

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

LABOUR MARKET FORECAST AND NEEDS

June 1, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month I had the pleasure of attending the Skills Canada NWT Regional Competition. As I walked through the venues I saw dozens of young people perfecting their skills in an impressive variety of fields from hairdressing to electrical wiring, from making a film to making a meal. I found all this activity inspiring. While 19 percent of the labour force includes youth who are not in school but who want to work there are many others who are working hard now to ensure their future employability and income.

The following day the GNWT released its labour market forecast and needs assessment for the next 15 years. Here is the headline: 78 percent of job openings will require a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree. That means the incoming workforce will need a solid set of skills to work in almost any field. Those without high school will be eligible for only 10 percent of the jobs. And it's important to note that most of the job openings will replace people who are now employed, who will retire or leave in the next 15 years. If we drill down into the study there are at least two more findings that are noteworthy. The first is that young people from rural and remote communities are more likely to be unemployed and to not have post-secondary training. In fact, one-third don't complete high school at all.

The report describes literacy and numeracy skills as inadequate in the Aboriginal population when compared to the non-Aboriginal population. As a result, special attention is required to close achievement and performance gaps between these two groups. The reward for closing this gap is substantial according to the study. An Aboriginal man with a Bachelor's degree in the NWT makes on average \$193.00 for every \$100.00 he would make with a high school diploma. So college and/or university will double your income. That's a powerful incentive.

The second noteworthy point concerns the fly-in, fly-out workforce. In 2014 there were almost 2,000 people working in the NWT but living somewhere else; a total of 10 percent of the workforce. Since this is worth \$60 million to the GNWT in Territorial Transfer Fund payments, it's an important gap to close as well. At the appropriate time, I'll have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.