

EN ACTION

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FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC

8th Convention
June 2 to 6, 2008



Renewing our action together

Lina Bonamie
President



THREE YEARS OF ACTION AND RESISTANCE

It was with great pride that the President of the FIQ, Lina Bonamie, opened the 8th Convention. This 8th Convention was especially important because it was the first Convention under the name of the *Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec* with a serving Executive Committee composed of three classes of care professionals. *FIQ en Action* here publishes a summary of the Executive Committee report delivered by the President to the delegates, containing extensive excerpts from her address. At this Convention, Ms. Bonamie was reelected by acclamation for a second term.

FIQ SOLIDARITY

The President began by reminding the delegates that, for the past 20 years, the Convention has been a privileged moment that allows activists to reflect together and map out the paths to be taken in the pursuit of a common goal – to improve the living conditions of the members represented by the FIQ, as well as those of women, families and the Quebec population in general. She emphasized the important symbolism of the transition from FIIQ to FIQ, which is evidence of a renewed strength.

“Once again, it has been proven to the government that the FIQ’s acute sense of solidarity is able to withstand all the government’s manipulations designed to divide and conquer. [...] The many challenges the FIQ has faced successfully are evidence that solidarity, beyond professional categories, and political and union allegiances, can move mountains. [...] The successful unification of the care professionals should serve as an example for present and future struggles, in that the creation of alliances or coalitions, whether formal or informal, can only be cause for hope.”

RESISTING THE GOVERNMENT’S ANTI-UNION APPROACH

The President continued with a review of the many actions taken by Jean Charest’s neoliberal government with the aim of weakening the labour organizations. Despite the effectiveness of the FIQ and its affiliated unions in reacting quickly to reduce the aftereffects, she reminded the delegates that the neoliberal forces are gaining ground every year, regardless of the political party in power.

“Decidedly, Bill 30, adopted under closure in 2003, was a real bombshell and its effects have drained an enormous amount of time and activist energy over the past five years. The merger of the accreditation units into four classes led to one of the biggest raiding processes in the history of several labour organizations. Of course, the FIQ largely emerged the winner from this process, which again shows that the vitality, dynamism and effectiveness of the organization and its affiliated unions are recognized and shared by the vast majority of care professionals.”



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"It is also with great satisfaction that the FIQ, like all the labour organizations involved, welcomed the Superior Court decision confirming the unconstitutionality of this iniquitous and perverse law. However, instead of acknowledging its fault and sitting down with the organizations to consider the necessary corrections, the Charest government chose to appeal the judgment."

The second phase of Bill 30, the decentralization of several negotiating matters to the local level, was not a restful time. The FIQ had to carry out 155 local negotiations within a short period.

"Many employers [...] intended to take advantage of this context to enter into negotiations based on a blank page and impose major rollbacks. Unfortunately for them, this attitude reflected a great misunderstanding of the professionalism, determination and combativeness of the FIQ and its affiliated unions.

"A labour organization's strength is proportional to the vigour of its democracy. In this regard, the three-tiered negotiating structure adopted by the delegates in 2005 proved this assertion on more than one occasion. The intermediate structure, constituted by the local negotiating councils, turned out to be a tremendous tool, allowing care professionals working in the complex health-care network to following the negotiating process closely and express themselves according to their reality and interests.

"Despite this major battle, the attacks still persist. Many of you have denounced the fact that, having barely left the bargaining table, some employers seem to want to contest the agreement's provisions shamelessly when the ink is barely dry.

"The reduction of the fiscal capacity of the State [...] results in enormous financial pressures on the health-care network. Faced with the requirements of their employer, [...] it is not surprising that institutional administrators are seeking to achieve savings at the expense of care professionals, since 80% of health-care expenditures are labour-related. Whether this is due to financial pressures or the employers' bad faith, we must remain vigilant and

unfailingly resist those who would impose rollbacks on care professionals."

Finally, December 15, 2005, the date a decree was imposed on State employees, is far from forgotten. Ms. Bonamie reminded the delegates that the FIQ, like other labour organizations, filed a challenge at the International Labour Office against this measure, worthy of an authoritarian regime, and the ILO ruled in favour of the unions. Nonetheless, the government refuses to correct its approach.

"Despite this extremely unfavourable context for the labour movement, the FIQ again showed its great effectiveness by wresting major gains from the government, which were included in the decree."

DEFENDING CARE PROFESSIONALS

In her address, Ms. Bonamie discussed the shortage of care professionals, which is quite real and is accentuating.

"In the FIQ's view, the shortage is fuelled by neoliberal governments whose aims are not to improve the quality of care by respecting the employees who work in the health-care system.

"The efforts instead must be guided by respect and recognition of the competencies of care professionals, and by the improvement of salary and working conditions, which will make it possible to obtain positive results for attraction and retention of the workforce."

A CLASH OF VALUES

The President also reported on all the efforts made by the FIQ to counter the Charest government's discourse on privatization of the health-care system.

"[...] The FIQ has played an important role in deconstructing the Right's discourse. Thus, the Charest government now knows that each of its actions and each of its discourses as an apologist for the private sector is examined by the FIQ, which follows on its heels and responds, blow for blow, to its lies and other attempts at populist

manipulation. [...] Over the past three years, the FIQ has multiplied its publications to dissect the discourse of the peddlers of private health care and denounce its specifics. The FIQ has multiplied its interventions on every possible podium, whether in the media or in various forums, to denounce the dangers of increased privatization and promote the many public solutions available to decision makers.

"The FIQ cannot stand alone in fighting effectively against this government's neoliberal agenda. This is why it has pursued its many collaborations within groups that unite Quebec's progressive forces. Its expertise and determination make the FIQ an active partner in several coalitions [...]"

IMPORTANT ALLIANCES

These alliances and coalitions allow the FIQ to exchange information and ideas and strengthen its ties of solidarity, in addition to benefiting, as a progressive organization, from better bargaining power and the power to influence in its struggles.

In this regard, Ms. Bonamie emphasized the FIQ's participation in *Public Services International* and various international forums. She also reminded the delegates that the FIQ had joined a Quebec interunion alliance of organizations active in public services.

"[...] Since June 2006, the FIQ is proud to be part of the Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics, which unites it with the CSQ, APTS, SFPQ and SPGQ. [...] Being part of such an alliance undoubtedly allows the FIQ to benefit from better bargaining power and greater visibility in the promotion of public services. Bringing together over 300,000 members working in all the sectors and services covered by the State, the SISP is now a significant force and an essential reference in public and parapublic affairs."

A STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

Finally, the President reviewed the constant efforts deployed by the FIQ and other member organizations of the Intersyndicale to obtain the pay equity settlement.



PANEL ON THE CRISIS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT



David Camfield



Benedicto Martínez Orozco

During the Convention, the delegates were invited to attend the panel entitled *Crisis of the labour movement and new avenues*. Moderated by journalist Patrick Lagacé, this panel brought together three distinguished speakers, David Camfield from Manitoba, Benedicto Martínez Orozco from Mexico and Alain Acquart from France. The presentations were made in French, English and Spanish and the delegates were able to follow the discussions in simultaneous translation. The panelists talked about innovative union approaches, sometimes very different from those practiced in Quebec.

Dr. David Camfield, a professor and researcher at the University of Manitoba, is particularly interested in the implementation of a type of unionism he considers to be a change necessary for union survival – social movement unionism. He noted that it was extremely rare to be part of such deep introspection by a labour organization and that self-criticism regarding the changes to be made was very praiseworthy. He was touched and honoured to attend the reflection proposed by the Convention.

According to Mr. Camfield, what care professionals are currently experiencing in the network is also observable in other public sectors and even in the private sector: budget cuts, increased workload, deterioration of working conditions – everyone is being subjected to the same pressure from employers. The search for profits at any price, privatization, cutbacks and the resulting violation of the right to work in dignity all have one name: liberalization. To combat neoliberalism, the unions must change weapons. Otherwise, what lies in wait for us is the death of the labour movement, just as in the United States, where only 12% of the workforce is unionized.

According to the researcher, making the move to social movement unionism does not guarantee success, but this is the best option available to the unions. He presented the main characteristics of social movement unionism. First, it is essential to get back to the essentials of union power: mobilization of the members. Real power is found in the workplace. This is where things move most effectively. It is also essential to develop bonds of solidarity with other workers or neighbouring community groups. Mr. Camfield rightly reminded the delegates that “an attack on one is an attack on all”. The notion of everyday solidarity must be put on the agenda. The delegates were greatly challenged by this approach, which is very close to the FIQ’s realities.

Benedicto Martínez Orozco of the FAT (Frente Auténtico del trabajo) is a member of the National Coordinating Committee of this Mexican labour organization and puts his own life at risk so that workers and citizens can aspire to live in dignity. His life experience is impressive and connected with the union activists present. While the FAT, based on its history and identity, primarily considers itself to be a labour organization, its actions go much farther than the labour field. Three sectors are represented equally in the FAT structure – the



THREE YEARS OF ACTION AND RESISTANCE — CONT'D

“This agreement undoubtedly is the result of the incessant work performed by the Federation’s activists since 1989. However, the road to pay equity was long and we had to wait over 10 years after the Pay Equity Act came into force. [...] It took a lot of energy to have the classes represented by the FIQ see their evaluation increased by two echelons, or even more. The FIQ can be proud of obtaining an average correction of 6.25%.”

“This agreement is a very eloquent example of how solidarity and tenacity can move mountains.”

RENEWING OUR ACTION

The President concluded her address by presenting the Convention’s chosen theme, *Renewing our action together*. She pointed out that contrary to many detractors, history shows that the gains obtained by the workers over time were obtained through the struggles of labour and union movements.

“More than ever, it is time to enter the political field. It is time to take note that the government’s decisions affect care professionals to the utmost extent as public sector employees, but also as citizens.”

“The Executive Committee believes that it is time for the FIQ to become part of this trend of social movement

unionism. [...] This will require revisiting the FIQ’s democratic processes, improving its leadership capabilities and better defining the role and the place that must be made for the next generation of union activists.

“If the FIQ considers this choice to be necessary, it’s that there is no question of waiting with arms folded for the government to take away the right to negotiate on behalf of the 57,000 members the Federation proudly represents. [...] There is no question of allowing this government or its successor to destroy the social pact that has made Quebec one of the world’s most prosperous societies, enjoying a quality of life that is the envy of many peoples around the world.” ■



Alain Acquart

PANEL ON THE CRISIS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT — CONT'D

union sector, the cooperative sector and the civil society sector. In this way, the problems experienced by the workers can be approached from a broad citizen perspective.

Operating in an environment where the most fundamental rights are flouted daily thanks to the complicity of a State anxious to offer companies the profits they seek, Mr. Martinez expounded on the necessity to establish alliances at all levels. The FAT has created a major network of alliances, with synergy that has translated into many gains. For example, in response to the intention of the previous Vicente Fox government to amend the labour laws to adapt them to private sector requirements, the FAT used its many union contacts around the world to put pressure on Mexican representatives and thwart the government's plans.

Mr. Martinez emphasized another fundamental aspect of the FAT's union action - popular education. This organization invests tremendous energy in raising the level of politicization and understanding of major sociopolitical issues among the members and in the general public. According to the FAT, education is the key, the mandatory condition for any success in union and citizen action. He cited the recent example of women workers at a warehouse where the new owners refused to recognize the collective agreement.

According to Mr. Martinez, thanks to the extensive training provided by the FAT, these workers knew their rights and flatly rejected the management demands. Political education could be the cornerstone of the FIQ's intended change of direction to social movement unionism. This would situate union action more proactively.

Alain Acquart of La Fédération SUD-Santé Sociaux (SUD stands for solidarity, unity, democracy) of France shared his experience as a union activist in the French public health network. Himself a nurse, he is currently the elected Treasurer of La Fédération SUD. Although the union representation system in France is completely different than what exists in Quebec, several close comparisons can be made. He particularly noted their modes of union action, which the delegates perceived as interesting avenues for reflection.

In fact, the actions of SUD-Santé sociaux members are concentrated much more at the local than the national level. Demonstrations are held directly in the workplace. For example, if a problem can't be resolved in a department, the workers mobilize immediately and don't hesitate to invade the office of the manager concerned and interrupt a meeting of the Board or other meetings if they consider it necessary. These demonstrations require few financial and human resources and

are organized quickly. According to Mr. Acquart, another important aspect is consensus. The decisions must be made by consensus, regardless of the level at which they are. "It's better to advance more slowly, but all together." This theme came up several times at the Convention in the delegates' interventions.

AN INSPIRING PANEL

According to Dr. David Camfield, to build the power necessary to renew union action and get beyond unionism by delegation, the Union syndicale Solidaires in France offers a very interesting example. He added that the change of direction proposed by the FIQ to social movement unionism is inspired by what SUD Santé-Sociaux calls "interprofessional unionism of social transformation". This union tangent has the potential to mobilize unionized workers and everyone threatened by neoliberalism so that they can repel employer and government attacks.

It was impressive to see how much the three panelists were able to capture and hold the delegates' attention. They answered a great many questions, thus allowing the delegates to explore the Convention them in greater depth and fuel reflection on the possibility of renewing the FIQ's union action within social movement unionism. ■

THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP

To renew our action together and thus experience unionism more intensely, the delegates were invited to discuss their role as leaders. Are leaders born or made? What are the main characteristics of an effective leader? These were some of the questions they pondered during the Convention.

In the form of an interactive presentation, facilitated by two energetic and inspiring women, Madalena Coutinho and Karen Diaz, the delegates were able to familiarize themselves with the main theories of leadership. The activity's principal objective was to raise the delegates' awareness of the attributes and importance of an effective leader, mainly by discussing three axes - the definition of leadership, its importance and the characteristics and results of effective leadership. Through various reflections and experiences, the delegates asked themselves how they can exercise leadership as union reps to achieve objectives and achieve progress.

This activity was only a first open door to ways of exercising leadership. As the delegates observed during the discussion, they can all work at being better leaders every day.

UNITING OUR FORCES TO RENEW OUR ACTION TOGETHER



The Convention theme was presented to the delegates by Suzanne Lavoie, Secretary of the Executive Committee. She was accompanied by the members of the Convention team: Danielle Couture, Coordinator, Sophie Fontaine-Bégin, Mélissa Lacroix, Marie Eve Lepage, Micheline Poulin and Marc Thibeault-Bellerose, union consultants.



Ms. Lavoie began her presentation by noting the extent to which the panel had set the table and prepared the discussions for renewal of union action. She made the connection with the remarks of Dr. David Camfield, who invited the FIQ delegates to reintroduce the notion of “movement” into the labour movement. She reminded the delegates that the crisis the FIQ is facing also affects every labour organization in this country and abroad. While the strategies put forward in the past have been effective and allowed the FIQ to stand out from other organizations and achieve significant gains, the old answers are no longer suited to the new problems in the current context.

CURRENT UNION PRACTICES

The presentation discussed the two main types of unionism practiced in Canada and Quebec. Business unionism, also called “bread and butter” unionism, and social unionism both have a major gap between the activist structure and the members. Ms. Lavoie presented an analysis of the FIQ’s union practice, which has been part of social unionism for many years. Like other organizations that practice this type of unionism, the FIQ adheres to causes that go beyond the strict context of work, because it is convinced that defending the members necessarily depends on defending social and political issues. In this regard, the FIQ has multiplied its alliances with other labour and social organizations to advance their demands in society and with decision-makers.

However, this effort to reconcile union struggles and citizen struggles has been a mixed success, particularly with regard to the main neoliberal strategies imposed by governments. The actions of organizations practicing social unionism are often based on a small band of mobilized activists, rather than the members as a whole. This absence of real contact between the activist structure and the members limits the bargaining power of labour organizations with a government and employers who are increasingly intransigent.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT UNIONISM

Even though the FIQ’s involvement in major social and political issues has allowed it to emerge as an unavoidable stakeholder with decision makers and reduce the pace of right-wing reforms imposed by a succession of different governments in Quebec, it must be recognized that a new impetus is necessary. This inevitable renewal depends on moving in a new direction – social movement unionism. This necessary change of course concretizes the FIQ’s firm intention to remain in the vanguard in promoting the legitimate demands of care professionals. This approach proposes a reinvestment by the members in their union and their Federation. They can no longer be passive spectators of the actions taken by union reps in their name.



UNITING OUR FORCES TO RENEW OUR ACTION TOGETHER — CONT'D



However, it would be false to claim that individualism is solely responsible for the difficulties faced by labour organizations. Without calling into question the leadership that the Federation must continue to exercise, this introspection regarding decision-making poses a direct challenge to every constituent of the organization – members, unions, union reps or FIQ staff. This no longer means just informing the members, but putting mechanisms in place to consult them more systematically. Even if the organization’s activists agree with the motions adopted at the Federal Councils, these positions often remain positions of the central FIQ because they are rarely discussed at the local level. Whenever possible, union reps and members must be involved, directly or indirectly, at every stage, from defining positions to developing strategies.

The solution thus depends on stimulating greater commitment and support and a sense of belonging at every level of the organization and reducing the gap between the activist structure and the members, so that from now on they perceive the FIQ as THEIR organization.

While this change of direction is unavoidable, there is no miracle formula to achieve it. Several avenues will have to be explored with the union reps and the members to map this course. To make this transition a reality, Ms. Lavoie presented four main premises: preserving democracy, avoiding immobility, mobilizing all of the members and developing the new generation of union activists.

Several delegates noted the bold nature of this reflection on the necessity to change the type of unionism practiced in the FIQ, because, to some extent, they observe a “mobilization shortage”. While some union reps were upset at the fairly harsh observations regarding the labour movement and certain strategies in response to neoliberal policies, some noted that this reflection comes at the ideal time, because they are having difficulty mobilizing their members around questions that sometimes seem more remote from the working conditions experienced day after day. The exhaustion of union reps who are being asked for more and more involvement to mobilize the members was palpable. Some delegates highlighted the difficulties encountered every day due to the lack of union leave granted to perform colossal efforts within their union.



In relation to these concerns, several union reps appealed for help and asked the FIQ to provide for an action plan to support them in their new union practices, which could rally and mobilize the members more.

While the delegates expressed agreement with the relevance of such a reflection on the necessity of getting involved in social movement unionism, some delegates wanted a deeper discussion on how to get there and the means that will be put in place to support the unions in this approach. They asked for clarification on the proposed avenues of reflection, such as the holding of information sessions in advance of Federal Councils and Conventions. They also asked questions about the possible consequences of such a change in direction for the delivery of the labour relations services for which the FIQ is responsible.

Directly in line with the reflection proposed in the theme document, Ms. Lavoie indicated that the course of action has not yet been defined and that this approach of social movement unionism requires that reflection be initiated with the union reps and the members, instead of proposing ready-made solutions that would not necessarily be echoed by the members

The Convention delegates unanimously adopted the proposal to renew the Federation’s action by committing to social movement unionism. Over the next few months, a work plan will be presented to the delegates for a more concrete transition to social movement unionism. The document presenting the Convention theme is available at the following address on the FIQ website. ■

THE FIQ IS MOVING

As of August 8, the FIQ’s new headquarters will be located at 1234 avenue Papineau, Montreal.

BROADENING OUR SOLIDARITY

The FIQ is a labour organization in transition, stimulated by the challenges it faces. The delegates thus used this Convention to evaluate what avenues should be taken to support and broaden the FIQ's solidarity. The FIQ is privileged to rely on members and union reps who don't hesitate to challenge the organization to extend the boundaries of solidarity.



To anchor this solidarity more strongly, the Convention delegates agreed that activists should be made more aware of the difficult realities faced by many workers who are victims of exploitation in other countries. They must deepen their knowledge of the economic, political and union situation at the international level.

In this vein, the delegates heard from the guest speaker, Francine Néméh, Director of the Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO). Ms. Néméh made a plea for a commitment by everyone to social justice. Faced with the harmful effects of globalization, she said, all peoples, both in the North and in the South, are in the same boat. She identified two phenomena that require action by progressive forces: the effects on populations of the war on terrorism and the consequences of the world free trade agreements.

On the social and political front, there are a growing number of cases of invasion of privacy, preventive repression, religious fundamentalism, ethnic profiling and breaches of international agreements that will end up destroying democracy if progressive forces do not resist. On the economic front, corporate globalization is causing a redistribution of labour, dislocation, wage reductions and generalized impoverishment. For Ms. Néméh, this must not be accepted fatalistically. She called for the union of political, community and social forces and sociopolitical education. "To feel concerned, we must understand and make things understood," she emphasized.

NEW PRACTICES IN SOLIDARITY

The delegates decided to take more positions on major national and international issues and increase the presence of speakers from foreign

countries to contribute to the debates at Federal Councils. They also decided to initiate international cooperation projects, which initially would be guided and supported by partner organizations which have expertise in this field. The FIQ will also provide financial support to graduates in nursing and cardiorespiratory care who want to participate in international cooperation internships. Finally, during international cooperation internships or missions, the delegates want to facilitate youth participation in these activities. They see this type of solidarity activity as a way to involve new members and contribute to the development of a social conscience so necessary in the current context.

To make these new practices a reality, a budget dedicated exclusively to the activities mentioned, based on one dollar per dues-paying member per year, will be added to the Solidarity Reserve Fund and will be taken from the organizations' regular budget. ■

A MORE EFFECTIVE UNION DEFENCE FUND

The goal of the Union Defence Fund (UDF) is to increase the effectiveness of union action by assuring financial support in defence of workers' rights. At the last Special Convention, the delegates adopted a motion to expand the list of situations that may necessitate UDF financial support to include mobilization for the negotiation of a first collective agreement.

Given the growing number of employers who act without considering the union and increasingly flout workers' rights, the delegates decided that the UDF can also be used to support the members in implementation of an action and mobilization plan to counter the shortage of care professionals, counter an employer who unilaterally changes locally negotiated working conditions, or fight the closure of a public site or institution to the benefit of the private sector. In such circumstances, the union from now on can receive an amount equivalent to \$5 per member, depending on the group concerned, to support the action plan.

The delegates considered these means necessary to improve bargaining power and thus push back employers who don't hesitate to chop care professionals' working conditions in the name of a balanced budget. ■

8th Convention



At 8:30 a.m., delegates started lining up for registration.



Over 800 delegates met for the 8th FIQ Convention which is also the 1st convention to be held since the Federation is composed of members of various categories of care professionals.



The panel facilitated by the journalist, Patrick Lagacé, raised a lot of interest among the delegates.



8th Convention



Guy Nantel, guest humorist, gave delegates a laugh during an evening break.



Round table discussions, sharing thoughts, speaking at the mike, voting for the election of FIQ representatives are all part of the responsibilities of convention delegates.



Four energetic teams met for a fun-filled educative activity “Géniales en herbe”. The game was to respond as quickly as possible to questions in the following categories: sociopolitical, labour movement, women and equality, acronyms and logos. The *Estrabi* team represented by delegates from the regions of the eastern Townships and Abitibi, won the honours and... the trophy. From left to right: Danielle Geoffroy, Aline Tessier, Marie-Josée Forget, Michel Mailhot, Chantale Roy and Micheline Levesque.





FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

FIQ Treasurer Lise Martel, accompanied by the Coordinator of Internal Services, Johanne Chouinard, was very proud to present a positive financial balance sheet to the delegates. The FIQ achieved a balanced budget while staying the course on its priority – allocating the necessary resources to carry out the large number of local negotiations while continuing to offer the members all the services they need.

The Treasurer reminded the delegates that the decisions made during the local negotiations again showed that the delegates had made financial choices to ensure that each FIQ union receives the same quality of services, regardless of its size or geographic location. Specifically, these decisions were to cover the mediation-arbitration costs from the federal contribution and to assign a union consultant as a FIQ spokesperson for each of these negotiations.

In studying the financial statements, the delegates recognized that the FIQ has stabilized its expending, which had increased constantly for several years in relation to the expertise necessary to defend the members. Every effort will be made to ensure that these expenditures remain stable.

The delegates unanimously adopted the financial balance sheet for 2007. ■

The 2007 report of the Internal Audit Committee, presented by Sylvain Lapalme and Danielle Renaud, was adopted unanimously.



A CODE OF CONDUCT THAT REFLECTS THE FIQ'S VALUES

Ever since the FIQ was founded in 1987, questions have been raised regularly at FIQ decision-making bodies after the various raiding periods. In 2001, the Federal Council decided to draft a code of ethics governing practices between the FIQ's affiliated unions. Obviously, the context did not allow work on this code to proceed before today.

The code of conduct presented to the delegates is meant to coordinate methods in accordance with the values advocated by the FIQ. This will strengthen cohesion and solidarity so that the FIQ remains a strong and representative labour organization for Quebec care professionals. The delegates discussed the values on which the code of conduct is based – respect, transparency, equity, justice, tolerance and democracy.

The code of conduct and the change of allegiance memorandum, adopted by a majority, are guides governing the relations among the different FIQ-affiliated unions and define the procedure during a change of union allegiance within the FIQ. It includes a commitment by the affiliated unions to respect the members' right to join a regional or local union, not to cause harm by their actions and to avoid confrontations and conflicts. The delegates also adopted dispute resolution mechanisms by creating a committee that will encourage conflicting parties to reach agreement. ■

Gasoline price increase

Given that many of the Federation's members must use their cars for their work and that the fluctuating price of gasoline is constantly rising, the delegates mandated the FIQ to put the necessary pressure on the *Conseil du trésor* to increase the kilometrage rate currently granted.



FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

CONT'D

SOLIDARITY RESERVE	2007 (12 months)	2006 (12 months)
REVENUE		
Administration Fund Contribution	107 022	99 132
EXPENSES		
Solidarity	<u>107 401</u>	<u>101 597</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE/ EXPENSES	<u>(379)</u>	<u>(2 465)</u>

RESERVE FOR CONVENTION & F.C.	2007 (12 months)	2006 (12 months)
REVENUE		
Contribution from administration fund	1 443 526	1 590 299
EXPENSES		
Convention & F.C. meetings	<u>1 278 819</u>	<u>1 244 938</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE/EXPENSES	<u>164 707</u>	<u>345 361</u>

RESERVE FOR HEAD OFFICE	2007 (12 months)	2006 (12 months)
REVENUE		
Contribution from administration fund	1 437 334	4 236 930
EXPENSES		
Head office	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE/EXPENSES	<u>1 437 334</u>	<u>4 236 930</u>

ADMINISTRATION FUND	2007 (12 months)	2006 (12 months)
REVENUE		
Regular Dues	20 651 369	20 663 278
Interest	614 682	284 211
Grants	51 195	57 450
Other revenue	<u>40 353</u>	<u>12 340</u>
Total revenue	21 357 599	21 017 279
EXPENSES		
Meetings and elected union officers	1 709 138	1 509 165
SECTORS		
Labour Relations	9 987 647	9 252 153
Sectors and Services	751 554	716 736
Health-Care	296 389	285 391
Status of Women	150 254	191 408
Health and Safety at Work	136 769	202 196
Task and Organization of Work	197 831	180 747
Social Security	<u>219 591</u>	<u>181 465</u>
Total for the sectors	11 740 035	11 010 096
SERVICES		
Education-Animation	577 086	673 294
Union Organizing	510 198	489 512
Communication-Information	644 690	521 750
Translation	<u>109 367</u>	<u>106 173</u>
Total for the services	1 841 341	1 790 729
Equalization	772 728	774 936
General Administration	4 342 082	4 122 744
Human Resources	<u>826 291</u>	<u>1 076 957</u>
Total expenses	21 231 615	20 284 627
EXCESS OF REVENUE/ EXPENSES	<u>125 984</u>	<u>732 652</u>

RESERVE FOR NEGOTIATIONS	2007 (12 months)	2006 (12 months)
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF PERIOD	19 116	19 116
ADMINISTRATION FUND CONTRIBUTION		
Regular dues	4 824 913	2 675 313
Special assessment	0	0
Other revenue	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total contribution	4 824 913	2 675 313
NEGOTIATIONS		
Salaries and fringe benefits	3 509 707	1 875 904
Travelling expenses	401 695	308 517
Rental expenses	0	77 295
Printing expenses	27 261	104 617
Courier and communications	36 378	46 218
Professional fees	152 345	32 357
Publications	0	58 040
Special projects	0	0
Federal Council meetings	83 110	92 261
Other expenses	200 866	97 625
Private sector negotiations	<u>735</u>	<u>1 593</u>
Total for negotiation expenses	4 412 097	2 694 427
EXCESS OF REVENUE/EXPENSES BEFORE CONTRIBUTION	<u>412 816</u>	<u>(19 114)</u>



CONTRIBUTION FROM ADMINISTRATION FUND	2007	2006
	(12 months)	(12 months)
REVENUE		
Administration Fund Contribution		
<i>BENEFITS</i>		
Regular dues	293 352	304 175
Donations	4 000	1 000
Interest	0	0
<i>UNION ORGANIZING</i>		
Regular dues	587 188	608 350
Interest	0	0
<i>SPECIAL PROJECTS</i>		
Other revenue - Distribution of penalties	0	0
Total revenue	884 540	913 525
EXPENSES		
<i>BENEFITS</i>		
Union Defence Fund Committee	0	0
Salaries and fringe benefits	0	1 728
Fines and legal expenses	0	0
Professional fees	23 753	20 622
Interest and bank charges	24	21
Other expenses	108 011	44 024
Financial aid	0	10 650
	131 788	77 045
<i>UNION ORGANIZING</i>		
Salaries, union leaves & fringe benefits	0	0
Travelling expenses	0	600
Rental expenses	0	0
Printing expenses	0	0
Courier and communications	0	0
Professional fees	33 355	16 814
Other expenses	0	13
	33 355	17 427
<i>SPECIAL PROJECTS</i>		
Salaries and fringe benefits	0	0
Travelling expenses	0	0
Financial aid - strike	0	0
Other expenses	0	0
	0	0
Total expenses	165 143	94 472
EXCESS OF REVENUE/EXPENSES	<u>719 397</u>	<u>819 053</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS OF DEC. 31, 2007	Union	Adminis-	Total
	Defence	tration-	
	Fund	Fund*	
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash	867 280	353 746	1 221 026
Temporary investments	0	5 814 175	5 814 175
Advance payment on benefits	0	0	0
Advance to Parity Ins. Comm. Fund	0	179 554	179 554
Advance to Administration Fund	326 803	0	326 803
Debtors	2 538	1 100 464	1 103 002
Expenses computable on next period and long-term	0	356 226	356 226
Deferred expenses	0	6 909 518	6 909 518
FIXED ASSETS	<u>0</u>	<u>1 913 501</u>	<u>1 913 501</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	1 196 621	16 627 184	17 823 805
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Suppliers and accrued liabilities	513	987 715	988 228
Deferred income	0	0	0
Dev't of human resources	0	42 374	42 374
Advance from Union Defence Fund	0	326 803	326 803
Debt coming to term within a year	0	0	0
Accounts payable	0	4 958 548	4 958 548
TOTAL LIABILITIES	513	6 315 440	6 315 953
LONG-TERM DEBT	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	513	6 315 440	6 315 953
MEMBER'S EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus	1 196 107	8 823 019	10 019 126
Not allocated accumulated surplus	0	946 107	946 107
Reserve for head office	0	0	0
Reserve for negotiations	0	412 817	412 817
Solidarity reserve	0	(379)	(379)
Reserve for convention	0	130 180	130 180
	<u>1 196 107</u>	<u>10 311 744</u>	<u>11 507 851</u>
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	<u>1 196 620</u>	<u>16 627 184</u>	<u>17 823 804</u>

* negotiations, solidarity, head office and Conv. & F.C. meetings.

REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD AND BALANCE OF ALL FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2007							
	Union	Administration	Negotiation	Solidarity	F.C. and	Head	Total
	Defence	Fund	Reserve	Reserve	convention	office	
	Fund				Reserve	Reserve	
BALANCE AS OF 31-12-06	476 710	2 733 625	0	0	(34 526)	5 472 184	8 647 993
Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Balance after correction as of 31-12-06	476 710	2 733 625	0	0	(34 526)	5 472 184	8 647 993
Income for the 2007 period	884 540	21 357 599	4 824 913	107 022	1 443 526	1 437 334	30 054 934
Expenses for the 2007 period	<u>165 142</u>	<u>21 231 615</u>	<u>4 412 095</u>	<u>107 401</u>	<u>1 278 819</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>27 195 072</u>
Excess for the 2007 period	719 398	125 984	412 818	(379)	164 707	1 437 334	2 859 862
Head office accumulated surplus	0	6 909 518	0	0	0	(6 909 518)	0
BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2007	<u>1 196 108</u>	<u>9 769 127</u>	<u>412 818</u>	<u>(379)</u>	<u>130 181</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11 507 855</u>

Note: Difference is due to rounding off of decimals

OUTLOOK FOR ENSURING A NEW GENERATION OF UNION ACTIVISTS



The members of the Youth Committee, composed of two women and three men, presented a report on the past three years to the delegates. The Committee had been particularly concerned by the recommendations adopted at the last Convention, because they put the spotlight on the challenges to be met in the future, particularly the absence of a new generation of union activists.

The proposal for the *New Generation of Activists Project* was supposed to make it possible to:

- obtain information on members under 30;
- identify the factors favouring the commitment of young members;
- develop strategies to achieve the union integration of young members.

Following the FIQ's decision to put the priority on the local negotiations, the Youth Committee, like the FIQ's other committees, had to slow down its operations and the project's activities were not implemented. However, it continued to think about how to achieve the Convention's objectives. The Committee members still participated in union education, social and political events, interunion meetings and government consultations.

AN EVOLVING COMMITTEE



The Youth Committee adopted objectives of mobilizing young people at the local level and consequently increasing the number of youth committees in the institutions. Concerned about the absence of a succession and the rise of antiunionism, combined with the imminent retirement of several union reps, the Committee members want to give themselves the means and tools to improve youth involvement. The absence of potential candidates for the succession could weaken the local teams and jeopardize the unions' capacity to intervene.

The Youth Committee members thus used the Convention as an opportunity to share their desire to develop a more social and political approach in recruiting young activists. They also expressed the need to create a forum where they can obtain information, debate union, social and political issues in general, and discuss union issues related to the realities facing young people.

Within the context of the Convention theme *Renewing our action together*, developing a new generation of activities is part of the approach the FIQ wants to take with its delegates and members to make a commitment to social movement unionism. It is noted that the FIQ should renew and get involved in the *New Generation of Activists Project*, which has the aim of hearing young people and considering their wishes and recommendations in redefining the FIQ's union practices. Everything would have to be done through initiatives at the local level, which then would be translated to the regional and national levels. It is also suggested that the FIQ consider the role devolving on the Youth Committee and evaluate the means at its disposal to accomplish its mission. The Committee's recommendations fall within the outlook of renewal of union action.

Several delegates talked about the efforts made in their respective unions to involve young members. Some unions already have youth committees, others have young members on the local team and all agree that this is only a beginning to ensure the true development of a new generation of union activists.

Having understood this Committee's importance and the role it can play regarding the new generation of union activists and the renewal of professional practice, the delegates decided to broaden the Committee's mandate to include encouraging union involvement by young members and exploring social and political questions in greater depth. The delegates also adopted the creation of a Youth Network as a broad-based forum, bringing together a greater number of young people. The first Network will be held in 2009. ■

SISP – THE APTS'S VISION



As agreed by the member organizations of the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics* (SISP), the Presidents have adopted the habit of inviting a representative of another SISP member organization to participate in their decision-making bodies. After receiving visits from Réjean Parent, President of the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ), and Michel Sawyer, former President of the *Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec* (SFPQ), it was the turn of Dominique Verreault, President of the *Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux* (APTS). Accompanied by Lina Bonamie, President of the FIQ, Ms. Verreault addressed the Convention delegates.

For this labour organization representing 26,000 health and social services technicians and professionals, the past few years have been marked by many challenges. The APTS was created in April 2004 in response to Bill 30. It was the product of a merger of the *Centrale des professionnelles et professionnels de la santé* (CPS) and the *Association professionnelle des technologistes médicaux du Québec* (APTMQ). “Bill 30 was a major challenge for our organization, just as it was for the FIQ. Our membership has grown by 60% and 45 job titles are not combined in one labour organization. This is certainly a great challenge, but the APTS was able to meet it brilliantly,” Ms. Verreault explained.

Like many labour organizations, the APTS looked for ways to counter the many attacks launched against the labour movement by the Government of Québec. “The decision to join the SISP in May 2007 represented a large part of the answer. Increase our labour solidarity to establish greater bargaining power with the government and thus change things,” the President said. Ms. Verreault also

talked about the respect prevailing within the SISP and the need to trust each other. “We have to be able to share our fears and apprehensions, but also to know each organization’s realities and understand other people’s needs.” Just as FIQ activists had done, APTS activists raised some concerns about loss of identity. This young organization has to build its own identity at the same time as it develops that of the SISP.

Ms. Verreault also took the opportunity to raise the possibility of negotiating certain members through the SISP in the next round of Québec negotiations. “We’ve had discussions with our delegates on the advantages and disadvantages of negotiating through the SISP. This isn’t a decision to be made lightly and questions are raised by our delegates, but I believe that this union alliance, in the next negotiations, could create undeniable bargaining power and that the workers in each of our organizations would come out the winners.” The APTS is also pursuing discussions with its members to reach a final decision this autumn. ■



ANTI-POVERTY CAMPAIGN

A few years ago, the FIQ joined forces with the *Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté* in a campaign to eliminate poverty in Québec. Recently, the Collectif launched a new campaign, *Mission collective: Bâtir un Québec sans pauvreté* (Collective mission: Build a Québec without poverty). Marie-Anne Paradis-Pelletier, coordinating this project for the Collectif, responded positively to the FIQ’s invitation for a discussion with the delegates to present the campaign.

She began by sharing the principles guiding the Collectif and the importance of solidarity. “Driven by the desire to make poverty disappear, the Collectif is working to make the struggle against poverty a social and governmental priority, beyond any political partisanship. Both a movement and citizen forum, it brings together a plurality of social players to move Québec towards a province without poverty that is wealthy for all its people.”

This laid the groundwork for a discussion of the campaign *Mission collective: Bâtir un Québec sans pauvreté*. The FIQ, like 250 other organizations, has already given its support to this mobilization campaign, designed to show the National Assembly the shared commitment to make Québec a society without poverty and obtain its commitment, in the name of human rights, to fight poverty here and now. This support campaign will continue until autumn 2008, taking the form of a postcard petition bearing the demands addressed to the National Assembly. This campaign has one aim: that the National Assembly really respect the law adopted unanimously in December 2002, the Act to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Here are the petition’s demands:

- That all citizens have access, without discrimination, to quality universal public services.
- That the minimum wage be set at \$10.16/hour (2007) and revised annually so that a single person working 40 hours/week escapes poverty.
- That public coverage be increased and adjusted annually to guarantee every person an income at least equal to the market basket measure, \$13,267/year (2007) to preserve his or her health and dignity.

The FIQ invites its members to sign this petition. For all the details, visit the website at <www.pauvrete.qc.ca>.

NEW BARGAINING POWER

A new Quebec round of collective bargaining will soon begin for the FIQ. We can already anticipate difficult negotiations, with the government continuing its attacks on the labour movement. There will be many challenges to improve the working conditions and salaries of care professionals. In the past, creating alliances has produced positive results. In the current context, this avenue should be considered to counter the neoliberal plague.



The Executive Officer in charge of the negotiations, Sylvie Savard, began with a presentation of the goal of the upcoming discussions – to exchange ideas on the expediency of setting up a negotiating table bringing together the member labour organizations of the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics* (SISP) – the FIQ, CSQ, APTS, SFPQ and SPGQ – to negotiate the following four matters: remuneration, parental rights, regional disparities and retirement.

Before turning the floor over to the discussions, Ms. Savard asked the question: “Why is it time today to discuss the expediency of setting up an SISP negotiating table?” Essentially there are two main reasons working in favour of such an exploration:

- the new picture that such an alliance would create for the union forces present in the public and parapublic sectors;
- the FIQ’s awareness of the magnitude of the crisis of the labour movement and the importance of increasing its bargaining power on the eve of the next negotiations.

AN ALLIANCE TO CONSIDER

The union forces in the Quebec public sector present the following picture: of the 500,000 public sector workers, 300,000 are FIQ, CSQ, APTS, SFPQ or SPGQ members. Could these State employees speak with one voice in making common demands to the government? This alliance would bring together the majority of the employees in the public and parapublic sectors and increase their power to influence decisions. Reflections on the following questions allowed the delegates to evaluate the pros and cons of such an alliance.

- How could we work together on our areas of agreement?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of such an alliance?
- Is this an opportunity or a necessity?
- Does this alliance represent a threat to the FIQ?

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

The Quebec labour movement still represents nearly 40% of Quebec’s active population. However, the influence its political influence seems to be declining and successive governments increasingly appear inclined to defy it. Even though the public sector unions do not operate in an environment in which fierce international competition is evoked to undermine salaries and working conditions, they nonetheless are strongly affected by the implementation of neoliberal policies.

The different laws adopted by successive governments in the National Assembly have gradually weakened the Quebec labour movement’s power to negotiate and influence decisions. This legislation has also had harmful consequences on the bargaining power and mobilization of the member of the various union associations. More recently, even though the FIQ succeeded in obtaining gains on several of the priorities set during different consultation phases, it is nonetheless true that the adoption of Bill 142 under closure greatly limited the power to negotiate of the FIQ and of all Quebec labour organizations.

In such a context, as the next negotiations approach, it appears more necessary than ever to improve the FIQ’s bargaining power and power to influence if it wants to achieve its objective of improving the working and living conditions of care professionals while continuing the struggle against privatization of public services.

At different times in its history, the FIQ has made alliances to improve its bargaining power in negotiations with the government. For example, in 1988, a new organization of 40,000 nurses began its first round of negotiations under the FIQ banner and obtained several gains. The Federation has also made ad hoc alliances on major issues, such as retirement, extension of the collective agreement and, more recently, pay equity.

A DRAFT MEMORANDUM

Every alliance should be solid and functional. A draft memorandum was therefore developed and presented to the delegates. This draft represents the formal concretization of the commitment of the participating organizations. It provides for the designation of the SISP to act on their behalf, only to negotiate the following matters: remuneration, parental rights, regional disparities and retirement. Added to this is the adoption of a common strategic framework, a common action plan and a common communication plan, the establishment of specific decision-making bodies and the decision-making mechanism of these bodies, the establishment of a team specific to the SISP and, finally, a non-raiding memorandum.

The draft memorandum raised a lot of comments among the delegates. Some see this alliance as an advantage for the FIQ and its members, but have questions about different aspects of the memorandum. The delegates are worried about the possible loss of FIQ’s identity and visibility. Regarding the decision-making process, they delegates sought to specify that, if this alliance happens, the rule of consensus must be applied for all decisions made by the bodies of the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics-Négociation* (SISP-N).

THE NEXT STEPS

Such an alliance must receive the endorsement of as many members as possible so that it represents a credible force from the perspective of the government and the employer party. Here are the future steps:

- continuation of the discussions at the next Federal Council in October 2008;
- consultation of the members on the possibility of a SISP-N alliance;
- decision on the creation of a SISP-N alliance at the December 2008 Federal Council. ■

8th Convention

During the Convention, delegates proceeded to elect the Executive Committee, the statutory committees and the permanent committees. Some committee members were re-elected and new union activists joined their ranks. These representatives will undoubtedly be a winning combination for the three coming years.

FIQ en Action is pleased to present the new FIQ committee members.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



President
Lina Bonamie
Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont
(PSSU)



1st Vice-President
Michèle Boisclair
CSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
(PSSU)



**2nd Vice-President
(Nurse)**
Daniel Gilbert
CSSS de Beauce
(SPSQ)



3rd Vice-President
Brigitte Fauteux
CSSS Institut universitaire de
gériatrie de Sherbrooke
(SPSE)



4th Vice-President
Sylvie Savard
C.H. universitaire de Québec
(ASIC)



**5th Vice-President
(Nursing Assistant)**
Carole Grant
C.H. universitaire de Montréal
(SPS du CHUM)



**6th Vice-President
(Respiratory Therapist)**
Élane Trottier
CSSS Dorval-Lachine-Lasalle
(PSSU)



Secretary
Suzanne Lavoie
Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis
(SPSQ)



Treasurer
Lise Martel
CSSS de Québec-Nord
(SPSQ)

UNION DEFENCE FUND Committee

- Roberto Bomba, Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital
- Julie Ouellet, Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis

ELECTION Committee

- Linda Saint-Amand, CSSS La Pommeraie
- Marcèle Dufresne, CSSS de la Montagne
- Cécile Roy, CSSS Dorval-Lachine-Lasalle

INTERNAL AUDIT Committee

- Jacques Poulin, C.H. universitaire de Sherbrooke
- Danielle Renaud, C.H. universitaire de Montréal
- Jérôme Rousseau, Hôpital Laval

STATUS OF WOMEN Committee

- Claire Alarie, CSSS du Sud de Lanaudière
- Annie Aspireault, C.H. universitaire de Montréal
- Sylvie Lachance, CSSS Richelieu-Yamaska
- Rita Lamothe, CSSS Vieille Capitale
- Annie Pinard, CSSS Champlain
- Nathalie Wallman, C.H. universitaire de Québec
- Charline Nolet, CSSS Haute-Yamaska (substitute)
- Chantale Roy, CSSS Vallée de l'Or (substitute)

YOUTH Committee

- Sara Caron-Guay, C.H. universitaire de Québec
- Patricia Goulet, CSSS Lac Saint-Jean Est
- Catherine-Lawrence Laporte, Hôp. de réadaptation Lindsay
- Marie-Noëlle Pelletier, CSSS de la Haute-Gaspésie
- Jérôme Rousseau, Hôpital Laval
- David Lambert, CSSS La Pommeraie (substitute)
- Mélanie Sasseville, CSSS Domaine-du-Roy (substitute)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY Committee

- Dominic Boulanger, Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont
- Michel Mailhot, CSSS Haute-Yamaska
- Karine Paiement, CSSS Dorval-Lachine-Lasalle
- Jean-Louis Pelland, CSSS du Nord de Lanaudière
- Joëlle Thiébaud, C.H. affilié de Québec
- Céline Tranquille, McGill University Health Center
- Charline Nolet, CSSS Haute-Yamaska (substitute)
- Jocelyne Paradis, CSSS de Kamouraska (substitute)

EDUCATION-ANIMATION Committee

- Pascal Beaulieu, C.H. affilié de Québec
- Christine Fortin, CSSS du Nord de Lanaudière
- Linda Lapointe, C.H. universitaire de Québec
- Karine Paiement, CSSS Dorval-Lachine-Lasalle
- Céline Dion, CSSS du Sud-Ouest/Verdun (substitute)
- Michel Mailhot, CSSS Haute-Yamaska (substitute)

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