

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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AUSTRALIAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

Statement by the Minister for Trade, the Rt.Hon. J. McEwen

The following Press Statement, dated 31 July 1958, has been received from the Australian Permanent Delegation in Geneva, and is circulated for the information of contracting parties:

"No change will be made in the level of import licensing during the next four months.

"This decision was announced to-day by the Minister for Trade, the Rt. Hon. John McEwen.

"Elaborating on the decision, Mr. McEwen said that the current import ceiling of £800 million would be maintained. The Government regards a stable level of import licensing as very important if disruption to business activity is to be avoided. Continuation of the present rate of importation could result in some running down of international reserves. However, at the end of June, reserves stood at £525 million.

"A significant change in import licensing policy, to take effect from 1 August, will make capital equipment from the dollar area more readily accessible to Australian manufacturers. From that date, Australian importers of capital equipment would be able to obtain their requirements from whatever source they desired. Imports of these items from the dollar area would be treated on the same bases as imports from other sources.

"This change', said the Minister, 'should have valuable cost saving advantages to industry. It should allow the Australian industrialist to buy the cheapest and most technically advanced plant and machinery for his factory.'

"Mr. McEwen stated that, in accordance with the Government's policy of simplifying licensing administration, a number of items would be exempted from the Import Licensing Regulations. These would include rosin, bromine salts, and a number of metals. Licences for the importation of these goods, covering trade of approximately £1½ million a year, would no longer be required.

"Some adjustments would be made in the levels of quotas for certain goods. These included some goods for which special licences outside the current quotas were already being issued. In other cases increases were being made to meet shortages which had developed since the quotas were established. Details of these changes will be announced in public licensing instructions."

"Commodities Involved in the Import Licensing Changes
to operate from 1. August 1958

Goods to be licensed without dollar discrimination

Capital equipment (other than electrical) including parts; electrical machine apparatus and appliances, including parts; television transmission and studio equipment and parts therefor.

Goods to be exempted from import licensing

Annato; piezo electric quartz plates, bars, rods; bromine salts, various cyanides, and hydrosulphites; rosin; cobalt metal; magnesium metal; vanadium metal; arsenic metal; chrome silicide; calcium silicide; molybdenum metal; chromium metal; fashion plates and books; maps, charts; geographical etc. globes; oil and water colour paintings.

Goods for which quota levels are to be varied

Dessicated coconut; white flannelette; olive oil; wall and floor tiles; crockery chinaware, porcelainware; brushes of the type ordinarily used in schools and artists' brushes; laundry clothing (used in laundry equipment).

Goods involved in other changes, mainly of an administrative nature

Musical instruments; window holland; cameras and photographic equipment; sanitary earthenware."