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| Saskatchewan | 20e | 3e | Discours sur la santé | 9 avril 1984 | Douglas Taylor | Minister of Health | Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan |

Mr. Chairman, I’d like to have my officials come in and, in a moment, introduce them to the members of the House. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and Mr. Chairman. It gives me pleasure to introduce the officials that will be working with me through this set of estimates.

Seated right beside me is the deputy minister of Health, Mr. Ken Fyke. To my right is the associate deputy minister of health, Dr. Peter Glynn. Seated behind me, over this side here, is Mr. George Loewen, associate deputy minister of Health; Mr. Dick Bailey, assistant deputy minister of Health. And directly behind me, Mr. Lawrence Krahn, the director of admin. services.

Mr. Chairman, before I would start these estimates, I think I would like to point out a few areas that I’m proud of in Saskatchewan Health – things that have been announced and implemented in this recent budget. And I think it’s only fair to share some of these new initiatives and developments with the members of the opposition. So Mr. Chairman, I would like to start with just outlining a few of the things.

First of all, I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that the total Health budget, including the Consolidated Fund, the Heritage Fund, and Special Projects Fund, is Mr. Chairman, one billion, thirty-nine point seven million dollars. And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Chairman, that this is an increase . . . this is an increase, Mr. Chairman, of $57.1 million over last year, or a 5.8 per cent increase. A credible increase in health spending by this government.

I’m very pleased with this, and I think it shows our commitment to first-class health care for Saskatchewan people.

And I want to highlight some of these budget increments -- $31.9 million in total for capital projects, $31.9 million. An increase of $5.4 million or, Mr. Chairman, in percentages that the opposition members may understand, 20 per cent increased over last year’s budget in capital expenditures and health care.

And of course, I think the people of Saskatchewan know real well about the commitment announced here by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, of the five-year, $25 million commitment to special home care construction, special care homes in this province. And as I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, when I took over the portfolio of Health, the Mental Health Association of Saskatchewan was doing a report because mental health services had been not attended to adequately over the past few years. I waited for that report to come in, and this year, Mr. Chairman, there are $700,000 in this budget for new mental health services.

Another area that we hear a lot about, Mr. Chairman, is waiting lists in Saskatoon, and I want to indicate that we have annual cost implications this year of $4.7 million to address that problem – a problem, again, that we inherited from our predecessors.

Again the chiropody service which is so well known by the senior citizens of this province, one that was promised to them, Mr. Chairman, in ’75, promised again in ’78, and ’82. I found the chairs that had never been put in place and I’m proud to say that that service is in Saskatchewan by the end of this year in every health region for the senior citizens of this province.

So I think as we go on in the next few hours discussing the Health budget, the estimates of the Department of Health, I’m sure that the people of Saskatchewan will see that this government, this Devine government, this Conservative government, will certainly protect and improve upon the health care services, and that no longer with the phantom of T.C. Douglas shouting, “Don’t let them take it away,” ever surface again in this province.