

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE CELEBRATION 2017

October 28, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was 100 years ago this year that women got the right to vote. Women in Alberta were the first to be enfranchised and voters there elected the first female MLA, Louise McKinney, in 1917. Suffrage spread slowly across Canada, with women in Quebec getting the vote in 1940 and aboriginal women along with men as well in 1960. Women slowly entered political life and in small numbers, and today we are still well short of parity. A quarter of Members of Parliament are women, and here in the NWT, as you know, there are just the two of us. This Assembly has committed in its mandate to increasing the number of women running for elected office.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this information to your attention because I recently attended an event which shared this same goal. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in Canada met in Regina at the beginning of the month. We spent a day with a group of young women who are considering running for, or helping someone else run for, public office at some point in their lives. They are part of a national initiative called Daughters of the Vote.

Mr. Speaker, a young woman between the ages of 18 and 23 will be selected from each of the 338 federal ridings to attend an event in Ottawa the week of March 6th next year. The programming for these emerging leaders will introduce them to how Parliament works and it will give them an opportunity to engage with elected officials. The goal is to provide knowledge and inspiration to women who are considering a career in public life.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to tell you that the event sponsor, Equal Voice Canada, received a total of 19 applications from the NWT, representing eight different communities. Unfortunately, only one of them will be chosen to go to Ottawa because, of course, we have just the one federal riding. This is a challenge faced in other jurisdictions as well, where there were several times as many applications as there are positions available.

Mr. Speaker, one of my take aways from this outreach event is that if we want more women elected to represent us in all orders of government, and of course we do, we need to make engaging young women a priority. They see a world of possibilities as they work on their post-secondary education and plan their careers. If we inspire young women we may indeed have more women sitting in this Legislature one day in numbers approaching half the population. That is our challenge and we need to dedicate time, effort and resources to making this goal a reality. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.