

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – MAY 27, 2008

**COST OF MAINTAINING VACANT HOUSING IN FORT
RESOLUTION**

In a time of fiscal restraint it's important that the government is responsible with the money and that every dollar spent is spent well and for maximum benefit.

I'd like to talk to you right now about an example of where I found government funds are not necessarily being spent in the most logical or responsible way.

On April 28, I was in Fort Res with the Standing Committee on Social Programs doing some public hearings. Prior to our public hearing, we went on a tour of the community. As we were walking down the street from the band office to the school, we passed three really nice, brand-new homes: well built, well constructed, nice lots, nice property, all three of them completely vacant.

We went around the corner and we found another house, a nice little house. Apparently it was built by students from the school as part of a trades development program — also vacant. In talking to the people from the community, it became obvious that these houses were actually built by the NWT Housing Corporation as part of the homeownership program. Unfortunately, upon completion of building these houses, the Housing Corp found that there was nobody eligible to purchase the homes. So for two years those homes have been sitting vacant in Fort Res, unused, getting older, and the government continues to maintain them, continues to heat them, continues to make sure that there's water. To me, this isn't necessarily a logical way to spend our money.

I understand the value of housing. I think housing is important and we need to make sure that there's available housing. But if there are no eligible candidates in the community, I'm not sure why we would build the houses themselves. It would probably have been a lot better to actually go to the community, find out if there are eligible candidates, and if there are eligible candidates, work with those candidates to construct homes. Once again, I believe this is a poor use of funds. I

think we need to solve this problem. We need to find some way to use those houses in that community to the maximum benefit of the people in Fort Res. Later today I'll be asking the Minister responsible for the Housing Corp. some questions concerning these houses and the government's program with respect to homeownership and how they decide where they're going to build houses and when.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.