

**THE HONOURABLE R.J. SIMPSON  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT**

**Income Assistance Regulations [R-010-2007,S.2.]**

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Nunakput on June 11, 2020 regarding Income Assistance Regulations.

The question was in three parts. The first part of the question asked whether “money, or the value of goods, in excess of \$500.00 per year, received by a person under a self-government agreement, a land claim agreement or an impact benefit agreement” was always considered unearned income for the purpose of determining an applicant’s net monthly income, or was this provision included in the regulations at some point subsequent to their coming into force.

The Income Assistance program has several exemptions that can be applied to unearned and earned income. These exemptions allow applicants to benefit from these types of income while still contributing to their household.

Up until August 2007, monies received through the Inuvialuit Final Agreement or other land claims were considered unearned income, and were not included in the calculation of net monthly income. Effective September 1, 2007, these monies remained unearned income, but were included in the calculation of net monthly income.

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As of December 1, 2012, monies received through the Inuvialuit Final Agreement or other land claims were exempted up to \$500 per person per year. Further, in August 2016, any land claim payments for children were fully exempted.

The second question inquired about the rationale for including land claims beneficiary income in the calculation of unearned income, when Residential School Settlement payments are not included in the calculation.

Section 20(5)(m) of the Income Assistance Regulations states that monies paid in response to pain and suffering, such as Residential School Settlement Agreement payments, are exempted from the calculation of Income Assistance. Land claim payments are not considered payments as a result of pain and suffering.

The third question asked if the Government of the Northwest Territories were to exempt land claims beneficiary income from being considered unearned income when determining an applicant's net monthly income, how much extra would it cost the Government of the Northwest Territories in Income Assistance for the current fiscal year.

At this time, the Department is not able to provide financial information for the current 2020-2021 fiscal year since it is still in progress. However, during the past three fiscal years, \$1.78 million in land claim or treaty payments was declared, of which \$1.28 million was automatically exempted. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 1,032 applicants declared \$691,000 in land claim or treaty payments, of which \$491,000 was exempted.

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If the Income Assistance program were to exempt 100 per cent of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement or other land claims payments, it could potentially increase expenditures by approximately \$200,000 per fiscal year, which would be dependent on the amounts paid out by Indigenous governments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.