To improve the efficiency and streamline the operations of the Australian Meat and Live-stock Corporation (AMLC).

Background

The proposal to increase the membership of the AMLC is in response to the workload of the AMLC. The existing arrangements which establish the Meat and Live-stock Exporters and Abattoir Operators Consultative Group, in which conflicts of interest sometimes occur, have not proved convenient. In 1977, as a temporary solution, an Interim Live-stock Producers Consultative Group was established to present the views of live-stock producers. The then Minister for Primary Industry, the Rt. Hon. I. McC. Sinclair announced his intention to introduce legislation permanently establishing a separate Live-stock Exporters Consultative Group. The present Bill formally establishes that body. Other difficulties have been experienced with the existing legislation.

The Australia-Middle East shippers have attempted to increase shipping rates by 17.5 per cent. The AMLC insisted that exporters would not pay more than 12.5 per cent. Under the existing legislation the AMLC could ensure a united front, preventing exporters paying the higher amount, only by imposing sanctions which are too harsh. In addition to cancelling or suspending licences, the AMLC would have to declare export contracts void, thereby hurting innocent parties. Also the AMLC can only apply sanctions after the event. It cannot monitor proposed export contracts. The proposed Bill would overcome these deficiencies and clarify some of the AMLC's powers. It would also assist in clarifying the AMLC's powers to limit exports to a country which imposes meat quotas or other specifications.
Main Provisions

Clause 4 amends sub-section 10(2) of the Principal Act to provide for export licences to be issued for a definite rather than indefinite period. Clause 5 amends sub-section 11(2) to expand the Corporation's powers to issue directions to licensees. This includes the power to require them to obtain the Corporation's prior approval of particular export transactions.

Sub-clause 5(1)(d) also no longer requires licensees to exercise control over exports which have reached their destination. Exporters will be required to furnish particulars relating to intended export transactions in addition to their present obligations (sub-clause 5(1)(e)). Provisions allowing to AMLC to suspend or cancel licences (s.12) remain unaltered.

Clause 6 repeals the existing s.14 relating to export contracts which require AMLC approval, and inserts a new s.14. The main effect is to remove provisions which render contracts void if the licencee contravenes the requirements of this section. Offending licencees will instead be dealt with under s.12. The new sub-section 14(2) clarifies the AMLC's authority to approve conditions, including freight rates, relating to the overseas carriage of meat.

Sub-clause 7(1) inserts a new sub-section 18(1) relating to membership of the AMLC, which allows for an additional member representing producers and another representing meat processors and exporters. Clause 15 amends s.41, replacing the Meat and Live-stock Exports and Abattoir Operators Consultative Group with the Live-stock Exporters Consultative Group and the Meat Exporters and Abattoir Operators Consultative Group. The functions of these two new groups are provided for in an amended s.42 (clause 16).

Finance, Industries, Trade & Development Group

29 August 1980

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE