

# Dryden cracks starting lineup [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

Rookie MP gets cabinet posting: Minister for social development

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## EXCERPTS

He's a rookie once again but hockey legend Ken Dryden says he'll bring the same ability to learn quickly and overcome the odds to Ottawa politics that he did to sports.

"I've been in a lot of situations before where I'd been new and have been thrown into deep water, and I've found a way of managing to swim," the newly appointed social development minister from Toronto said yesterday.

"These are things that you always find out when you're involved," Dryden, 56, told reporters.

Dryden, who was elected in the riding of York Centre, will need all of his renowned abilities in his latest career. He has been charged with implementing the Liberals' promise to create a national day-care program, a pledge that has gone unfulfilled since former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien first made it in 1993.

In the recent campaign, it was a key plank in the Liberals' social policies platform, with Martin committing to spend \$5 billion to establish 250,000 new day-care spaces by 2009.

The quiet-spoken Dryden, whose many hockey honours include six Stanley Cups, five Vezina titles and the Calder Trophy for outstanding rookie, welcomed the challenge yesterday.

"The area of child care is of such interest to the public, has been of such interest for some time, that this is a real opportunity. As you know, opportunities aren't always there. And so, when they are there, it's a very exciting moment."

Dryden said the Liberals' latest plan, unlike previous proposals, will be easier to develop because financial help from provincial governments is not necessary.

He also said the federal government can better afford a national day-care strategy now than in the early 1990s, when the Liberals were trying to bring a \$38 billion annual budget deficit under control.

"Ten years ago, the fiscal circumstances in the country were different than they are today; 10 years have passed and this is a significantly different time."

The former Montreal Canadiens netminder, who earned a law degree at McGill University, dislikes being pigeonholed as a sports expert. As well as writing four books and holding down the presidency of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Dryden served as Ontario youth commissioner from 1984 to 1986 and has an abiding interest in education.

"This is an area that I've done a fair bit of work in," he said when asked about the social development portfolio.

He said his experience dealing with youth, voluntary groups and communities will stand him in good stead in his new job.

"It's an area that I love to work in, have loved to work in for years and years. And this is a portfolio that I really can't wait to get involved in."

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** election <sup>[3]</sup>

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