

NORTHAMPTON HOSPITAL, SERVICES

1199. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Considering that the Northampton Hospital has a large catchment area to the north and east, when will the dispute with local doctors be finalised to allow doctors to fully service that facility?
- (2) Will the minister guarantee that all services in the Northampton Hospital will be maintained and, with further population growth, improved?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) There is one medical practice in Northampton consisting of a practice principal and his employee. The practice principal has declined the offer of contractual indemnity that would enable him and his employed doctor to keep working at the hospital as visiting medical practitioners. Efforts are under way to secure these doctors' services so that following a resolution of their contractual indemnity issue, both can recommence providing services for public patients at the hospital.
- (2) An examination of the utilisation of the acute emergency department and admitted patient services provided by the Northampton Hospital clearly shows that use has been steadily declining for some time. The country health services review in January 2003 identified a significant mismatch between the available health resources, current modes of service delivery, and the modern day health needs experienced in communities. The long-term viability and sustainability of rural and regional services requires the development of more contemporary and effective service delivery models in consultation with the local communities.