



en Action

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 3 • OCTOBER 2001

6^e Convention
du 12-13-14 juin et
du 26-27-28 septembre 2001



After warmly greeting the delegates and the guests from other organizations, FIIQ President Jennie Skene invited the delegates to continue the work of the 6th Convention which began last June. Here are some excerpts from the President's opening address.

MAJOR DECISIONS

for the FIIQ's future

«Over the next few days, you will often hear that this is a special kind of Convention. Members of the Executive, staff or other delegates will remind you that you have to make a crucial decision for the FIIQ's future. And it's true!

«But we can't begin our work without taking a few minutes to look back on the events that occurred barely 15 days ago, events which have changed the face of the world forever. I want to speak about acts of extreme violence committed against the United States.

«Acts of unprecedented violence resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent victims and sowed fear not only around us, but all over the world. Nothing can justify the use of such violence. We must denounce these acts, which, in fact, are crimes against humanity.

«Unfortunately, we must observe that today's world is still the stage for many manifestations of violence generated by intolerance, power and money. The sad events of the past few days remind us that not so long ago, a terrible genocide occurred in Rwanda, that armed conflicts have raged in the Middle East for over forty years, that the Congo is going through a devastating civil war, that peace has not yet returned to Ireland... and I could go on... The victims – men, women and children – can be counted in the tens of thousands every year.



«But one thing is certain. Violence can only give rise to violence. The search for a better world for everyone undeniably requires respect for the human rights of every human being, including the right to life, the right to health, the right to work and the right to decent living conditions. If our collective will is to make our contribution to achieving this ideal, we will certainly accomplish this through the solidarity we can build with people here and elsewhere. The reflection and discussions in which we will engage and the decisions we will make in the next three days will undoubtedly lead us in this direction.

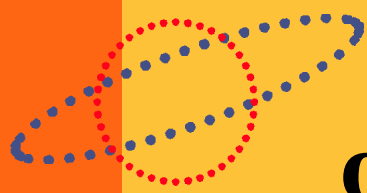
[..]

«...the decisions we are preparing to make have major implications for the organization. All of our Conventions are important, you will tell me. Think of the 1991 Convention when we decided together to fight against violence in all its forms. At the same Convention we established a solidarity fund. Or think of the 1993 and 1996 Conventions when we decided

to take on the organization of work and give ourselves the tools to intervene more effectively. Finally, think of the 1998 Convention when we focused on how globalization affects our daily lives as unionized nurses, women and citizens. Yes, all our Conventions have major consequences for nurses, for women and for our organization.

«This 6th Convention is no exception. The issues it will discuss are also of the utmost importance. We have already decided to recommend that nurses set up a strike fund. Tomorrow we will clarify and improve our policy against violence, determine how we intend to expand our union and social alliances and, finally, decide on a possible affiliation to a central union organization.» «I assure you that, regardless of the decision, the members of the FIIQ's Executive will go along with you and join you in assuming the responsibility for persuading nurses to share our conviction that this Convention made the best possible decision.

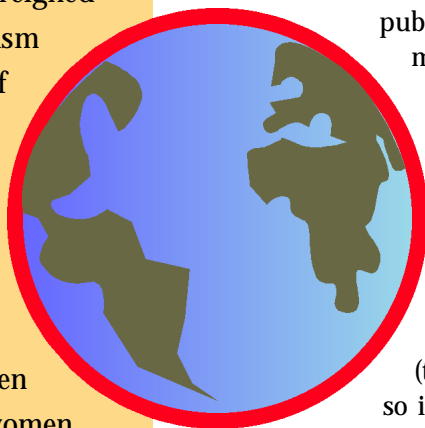
«Thus, if the Convention decides against affiliation, we will ask all nurses to give us the means to continue defending them in the best possible way, within an independent federation.»



The Executive officer, Lina Bonamie, presented the effects of globalization on unionism and nursing. She began by reviewing the past two hundred years of successive economic cycles that were marked by capitalism as the development model, a model that has taken different forms depending on the social and political movements of each era. While unfettered capitalism reigned in the 19th century, neoliberalism today has imposed its mastery of the world.

On more than one occasion in history, actions taken by workers, citizens or entire populations have literally changed the course of events. Had it not been for some of these struggles, women still would not have the right to vote, maternity leave would not exist, victims of work-related accidents would end up jobless and in poverty, the nursing profession would not be recognized, etc. These examples may seem simplistic, but a look outside our borders shows that they are not. Even today, in many countries around the world, women are struggling for recognition of their most basic rights, workers are compelled every day to work under conditions that put their lives in danger and union activists are murdered solely for engaging in union activities.

Many past struggles produced results and led to important changes. Once against we must show a fighting spirit and ingenuity, defining strategies that can change the course of events to favour respect for our rights as human beings, citizens, women, nurses, workers and professionals, while knowing that these rights are closely related. Before going further, we should take a last look at history and define the challenges for the future...



THE RIGHT TO HEALTH, THE RIGHT TO CARE

After twenty years of growth, economic disruptions, particularly the economic crises of the mid-1970s and early 1980s, restricted the network's development. In the early 1990s, Marc-Yvan Côté, then Minister of Health and Social Services in Premier Bourassa's Cabinet, embarked on a crusade to tell the public and the network's managers that Quebec had to adjust the health-care network «to live within its means¹».

As we know, under the pretext of making the public health-care network more efficient (the better to preserve it, so it was claimed...) and the obligation to balance the budget at any price, the Quebec government embarked on what has now become ten years of budget downsizing, service cuts, outsourcing of certain auxiliary services and institutional closures. The reduction of public services clearly reflected the neoliberal philosophy.

The government complained about the constraints encountered in its search for efficiency, including collective agreements, labour legislation, professional legislation, etc. Yet neoliberalism requires that markets be free of any hindrance. This new philosophy is undoubtedly the common denominator of the government decisions of the past few years regarding public health-care services. It is even easy to link several government interventions with one or another of the strategies useful to the implementation of neoliberalism. For example, the nursing shortage and the underfunding of the public health-care network, while reducing taxes, can be linked to the World Bank's strategy of underfunding resources, while the review of the professional system can be associated with the deregulation strategy. The ultimate objective sought by the neoliberals is the dismantling of the public health-care network and the deregulation of its services.

In this context, health-care services become commodities like any other, for which people can shop and buy. This assertion should provoke shudders in any citizen concerned about social justice and for whom the right to health care means something. For nurses, this is an assertion that contradicts their deepest values and the social role they recognize for themselves. If we do not react quickly, we will end up with an American-style health-care system. Delegates felt that it is important to preserve the public health-care network.

Faced with the threat posed by globalization, including the threat to the public's right to

health and nurses' right to care, the delegates decided to expand their solidarity significantly, both with other workers and with the public. For the delegates, these two rights are inseparable and, as guardians of health and socially involved citizens, nurses have the responsibility to resist and make every effort to ensure that healthcare is now downgraded to a commodity. «We are increasingly convinced that we cannot do without broad-based alliances to defend basic rights,» some delegates affirmed. «We must engage in the struggle for human rights, both here and elsewhere,» others added. This is why, together, they consider it appropriate for the FIIQ to get involved in national or international organizations working for this objective.

The task ahead may seem enormous. But the delegates are convinced that they can count on the achievements of different citizens, community, feminist or other groups who are working to defend human rights, and that the FIIQ must support them regularly through concrete actions. In this sense, they assessed the appropriateness of substantially increasing the amounts paid annually to the Solidarity reserve fund.

To ensure that the declaration of principles which guides the FIIQ's actions also drives its day-to-day activities, the Convention delegates decided to include the principle of the primacy of human rights over economic imperatives, the right to work in a healthy environment, the necessity of pursuing the struggle against poverty and violence and, of course, the right to health and the right for nurses to care.

As we know, the stakes of globalization not only affect today's generations by future generations as well. Having the FIIQ's future at heart, the delegates created the Youth Committee to stimulate the interest of young people in getting involved in their organization and collective action. For some of the delegates, «a youth committee could provide young union reps with a forum for discussion and action where they could express their needs and share their vision of the future. Young people must be able to influence the society in which they will live tomorrow.» By creating such a committee, «we will have to be willing to be challenged, questioned and sometimes even second-guessed eventually for the way we do things. But this forum undoubtedly will become a place where it will be possible to transmit our pride in our struggles and our collective victories,» some delegates said. For many, the creation of such a committee is another way to expand our inter-generational solidarity.

For the delegates at the 6th Convention, the decisions that were made in the framework of the debate on *Unionism and Nursing in a context of Unionization*, will undoubtedly enable the FIIQ to be an organization that is **SOLID IN SOLIDARITY**.

¹ GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Un financement à la mesure de nos moyens*, 1991.

FOR A STRONGER



F
I
I
Q



In the light of the debates preceding the 52% rejection of an FIIQ affiliation to the FTQ, this result can be interpreted, without fear of error, as reflecting the will of all delegates to develop the union strength of nurses. Of course, some would have wanted to give the FIIQ new means of action and new forums by affiliating to the FTQ. But the majority preferred to consolidate their organization to continue defending nurses' demands within an independent union federation.

This was not an easy decision and several delegates expressed their ambivalence. Some felt that there was too little time to reflect. It's true that less than a year elapsed between the time when the FIIQ was mandated to explore a closer structural relationship with the FTQ (an exploratory approach which was then extended to the CSN and the CFNU) and the time that the delegates had to vote on the question. In fact, the delegates received an initial progress report in March, in which the FTQ was presented. In June, they received a second report presenting a profile of the CSN and the CFNU. Two Federal Council meetings isn't much to absorb the details of such a complex question, especially since the sense of loyalty to the FIIQ is very strong. Some delegates therefore proposed to postpone the decision on affiliation to spring, but this proposal was not adopted.

This also wasn't an easy decision for those who, while admitting the validity of an affiliation, expressed fears about preserving the FIIQ's autonomy and identity. *If we were affiliated, would we be able to continue defending nurses' interests within the FIIQ?* This question was present throughout the approach: at the November 2000 and March 2001 Federal Council meetings, during the Executive tour last spring, at the meetings of the affiliated unions in April 2001 and during the Convention in June and September. This concern served as the backdrop for discussions with the members and the delegates. The final report submitted to the delegates contained assurances in this regard, but this wasn't enough to convince the more skeptical delegates.

The decision to reject FTQ affiliation wasn't easy for anyone, but the arguments of those who wanted to continue as an independent federation, rejecting the FTQ or excluding any idea of affiliation, rallied the majority of the delegates.

A RALLYING POINT

Although the vote was close, the debate and its outcome were not divisive. The two groups shared the same conviction: the future is with the FIIQ. In fact, the vast majority of delegates agreed on one conclusion: the result of the vote will not translate into maintaining the status quo for the FIIQ. On the contrary, they agreed that the decision to continue with an



independent federation was the beginning of a wide-ranging reflection on the FIIQ's new future directions. The Convention mandated the FIIQ's Executive Committee to analyze the situation and propose an action plan for development of the FIIQ and, by implication, strengthening of nurses' unions.

The organization's stakeholders, both elected representatives and staff, have already set to work. The approach and the debates in which the FIIQ has engaged identified some of the paths to be explored. Other questions remain open, but one thing is certain, the FIIQ's

members will find the answers together.

By relying on the FIIQ's strengths, its unions and its members, its unfailing solidarity, its social recognition that is the envy of many other union groups, its fairly surprising capacity to react and its even more surprising skill in finding original ways to take on the challenges that face us, there is no doubt that tomorrow's FIIQ will be even stronger and more dynamic.

This new FIIQ will be rooted in today's FIIQ and, turning to the future, will soar to new heights at every level of the organization: in the institutions, in the unions and in the Federation. It may offer new services, but it will also place more demands on all local, regional or federal elected representatives who will be even more fully involved. Of course, it will tend to improve its services, because there is always room for improvement, but it will continue to make union officers and representatives even more autonomous. It will offer them new responsibilities because the FIIQ's role will be expanded at the central level.

The months ahead will therefore be very stimulating for all FIIQ members, who will be invited to participate in the collective process of reflection now beginning. While the rejection of FTQ affiliation reflects the nurses' strong sense of loyalty to their organization, it is also a new starting point for building a stronger FIIQ, which is preparing to develop new means to defend its members even better.

CONVENTION PHOTOS

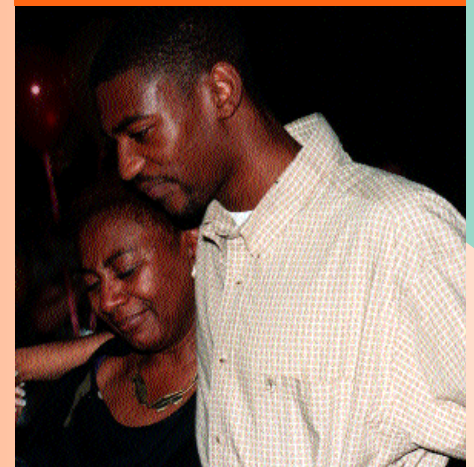
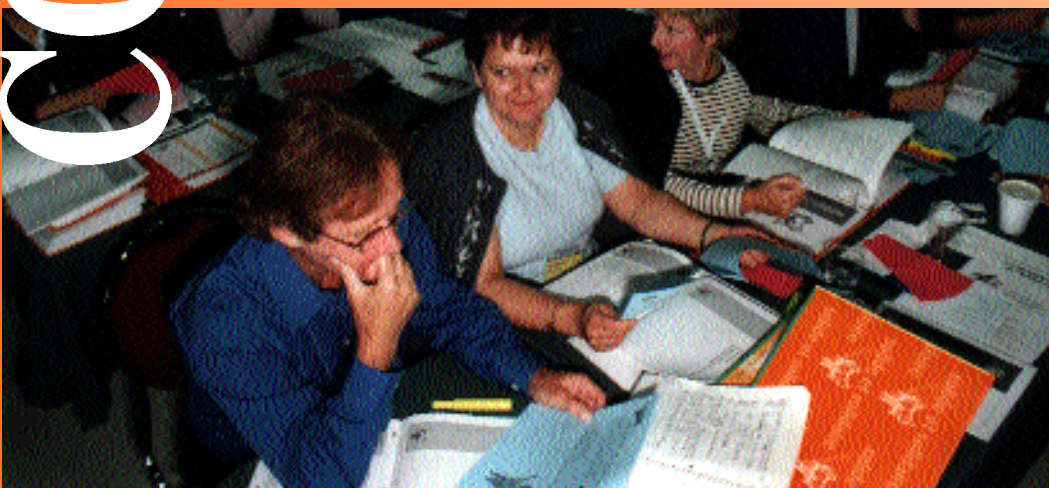


The delegates register



The delegates participate actively in the debates on the agenda of this 6th Convention

An intense time during the party organized to mark Régine Laurent's departure





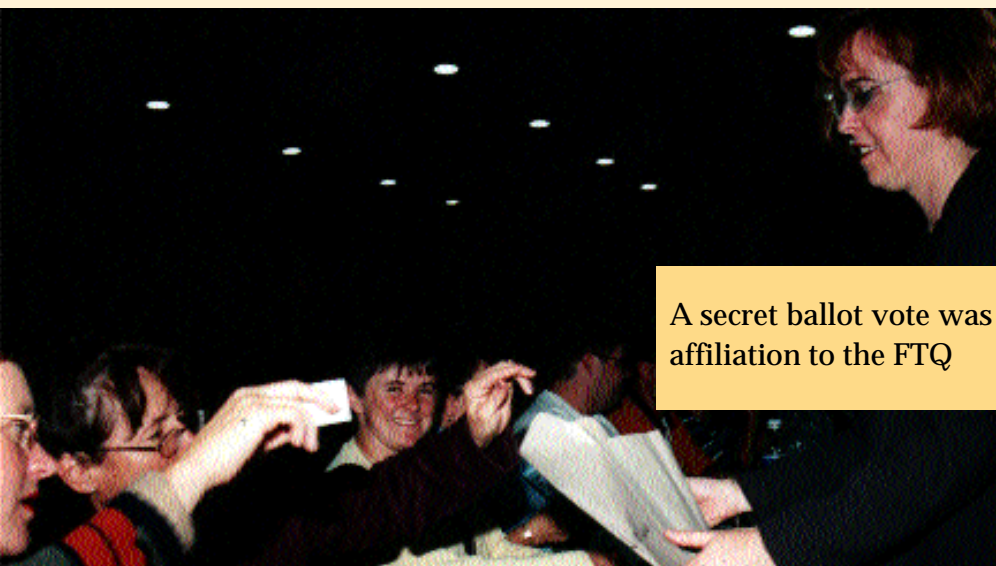
The delegates expressed their point of view on the issues debated in the plenary



The delegates took advantage of Minister Trudel's visit to set him straight on the reality of nurses in the healthcare system. Many of them spoke up



The Chair of the Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec, Diane Lavallée, presented the « *Femmes et Santé* » guide on women's health. The FIIQ cooperated closely in the production of this work



A secret ballot vote was held on the proposal for affiliation to the FTQ

A STRIKE FUND, AN ESSENTIAL INSTRUMENT TO WIN OUR STRUGGLES

Referendum to be held
December 6

You will remember that during the first part of the Convention last June the delegates voted for the creation of a strike fund and determined its conditions. They believed that a strike fund is necessary and can only benefit the members, the unions and the FIIQ. They also believed that, with a strike fund, nurses would undeniably emerge as the big winners. Isn't it true that an organization with a strike fund has a better foundation to organize a strike and anchor its bargaining power? Giving the FIIQ a strike fund means giving all nurses the means to choose and emerge from a struggle even stronger, more unified and more in solidarity.

The delegates also decided to hold a referendum of all members on this question. It will be held December 6. Until then, a document presenting the importance of adopting a strike fund and the conditions of collection will be distributed to all members. Watch the union bulletin board for all details concerning the referendum.

NWP



For the past several years, workforce planning has been a priority for the FIIQ. After participating actively in a committee in 1998 and a working group in 1999, the FIIQ in 2000 invested countless hours in the Nursing Workforce Planning Forum. After a presentation of the issue by the 2nd Vice President, Daniel Gilbert, the delegates were able to ask questions and especially share information on the problems related to the nursing shortage.

The delegates require no further proof of the importance and urgency of taking action on workforce planning. Work requiring participation and coordination of the national, regional and local levels will have to rank among all stakeholders' priorities.

Major and significant changes are necessary and expected by the nurses. To respond adequately to these expectations, the responsible Executive member, Daniel Gilbert, announced that each institution's union reps will be trained, and that tools will be made available to the local teams, who will engage in a workforce planning exercise. A team of consultants has also been set up to assist the consultants in the institutions.

Everything is in place to ensure that, wherever necessary, the local teams have the necessary tools and support to find lasting structural solutions to the problems of attracting and retaining the nursing workforce.

Stay tuned!

GOOD FINANCIAL HEALTH !

From the auditors' report and a review of the financial statements presented by the Treasurer, Lise Martel, the delegates were able to conclude that the FIIQ is in good financial health. After sharing the fines, replenishing the negotiation reserve fund, and repaying the Union Defence Fund and the loans granted by our sisters in other provinces, constant vigilance has allowed the FIIQ to regain its financial stability. In response to every blow struck by the government, the FIIQ's members, delegates and staff have stood shoulder to shoulder and made the necessary efforts to preserve the FIIQ as their collective instrument. Solidarity is and will always remain the nurses' trademark.

VIOLENCE

TO WORK IN DIGNITY A GENERAL POLICY TO COUNTER VIOLENCE AT WORK

On the fifth day of the Convention, delegates adopted a policy to counter violence at work. At the same time, a nurse working at the Montreal General Hospital was assaulted by a doctor. Delegates had living proof of the importance of establishing a policy in each institution and of the urgency of breaking the silence. After a discussion of actions taken to date by the Federation, definitions of violence and the urgency of taking action, delegates adopted a statement of principles and measures to be taken to implement such a policy.

According to a study conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1998, violence in the workplace is becoming widespread. It is a growing phenomenon, raging all over the world, and a serious subject of concern. The study shows that violence in the workplace is not an episodic and individual problem but a structural problem rooted in a social, economic and cultural context. Of all caregivers, nurses are the most exposed to violence. The many abuses, physical as well as psychological, that nurses suffer have serious repercussions on their health and contribute to increase the distress that already affects them as a result of their difficult working conditions. Added to this are other consequences, including a greater risk of errors, reduced motivation, high absenteeism and abandonment of the profession.

It is urgent to continue the action that the Federation undertook twelve years ago, that is to reveal the violence that nurses suffer, to overcome the fear which inhabits us, to break the silence and to support one another. The policy adopted by delegates at this Convention com-

pletes the policy adopted in 1992 and expands its scope. In fact, this policy makes it possible not only to manage cases of discrimination but also all other forms of violence that may occur in the workplace. It involves three components: a statement of principles, a model draft policy and preventive measures. It is an approach based on education instead of punishment. In other words, the FIIQ does not want to multiply the number of complaints but rather to equip nurses so that they can put a stop to the insults, harassment and intimidation to which they are subjected. All efforts will converge on promoting widespread awareness among members and in the work environments so that nurses can work in dignity.

The objectives of the policy are:

- to ensure a sound work environment, i.e. one that is free of violence and that respects the physical psychological integrity of the persons working in the institution;
- to develop harmonious relations based on the recognition of cultural diversity
- to encourage prevention by organizing information, awareness-raising and support activities
- to support and assist victims of violence by establishing procedures for assistance and recourse.

The policy also includes mechanisms for processing complaints, identifies other recourse available, and outlines the role of the union and of the Federation.

By adopting this policy, the administration's commitment should be put into practice in the three following fields of action: nurses' safety, the safety of the premises and training of the resources in the workplace.

The executive officer in charge of the Status of Women, Sylvie Boulanger, reminded delegates that the quality of life in an institution concerns the employer, the union and all the personnel. It is only by accepting to share this responsibility that zero tolerance can be implemented in the workplace.

● Definition of violence in the policy

Violence is **ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR**, which takes the form of **UNDESIRE**d words, actions or gestures, and which are an attack on the physical or psychological integrity of the individual and are such as to create unfavourable working conditions or to lead to dismissal. Thus, there is violence when a person tries **TO IMPOSE HIS\HER WILL ON ANOTHER PERSON**. The aggression can be **ISOLATED** or take the form of **HARASSMENT** characterized by offensive gestures. In all cases, violence is an **ABUSE OF POWER** that harms a person and attacks her dignity.

AN ENERGETIC TEAM

During the first part of the Convention in June, delegates adopted an amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws, hence modifying the composition of the Executive Committee. It will now be composed of eight members instead of nine. Thus, the position of Associate Treasurer and Associate Secretary were replaced by a position of Associate Secretary-Treasurer. It is with pleasure that *FIIQ en Action* presents these eight determined fighters to the cause of nurses.



JENNIE SKENE
President
CHA - Pavillon
Enfant-Jésus,
Quebec City



SYLVIE BOULANGER
1st Vice President
CHUQ - Pavillon
St-François d'Assise,
Quebec City



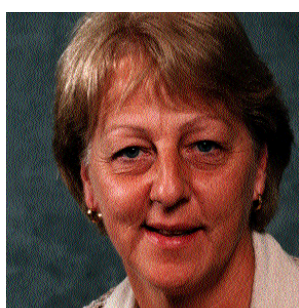
DANIEL GILBERT
2nd Vice President
CH Beauce-Etchemin,
St-Georges



MICHÈLE BOISCLAIR
3rd Vice Presidente
CLSC Pierrefonds,
Pierrefonds



LINA BONAMIE
4th Vice President
Hôpital
Maisonneuve-Rosemont,
Montreal



CHANTAL BOIVIN
Secretary
Complexe de la Sagamie
Pavillon Joncquière,
Joncquière



LISE MARTEL
Treasurer
Corporation CHSLD
Chauveau,
Quebec City



SYLVIE SAVARD
*Associate Secretary-
treasurer*
CHUQ - Université
Laval pavillon,
Quebec City

Statutory Committees

Election Committee

GISMOND BERNATCHEZ
CH Fleury, Montreal

DANIEL DANIS
Hôpital Ste-Croix, Drummondville

Union Defence fund Committee

BARBARA J. ARSENEAU
Douglas Hospital, Montreal

Internal Audit Committee

LUC CAYER
CHUS (Hôtel Dieu and Hôpital
Feurimont), Estrie

ANDRÉ HAMEL
Hôtel-Dieu d'Arthabaska,
Arthabaska

LUCIE MASSE
CH Louis-H. Lafontaine, Montreal

FIIQ committees

Status of Women Committee

ANNIE ASPIREAU
CHUM (Hôpital Notre-Dame)
Montreal

MADELEINE BELLEAU
Pavillon l'Enfant-Jésus,
Quebec City

RO LICATA
CUSM (Royal Victoria Hospital),
Montreal

MICHELLE POIRIER
Hôpital Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine,
Montreal

ISABELLE POULIOT
CHUQ (Pavillon de l'université
Laval) Quebec City

NATHALIE ST-ONGE
CH Anna Laberge, Montérégie

Occupational Health and Safety Committee

DANIEL BÉLANGER
CH Robert-Giffard, Quebec City

BENOÎT DANDURAND
CH Pierre-Boucher, Longueil

MARIE-JOSÉE GAUTHIER
CH Anna-Laberge, Châteauguay

LORRAINE T. LAFORGE
CHUM - (Hôtel-Dieu), Montreal

HENRI C. MOÏSE
CLSC Vieux Lachine, Lachine

JEAN-FRANÇOIS TREMBLAY
CH Granby, Gramby

Security Committee

BARBARA J. ARSENEAU
Douglas Hospital, Montreal

SYLVAIN LAPALME
CHSLD Lucille-Teasdale -
Pavillon J. H. Charbonneau,
Montreal

WENDY SHERRY
CUSM (Montreal General Hospital),
Montreal

Education-Animation Committee

ANNE BOLDUC
Hôpital Ste-Croix, Drummondville

MICHEL CHAMPOUX
CHUS (Hôtel Dieu — Hôpital
Fleurimont), Estrie

STÉPHANE GAGNON
CH Delanaudière, Joliette

GUY LAROUCHE
Centre Le Jeannois - Pavillon H. D.
d'Alma, Alma

SERGE PRÉVOST
CH Charles Lemoyne,
Greenfield Park

WENDY SHERRY
Montreal General Hospital, Montreal

Journal Committee

ELAHÉ MACHOUF
Vigi Santé Lté - CHSLD Dollards-
des-Ormeaux,
Dollards-des-Ormeaux

MARIE-EDITH OUELLET
Institut national de santé publique,
Quebec City

NOËLLA SAVARD
Institut universitaire gériatrique -
Pavillon Alfred Desrochers,
Montreal

YVES TREMBLAY
CH Maisonneuve-Rosemont,
Montreal



FIIQ EN ACTION

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 3 •
OCTOBER 2001

This tabloid is
published by the Communication-Information
Service.

Web site : www.fiiq.qc.ca

e-mail: info@fiiq.qc.ca

Published after each Federal Council and
Convention meeting, this tabloid has a
distribution of 45 000 copies.

Any reprint of texts or excerpts must indicate
"Reprint from the publication *FIIQ en Action*".

ISSN 0838-4207

REMINDER

A FEW CONCEPTS

JOB EVALUATION: process by which jobs are evaluated based on four main criteria: qualifications, effort, responsibilities assumed and conditions of practice. Following this exercise, a value is assigned to each job so that they can be compared with each other and so that the necessary salary adjustments can then be made.

PAY RELATIVITY: process of evaluating jobs at a given employer. In pay relativity, all jobs are evaluated and compared with each other – including mixed jobs – to establish a coherent compensation policy.

PAY EQUITY: job evaluation process based on criteria exempt from sexist bias for a given employer. The objective of the pay equity program is to correct pay gaps due to gender-based discrimination. Thus, in pay equity, only the predominantly female and male job categories are evaluated and compared with the objective of putting an end to gender-based differences in pay.

JOB CATEGORY: group made up of employees who hold similar positions, with similar responsibilities and similar compensation (rates and scales). This is not necessarily equivalent to a job title.

PREDOMINANTLY FEMALE OR MALE: a job category is predominantly female if it is more than 60% made up of women. It will be predominantly male if it is more than 60% made up of men. A job category will be considered mixed if the women are between 40% and 60% present. The fact that the job category is associated with an occasional stereotype – as in the case of nurses – may also determine female predominance.

Examples of job categories:

- nurse (91% women) : predominantly female
- physical educator (69% men) : predominantly male
- psycho-educator (54% women) : mixed.

PAY EQUITY

A CHALLENGE FOR ALL UNION ORGANIZATIONS

If there is one question on every nurse's lips, it is the progress achieved on pay equity. This work is proceeding rapidly and should make it possible to correct the pay discrimination suffered by Quebec nurses. A fair salary for nurses' work and responsibilities is certainly one of the key objectives that the FIIQ has adopted since its founding, and major advances have been achieved over the years. Today, the FIIQ is at the most important stage of the work on this issue: the revision of the tool used by the Conseil du trésor to evaluate jobs. Since 1988, the Conseil du trésor had never accepted an in-depth revision of this tool to ensure real consideration of the characteristics specific to women's work in general, and nurses' work in particular. The union organizations applied themselves to this task last April. A working group was therefore set up, composed of representatives of the Conseil du trésor, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, and representatives of the FIIQ, the FTQ, the CSN, the CSQ and the SFPQ. This FIIQ is providing this working group with all its expertise in job evaluation and recognition of the characteristics specific to predominantly female jobs. As you read the other articles, you will observe the nature of the changes that the Conseil du trésor has agreed to make to its job evaluation tool.

The nursing profession undoubtedly represents the archetype for female jobs, which all too often are underpaid because of a salary structure based on the characteristics of male jobs. Few predominantly female jobs have as many characteristics typical of women's work as nursing. In this sense, the FIIQ's great concern regarding the specific characteristics of nurses' work will benefit all predominantly female jobs. The union organizations involved in this work have agreed to pool their energy and competencies so that gender-induced pay discrimination is finally corrected in the public and parapublic sectors. Undoubtedly this is one of the greatest challenge these organizations have ever faced, a challenge that we will all face together.

Lina Bonamie

4th Vice President

A new job evaluation proposal

NEW SUB-FACTORS

Ever since last April 9, when the Conseil du trésor tabled its proposal for revision of the job evaluation plan with the interunion table, interunion meetings and discussions with the Conseil du trésor have been held three days a week, sometimes more often. Initially, the work essentially focused on the definition of the sub-factors. Once this stage was completed, the parties, since mid-June, concentrated on defining how they considered these sub-factors should be measured. Not only it is essential to determine what aspects of the job will be considered for evaluation purposes, but it is also essential to agree on how to do this. It isn't enough to say that an employee has to make a small, great or very great effort. It is also essential to decide what will be measured. This exercise must be repeated for each sub-factor evaluated. The Conseil du trésor has agreed to introduce new sub-factors into the job evaluation plan. Here they are.

Updating knowledge and competencies

The necessity for updating knowledge and competencies was not formally evaluated in the 16-factor plan. The Conseil du trésor has proposed that it be made a separate sub-factor. Not only the knowledge acquired by academic education, experience and on-the-job training will be measured, but also the knowledge acquired by individual employees throughout their career.

This new sub-factor should allow this essential aspect of work to be isolated and evaluated. Predominantly female jobs are often found in constantly changing fields of practice, where innovations, discoveries and changes regularly occur.

The Conseil du trésor also agreed to revise the definition or the measurement of sub-factors that already existed. Here, in summary, is the nature of the changes discussed.

Physical skills and manual dexterity

In its evaluation, the Conseil du trésor essentially focused on the physical skills and manual dexterity required to use tools. However, many of the tasks performed by the employees are performed directly on people without using tools. It is therefore important to correct this deficiency. Thus, the new measurement of this sub-factor will make it possible to consider the necessary skills and dexterity with or without skills.

Responsibilities regarding people

Although our discussions with the Conseil du trésor are not yet completed in terms of the way responsibilities regarding people are measured, it can already be said that the measurement of this sub-factor will be revised to ensure that the major responsibilities assumed by employees in the delivery of care and services to people are correctly considered.

Interpersonal relations skills

Even though the vast majority of public and parapublic sector employees provide services to individuals, the interpersonal relations skills essential to provide these services were not measured. Only the physical skills, a sub-factor that is more favourable to predominantly male jobs, were measured.

This new sub-factor should make it possible to measure a characteristic specific to women's work, because they are often made responsible for opening a relationship with clients, whether to direct them to the right resource or to enter into a helping relationship. Assuming these responsibilities requires skills that have not been measured to date.

Psychological effort

In the 16-factor tool, the Conseil du trésor only assigned very low importance to psychological effort. At most, reference was made to this as one of the effortful working conditions among a group of physical efforts.

This situation will be corrected, because the psychological efforts, essentially associated with women's work, will be measured on the same basis as the physical efforts essentially associated with men's work.

REVISED SUB-FACTORS

Financial, material and organizational responsibility

The approach that had been adopted by the Conseil du trésor to measure these responsibilities that makes a lot of reference to the impacts of material and financial errors. This approach certainly made it difficult to measure responsibilities when they were assumed within the context of care and services provided to the public. A new measurement is under discussion with the Conseil du trésor, which should facilitate the consideration of these responsibilities.

Responsibilities for supervision or coordination of activities

Whereas in the past, the responsibility for supervision was approached in a hierarchical context based on a very masculine approach, from now on the responsibilities of supervision and coordination will be considered, an approach that will make it possible to consider the full scope of this responsibility, including professional supervision.

Communication responsibilities

The measurement of this sub-factor is not yet established with the Conseil du trésor. Although the positions are diametrically opposed to date, we have no doubt that we will reach an agreement with the Conseil du trésor

on a measurement that will make it possible to value the major communication responsibilities assumed by employees.

Autonomy and judgment Reasoning and creativity

These two sub-factors were previously three (autonomy, judgment and reasoning). This new division should allow better measurement of the decision-making latitude enjoyed by employees, whether hierarchical or professional, as well as the intellectual efforts inherent in reasoning and creativity.

Concentration and sensory attention

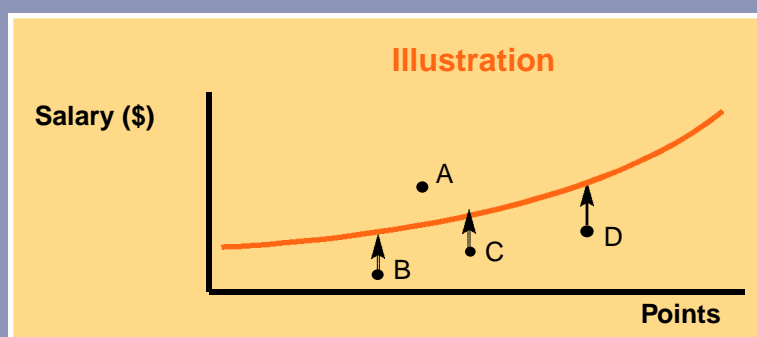
The measurement of this sub-factor was revised to ensure that the necessary level of concentration, the simultaneity of tasks and the frequency of interruptions are correctly measured. Thus, the efforts related to concentration and sensory attention will really be taken into account.

Other factors

Finally, all the other sub-factors of the evaluation plan were revised to allow better consideration of the characteristics specific to predominantly female jobs.

METHOD OF ESTIMATING PAY GAPS

Parallel to the work on the job evaluation plan, a working group was set up to determine the criteria that will guide the comparison between the salaries of female job categories and those of male job categories. However, this comparison can only be made once the job evaluation exercise is completed. The following graph illustrates the method adopted to calculate the adjustments to be paid for female job categories. Based on the values of and salaries of the male jobs, a curve is plotted according to a given mathematical formula. The pay gap is then calculated by comparing the salary for the female job categories to the curve thus obtained. The gap between a given female salary and the curve determines the adjustment payable.



We should remember that the May 2000 collective agreement provides for repositioning of the salary scales of nurses and baccalaureate nurses. This scale adjustment was obtained by comparing the value of these jobs to the male job curve. Since the Commission de l'équité salariale has recognized that the pay gap calculation method adopted by the Conseil du trésor was biased and that it had to redo its work, we are currently conducting this exercise jointly within the interunion table. We will then be able to determine whether or not the adjustment obtained upon renewal of the collective agreement was sufficient.

At the end of August, the interunion table presented its comments on all of the elements tabled last April by the Conseil du trésor, regarding the method of estimating pay gaps. The parties have agreed to add to their discussions the questions related to identification of job categories and their gender predominance. To date, only one job category is still pending, but the discussions on this matter should be finalized shortly.

We are still pursuing our discussions regarding the method of estimating gaps on the interunion table and a comprehensive proposal, including the sub-factors and the estimated gaps, should be tabled with our management counterparts in the next few days.