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DRIED FRUITS EXPORT CHARGES AMENDMENT BILL 1982

Date Introduced: 19 August 1982
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. P.J. Nixon, Minister for Primary Industry

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To raise the maximum export charge leviable on dried fruits, refine the procedure for altering that rate, and alter the provision for payment of the charge.

Background

Export charges are levied on dried fruits (currants, sultanas and raisins) under the **Dried Fruits Export Charges Act** 1924. That Act is to continue in force until a date which the Governor-General may fix by Proclamation (section 5).

The maximum rate of export charge was altered to the metric rate of 7/10ths of a cent per kilogram ($7.00 per tonne) on 1 September 1975 (Gazette Ref. s.168: p.1), pursuant to the **Dried Fruits Export Charges Act** 1975, and the actual rate was then 7/20ths of a cent per kilogram ($3.50/tonne) (Statutory Rules 1975/169). From 1 March 1976, the actual rate has been 9/20ths of a cent per kilogram, or $4.50 per tonne (Statutory Rules 1976/70). Financial pressure on the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation, which controls the export marketing and overseas promotion of Australian dried vine fruit, led to an increase in the actual rate to $7.00 per tonne on 29 April 1982. The action was taken with industry agreement in the light of the Corporation's steadily rising costs and sharp fall in receipts following a poor 1981 harvest. The actual rate is now at the maximum permitted by the Act.

The present Bill provides for an actual rate of $7.00/tonne until altered, with a new maximum rate of $15.00/tonne. The Principal Act is further altered to permit different rates for currants, sultanas and raisins should market price differentials for the three commodities later make them appropriate. Prices for the three commodities are presently similar.

The main industry organization, the Australian Dried Fruit Association, has been consulted in the past on matters relating to the Australian Dried Fruit Corporation. A new section 4 formalizes this consultation by requiring consultations between a representative of the producers' organization and an officer of the Department of Primary Industry before regulations altering the rate of export charge may be made.

A minor amendment removes words relating to the person to whom the export charge is payable. This matter is thought more appropriate to be prescribed by regulation, as was done for example under Statutory Rule No. 70 of 1976, making the charge payable to the Collector of Public Moneys in the Department administering the Act.

Main Provisions

Clause 2 provides for commencement on the date of Royal Assent.

Clause 3 provides that "producers' organization", for the purposes of the new section 4 of the Principal Act, means the Australian Dried Fruits Association or such other association as may later be prescribed.

Clause 4 amends section 3 of the Principal Act to provide a present rate of 0.7 cents per kilogram and a maximum rate of 1.5 cents per kilogram. The new sub-section 3(2A) permits differing rates on dried currants, dried sultanas and dried raisins. A substituted sub-section 3(3) omits specification of the person to whom duty is to be payable.

The new section 4 of the Principal Act, substituted by clause 5, permits the Governor-General to make regulations. By sub-section 4(2), the actual rate of export charge may not be varied unless the Australian Dried Fruits Corporation has reported to the Minister and consultations have been held between an officer of the Department of Primary Industry and a representative of the "producers' organization" which refers, by section 2, to the Australian Dried Fruits Association.

For further information, if required, contact:

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25 August 1982