

## **MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

### **TRIBUTE TO SEARCH AND RESCUE TECHNICIANS**

**February 8, 2019**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the outstanding efforts of the search and rescue technicians of the 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron based in Winnipeg. The efforts these search and rescue technicians, often called SAR techs, made to reach the site of the downed Air Tindi plane last week was heroic. This is what I have pieced together about their actions from news reports.

Air Tindi dispatched a charter flight to Whati in the morning of January 30 and lost contact with the two pilots just as the sun rose. Soon afterwards, the company called the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Trenton, Ontario, for help. Staff there dispatched 435 Squadron from Winnipeg and they arrived in the late afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, as you may recall, was a cold day in Yellowknife, with poor visibility and blowing snow, but searchers in the air were able to find what they thought was the crash site just west of Marion Lake. Search and rescue technicians parachuted out of the Hercules aircraft carrying overnight survival kits and medical supplies.

It took six to eight hours for the SAR techs to make their way from their landing to the crash site, wading through chest-deep snow. The Hercules provided light so they could see what they were doing. The overnight low in the area was minus 24, with a wind chill that made it feel like minus 33. The techs arrived at the site during the night and were able to confirm the downed plane belonged to Air Tindi and that the pilots had died. By midday, with their work done, the SAR techs were picked up and brought back into Yellowknife. It's important to note that the SAR techs worked with support from the crew in the Hercules, the Canadian Rangers from Behchoko, and Air Tindi.

Mr. Speaker, most of us have experienced flying in small planes to reach distant and remote communities. We depend on companies like Air Tindi to get us there safely, and 99.9 percent of the time, that's what happens, but as Northerners, we know that accidents are a reality. When they happen, we depend on search and rescue technicians, the people who are willing to jump out of a plane on a dark and stormy night to see if they can help. I am grateful to 435 Squadron and our own 440 Squadron for their efforts last week and every time they are called on. Mahsi.