SHORT DIGEST OF BILL

Purpose
The main purpose of this Bill is to extend the operation of the Stevedoring Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act 1967 by a further six months to 1 July 1977 to enable new arrangements for the stevedoring industry to be finalised.

Previous Legislation
The Stevedoring Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act 1967 superseded many of the provisions of the Stevedoring Industry Act 1956. It was enacted in November 1967 to give legislative effect to the arrangements agreed to by representatives of employers, unions and the Government in the National Stevedoring Industry Conference. The National Conference was set up in 1965 under the Chairmanship of A.E. Woodward to achieve long-term improvement in the stevedoring industry.

The Stevedoring Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act 1967 was originally introduced for a limited life, expiring on 30 June 1970, so that the National Conference scheme would have a trial period. However, it became evident that it was not feasible to introduce permanent arrangements for the industry before that date. Consequently the temporary arrangements were extended for another two years. Since then it has been further extended on a number of occasions, most recently by the Stevedoring Industry (Temporary Provisions) Amendment Act 1976 assented to on 3 June 1976.

In late 1975, the Labor Party Minister for Labor and Immigration (Senator the Hon. J. McClelland) requested R. M. Northrop, Chairman of the Stevedoring Industry Council which succeeded the National Conference, to report on the views of the parties to the industry regarding present problems and appropriate future arrangements for the industry.

After examination of this Report and other material the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations (Hon. A. A. Street) in his Second Reading Speech on a Bill to amend the Principal Act on 6 May 1976, identified the problems under existing arrangements and provided a statement of stage one of the Government’s attitude to future arrangements for the industry. In his Second Reading Speech on this Bill (No. 2), Mr. Street reported on progress and introduced stage two. The main feature of the new arrangements is the abolition of the Government’s regulatory role in the industry currently through the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority (ASIA), providing the industry can develop a suitable solution to problems such as the need to reduce the
workforce, redundancy and recruitment, distribution and transferability of labour, industrial relations, participation of interested bodies and funding.

Provisions

This Bill will amend the Stevedoring Industry (Temporary Provisions) Act 1967 by extending the life of that Act to 1 July 1977 (clause 3).

Consequent upon amendments to the Stevedoring Industry Act 1956 which will allow long service leave generally to be dealt with by awards of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, this Bill amends section 7C of the Principal Act so that ASIA can continue to provide the Fremantle Port Authority with a refund of part of the stevedoring industry charge paid in respect of long service leave and pension benefits of certain waterside workers (clause 4).

Finance, Industries, Trade and Development Group

29.11.76

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE