

BANANA IMPORTS REFUSED

23.6.77

Joint statement by the Acting Prime Minister and Member for Richmond, the Rt Hon. J.D. Anthony, M.P. and the Member for Cowper, the Hon. I.L. Robinson, M.P.

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"Applications to import bananas into Australia from Pacific Islands and South East Asia have not been approved because of the presence of diseases and pests in those areas", Mr. Anthony said.

The Banana Growers' Federation made representations to Mr. Anthony expressing concern at the possible introduction of disease if banana exports were admitted.

Mr. Anthony referred the matter to the Department of Health for investigation and a report has been submitted to the Minister.

"The Department of Health has refused banana export applications from Western Samoa and Tonga on the grounds that the diseases and pests in those areas could endanger the Australian industry", he said.

Mr. Anthony said a serious fungal disease of banana leaves known as black leaf streak was widespread in the Pacific and South East Asian areas.

"The presence of exotic fruit flies in the Pacific Islands would require fruit to be fumigated before export and I understand that Western Samoa and Tonga are unable to meet Australian fumigation requirements", he said.

"The import applications for bananas from Ecuador have similarly not received approval, principally because of the possibility of Moko disease being introduced into Australia", Mr. Anthony said.