

this—not the ombudsman, not the regional desk, not information in, not information out—can have anything but a marginal effect. What is essential is that we build up a credibility in our party process, increase the influence and responsibility of the individual Member of Parliament, and secure the integrity and legitimacy of the electoral system, for these are at issue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and The Islands): We, as Members of Parliament and as members of political parties, have a personal responsibility to combat the alienation that afflicts the political system. There is a growing danger to political parties that pressure groups, protest movements, student activists, social planning councils, will so establish themselves as agents of social change that parties will have little room to manoeuvre. Many people already feel there is so little genuine radicalism inside the party system that anyone wishing change must look elsewhere. Yet we cannot function without political parties. It was Lord Bryce, a great scholar and a great politician, who said:

Political parties are far older than democracy. No free large country has ever been without them. No one has shown how representative government could be worked without them.

Sir John A. Macdonald was not only the father of this country, he was the father of his party. I am sure he would be the first to recognize the changes that are necessary in our political and electoral processes to ensure a viable party system and thereby a viable parliamentary system. It is with that reference to Sir John A. Macdonald that I return to Kingston and The Islands. Many important functions and occasions will be taking place in my constituency in this tercentenary year, none more important than the visit of Her Majesty the Queen which His Excellency the Governor General so graciously observed in the Speech from the Throne.

I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to extend to you and to all hon. members an invitation to come to Kingston to participate in our tercentenary celebrations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it is not only with apprehension and anxiety but with a deep feeling of respect and pride that I deliver today my first speech in the House of Commons.

I have already had the privilege, Mr. Speaker, of serving the Canadian people for a few years in other capacities. It is however a great honour for me to take my place in this assembly as elected representative of the constituency of Outremont.

I have been for a long time an observer and admirer of our parliamentary institutions. Those institutions are closely related to the Canadian context and they have appeared quite sensitive to the problems encountered by the government as the result of the complex developments in the world.

The Address—Mr. Lalonde

Now if the successive Canadian governments have remained mindful of the needs of the people that ability is mostly due to the fact that it is made up of individuals sitting in this House who heed the advice of the 264 delegates of the Canadian people who are sharing that task.

[*English*]

This House certainly has known many outstanding parliamentarians. I believe the highest honour that can be conferred on one of its members is that of being recognized by his colleagues as a true House of Commons man. As I begin my parliamentary career, I can only express the hope that one day my colleagues will be kind enough to give me such an honour.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lalonde: The profound respect that both you, Mr. Speaker, and your distinguished colleague the Deputy Speaker have inspired in all hon. members of the House will set up an ideal which I shall strive to emulate.

I am also flattered by my nomination as Minister of National Health and Welfare. However, my pride is tinged with a substantial dose of humility and the awareness of the challenge so ably met by my predecessors, among them the Hon. Brooke Claxton and Paul Martin, J. Waldo Monteith, Judy LaMarsh and also the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), all of whom successively gave shape to the social security policy of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to inform the House of the approach envisaged by the government for its social security policy as outlined a few days ago in the Speech from the Throne.

As indicated in that document, that aspect of policy is one of this government's first two priorities, and there are two excellent reasons therefor.

First of all, our study of the social security system has revealed that income security plans in Canada are inadequate for attainment of the objectives set. They were created for several purposes; first to provide protection for those who normally would have adequate incomes, whose incomes were, on the average, adequate during their lifetime, against the risk of lost earning capacity during a relatively short period and also to assist them in regulating their income flow along the years. In the second place, the plans aimed at ensuring adequate and equitable incomes to people normally unable to be self-supporting and finally to contribute an income supplement, with due consideration to appropriate work incentives, to those who, during a given period, are unable to earn sufficient amounts.

Now, during that study, we clearly saw that a reform of the Canadian social security programs was not possible solely through amendments to federal legislation; instead, a concerted global approach of all the social security programs, at the federal and provincial levels, was in order.

A second reason for the high priority accorded the Canadian social security policy is the fact that the Canadian people have clearly indicated to the House of Com-