

Asked by:

Member for Nunakput

June 11, 2020

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

Mr. Speaker, on June 10, 2020, I asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he could confirm whether or not payments to claims beneficiaries (per s. 20(4)(t) of the Income Assistance Regulations) has always been considered as “unearned income” when determining “net monthly income” for the purpose of calculating income assistance payable to an applicant, or whether payments to claims beneficiaries were exempt from being considered unearned income under the regulations, prior to 2007. Quoting from unedited Hansard, the Minister replied “*I’m not up to date with what happened in 2007, so I can’t confirm what the status of the program was in 2007.*” I also asked the Minister how much the inclusion of this provision saves the Government of the Northwest Territories on income assistance payments, to which I did not receive a direct answer.

Consequently, I have the following written questions:

1. Since the 1990 inception of the Income Assistance Regulations pursuant to the *Social Assistance Act*, was “*money, or the value of goods, in excess of \$500.00 per year, received by a person under a self-government agreement, a land claims agreement or an impact benefits agreement*” always considered as 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;
2. What is the rationale for including claims beneficiary income in the calculation of “unearned income” when Residential School Settlement payments are not included in that calculation;
3. If the Government of the Northwest Territories were to exempt claims beneficiary income from being considered as “unearned income” when determining an applicant’s net monthly income for the purposes of calculating income assistance payable to an applicant, how much extra would it cost the Government of the Northwest Territories in social assistance payments to applicants for the current fiscal year? Put another way, how much money will the GNWT save in income assistance payments in the current fiscal year by including claims beneficiary income as “unearned income” when determining an applicant’s net monthly income for the purposes of calculating income assistance payable to an applicant?