GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

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AUSTRALIAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

Action Affecting Imports of Printed Cotton Textiles

The following communication, dated 27 February 1958, has been received from the Australian Permanent Representative in Geneva, with the request that it be transmitted to the contracting parties:

"The Australian Government, as an emergency and temporary measure, has decided not to issue any further import licences for printed cotton textiles (contained in Tariff Item 105 (A)(1)(a)(3)). This decision will be announced today.

"Imports of printed cotton textiles increased substantially in recent months. This increase is related to the substantial relaxation of imports which became operative as from 1st April 1957. Imports are running at an annual rate of about 60/70 million square yards compared to 38 million square yards in 1956/57. This increase has caused and is threatening Australian industry with serious injury.

"The question of tariff treatment for the industry, which is not getting protection from the present small revenue duties, is being examined by the Australian Tariff Board. Further import licences will not be issued until the Government has considered the Board's report, which should be received in about two months time. It is intended to continue emergency action only until the Government has dealt with the Board's report.

"It is pointed out that no licences already issued to countries to which Australia applies GATT are being cancelled. Importers unused quota entitlements may be taken up on other goods within category B or bank C 16 goods of the import licensing system. Under the Australian-Japanese agreement on commerce, Japan has agreed to reduce exports to Australia by over one-third thus restricting the volume of exports already covered by import licences and firm orders. Licences thus redundant may not be used to import printed cotton textiles from any other source but may be used on other category B or bank C 16 goods from any country.

"Due to the damage which is already being suffered by Australian industry, and in view of the large quantities of imports already covered by import licences, emergency action had to be taken prior to notification and consultation. The Australian Government, if requested, is prepared to consult as required under paragraph 2 of Article XIX."