

EN ACTION

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FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC

Special Federal Council on Negotiations
March 12, 2007
Federal Council, March 13 and 14, 2007
Special Convention, March 15 and 16, 2007



Solidarity

Lina Bonamie
President

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STRONG AND UNITED, IN SOLIDARITY!

In her address, the President of the Federation, Lina Bonamie, kicked off the week, during which a Special Federal Council on the Negotiations was followed by a regular Federal Council and a Special Convention.

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She began by reminding the delegates that, at the last November Federal Council, they had adopted an action plan for the local negotiations. This action plan provided for the holding of Special Federal Councils on the Negotiations as needed. Given the context of the elections, the general progress of the local negotiations and the situation prevailing in the workplaces, Ms. Bonamie explained that the Executive Committee had considered it important to hold such a Federal Council.

"Given the statements made by the candidates in the March 2007 elections, it was also considered essential to make a public intervention to denounce the false hopes the candidates are creating for the public by their erroneous, unrealistic, and even utopian statements," the President explained. She also invited delegates to a demonstration in front of the Quebec Parliament

Building on the same day as the leaders' debate.

"This demonstration, in the image of care professionals, will mark this week of discussions and I am persuaded that it will show strength and solidarity. The Premier and the other party leaders must be shown that care professionals aren't fools. They want to work in a context in which they are recognized, appreciated and valued, and this can only be materialized by conditions of employment that at least maintain the status quo," the President pointed out.

Ms. Bonamie also invited delegates to read the second issue of the Federation's new publication, FIQ Special Report, which presents an analysis of the platforms of the main political parties based on the FIQ's positions on the themes it recommends.

The Federation deplores that the Government is stubbornly denying the

realities of the health-care network, just as it denies union rights. It also accuses the employers of showing bad faith and imposing conditions instead of negotiating. Within the context of the local negotiations, Ms. Bonamie reminded the affiliated unions that it is necessary to make members aware of the importance of mobilization. *"Mobilization will make it possible to really put pressure on the employer to obtain the best possible conditions of employment for care professionals,"* she pointed out.

The regular Federal Council was interrupted by a General Meeting to create FIQ - Association immobilière, within the context of construction of the Federation's new headquarters. The President told the delegates that they would be invited to adopt the bylaws that will govern the operation of this non-profit organization and protect the Federation's assets.

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Maire-Noëlle Pelletier, CSS de la Haute-Gaspésie, and David Lambert, Hôpital Brome Missisquoi-Perkins.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE YOUTH

Brigitte Fauteux, executive officer for the Youth Committee, the committee members and Florence Thomas, consultant for the Health-Care Sector, presented a report on the activities in which they participated and recalled un certain number of important objectives of a *Youth Committee* action plan.

THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF THE INSTITUT DU NOUVEAU MONDE

"The Summer school of the Institut du Nouveau Monde is a Citizenship school. Mobilized around a common goal, the goal to become better citizens, hundreds of young people meet each summer to spend a few exceptional days together. Along with dozens of specialists, artists, public figures, political actors, both men and women, and committed citizens, they take part in a collective reflection on our future." The Youth Committee presented two manifestos which will soon be available on the Federation's web site. The 2007 edition of this summer school will be held in Montreal from August 22 to 25. The registration form will soon be available at <www.inm.qc.ca>.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE SHARED "COMMONS"

In the context of this symposium, the Youth Committee of the Federation attended the conference on wind energy. Under the theme "Privatization of Hydro-Québec by way of wind energy", the guest speaker, Gabriel Ste-Marie, economist and researcher at the *Chaire d'études socioéconomiques*, began discussing the issue by attempting to answer the following questions: "Why privatize the wind in Quebec?" or "Why is the Charest government intent on leaving the development of wind energy to the private sector?" Mr. Ste-Marie explained the importance of preserving the public character of this source of energy, rather than handing it over to the private sector, which is much more costly.

MOBILIZING YOUNG PEOPLE

The committee presented a short excerpt from a radio interview on the difficulties which young people face on the way to active union involvement. The committee members spoke about the obstacles they had to overcome, but also about their resolve to integrate local teams and to be more actively involved. The delegates and young people present at the meeting were invited to speak about their own experience; many delegates corroborated the importance of taking the means and measures to mobilize the young members of the Federation and ensuring that young union activists will be prepared to take over. ■

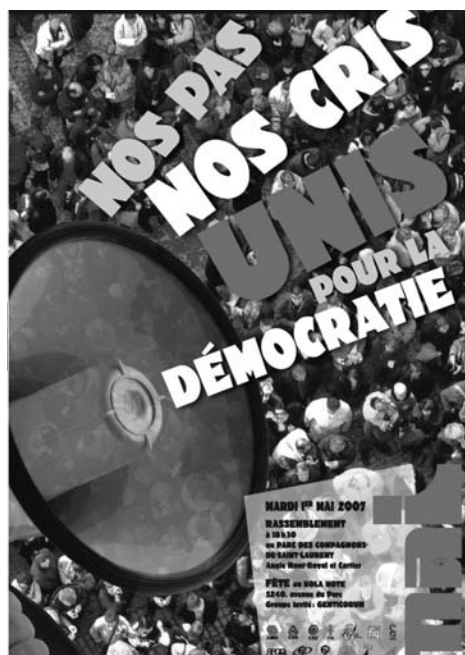
STRONG AND UNITED, IN SOLIDARITY

CONT'D

From a more social and political perspective, a report of the tour by the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics* was presented to the delegates. Ms. Bonamie mentioned that this tour, which was an eloquent success, was an opportunity for the Federation to visit the regions, meet the union reps of different labour organizations and assure the SISP's visibility.

To conclude this busy week, Ms. Bonamie briefly reviewed the very loquacious and colourful address by Léo-Paul Lauzon, Professor of the Chair of Socioeconomic Studies at UQAM. "Mr. Lauzon explained how he reads the news critically. He certainly permanently changed the way some people perceive the media," she said.

Finally, the President invited the delegates to continue visibility actions in the regions and to put the May 1st demonstration on their agenda so that we may march and shout together for democracy! ■



2007 MAY DAY ACTIVITIES

This year, International Workers' Day activities will be organized on May 1st under the theme *Nos pas, nos cris, unis pour la démocratie*. In contrary to the two past years when Mayday was celebrated by a Quebec-wide march, in 2007, Mayday will be celebrated regionally. Keep an eye out for activities in your region.

DEMONSTRATION IN MONTREAL

For those who live in Montreal or the surrounding region, here are the details for the demonstration to be held on Tuesday, May 1, 2007.

Rally: 6h30 p.m.
 Parc des Compagnons-de-Saint-Laurent
 Angle des rues Mont-Royal et Cartier

Evening show:

Kola Note
 5240, Park Avenue
 Entertainment: Genticorum

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA - FOLLOW-UP ON THE FIQ ACTION PLAN

Élaine Trottier, Executive officer in charge of the Occupational Health and Safety Sector, and Hélène Caron, consultant for that sector, gave the delegates a presentation following up on the Federation's action plan on a potential pandemic influenza. Ms. Trottier began by reporting on her correspondence with the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* (MSSS). This correspondence accounted for the concerns expressed by delegates, at the last November Federal Council, about the personal protection equipment reserved for care professionals in the event of an avian flu pandemic or an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS),

It is deplorable that, one year after the presentation of the *Quebec Pandemic Influenza Plan - Health Mission* of the MSSS, there is still so little information on the progress of the preparations and the current state of the situation in each Quebec healthcare institution. The MSSS responded in the negative to the Federation's request for a meeting. This response was limited to referring the Federation to a toolkit intended to inform and reassure the staff and the website at www.pandemiequebec.gouv.qc.ca.

Over the past few months, parallel to this approach, a questionnaire evaluating the situation prevailing in health-care institutions was distributed to the unions affiliated to the Federation. The Federation wanted to know the status of the preparations and what personal protective equipment members will be entitled to receive in the case of a flu pandemic. Hélène Caron presented the results of this survey to the delegates. On the whole, they are fairly disturbing. Although the majority of the institutions have an action plan to fight a flu pandemic, care professionals have received little information on the subject. According to the responses obtained from the 58 questionnaires received, which cover half of the Federation's 57,000 members, more than one third of the respondents do not know what type of masks have been reserved to protect them. One out of two questionnaires reveals that no awareness and information meeting has been held with the staff regarding a potential pandemic. Finally, only half of the respondents consider that members are protected adequately in such a context.

Two proposals were adopted by the delegates. Thus, the Federation was mandated to ask the MSSS to ensure that each institution is ready to deal with an eventual avian flu pandemic and to update and publicize its toolkit so that all the members have access to it.

SISP SPEAKING TOUR DEFENDING PUBLIC SERVICES



From left to right: Michèle Boisclair, 1st Vice-president, Florence Thomas and Marc Thibault-Bellerose, consultants for the Health-Care Sector

Last December, the Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics (SISP) launched a platform entitled “*Public services, the best of ourselves!*” It was the starting point of an information and consultation tour for the members of the four SISP organizations in the context of the Quebec election campaign. Michèle Boisclair, executive officer responsible for Health-Care, accompanied by the consultants for the Sector, Florence Thomas and Marc Thibault-Bellerose, reported on this speaking tour.

At first, the speaking tour, which brought together the SPGQ, SFPQ, FIQ and CSQ was to be held from January 30 to April 4, 2007. The fact that the Quebec Liberal government called for early elections forced a slight modification in the tour schedule in order for each of the targeted regions to have the opportunity to speak up on regional issues and question the various election candidates.

Thus, at the time of the Federal Council, eight of the twelve cities scheduled in the tour had been visited by SISP political officers; only Rimouski, Gaspé, Quebec City and Montreal remained. These four cities received the visit of SISP representatives in the following week.

EXCEPTIONAL PARTICIPATION

In all the cities visited, participation was outstanding. A common conclusion arose from the various assemblies: public services are hit by a wave of deregulation, privatisation, subcontracting, erosion of budgets and shortage of personnel and resources. This conclusion applies both to the health-care and education networks and to the public service. The defence of public services is not a luxury, it is a necessity!

A MOVING TESTIMONY

During this presentation, delegates heard a testimony which confirmed the success of the SISP speaking tour. Thus, Jacques Poulin, President of the *Syndicat des professionnelles en soins infirmiers et cardio-respiratoires*

du Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke and the Federation's regional officer for the SISP assembly in the eastern townships came to speak on his experience. “*I had the opportunity to attend the press conference and the meeting where Lina gave a brilliant performance. The FIQ stood out by the quality of its interventions and I was really proud of the Federation*” stated Mr. Poulin. He also highlighted that it was an excellent initiative for the Federation to have joined the SISP and that the FIQ had considerable influence there. “*This is practically a motion of congratulations because I find that the FIQ has a clear view. Our Federation is a respected for the quality of its public interventions.*” ■

INQUIRY: THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC SPACE

Last December, the Federation was invited by the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* to participate in an inquiry on the place of religion in public space. Michèle Boisclair, executive officer in charge of the Health-Care Sector, informed the delegation of this invitation which the Federation has accepted.

Florence Thomas, consultant for the Sector, explained that several organizations were approached, given that there was an increase in the number of demands regarding reasonable accommodations in Quebec. The inquiry is therefore designed to find out what the situation is like in different fields: education, public service, health-care institutions., etc.

Information was also given on the steps involved in this process. Thus, the month of March will be devoted to the preparation of a questionnaire that will be sent to members in the Spring and compiled during the summer period. The said questionnaire will aim to verify members' knowledge of reasonable accommodations and give them the opportunity to report on the situation in their institution. ■



The guest speaker, Léo-Paul Lauzon from the *Chaire d'études socioéconomiques* at UQAM.

READING THE NEWS WITH A CRITICAL EYE

Léo-Paul Lauzon, professor at the *Chaire d'études socioéconomiques* of UQAM, came to explain to delegates how to read the news with a critical eye.

With a touch of humour, Mr. Lauzon sensitized the delegation to the phenomenon of globalization; he denounced the propaganda, disinformation and the fact that economic development benefits only the most affluent people in society.

Speaking in a lively and colourful manner, Mr. Lauzon unreeled before delegates' eyes an impressive number of newspaper articles in support of his views. Thus, he demonstrated that the profits of corporations have never been as high, while the salary of workers is constantly dropping.

Using the figures provided by *Statistics Canada* and the *Institut de*

la statistique du Québec, he showed that public funds are often used to subsidize corporations with record-high profits and that holders of capital are the main ones to benefit from the profits made. Money is in the pockets of a minority.

Quebec is small but competitive. With its GNP, Quebec ranks 20th in the world. Mr. Lauzon insists: Quebec has never been as wealthy; we must therefore question how it is that the government is broke.

Quoting the World Economic Forum, Mr. Lauzon indicated that the Northern European countries are the most competitive although they have

a rate of unionization close to 90% and education is free from kindergarten through to university. According to the United Nations, these countries nevertheless have the best education system in the world.

The Quebec population is increasingly under the yoke of the large multinationals which are becoming gigantic; inequality in wealth is soaring upwards.

Closing with a "potpourri" on health, Mr. Lauzon undoubtedly raised a lot of questioning, made many delegates smile and inevitably changed their way of reading the news. ■

THE QUEBEC SOCIAL FORUM IN MONTREAL

For several years now, the Federation has participated in the world social forums. These were particularly enriching on account of the forum which they provide for democratic debate, in-depth reflection, exchange of experiences and articulation between the various social movements and networks.

Two years ago, two young Université du Québec students began thinking about organizing a Quebec Social Forum (QSF). Since then, the idea has made headway and the first edition of the forum will take place this year. The QSF "proposes to individuals and organizations a participatory and non-partisane space for reflection, convergence of demands and social struggles opposed to neoliberal capitalism and all forms of oppression, promotion of alternative practices and work for Quebec society tomorrow."

The Treasurer, Lise Martel, informed delegates that the Federation will participate in the meetings held in the context of the Quebec Social Forum, in addition to offering financial support and holding a workshop. The Forum will be held from August 23 to 26, 2007, at UQAM in Montreal. It will be a four-day long succession of demonstrations, conferences and workshops.

Eight themes will be developed, including Human rights and the struggle for equality, Public services and social programmes, and Labour, union struggles and the social economy. The Federation hopes that affiliated unions will be at the rendezvous and that they will encourage young members to participate.

FROM IWD TO THE GOVERNMENTAL POLICY FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Michèle Boisclair, executive officer for the Status of Women Sector, accompanied by Michelle Poirier, consultant for the sector, reported briefly on the March 8 activities organized to celebrate International Women's day (IWD). Madam Boisclair stressed that these activities - whether they be lunches, suppers, questionnaire-games or others -- arouse more and more interest. She also took advantage of this opportunity to congratulate the local teams that took the time to celebrate this very special day, in spite of the negotiations which take up a lot of their time and energy.

Madam Boisclair also discussed the governmental policy for equality between women and men which was made public on Sunday December 17, 2006, by the Quebec Minister of Families, Seniors and the Status of Women. After having presented a brief overview of the most important events leading up to this policy, Madam Boisclair pointed out that the related plan of action has a 24-million-dollar budget over three years.

The women's movement hailed this policy and expressed its satisfaction

regarding the maintenance of the existing government structures and the orientations adopted. Nevertheless, the Intersyndicale des femmes, of which the Federation is a member, has expressed certain criticisms and concerns:

- the absence of analysis of the world context;
- the fact that the government wants us to believe that this is his initiative while it is in fact the result of long years of struggle by social movements, women's groups and union organizations;

- significant omissions such as the inequalities between unionized and non-unionized sectors;
- actions designed to implement the orientations of the policy sometimes lack scope and often lack precision as to the resources that will be granted;
- lack of recognition of the feminist analysis and feminist movement.

Madam Boisclair concluded her speech by stressing the importance of continuing to make demands since the struggle for true equality is far from over! ■

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FIQ UNION CONTRIBUTION



Lise Martel, Treasurer of the Federation

Lise Martel, the Treasurer, reminded convention delegates that it was their responsibility to establish the Federation's funding sources and assure their efficient use. They therefore adopted amendments to the *Constitution and By-law* which essentially concern the union contribution.

Institutional mergers and the many changes made to the unionization rules, including the division of all unionized employees in the health-care sector into four classes of personnel, brought more than 11,000 care professionals into the ranks of the Federation. This new reality had considerable impacts.

After exchanges and debate, delegates adopted adjustments to the FIQ union contribution, which maintains the financial balance achieved in previous years, as well as the quantity and quality of services delivered by all personnel. Adjustments are also intended to assure the continuity of the various budget commitments (local negotiations, mediation-arbitration, headquarters, information technology master plan, etc.). All these commitments continue to be challenges for the future.

A NECESSARY ADJUSTMENT

Unionized employees in the class of nursing and cardiorespiratory care personnel receive basic pay that involves significant differences depending on their job title.

The members of the Executive Committee worked with the objective of proposing corrections that would maintain revenues and some degree of equity among the various professional groups within the Federation. Thus, to determine the FIQ contribution, the Executive Committee moved a recommendation to group the members in three classes of personnel: nurses, nursing assistants and respiratory therapists.

The Federal Council vote to set the contribution at 1.24% of the 6th eche-

lon of each of these classes, effective July 1, 2007; this rate will apply to the salary, including equity and the April 1, 2007 adjustment.

RETROACTIVITY: A NON-RECURRING CONTRIBUTION

After many years of demands and a determination that only women can have, with the equity settlement, women's work is finally considered at its fair value. For the Federation, this undeniably results in the necessity to take a position on a budget inflow which, though non-recurring, is of great importance.

Already in June 2006, at the Special Federal Council, the Executive Committee members had raised the question with the delegates of adjusting the FIQ contribution after the equity process was completed. When this Federal Council was held, the *Commission de l'équité salariale* had not yet rendered its decision on the Government's request to spread the salary adjustments out over a longer period.

However, this decision has a real impact on the amount of retroactivity because the Commission ordered that it be spread over seven adjustments instead of eight as requested by the Government. Thus, when the back pay is disbursed, the amounts will be greater because they will be calculated over a shorter period.

It is important to remember that delegates also adopted a resolution that no deduction be applied to the adjustment of the FIQ contribution for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

In addition, a specific problem was brought to the attention of the

Executive Committee's. A large number of members, specifically nurse clinicians (baccalaureate nurses) and perfusionists, will not receive retroactive salary payments. The clinicians are excluded because they received their adjustment as of April 1, 2000 and the perfusionists because they are identified by the Equity Committee as a mixed class and thus not covered by the pay equity program. In this context, since the FIQ contribution applies to the average number of contributing members, established for each union, this would result in a billing applied to members who will receive no back pay.

The presentation and discussion of the data allowed the delegates to observe that, by maintaining the payment to the Federation of the FIQ contribution on the salary adjustments effective from January 1, 2004, it would be possible to exclude both nurse clinicians who do not receive retroactive pay and perfusionists from the number of members who would have to be assessed.

In conclusion, the Treasurer pointed out that the adjustment of the FIQ contribution takes into account the Federation's new reality and is part of a process of adaptation to the environment in which it operates.

UNION DEFENCE FUND

Delegates voted in favour of an addition to the *Union Defence Fund Bylaws (FDS)*. Thus, from now on, the FDS, in addition to its other purposes, can provide financial assistance to union representatives who are trying to enforce their union rights. ■

NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS: NEW CONDITIONS

At the Special Federal Council on the Negotiations, Sylvie Savard, Executive Officer in charge of the Negotiation Sector, accompanied by Julie Bouchard, consultant for the sector, reported on the various exchanges with the *Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux* (CPNSSS) and the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* (MSSS). During these discussions, the national parties agreed on certain conditions in the following issues:

SENIORITY DURING DEFERRED PAYMENT LEAVE

Effective November 29, 2006, employees will accumulate seniority during deferred payment leave. However, employees who joined a deferred payment leave plan as of May 14, 2006 and who took their leave between that date and November 29, 2006 will not have their seniority recognized for that period.

RECOGNITION OF YEARS OF SERVICE FOR DETERMINATION OF THE ANNUAL VACATION QUANTUM

An employee hired as of May 14, 2006, who has not left

the health and social services network for more than one year, will obtain recognition for all the years of service accumulated in the network to determine her annual vacation quantum.

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION TO THE BASIC PRESCRIPTION DRUG INSURANCE PLAN

The employer's contribution to the basic drug insurance plan for employees earning less than \$40,000 at the top of their scale will be increased as follows:

	2007-04-15 to 2008-03-31		2008-04-01 to 2009-03-31		Effective 2009-04-01	
	7 days	14 days	7 days	14 days	7 days	14 days
in the case of a contributing employee insured for herself and her dependants	\$3,01	\$6,03	\$3,32	\$6,65	\$3,48	\$6,97
in the case of a contributing employee insured alone	\$1,21	\$2,41	\$1,33	\$2,67	\$1,39	\$2,78



From left to right: Sophie Fontaine Bégin, consultant assigned to Pay Equity, Sylvie Savard, 4th Vice-president, Julie Bouchard and Francine Roberge, consultants for the Negotiation Sector.

OUTPOST/NORTHERN CLINIC NURSE

Following the conclusion of the pay equity issue, a new salary scale for outpost/northern clinic nurses was created. The discussions regarding the job title and the definition of outpost and northern clinic continued and an agreement was finally reached. These amendments will be introduced in the decree in lieu of a collective agreement and the nomenclature of the job titles. The new definition of an outpost or northern clinic is as follows:

An outpost or a northern clinic is a point of service where the employee, in addition to her nursing function, performs evaluations of the users, allowing the physician to make a diagnosis at a distance and determine the appropriate procedures. She is also called upon to perform activities and procedures generally reserved for physicians in other work environments.

The outpost/northern clinic nurse salary scale excludes the supplement stipulated in the decree in lieu of a collective agreement. Thus, all outpost/northern clinic nurses and nurse clinicians working in outposts and northern clinics receive the supplement in addition to their salary.

RED CROSS

The Red Cross and the MSSS are currently setting up a partnership for creation of a team of 150 health professionals trained and ready to intervene in humanitarian missions around the world.

To facilitate the creation of this team, the Federation was approached to negotiate conditions of leave with-

out pay allowing nurses and respiratory therapists to leave their jobs temporarily on the best possible conditions. Once the general conditions of leave without pay are determined, these leaves will have to be negotiated at the local level. Talks will continue to better evaluate the potential impacts for employees, particularly regarding insurance.

PILOT PROJECTS

During the meeting held on March 12 at the MSSS, the Federation obtained confirmation that budgets will be available to the creation of pilot projects on reorganization of work time. However, it is important that the union and the employer make a joint request for their candidacy to be studied. The Federation will be a major stakeholder in selecting and implementing these pilot projects.

PERFUSIONISTS

The MSSS and the Conseil du trésor are currently discussing this issue. The training required is at the heart of the talks, since it will determine the applicable salary scale.

LOCAL ARRANGEMENT

A request has been made to the Federation by the CPNSSS to add a new local arrangement to clause 19.02 of the decree in lieu of a collective agreement, allowing the parties at the local level to waive the 16-hour interval between shifts. For the time being, the Federation has refused to consider this change, given the resolve of members to oppose it and the current status of the local negotiations. ■

CALCULATION OF THE AMOUNT OF BACK PAY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Special Federal Council on negotiations was an opportunity to make closing remarks on the issue of pay equity. Thus, the executive officer, Sylvie Savard, and the consultants Sophie Fontaine and Francine Roberge, assigned to the issue of pay equity, presented to the delegation a summary of the elements needed to determine the amount of the back pay to which each employee is entitled and to proceed to the calculation.

These elements are:

- Hiring date;
- Salary scale (hourly rate) corresponding to the job title before the application of the *Pay Equity Act*. This scale must cover the period from November 20, 2001 to February 18, 2007;
- Salary scale (hourly rate) corresponding to the job title after the application of the *Pay Equity Act*. This scale must cover the period from November 20, 2001 to February 18, 2007;
- The difference between the salary scale before and after the application of the *Pay Equity Act*;
- The number of days worked during the periods corresponding to the dates for the payment of pay equity adjustments or the dates of the negotiated pay raises;
- Moreover, for a more specific calculation of the amount which will be paid as back pay, it is useful to have at hand each of the pay stubs since November 21, 2001 (or afterward, if the hiring date is posterior to November 21, 2001)..

PROGRESSION IN THE SALARY SCALE

Explanations were also given regarding the progression of Cegep-trained nurses and nurse clinicians in their respective salary scales. Here are the main observations:

- the pay adjustments obtained by nurses as a result of the pay equity exercise have modified the salary gaps between the two groups;
- after 18 months of experience, the salary of the nurse clinician is higher;
- after 24 months of experience, the salary for the two job titles is identical;
- after 30 months of experience, the hourly rate of the nurse clinician is \$0.79 higher;
- after 36 months of experience, the hourly rate of the nurse clinician is \$2.10 higher;
- after 48 months of experience, the hourly rate of the nurse clinician is \$2.12 higher. ■

On the Federation's web site, under the section *Équité*, you will find examples which illustrates the calculation of back pay in different cases and the progression in the salary scales: <www.fiqsante.qc.ca>.

DIRECTIVES FROM THE CONSEIL DU TRÉSOR

1. It is recommended that employees who have left employment (retirement or resignation) communicate in writing with all their former employers in order to confirm their address. Unions will receive the list of all employees who have left one or several employments since 2001.

< www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ress_humaine/conditions/equite/demarches.asp >

2. It is possible to benefit from a reduction of payroll tax checkoff on the amount of the back pay, providing that the amount is paid into a RRSP, and this even if the employee has already received her payment. www.tresor.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ress_humaine/conditions/equite/reer.asp

AND THE LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS ...



Sylvie Savard, 4th Vice-President of the Federation.

After having reported on the situation of the Quebec negotiations, Sylvie Savard, executive officer, accompanied by the consultants assigned to the issue of local negotiations, Chantal Pagé, Linda Perron and Richard Laforest, followed up on the action plan adopted at last December's Federal Council meeting.

TWO MEETINGS WITH THE MSSS

At the January 16 meeting, two objectives were pursued:

- inform the MSSS of the critical status of local negotiations;
- notify the MSSS of the adoption of the Federation's action plan, insisting on recourse to mediation-arbitration.

The MSSS did not have such a gloomy assessment of the situation. In institutions where the 24-month negotiation period was about to expire, it confirmed that employers had to request mediation-arbitration within 10 days after the end of this 24-month period. A written notice was sent to the employers concerned.

The February 19 meeting was held at the Federation's request. It was imperative to discuss difficulties related to the lack of very short-term availability of mediator-arbitrators and the consequences of this for the deadlines.

The MSSS anticipates three short-term solutions to make up for the unavailability of mediator-arbitrators:

- resort to mediation-arbitration as little as possible;
- choose mediators not on the list;
- shorten as much as possible the mediation time.

For the Federation, none of these solutions solves the basic problem of non-compliance with the deadlines and the immediate unavailability of

mediators. The MSSS representatives made a commitment to intervene with the Ministère du Travail and clarify the situation. To date, the Federation has received only a partial response concerning this question, that is the addition of a number of names to the list of mediator-arbitrators.

AN ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGNOSIS

A systematic analysis of all the local negotiations in progress was done to obtain the most accurate general picture possible and to be efficient in planning the pursuit of the negotiations and the recourse to mediation-arbitration if necessary.

The Executive officer indicated that, where agreements were achieved, the negotiating committees succeeded, in most cases, in:





THE FEDERATION TAKES TO THE STREETS

Songs chanted on well-known tunes were the expression of the discontent produced by a government which persists in denying the reality of the health-care network and union rights.



Delegates denounced the bad faith of employers in the process of local negotiations.

The delegation marched to the Quebec Parliament where the President, Lina Bonamie, gave a vibrant speech.



On the tune of "Agadou dou dou"

Libéraux, raux, raux

Un pouvoir incompetent

Libéraux, raux, raux

Au pouvoir pour pas longtemps.

Des coupures, des mensonges

À la FIQ, on est tannées

Des bâillons, des décrets

On s'en souviendra longtemps.

À l'Assemblée nationale

On s'en fait passer pas mal

Des lois antisyndicales

On peut pas dire qu'est génial.

Pour négocier au local

D'la volonté faut montrer

Pas juste de la syndicale

Mais aussi d'la patronale.



AND THE LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS... - CONT'D

- maintaining the shift as a component of the position;
- preserving the existing job structure;
- maintaining and, in some cases, reducing the annual vacation period;
- preserving the status quo to a large extent.
- move resources as they see fit;
- eliminate shift stability in the positions;
- be able to post part-time positions even if the needs are full time;
- lengthen the annual vacation period or limit the number of weeks that can be taken in the summer;
- refuse any leave without pay systematically even when such a leave is possible;
- exclude human resources for the processes of evaluation of training needs; implementation of human resources development programs; and use of the budgets established at the Quebec level;
- refuse to entrench the mechanism for dealing with complaints in case of violence in the collective agreement.

LOCAL ACTION PLANS

Where the local union initiated mediation-arbitration, local action plans were adopted as a possible action to resolve the impasse at the bargaining table. Different local actions have already been taken by some unions: wearing buttons, bracelets, t-shirts, clown noses, etc. In local general meetings, members evaluated whether it was expedient to act and to mandate the Negotiating Committee to ask for mediation-arbitration at the appropriate time. Moreover, in certain cases, political interventions made it possible to get negotiations moving again and, in other cases, to resolve the dispute.

Few unions to date have adopted an action plan, although, as some delegates pointed out, negotiations are primarily a question of bargaining power. Just as it is important to support the FIQ Negotiating Committee in the Quebec negotiations, it is also essential for the members of the local negotiating committee to feel supported by actions, no matter how small! This is why it is important to vote on a local action plan and to take action, if necessary.

UNREALISTIC AND DECEITFUL STATEMENTS

In the last election campaign, the party leaders made many deceitful, erroneous and unrealistic statements regarding health care. However, they weren't alone in talking nonsense. Thus, Lise Denis, Executive Director of the AQESSS, told the Le Soleil newspaper on March 3 that, at the local level "work schedules are being adapted, new positions are being opened, work is being reorganized or we are using the local negotiations to find ways with the employees to adapt the work environment better to the staff's needs".

In the reality of the local negotiations, the employer offers are more like employer demands and are completely contrary to this political line. The network's managers want to slash working conditions and take away a large part of the status quo. In particular, they want to:

The network's managers seem to forget the conclusions and objectives of the Nursing Workforce Planning Forum. There is a trend to deterioration of normative working conditions, which is contrary to all logic in a context in which the staff shortage is far from over. The only way to act on this shortage is to offer nursing and cardiorespiratory care professionals conditions of employment which not only will attract them, but retain them in the health and social services network.

QUEBEC-WIDE ACTION NEEDED

As an organization representing 57,000 care professionals, the Federation could not miss the opportunity offered by the election campaign and the leaders' debate to make its voice heard. As a privileged witness and often the victim of the government's decisions, the FIQ must denounce all kinds of abuses and foreshortened truths. The employers' attitude in the current local negotiating process is irresponsible and runs a great risk of encumbering the health-care network's short, medium and long-term future.

Given this situation and within the context of the Quebec action plan, the Executive Committee invited delegates to go to Parliament Hill and tell the various party leaders, loud and clear, that their statements are false and that the situation in the work environments is outrageous. Sylvie Savard also said that visibility actions should be pursued in the regions. ■