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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, INITIATING WORK ON THE
FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE. BEDFORD PARK. 5.6.72

PROFESSOR RUSSELL, MY PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUES, LADIES & GENTLEMEN:

I'M DELIGHTED TODAY TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY FORMALLY TO BEGIN WORK ON THIS EXCITING NEW PROJECT. I DON'T THINK I'M EXAGGERATING WHEN I SAY IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE STATE GOVERNMENT PROJECT AFFECTING THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICTS BEGUN IN A DECADE. AND, OF COURSE, BECAUSE OF ITS FUNCTION AS A TEACHING HOSPITAL THE FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE WILL BE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE STATE AS A WHOLE. FORTY MILLION DOLLARS MAY SEEM A LARGE SUM TO COMMIT TO ONE PROJECT, BUT NOT WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT THE AREA IT WILL SERVE IS ESTIMATED TO REACH A POPULATION OF 232-THOUSAND BY 1976 OR WHEN ONE REALISES THAT AT PRESENT WE HAVE NO MAJOR GENERAL HOSPITAL SOUTH OF THE CENTRE OF ADELAIDE.

SIR, THE PROVISION AND STAFFING OF ADEQUATE HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES IS A CENTRAL CONCERN OF ANY STATE GOVERNMENT AND IT HAS BEEN THE PRIME CONCERN OF MY GOVERNMENT SINCE OUR RETURN TO OFFICE.

PAGE 2.

THE NATURE OF SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL PROJECTS IS SUCH THAT THEY DON'T GENERATE THE SAME AMOUNT OR TYPE OF PUBLICITY THAT OTHER STATE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES MAY DO AND SO THERE ISN'T PERHAPS THE GENERAL COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THESE AREAS AS THERE IS - SAY - ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE TO THE NATIONAL SERVICE ACT. BUT PROGRESS HAS BEEN DRAMATIC.

WE ARE NOW SPENDING RECORD SUMS ON HEALTH AND EDUCATION AND WE ARE SEEING THE RESULTS IN THE SHAPE OF IMPROVED SERVICES. LAST YEAR WE TOOK THE UNPALATABLE BUT NECESSARY ACTION - FORCED ON US BY THE COMMONWEALTH - THAT WE WOULD INCREASE STATE CHARGES RATHER THAN SACRIFICE PROGRESS IN THESE QUITE ESSENTIAL AREAS. I THINK THE LARGE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE AGREED WITH US AND THAT TIME IS PROVING THE WISDOM OF THAT DECISION. CERTAINLY MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESSURE ON PROVIDING BETTER AND EXPANDED SERVICES IN OUR HOSPITAL WARDS AND CLASSROOMS.

WE ARE NOW FULFILLING THE PROMISES WE MADE IN MAY, 1970.

AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME WE SHALL PUT EQUALLY DRAMATIC NEW PROJECTS BEFORE THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR JUDGEMENT.

THIS NEW CENTRE WILL BE UNIQUE IN AUSTRALIA AND BRITAIN IN THE DEGREE OF INTEGRATION ACHIEVED IN THE THREE FUNCTIONS OF PATIENT CARE AND TREATMENT, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS VERY CAREFUL PLANNING DESERVE THE HIGHEST PRAISE FOR WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

EVENTUALLY THERE WILL BE A 710 BED TEACHING HOSPITAL USING THE MOST MODERN AND SOPHISTICATED MEDICAL AND SURGICAL TECHNIQUES, A NURSE TRAINING SCHOOL AND MEDICAL SCHOOL FACILITIES FOR 64 STUDENTS A YEAR. BY THAT TIME - 1980 - THE MEDICAL CENTRE IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SOME 100-THOUSAND OUTPATIENT CONSULTATIONS A YEAR AND WILL BE TREATING 17,000 PATIENTS ANNUALLY. TODAY WE'RE INITIATING WORK ON PHASE I, THE PRE-CLINICAL MEDICAL SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS, THE NURSE TRAINING SCHOOL, LECTURE BLOCK AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES.

PAGE 4.

IT IS A MAJOR EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICAL SERVICES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT MUCH VERY HARD WORK BY THE STAFF OF FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, THE HOSPITALS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT AND THEIR CONSULTANT ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS. SOUTH AUSTRALIANS GENERALLY AND THOSE OF THE SOUTH WESTERN SUBURBS IN PARTICULAR WILL HAVE REASON TO BE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THEM IN THE FUTURE.

SO, IT'S NOW WITH VERY MUCH PLEASURE THAT I FORMALLY BEGIN WORK ON THE CENTRE.