

Speech from the Throne October 21, 2009 Highlights

Moving Forward

Moving Forward:

- In the past year, Saskatchewan's population has grown by 16,000 people - faster than at any time since the early 1950s.
- Saskatchewan continues to post the lowest unemployment rate in the country, while Saskatoon and Regina have the lowest unemployment among major Canadian cities.
- Lower property and income taxes, a record investment in infrastructure and a massive reduction in the provincial debt.

Health - Putting Patients First:

- Reduce surgical wait times in Saskatchewan to no longer than three months within four years.
- Physician recruitment strategy.
- Retain our province's medical graduates and residents so the people of Saskatchewan benefit from the dollars we spend training doctors in our province.
- Improve access to long-term care for seniors.
- Introduce changes to limit the proliferation of needles handed out by needle exchange programs.
- Re-establish an independent provincial addictions agency.
- Continue the reduction of tobacco use in our province.
- Recruit the remaining 30 per cent of the 800 additional nurses promised in the last session.

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Reduced the province's debt by \$2.7 billion, or nearly 40 per cent.
- Modify the budgetary process in the future to reduce the impact of wild fluctuations in natural resource revenues.

Education:

- Nearly \$300 million has been invested in pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 infrastructure – the largest amount ever invested in building and upgrading Saskatchewan schools in a two-year period.
- Continue improvements to over 230 schools in every part of Saskatchewan.
- Allocate the remaining \$4 million that has been provided for the development of 1,000 new licensed childcare spaces, bringing the number of spaces to a total of 11,400.
- The largest investment ever in post-secondary infrastructure projects – over \$150 million.
- \$18 million spent on student housing.
- Student loan enhancements.
- The weekly amount students can receive has been increased for the first time since 1994.

Putting Vulnerable Children First:

- Review of The Child and Family Services Act and The Adoption Act.
- Set aside \$25 million to improve the child welfare system.
- Implement a new electronic case management system to provide better monitoring and protection of children and youth in its care.
- \$76.9 million initiative to eliminate a 440-person waitlist for programs.

Justice and Policing:

- Banning texting and hand-held cell phone usage while driving.
- New ticket legislation to protect those wishing to attend events and concerts.
- Preventing members of a profession from escaping disciplinary proceedings by resigning.
- Continue on commitment of an additional 120 police officers throughout the province.

Agriculture:

- AgriStability program to Melville.
- \$70 million in direct support to livestock producers through the Cattle and Hog Support Program.
- Largest farmland property tax reduction in Saskatchewan history.

First Nations and Métis Relations:

- Further work on developing guidelines covering Saskatchewan's duty to consult.
- Engagement of First Nations and Métis People in the economic prosperity of Saskatchewan.
- 2010 will be designated as the Year of the Métis in Saskatchewan.
- Working with the Métis Nation and other organizations to honour the Trails of 1885 celebrations in 2010.

Environment:

- Plans for a new environmental regulatory framework.
- Present a comprehensive water management plan.

Energy:

- Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies will complete second phase of hearings on Saskatchewan's energy future.
- Significant commitment to increased wind power.
- Innovation Saskatchewan will be fully implemented.

Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport:

- First new Provincial Cultural Policy in 30 years.
- Participation in 2010 Vancouver Winter Games.
- Continue improving provincial parks.

Immigration:

- Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program has set the goal of attracting 3,400 nominations.
 - Reduce processing times for immigration.
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