

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/414

30 September 1955

Limited Distribution

Original: English

AUSTRALIAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

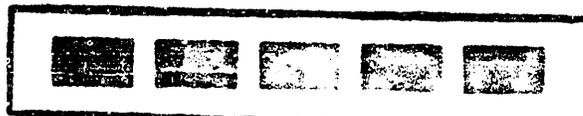
Intensification as from 1 October

The following statement has been received from the Government of Australia:

"Senator the Hon. Neil O'Sullivan, Minister for Trade and Customs, today gave details of the further restrictions on imports which were recently announced by the Prime Minister. These restrictions, which will affect almost all types of imports, will operate from 1 October 1955.

"The current licensing levels relating to goods from the non-dollar area will be reduced as under:

1. Category A: Quotas will be reduced by 12 per cent, with the exception of the following goods, the quotas for which will be reduced by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent: surgical instruments, bacteriological products, yarns (other than rayon and jute), ophthalmic instruments, meat wraps, aluminium angles, etc., aluminium wire, brass, bronze and other non-ferrous alloys.
2. Category B: Quotas will be reduced by 25 per cent, with the exception of special quotas, which have been granted for textiles for manufacturing purposes, which will be reduced by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
3. Quotas for completely knocked-down motor vehicles will be reduced by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
4. Quotas for fully-assembled motor vehicles will be reduced by 25 per cent.
5. Other quotas will be reduced by $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, except the following goods, for which there will be no reduction in the current level of quotas: iron and steel, rubber, fruit wrapping paper, rock phosphate, ferrous alloys, aluminium and nickel blocks, etc., hessian and jute viz bags packs sacks piece goods and yarn, roller and ball bearings and steel balls for bearings, nitrate of soda and other fertilizer, tobacco leaf, manganese, chrome ore, paper pulp, medicines, asbestos.



6. The allocation for goods in the administrative category will be reduced by 12½ per cent overall.

"The level of licensing of goods from the dollar area will be subject to an overall reduction of 12½ per cent as stated by the Prime Minister.

"The Government has decided that Australia's external receipts and payments must be brought into balance before 30 June next, and it is with that object in view that further restrictions on imports are being imposed; for this reason, it will not be possible to continue the present system of granting special licences or new quotas, as is done at present by licensing committees, established in each State. These committees will be abolished forthwith and all applications not dealt with at the time will be refused by the Collector of Customs in the applicant's State. It would be possible to continue concessional treatment on an individual application basis only if more severe general reductions were imposed. Therefore, the Government has decided not to give special treatment in individual cases since this would necessitate an even greater reduction in the allocations of existing quota holders.

"Senator O'Sullivan also stated that from 1 October next certain basic materials would be licensed on a basis which would permit the licence holder to purchase the materials from any country regardless of currency considerations. These raw materials are: titanium dioxide, sulphur, paper pulp, cotton, aluminium, nickel, copper, tobacco leaf, hog casings, crude asbestos fibre, newsprint. Importers of these materials would thereafter be able to purchase them from the best and cheapest source of supply and this should be a help to manufacturers in reducing production costs. It would also enable the maximum quantity of materials to be obtained within the limited funds that can be made available. The goods in question will be included in a quarterly "all countries" budget, and a quarterly allocation will be made in respect of each commodity. Some of the commodities are at present dealt with on a quota basis when imported from non-dollar countries, but from 1 October, they will be dealt with on an administrative basis by the Central Import Licensing Branch, at 52 William Street, Sydney. Senator O'Sullivan expressed the view that this innovation would not only be helpful to Australian importers, but would also be of value in international trading relations. Countries which export these important materials would be able to compete on more even terms in supplying the Australian market and would not feel that they were being put at a disadvantage by discrimination in import licensing."

Consideration of the foregoing statement has been added to the Provisional Agenda for the Tenth Session.

