had sent a reference to the Textiles Authority within the Industries Assistance Commission covering certain textile floor coverings. 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 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 make its report by 28 February 1975 on 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 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.