

BLUE GUM LOGS, TRANSPORT BY RAIL

8. Hon CHRISTINE SHARP to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is the minister committed to maximising the use of rail for the transport of blue gum logs in the south west in order to reduce the use of almost 750 000 additional road trains on south west highways each year?
- (2) If so, how does the minister intend to achieve this?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

- (1)-(2) As recently as a few days ago I was talking to one of the major proponents of the woodchip mill in the south west. The agreement is for Westrail to transport the woodchips from the mill to the port of Albany. This will cause a major reduction in the need to transport woodchips by road. Transport of the timber to the mill by road will remain, but we have put a proposal to the Federal Government for assistance with roadworks in the area. We hope to get an indication of support in the near future. One of the benefits of the sale of Westrail freight will be the possibility of extending a rail system into that area. I am keen to encourage transport, whether it be the transport of blue gum logs, woodchips or anything else, to move off road onto rail throughout Western Australia. Western Australia can only benefit from the removal of the task off road onto rail. I will encourage people in whatever industry to do that.