Date Introduced: 29 February 1984
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. John Kerin, M.P., Minister for Primary Industry

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To impose a charge on the export of fresh fruit and vegetables, pursuant to a policy of 50 per cent recovery in respect of inspection services, which are provided by State Departments of Agriculture at Commonwealth expense.

Background

The Export Control Act 1982 and associated subordinate legislation authorize inspection of prescribed goods for export. The Exports (Fresh Fruit) Regulations and Exports (Fresh Vegetables) Regulations were repealed, along with Regulations relating to other types of primary product exports, and replaced by the Export Control (General) Regulations 1982, which in regulation 4 declared fruit and vegetables to be prescribed goods and in regulation 5 adopted the respective requirements of the Exports (Fresh Fruit) Regulations and the Exports (Fresh Vegetables) Regulations. The Regulations prescribe fees for certain services rendered out of hours or at distant locations.

The present Bill would impose a charge for export inspection, pursuant to a policy of recovery of 50 per cent of the cost of operating the inspection service. The Bill provides that the rate of charge may be prescribed by Regulation but is not to exceed, in relation to an export permit, $20 plus 18 cents for each "package" (as defined) involved. It is intended that actual rates, at half this level, apply from 1 April 1984. Had these rates applied throughout 1983/84, an estimated $1.2 million would have been collected. Estimated total claims from State governments for operating inspection services in 1983/84 are $2.4 million.
Main Provisions

The Bill would commence on a date fixed by Proclamation. Clause 3 provides that the associated Collection Bill is to be read as one with the Bill. That Collection Bill defines "vegetables" to include fruit.

Export inspection charge is levied by clause 5 on fresh vegetables in respect of which an export permit has been granted. Under clause 7, the exporter is the person liable to pay the charge.

Clause 6 authorizes regulations to prescribe rates of export inspection charge, including varying rates for different classes of vegetables or fruit. Charges in respect of fresh vegetables covered by an export permit are not to exceed $20 plus 18 cents per "package". Subclause 6(4) permits regulations to define exactly what will comprise a "package" in respect of any given packaging method.

For further information, if required, contact:

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