

MEDICAL ACT, REVIEW

490. Mr M.F. BOARD to the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to his long overdue announcement that the Medical Act will be revamped.

- (1) Why was the issue not dealt with at the beginning of the Government's term?
- (2) Why did the minister tell the President of the Australian Medical Association just two months ago that this legislation was not a priority, even though he made a media event of it this week?
- (3) Will the minister confirm that the legislation will not be dealt with this year, but introduced next year?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

- (1)-(3) I am not sure whether the member for Murdoch realises that the Medical Act was written in 1894, so the legislation has been a little while coming - probably during the whole term of the previous Government and the terms of virtually every other Liberal Government since Federation.

I will deal with the question about my telling the Australian Medical Association that the legislation was not a priority and why it has taken so long to come forward. At my last meeting with the Australian Medical Association there were discussions about trying to put corporate medicine rules and regulations into the Medical Act. As I pointed out to the head of the AMA at that time, it is not appropriate to put those rules and regulations into that kind of Act. Issues concerning corporate medicine can be very well accommodated in the existing processes for the registration of medical practices. Some issues need to be dealt with.

Mr J.H.D. Day interjected.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: It is interesting to hear the member for Darling Range pipe up on this matter. The only thing he did when he was the minister was to allow the AMA to undermine him. At least I, as Minister for Health, have the support of a Cabinet, a Government and a Premier when it comes to those kinds of people.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I will deal with the articles that have appeared in the newspaper this week. The member for Murdoch obviously does not listen to what happens in this House, because some two weeks ago when we were last in session - it may have been the week before that - the report of the Medical Board of WA for this year was tabled. The newspaper article very clearly describes all the issues that were in that report. All I did was answer two of the reporter's questions about the issue. One of the questions put to me was about the efforts of the Attorney General to bring together all these matters under the state administrative tribunal. Unfortunately, other issues have slowed down the drafting of the Bill, because those issues need to be drafted in such a way that they will work.

There is a rabble on the other side of the House. However, I do not need distractions; I simply like to get on with my job of Minister for Health. The kinds of distractions that come from the other side of the House are merely that - distractions.