

*"It's very frustrating. I get about 20 phone calls a day asking, when can I have a house? And I come up with inventive ways of answering, but it's all the same thing—hell may freeze over before you get a house under this program. On our waiting list there are 27 elders from the northern communities who, for one reason or another, cannot stay in their communities. . . They could end up in Thunder Bay or Kenora, on the third floor of some government-designed unit, down at the end of the hall in the shoe box on the left, surrounded by nobody of a similar background; or, again, too far for family and friends to travel." (Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 27A:63)*

Thirty-eight applications for housing are based on medical need and of these, nine are urgent.

Mr. Kay read from a doctor's letter which accompanied one of the urgent applications for housing:

*"She says that she is writing to recommend that "so-and-so" and his family receive housing in Sioux Lookout. He is a 17-month-old boy who currently lives in one of our communities. The child suffers from a very severe form of asthma. His asthma affects him on a daily basis. In addition, he's had to be flown to Sioux Lookout on numerous occasions for acute care. His asthma is severe enough that if it were not possible to fly due to weather-outs—and this happens quite frequently—he could become extremely sick and possibly die. This boy would benefit from being away from the dusty environment of this community and having close access to a hospital in Sioux Lookout. It is not expected that the boy's condition will improve over the next few years. She hopes we will consider this application seriously as she believes it could be a matter of life and death.... We received this application January of last year, and that's extremely frustrating. I have another 8 applications that are that severe or even more so." (Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 27A:64)*

Mr. Russell from the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation indicated that in Ottawa, there are 59 units and 107 families on the waiting list. (*Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Issue No. 24:7*)

### The Effect of CMHC Budgetary Reductions

CMHC told the Committee that it is estimated that 7,650 fewer federal units than expected will be available in 1992; a reduction of 309 RNH units<sup>7</sup> and 175 Urban Native Non-Profit Housing Units.

Witnesses expressed their concerns about the reductions. In a written submission, Andrew Petter the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in British Columbia commented that "I am concerned that recent federal cutbacks will seriously limit the availability of badly needed affordable housing for aboriginal people living in British Columbia."<sup>8</sup>

The NCC had this to say:

*"The disturbing trend we want to raise today concerns the cuts to the last budget. We're very concerned about that. What we have been told is to expect a 21% across-the-board cut this year—I'll restrict that to housing, although there is an impact in other areas—and an anticipated 30% cut next year. So we're looking at 51% or better cut in an already inadequately funded program which is supposed to reach people who are most in need . . . We question the decision on the clawback of universal programs to retarget to those most in need. How do you square that approach with the government's decision to implement universal across-the-board cuts to native housing? If you're looking to put money to those who are most in need, then I think that approach should be re-examined. You cut basically those people you're most trying to target to help." (Mr. Phil Fraser, Vice-President,*