



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

28 SEPTEMBER 1977

LETTER TO MR FUKUDA

The Prime Minister telexed the following letter to the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Fukuda, today.

My dear Prime Minister,

I regret that I feel compelled to raise with you again the question of Australian exports of beef to Japan.

Mr McKay, the leader of the Australian delegation to the bilateral discussions with your officials in Tokyo on Monday and Tuesday of this week, has now reported to me. He has told me that no progress was made in establishing a more reliable and predictable basis for our beef trade.

I am deeply disappointed that the understanding which we reached in our discussions in Kuala Lumpur, that officials should continue discussions in even closer fashion with a view to finding ways for more stability in exports, has yielded no results. I would have thought that the achievement of more stability would at least have meant a move from the present six monthly quotas for beef imports to a twelve monthly basis.

In our discussions in Kuala Lumpur we each recognised the political difficulties which each of our Governments face in relation to our beef industries. The beef issue is one which is infecting our trading relationship and indeed our total relationship. The close and friendly relationship which we now have and which we are both concerned to develop should not be put at risk.

Knowing your concern about this matter, I would hope that you might personally review the position with a view to encouraging some progress towards a mutually satisfactory solution.

I suggest that we should agree to resume the talks at an early date, and I would be happy to send one of my senior Ministers to Tokyo for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

(Malcolm Fraser)
