

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues who made statements today recognizing International Women's Day. It is, of course, a day to reflect on the accomplishments of women and to gather strength to continue the work required to achieve women's equality.

Mr. Speaker, as you've heard from some others, a unique celebration took place in the House of Commons today. It marks the beginning of the right of women to vote in some jurisdictions 100 years ago. It also highlights the need to attract more women to political life. I'm talking about the initiative that we have here and is in Ottawa today called Daughters of the Vote.

This morning, one young woman from each of the 338 ridings in Canada took a seat in the House of Commons. It was a very inspiring sight to see every seat occupied by a woman, representing Canada in all its diversity. Olivia Villebrun from Fort Smith is there representing us. As Nelson Mandela, that great champion of equality once said, "It always seems impossible until it is done."

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we here, at the Legislative Assembly, held our own NWT Daughters of the Vote workshop last month. Young women aged 17 to 23 joined us from communities around the NWT, from Tuktoyaktuk to Fort Smith. These young women heard the stories of women elected to a variety of roles, including city council and the school boards, as well as here, at the Legislative Assembly. We were joined by my colleague, the Minister for the Status of Women, along with former MLAs Jane Groenewegen and Sandy Lee. They talked about why they ran for office and what changes they wanted to make. As the Minister said that day, "The only one who limits us is ourselves." It is important to show these young women that, if we can get elected, they can, too. My hope is that some of them will come back in the future as MLAs for their ridings.

Mr. Speaker, we have nowhere to go except up in terms of equality of representation. There have only been 12 women MLAs in the whole history of this Legislative Assembly and no more than three at once. Our current legislature has the lowest proportion of woman members of any jurisdiction in Canada except Nunavut. At the federal level, a quarter of MPs are women, an all-time high. What I want to see and what I think we all want to see is equality.

Our task is to offer the women we know the support, mentorship, and encouragement to turn the dream of equality into reality. Let's celebrate International Women's Day with our determination to make that happen. Mahsi.