

May 13, 2010

Good Morning!

I want to thank you for your presence today at our news conference.

Today, we have with us, Sister Auréa Cormier, one of our Provincial Board members, Michel Doucet, law professor at the Université de Moncton and Jean-Marie Nadeau, President of the NB Acadian Society.

First I would like to say that the Common Front for Social Justice had expressed to the Liberal government and the other political parties its real concern about the possibility that the Community Inclusion Networks would not be under the New Brunswick Official Languages Act.

We understand that the Crown Corporation itself will be under the New Brunswick Official Languages Act. However, the Community Inclusion Networks will not and **they are the groups that will deliver the services to people living in poverty.**

As you can read in the response from Kelly Lamrock, our fears were grounded. He wrote: *"The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation will be a Crown Corporation and as such it will be subject to the Official Languages Act. This means that the staff of the Corporation will be required to provide services in both official languages. Community Inclusion Networks will be hosted by local non-profit organizations which will be reflective of their communities. Any criteria regarding provision of services by the Community Inclusion Networks will be determined by regulation which will be approved by the Board of Directors of the Corporation."* (Signed: Kelly Lamrock, Minister)

This will have some very serious implications for people living in poverty. I will let Sister Cormier talk about them.

As was saying Mrs. Linda McCaustlin, the Common Front for Social Justice (CFSJ), asked for a clarification from Minister Kelly Lamrock on what would happen on the ground in terms of language of service delivery when the recently created Crown Corporation, the New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, would be in operation.

The Community Inclusion Networks, whose number may be as high as 20 throughout New Brunswick, will operate in our cities, towns and regions. These Networks will receive government funds to carry out the activities associated with the Economic and Social Inclusion Plan. The objective of this Plan is that, *"by 2015, New Brunswick will have reduced income poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50%, and will have made significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion."*

The concerns of the CFSJ is that the organizations recognized as forming part of the Community Inclusion Networks may not be in a position to offer services to low-income people in the language of their choice.

In the N.B. poverty reduction plan, a great deal of emphasis is placed on strengthening the ability of low-income people to enter the workforce. Community organizations will offer training opportunities to help adults New Brunswickers attain the skills they need to participate fully at work and in their communities. If a French speaking person applies in Saint John for example for a session to improve his or her abilities in order to qualify for a job, the recognized Saint John community organization should have the obligation to offer the training to this person in the language of his or her choice. Community organizations belonging to the Community Inclusion Networks will also be in charge of literacy, mentoring, community transportation, community economic development, social enterprises and setting priorities for housing.

Minister Lamrock's letter states that the language in which the services will be offered will be determined by the Board of the N.B. Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. Therefore, this right is not guaranteed under the law. It is not said that the service users will be served in the language of their choice in this officially bilingual province. Moreover, the Minister states that the Act does not contain an appeal process for individuals who are not satisfied with services provided by the Community Inclusion Networks.