



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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BETTER HEALTH FOR CANADA'S INDIANS

An address by Mr. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, at the opening of the Sioux Lookout Indian Hospital, at Sioux Lookout, Ontario, on February 17, 1950.

SYMBOL OF RECENT HEALTH PROGRESS

This afternoon an important health advance in Canada was marked in this community by the official opening of the Sioux Lookout Indian Hospital. This fine 65-bed hospital, with accommodation for a staff of 30, is a symbol of our resolve to do everything possible to bring our Indian and Eskimo population along with us in our nationwide drive towards good health.

Five years ago Canada's expenditures on the health of Indians and Eskimos totalled little over \$2,000,000. This present year they total \$10,700,000 - a five-fold increase in five years.

In Canada we have entered what I am confident will prove to be our greatest period of health progress. The historian of the future, looking back over the middle years of this century, will be struck by the attention paid to health care. The individual Canadian, voluntary and professional health workers, government health officers - all are co-operating to bring health care to unprecedented levels.

The Federal Government in 1948 suddenly gave great impetus to provincial health activities by the National Health Programme. This already has had such far-reaching results that now, less than two years later, we find new enthusiasm and a new ferment of activity in the Canadian health scene. Everywhere hospitals are being built, existing services are being extended and new services developed; 1700 health workers have been enabled to take advanced training, and 1800 new recruits are being added to provincial health staffs.

HISTORY OF INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

My talk tonight is the first major report that I have made about the part being played by the Directorate of Indian Health Services, in the Department of National Health and Welfare, to open the way to health for Canada's Indians and Eskimos, and also to provide public health care for all living beyond the reach of other health facilities.

The story of health care for Canada's native population is long and uneven. Since Jacques Cartier landed on Isle Royal in 1535, Indians have looked to Canada's new settlers for health assistance, which they in turn have felt a moral obligation to provide.