

Official Languages: Association of Cosmetology Reprimanded

Description

The New Brunswick Commissioner of Official Languages is challenging the NB Cosmetology Association for its services in French that are deficient.

Robert Levesque, of the Salon Chez Robert in Bathurst, has been a member of the association since 1978. He has often had problems with the association, in other cases with regards to the offer of services in the language of Molière.

In August and September 2016, he filed a complaint with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, complaining that he had not had access to training in his language for seven years, although it was available in English.

He also criticized the organization for offering two French-language services to members on his recorded voice mail and four in English.

In addition, Mr. Levesque reported that an employee who speaks French would have instructed her to communicate with the Executive Director in English while seeking clarification on a subject. He refused.

He complained that a manager of a specific department within the organization used English terminology to communicate information to him.

“My point is that the French must be treated fairly, like the English. As members, we pay the same membership fee. Why should we have less service? “, Says the Bathurst hairdresser.

The Commissioner recalls that since July 1, 2016, professional associations are subject to the Official Languages Act.

During its investigation, the association replied that it offered service in both languages on the telephone, by e-mail, mail, at its meetings, assemblies and trainings.

However, the Commissioner concluded that Mr. Levesque’s complaints were well founded and that there had been “a violation of the Official Languages Act”.

Katherine D’Entremont noted that, because the Executive Director can not speak French, “it is up to the employees to act as an interpreter so that Francophone members can obtain the important information” holds.

She also observed “several grammatical errors in the French version of the website of the association and found that the electronic links added in this version lead to the English version of the suggested sites”.

The official languages watchdog lists a number of recommendations, including that front-line staff be able to respond to members and the public in the language of their choice. Similarly, training and

related manuals and documents must be offered in both English and French.

She argued that the next person to be in the general management should be bilingual.

The director of the NB Cosmetology Association says that changes have been made to meet language obligations even before the commissioner draws up her report.

“We will continue to take action to implement the Commissioner’s recommendations and we are committed to providing equal service to our members and the public in both official languages,” Gaye Cail replied by e-mail.

The organization, which governs the profession of hairdressers-stylists and beauticians, has about 8500 members

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