

POLYPHAGOUS SHOT-HOLE BORER

464. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I thank the minister for the stack of booklets she sent to my office under cover of a recent letter concerning the polyphagous shot-hole borer. They provided a very informative summary of the borer's impact upon trees, but they lead me to ask the following questions.

- (1) Does the extensive list of host plants within which these creatures thrive include the hemp plant or is it, as the booklet seems to suggest, limited specifically to a wide variety of trees?
- (2) If the hemp plant does not, in fact, serve as a host for this invasive and destructive beetle, will the department consider that to be one more excellent reason to advocate for the growth of more hemp and the creation of more wood substitutes here in WA; and, if not, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I will tell the member why not.

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I answer on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Food.

- (1) No. Hemp is a herbaceous plant. The polyphagous shot-hole borer attacks trees with woody stems.
- (2) The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is available to support industry in exploring alternative fibre industries.