

*Routine Proceedings*

they want to know that their vote makes a difference and that their concerns will be addressed in Parliament.

[Translation]

Today's senior citizens worked to improve living conditions in this country. They are the people who contributed most to medicare. These are the Canadians who worked hard all their lives to provide a better future for their children and grandchildren. And what is the Conservative government doing in return? Am I expected to announce some fantastic project? Do not count on it.

• (2055)

The Conservatives said quite innocently that user fees for health care was a suggestion to be taken seriously, so seriously that their party leader wrote to *The Toronto Star* on April 30 of this year that if she became Prime Minister, she would allow the introduction of user fees. On June 25, she will be the Prime Minister. What can we expect? But that is not all.

The Conservative government also decided to reform old age pensions, which the Liberals put in place in 1952 to assure that all Canadians would have a pension to supplement their retirement income. What about the money today's senior citizens contributed over the years so that they would enjoy a secure old age? Well, the Conservatives decided they had other priorities.

They would rather spend \$5.8 billion on helicopters instead of paying old age pensions. And then they wonder why they are not popular.

[English]

The Conservatives not only have abandoned Canada's seniors, they have dropped Canada's youth, our future, from the agenda as well. Canada's disappointing economic performance under Tory rule is one of the greatest obstacles facing young Canadians. Statistics predict that the unemployment rate in Canada will be at least 11.5 per cent over the next year, youth unemployment traditionally being at least 5 per cent higher than that of the general public.

For those whose education does not extend beyond high school, the prognosis is poor. As we approach the year 2000 the proportion of the work force requiring high skills will increase from 45 to 64 per cent. Two-thirds of

all new jobs created in this country between 1989 and the year 2000 will require at least 12 years of education and the remaining jobs will call for at least 16. Those numbers indicate with great clarity that this government has abandoned Canada's youth.

[Translation]

This government, which so easily forgets our seniors, has the same trouble with our youth. This group has the skills, the energy and the will to work. The Conservatives keep promising and talking about jobs, but that's all they do.

Where are their fantastic job creation programs? Where are the permanent jobs that will help young graduates at all levels earn a decent living? Where are the summer jobs to guarantee that students have the money to pay for their education? Where is the incentive for young people to get a diploma, which if the Liberals do not take office as soon as possible will be just a worthless piece of paper? Tories are all talk and no action.

We must save our human resources. All this potential may be lost forever and I want us to hold on to it. We Liberals are ready to lend a helping hand and work together with these young people so they will have a future, as we did.

[English]

Many young people feel either rejected or marginalized in society which creates additional problems of crime and drug and alcohol abuse. We have to focus on youth now more than ever before and finally end the politics of exclusion and encourage our youth to participate.

Creating a national apprenticeship program that would encourage our youth to stay in school and help their transition into the work force is a first step. It would also provide an alternative to attending college or university.

The establishment of a Canadian environmental youth force, a volunteer organization that would work on environment reclamation and educational programs would not only benefit our environment badly damaged by the policies of this government, but would also help in developing learning skills and good work habits. It would promote interest in science and awareness of environ-