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News release

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Moncton – **An Economy that Includes Everyone; the absents!**

“ Blaine Higgs’ throne speech has a section entitled: *An Economy that Includes Everyone* where it says: *Our greatest strength is our people.* We are puzzled that there is no mention of women, more than half of our population, and workers, one of the essential pillars of our economy, in this throne speech. Are they not people? The burning issue of pay equity is not addressed at all and the increase of the minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour and the modernizing of employment standards (example: pay sick leaves) are totally absent in this throne speech. How can we build our economy if we leave the majority out.” ask Pauline Gallant, co-chair of the NB Common Front for Social Justice.

Yesterday, the same day the new government was reading it’s throne speech, the report: *A Reboot for Poverty Reduction, the 2018 Child Poverty Report card for New Brunswick* was published. Our province, with a 22.8% child poverty rate, is in fourth place at the national level.

“Part of these children comes from working families and from families on social assistance. The fact that the economic situation of low-income workers is not part of the throne speech does not bode well for them” continues Ms. Gallant.

“For children and families on social assistance, Blaine Higgs is saying: *Your government will restart and reinvigorate the stalled poverty reduction process. This will begin with comprehensive social assistance reform.* We have seen disinterest on poverty reduction by the last government and we certainly welcome a refocus on poverty reduction. We have also said that there is a need to overall the social assistance system to make it work better. The reality is that all citizens depending on social assistance to survive are living below the poverty line. A real reform must address their revenue as well as the policies. If this government is serious in changing their lives, they must immediately increase the social assistance basic rates to compensate for the loss due to inflation. Table 1.” concludes Pauline Gallant.

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Table 1. Current basic rates. Rates indexed to inflation for four categories of citizens on social assistance (2010-2017). New Brunswick. (\$)

	Current basic rate (year in effect)	Basic Rate indexed to inflation	Difference	Inflation rate
Transitional Assistance Single individual	\$537 (2010)	\$604,18 (2017)	\$67.18	Inflation 13% (2010-2017)
Extended benefits Single individual	\$663 (2014)	\$697.47 (2017)	\$34.47	Inflation 5% (2014-2017)
Single parent, 1 child	\$887 (2014)	\$933.12 (2017)	\$46,12	Inflation 5% (2014-2017)
Couple, 2 children	\$995 (2014)	\$1,046,73 (2017)	\$51.73	Inflation 5% (2014-2017)

Source: Social Assistance. Information Document. March 2018. NB Common Front for Social Justice