

**Front commun  
pour la justice sociale- N.-B.**  
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Moncton, NB, E1C 1W1



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## **It's Incredible! I just could not believe my eyes!**

Moncton – ``These are just a few of the nice words that came to my mind when I read the news about the Department of Social Development paying Ernst and Young \$13.2 million dollars without even going to the tender process.`` says Johanne Petitpas, co-chair of the Common Front. ``When the Common Front applied this year for a subsidy of \$1,800 (not \$1,8 million) for translation of a document for our activity, we needed to submit quotes from two different translators, the budget for the whole event and our Constitution. Quite a difference of policies if you ask me.``

``Social assistance recipients have to account for every small expense with a receipt, and we have a Department who is accepting to pay \$646,000 in travel expenses from this company without any receipts. We have citizens who have to go to doctors for appointments but cannot be reimbursed because of strict policies, and, on the other hand, we have this company that exceed by \$700,000 its purchasing order without penalties. Unbelievable!`` continues Ms. Petitpas.

For Johanne Petitpas:``The Auditor General, Kim MacPherson, talks about a culture of complacency from this department and disrespect for procurement rules. Our experience over the years with this department when it comes to vulnerable citizens on social income is a culture quite the opposite. **There is an ingrained culture of oppression and of sticking to all the small policies they have in place at the expenses of individuals and families.**``

We must remember that single individuals who have to rely for their survival on this same department, who is very loose with its millions, are just receiving \$537.00 a month and have not had a raise in their basic rates since 2010. All the others have not had an increase in their basic rates since 2014. All of them are under the poverty line and have been losing part of their purchasing power because of inflation. Almost two thirds of the 37,262 men, women and children on social assistance had to rely on food banks to not go hungry in 2016.

For Johanne Petitpas ``The Common Front has met with ministers and deputy ministers over the years to lobby for increases to the basic rates and for changes in a number of policies that are detrimental to recipients. Their answers was: *We*

*don't have the money and if we change policies, there will be abused, we are accountable to voters. Ha! What a farce!``* declares Johanne Petitpas.

When we read the Auditor General report dealing with the Red Cross who has a contract with the Social Development Department for \$11.3 million and does not submit monthly and annual reports, we really have to ask ourselves, where is the leadership of the minister's responsible?

For information

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