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## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! IT'S TIME TO ACT !



At the Federal Council, the Federation launched its mobilisation campaign for this bargaining round. The theme is based on one of nurses' priorities for the negotiations: the workload.

The first part of the slogan is a heartfelt cry that comes from nurses as well as the population: *"Enough is enough!"*. In addition to this first part that reveals a widespread feeling, the expression *"It's time to act!"* indicates that nurses want to see employers take action to improve the situation in centres, the government take action to set the network straight, and consequently improve the situation for nurses, and negotiations be settled.

The visual concept is based on a French expression *"squeezed like a lemon"*, which is a good illustration of how nurses feel with the current workload. The lemons have been squeezed until there is not one drop of juice left! The lemon squeezer is red to highlight the urgency of negotiating and restoring the situation in the Health and Social Services Sector.

Finally, to stress the force of the group and the solidarity of nurses, the signature is *"The nurses of the..."* with the FIIQ logo.

Thus, this will be the theme of this bargaining round for FIIQ nurses. It will be present in one form or another throughout the negotiations.

## THE KICK-OFF FOR ACTION !

The kick-off for the pressure tactics that nurses will begin on April 1 to demand that negotiations truly begin was delivered by the president of the FIIQ, Jennie Skene. Before the 500 delegates participating in the demonstration before Cité de la Santé in Laval, she declared:



### "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! IT'S TIME FOR ACTION!"

*"For two years now, nurses have been calling for help ; today, they are calling for help; tomorrow they will take action. The current situation is explosive and what happened in the emergency departments may extend to the entire Quebec health network.*

*Compulsory overtime and longer and longer workdays are wearing us out. To job instability, availability around the clock and on weekends, heavy workloads, insufficient regular work teams, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH !*

*We want true negotiations to begin immediately! We do not want negotiations to be decentralised. This would mean that working conditions would vary from one institution to the next, result in inequities between nurses, and encourage institutions to raid one another for employees. IT'S TIME TO ACT!*

*We want working conditions that will enable all nurses to deliver quality care. We want salaries that reflect our responsibilities and we say NO to the 5% pay raise offered by Mr. Leonard. We demand that he loosen the purse strings. Pressure tactics begin today. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! IT'S TIME TO ACT!"*

# Progress report on negotiations



To begin the agenda item on negotiations, the Executive Committee member co-responsible for negotiations, Chantal Boivin, presented a progress report on the main events that occurred since the beginning of the year.

Thus, on January 27, the President, Jennie Skene, and the Vice-President in charge of negotiations, Lina Bonamie, met

the representatives of the *Conseil du trésor*. At this time, the presentation of the working condition offers were impending and the presentation of the salary offers were scheduled to be tabled after the federal budget. The latter was presented on February 16.

Meanwhile, on February 2, the *Comité patronal de négociation de Santé et Services sociaux (CPNSSS)* convened the FIIQ Negotiating Committee to present its offers with regard to working conditions. In fact, it was a 12-page "statement of intent"

that could be called, according to Mrs. Boivin, "*Decentralisation in all its forms*"! These insulting offers the President and Vice-President to make several interventions in the media.

Three meetings between the CPNSSS and the FIIQ Negotiating Committee followed and explanations were given by both parties. The Negotiating Committee reiterated that a complete proposal of management offers on working conditions was necessary and more than urgent.

Then, on March 9, the Minister Bernard Landry presented his budget in which he announced a 1 billion 747 million dollar investment in health. The very next day, the president of the *Conseil du trésor*, Jacques Léonard, tabled the government's salary offers: a scanty 5% over three years! On March 11, the Minister Pauline Marois revealed how she intended to distribute the new sums devoted to health. All these events led the Federation to be present and intervene publicly on several occasions.

Moreover, the work of the task force on the strategic planning of the nursing work force, set up following the Essential Services Council's order, continued, as did the work on pay equity.

The negotiations must now truly begin. As a matter of fact, the management party convened the Negotiating Committee for the presentation of the texts on working conditions in the week of March 22.

Let us hope that this time the management party will fall into step quickly.



# NO

## TO MANAGEMENT OFFERS

The Federal Council delegates unanimously rejected the offers on working conditions and the salary offers, presented on February 2 and March 10 respectively. Several delegates described the salary offers — 1 % for 1999 ; 2 % for 2000 ; and 2 % for 2001 - as insulting, unacceptable, disrespectful and clearly insufficient. Moreover, they do not at all respond to nurses' demands which are for a raise of around 15%.

As for the offers concerning working conditions, presented in detail in the last issue of the *FIIQ en Action* (Vol. 12, No 2), their only objective is the decentralisation of negotiations to the local level. Delegates believe that this orientation is only advantageous for employers and it will re-introduce the inequities with respect to working conditions that nurses experienced thirty years ago. Thus, delegates decided to recommend to local general assemblies the rejection of government offers.



# Job precariousness and stability of positions : SOLUTIONS

On March 11, representatives of the FIIQ met with the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mme Pauline Marois, to discuss problems related to the planning of the nursing work force for the summer period. During this meeting called by the FIIQ, Mrs. Marois clearly stated that she was intent on finding short-term and middle-term solutions to the problems experienced by nurses.

In the short-term, the objective of the Minister is to have sufficient personnel for the summer vacation period. She evaluates the number of additional nurses required to be 2 500. Of this number, 1 500 nurses will be recruited among new CEGEP and university graduates, and the others among nurses who graduated in 1994, 1995 and 1996 but who have left the profession. Moreover, there are 2 200 vacant positions to be filled before the summer. Let us simply point out that the number of hours worked by employees on the availability list soared from 17,4 % in 1996-97 to 31,8 % in 1998-99. To implement this programme successfully, the Minister therefore proposes to speed up the process for grant-

ing these positions and to complete it as soon as possible.

In the middle term, the Minister of Health and Social Services hopes to implement a true work force planning process in order to create working conditions that will attract young nurses. She wants to take action with regard to job precariousness, regular work teams and the organisation of work.

## Down-to-earth solutions

The FIIQ believes it is urgent to solve the problems which will only get worse with the coming of the summer period. Moreover, it is imperative to solve these problems with something

other than a temporary solution. Thus, it is urgent to fight job precariousness, once and for all, and to stabilise positions in order to attract new nurses to the nursing job market.

In order to settle the problems related to the planning of the work force at a Quebec-wide level, delegates mandated the Negotiating Committee to begin talks in view of the following :

- Immediate posting of vacant positions
- Immediate posting of positions on the care units where extra personnel is called in on a regular basis
- creation of a minimal float team in each institution

- posting of full-time positions
- speeding up of the process for granting positions
- implementation of work schedules for employees on the availability list when replacement needs are foreseeable
- setting up of a joint committee in each institution in view of examining if regular teams are big enough

These solutions will be sent to Minister Marois and presented to the management party shortly.

We'll see what the result of this is ...

Enough is enough!  
Nurses are exhausted!  
15 % is not a gold mine!  
Loosen the purse strings !

Chanting these slogans and many others, 500 delegates demonstrated in front of the largest health-care institution of Laval, *Cité de la Santé*, during the Federal Council. Even pouring rain did not prevent nurses from making this action a success.



In response to government offers, a plan of action was adopted by a vast majority of delegates. The first action was a demonstration in front of the employer of *Cité de la Santé* in Laval. The action plan includes a certain number of major actions that delegates consider essential to develop bargaining leverage in the negotiations with employers and the government.

Consequently, all nurses will be invited to vote, in a referendum that will be held on April 8, on actions to be launched by the Negotiating Committee at a time deemed appropriate. This referendum vote will be taken on :

•  
REJECTION  
OF OFFERS

•  
HOURS OF  
RECUPERATION

•  
DAYS OF  
RECUPERATION

•  
A GENERAL  
STRIKE

Moreover, delegates voted for an "April fool's campaign" during which nurses will be invited to distribute messages to the director



general, the director of nursing, the director of human resources or any other management employee. By this action, nurses will clearly express their disagreement with decentralisation. Moreover, as part of the pressure tactics, nurses will wear tee-shirts and jeans at work. In addition, at a time deemed appropriate, there will be a sit-in in the offices of Minister Pauline Marois and the Vice-Premier, Bernard Landry.

### Referendum on April 8

A strong vote in favour of the pressure tactics during the referendum will be a clear sign for the *Conseil du trésor* that the salary offers are clearly insufficient and, for employers, that their offers with regard to working conditions do not take into consideration the situation that nurses experience.

This must be a clear message for:

- the *Conseil du trésor* which refuses to recognise the invaluable contribution of nurses to health care and services;
- employers who only want to manage things their way without paying any heed to the union party;
- the Minister of Health and Social Services who must go beyond mere statements of intent and repair the damages done to the network as a result of years of cutbacks.

The massive participation of nurses in the April 8 referendum and a very strong vote in favour of the pressure tactics will give the government and the management party a very clear message. **Enough is enough! It's time for action!**

April 8, 1999  
Referendum Day  
for nurses

On April 8, a referendum will be held in all FIIQ-affiliated institutions for nurses to take a stand on management offers and on the proposed pressure tactics. Here is an example of the ballot.



### BALLOT

I reject the offers on non-monetary matters and on salaries tabled by the management party on February 2 and March 10, 1999 respectively.

FOR  AGAINST

I mandate my union to launch the following actions, at a time deemed appropriate by the Negotiating Committee:

- hours of recuperation to be held one at a time

FOR  AGAINST

- days of recuperation to be held one at a time

FOR  AGAINST

- a general strike

FOR  AGAINST

Please check (✓ or x) the appropriate box.



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