

Segregation in New Brunswick

Description

To the Editor..... In December 1955 in Montgomery Alabama, Rosa Parks a middle aged African American woman defied segregationist policies and refused to go to the back of the bus and give up her seat to a white passenger. Her defiance was the start of a cataclysmic change of events that has forever changed race relations in the United States, making African Americans equal under the law. Though times have changed, and societies have moved forward, in New Brunswick segregationist policies still exist. When Dominique Cardy suggested that Anglophone and Francophone students share the same bus as a cost saving measure, the Office of the Attorney General said no, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages said no, and the Premier said "duality is not on the table." Imagine for a moment that New Brunswick is Montgomery Alabama with the only difference in the analogy being that African Americans and Whites actually could ride on the same bus whereas in New Brunswick Anglophone and Francophone students cannot. The government officials of both days support segregationist policies, one based on race, while the other based on language laws through judicial and government interpretation of the day. Jim Crow laws in the Southern United States enforced segregation between African Americans and whites in public schools and public transportation, in order to prevent any contact between the two groups. In fact in 1896 the US Supreme Court solidified the segregationist policy with the "separate but equal decision" in the Plessy vs Ferguson case. Fast forward to modern day New Brunswick, where government officials are determined to uphold segregationist type policies at any cost by citing their interpretation of current Supreme Court of Canada decisions. Segregation is segregation whether it is based on race or language. Imagine today that if the Anglophone East School District and District Scolaire Francophone Sud were school districts separated on race versus language. Would we even be having this discussion if our children can ride the same school buses together? As societies evolve, so do the decisions which are made by the Supreme Courts. It is time for New Brunswick to step away from Montgomery Alabama and allow our children from both linguistic groups to ride the same bus together. Tyger Williams, Moncton

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