The Army is co-operating with the Australian Wool Board to provide facilities in Melbourne for tests on the performance of baled wool under high compression.

Announcing this today, the Minister for the Army, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, said the tests would be carried out at the Army Design Establishment, Maribyrnong, commencing on Monday, September 18.

A number of bales of wool dumped by high density methods were being deeply frozen, then placed in a heating chamber at the Design Establishment. Some would be secured with standard metal strapping, and others without fastening.

The purpose was to test the behaviour of the high density bales when returned to a normal state.

It was desired to establish, as a result, the practicability of high density dumping for overseas shipments of wool, as a means of conserving cargo space, consistent with modern shipping methods. It was hoped the tests would confirm that wool baled by the high density process would not suffer damage as a result.

Mr. Fraser said that the reason the test bales were being frozen was that wool shipments to some European countries during winter could freeze while lying on docks and in stores awaiting use.

They would be placed in the heating chamber at the Army Design Establishment on Monday and remain there until approximately Thursday, September 21. It was intended to use a camera with wide angle lens to record hourly any changes in the wool bales' size and shape.

The Army's heat chamber was designed to simulate high temperature and high humidity conditions for testing vehicles and other large items of equipment in hot/wet and hot/dry climatic conditions. The chamber measured 23 feet by 50 feet and was constructed of brick with insulated walls.
Adjoining the test chamber is the control and recording section from which equipment under test could be observed through windows.

Information supplied by the Wool Board gave the specifications of a conventional dumped bale of wool as approximately 18½ cubic feet in volume and approximately 17 lbs. per cubic foot density.

For a high density bale, the volume was from 9 to 11 cubic feet and up to 33 lbs per cubic foot in density.

The tests being carried out by the Wool Board with the use of the Army's facilities were part of a general attempt to reduce transport costs in the Wool Industry.

The Army was pleased to be able to co-operate with the industry in making its specialised facilities available on this occasion.

Lists: A and B

Further information:

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17th September, 1967.

OTHER STATES: ADPR AT COMMAND HEADQUARTERS