

B-DOUBLE TRUCKS, JARRAHDAL ROAD

17. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture:

The renewal of the B-double truck permits on Jarrahdale Road has not gone ahead and I ask: Will the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure be alerted to the fact that the decision will have enormous cost repercussions within the livestock industry in the great southern of Western Australia?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

The issue of B-doubles on Jarrahdale Road has not been outstanding for any great period. There is a misunderstanding of the process that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is undertaking to deal with extra-mass vehicles and, in particular, over-length vehicles. The process is one of consultation with the community about whether vehicles of that nature ought to be permitted on certain roads.

Hon M.J. Criddle: It is not suitable.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I shall tell the member what happened when the first permits were granted for B-doubles to go through Jarrahdale. I can tell the member this with some confidence because the minister has addressed this matter in another place today and I trust it is entirely accurate information.

Several members interjected.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I quote from notes that were taken at a community meeting on this issue as follows -

Some 300 people attended a community meeting and were absolutely up in arms because the former Minister for Transport had not consulted the community at all - indeed, he had totally misled the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale by leading people to believe that there would be a review before he issued any of the permits. The next day he issued 35 permits, and over the ensuing months he issued 80 permits.

As I understand from notes of what the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure said at that meeting, she made it very clear that running B-doubles on that piece of road was something to which Labor was absolutely opposed. This was a pre-election commitment. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is being attacked by Hon Murray Criddle for honouring an election commitment. Is attacking the Government for honouring a commitment the best the new Opposition is able to do? I shall go one stage further. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has started this process and it has been extremely successful already. It involves consultation with road users and stakeholders in both industry and the community. Four forums will be held; the first has already been held in Perth and further forums are to be held in Geraldton, Katanning and Kalgoorlie.

Hon M.J. Criddle: The first one will be on 5 May.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am sorry if I inadvertently misled the House. I was told a moment ago that a forum had already been held. A consultative process is in place and that is more than the Hon Murray Criddle did as minister for the people of Serpentine-Jarrahdale.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the House is answering five supplementary questions. I do not allow supplementary questions until every member seeking the call has asked a question. If the Leader of the House completes his answer to the original question, I will be able to give the call to other members who have indicated they would like to ask a question today.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Thank you, Mr President. Those points needed to be made in the context of the question. I respect the member's question. However, he must respect the process, which, particularly concerning the Jarrahdale road, is in accordance with the Government's policy that was articulated prior to the election. It is extremely easy to criticise a Government for doing no more than honouring its election commitment. However, I am confident that after the completion of the consultative cycle when determinations are made about the use of road trains on certain roads, the issue of the economic effect, which was raised yesterday and later today, can be adequately dealt with.