



New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

Randy Dickinson **Improved Service**

One of the things we made sure of was to increase the capacity of the Commission to function in both languages, not just with staff but also on the appointment of Commission members. We do have a significant number of complaints that come into the Commission in French, as well as those in English, and it's been the policy of the Commission to respond to the complaint or the respondent in whichever of the official languages they choose. That means if there are some cases where we have one side of the complaint who wants their material in English and the other side wants it in French, or vice-versa, so it can entail quite a lot of work in terms of translation and sharing of that information. When the Commission is ready to review a case file and make recommendations, they have to make sure that they're treating it with full knowledge of what's in the file. We also made sure that while I was here—soon after I came in—that Commission members actually read their files and that they actively participated in discussions. We didn't want just a rubber-stamp mechanism and people coming in just voting whatever was recommended by the staff. So we made a point of acting sort of like a Devil's advocate on some of the recommendations to force people to explain and rationalize where these recommendations were coming from and what was the legal jurisprudence that would be able to back them up, and also to make sure whatever decisions we made were dependable, if either side chose to take the decision to judicial review. I can say, quite pleased, that during the time I was here, we had very few cases from our decisions that were overturned by judicial review. The one or two cases where that happened, it was on a technical point, which I don't think reflected poorly on the work of the Commission. There was other information that came to light upon the submissions of the other party that allowed the judge to send it back to have it reviewed again. That's fair, because we want to make sure in the end that whatever decisions are made are correct and are setting a good precedent for any future cases that come afterwards, and that means making sure again that we're fair to both sides.