

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

RECORDS OF NON-CONVICTION

October 25, 2016

MS GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to share one NWT resident's experience with a document called records of non-conviction and to call for the end of its use in Yellowknife.

A constituent of mine who was on income assistance got a job working with clients in a vulnerable sector. The employer properly requires applicants be screened to ensure that they don't have criminal records. Two days after getting the job, my constituent was let go. He has never been convicted of a criminal offence but the forms supplied by the RCMP detailed the things he was not convicted of. Mr. Speaker, this is a record of non-conviction.

What kind of things has he not been convicted of? Well, I don't know. From my research, I can say that these documents contain records of a person having been questioned by the police and not charged, or charged with charges that were later dropped, or charged and later acquitted. So my constituent lost a job he desperately needed because the police issued a form which confirms he has no criminal record, but which also says there is "adverse information" on file. In this circumstance, information is released on the crime investigated. But again, this is not a conviction, it's a suspicion.

Mr. Speaker, not to put too fine a point on it, this is outrageous. When I learned of this practice, I went to the Justice Minister for background information, and asked whether our administrative oversight powers under our policing contract enabled us to tell the RCMP to stop issuing records of non-conviction. The Justice Minister said this is a national policy of the RCMP and that the information is given to the job applicant, so it is not the police prejudicing anyone by informing prospective employers.

This is just obfuscation, Mr. Speaker, because you can't get or keep the job without the criminal record check and the criminal check is released along with the record of non-conviction, it's all on one page. The injustice of this situation is clear for any fair-minded person. The words "innocent until proven guilty" come to mind, but do they mean anything? I will have questions for the Minister.