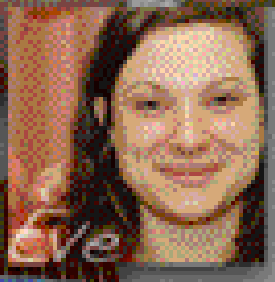
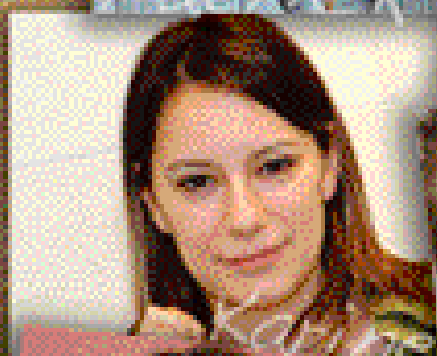


CSQ News

Spring 2007

SPECIAL ISSUE YOUNG MEMBERS



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Insurance provider selected by the CSQ





PHOTO : FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD

United more than ever

Réjean Parent
President of the CSQ

The first mandate of Mr. Charest, with its toolbox of disastrous laws that affected our social and union rights, had an impact on the CSQ and the entire union movement. It undoubtedly shaped the concerns of our delegates at our last Congress in June 2006: internal consolidation, development, and building a new union movement with independent unions along with a solid common front for the next round of negotiations.

The last Québec election, despite our efforts to encourage the emergence of more progressive elected officials, disappointed us yet again in terms of social and democratic development. We can dispense with a simplistic left-right analysis, yet it is nevertheless true that a much larger choir singing the praises of privatization and streamlined government now occupies most of the seats in Québec's National Assembly. Whether we like it or not, the policies advocated by these people and the legislation they adopt have a direct impact on our living and working conditions, usually a negative one.

It indicates the extent to which the concerns defined by our last Congress still resonate in this new political landscape. The work carried out over the past year to strengthen cohesion among our components and the overall effectiveness of our organization should be saluted. Our federations are increasingly involved in development, and we hope that additional resources from the establishment of a designated fund will revitalize our development plans. Collaboration in recent months on common goals with various partners such as the Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec (SFPQ), the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ), the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ) and the Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS) should foster closer alignment and more effective action in building a strong union movement. Although we are still in a post-negotiation cooling-off period, we continue to strive to secure a common front.

All of our action is driven by the same purpose, to revitalize our ability to take action. Despite what some tenants of economic liberalism would like us to believe, unions are not too strong. On the contrary, the union movement has experienced countless setbacks over the past few decades, and the attacks it has sustained have weakened it and raised doubts, but the time has come to unite our vital forces and reawaken hope. Together, a different world is possible.

CSQ News

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LA CENTRALE DES SYNDICATS DU QUÉBEC

The strength of a major union confederation

1227 unions
170,000 members
170,000 federations



Pay equity

The **impact** on your retirement?

Since RREGOP was established, the method used to take into account lump sums payable to due-payers or the retired employees has remained relatively unchanged. It should be recalled that in RREGOP language, the term “lump sum” is the equivalent of “pay retroactivity,” which we find in our collective agreements.

Denis Doré

CSQ Social Security Advisor

For retired employees, the amount, excluding interest, is added to the last year of active participation. This amount results in a new calculation of the income, which is retroactively payable on the day the individual retires.

For the actively employed, the lump sum, excluding interest, will be entirely applied against the year 2007. The pension contribution, which is 7.06%, will be paid on the entire amount excluding interest.

The leverage effect problem

This method results in a leverage effect on the pension plan for people who will be retiring in coming years, but not for those already retired or who will retire in 2007.

We should remember that to establish an average eligible salary, CARRA uses the five best years of salary recorded in the record. In this way, if an individual is already retired, the lump sum, added to the last year has the same effect as if the amount were equally distributed over the years applicable for establishing the lump sum. However, it should be noted that this only holds true when the period covered by the lump sum is lesser or equal to five years.

For others, the effect is magnified as salary, determined by new scales, is added. It reaches a maximum when the four years previous to the payment of the sum are taken into consideration. For individuals entitled to significant amounts, this means that the average salary for the best five years may be higher than the best salary actually received. This results in considerable additional costs for the plan and allows some people to receive a higher

LA CENTRALE DES SYNDICATS DU QUÉBEC

Do you have service to redeem with RREGOP?

Leave without pay ended over 6 months ago
Parental leave ended over 6 months ago
Service as a casual employee

Would you like to save money?

Take action at the right time! The cost of redeeming your service depends on your salary and your age at the time you apply to redeem a period of service.

The cost of redemption increases based on age. The age cohorts are as follows:

59 years and under, 40-47 years, 48-54 years, 55 years and over.

Briefly, if you are 39, 47 or 54 years of age, don't delay, because you don't have much time before a higher redemption rate applies. You should also act quickly if a salary increase is on the horizon.

It is better to redeem a leave without pay within 6 months of the end of the leave.

Check with your CSQ union

CSQ Sécurité sociale www.csq.qc.net

career, benefits some to the detriment of others.

The chosen solution

A number of approaches were studied, but the only fair solution is to distribute the amount of the pay retroactivity as if it had been distributed over the years. For now, CARRA is unable to do so. However, with the implementation of new systems and a new employer's declaration, it says it will be able to do so in the future.

For lump sums payable starting in 2008, the sums will be attributed to the years in question. As for the sum payable in 2007, the distribution will only start in 2010. If you retire by December 31, 2009, the retroactive amount will be entirely attributed to the year 2007. In contrast, if you leave in 2010, this amount will be spread over the years 2001 to 2007.

This is the most equitable solution we have been able to reach with the Conseil du trésor, taking into account the administrative limitations of CARRA.

income than they should because one year, among the five, exceeds the rest. In this way, those whose lump sum year is among the best five receive a higher benefit than others. This problem has long been an issue, but no one, until last year, really pointed it out because such large lump sums had never been paid to so many people, creating such a potentially significant impact on the pension plan.

Ultimately, the payment of a lump sum, whether or not paid at the right time in a

The CSQ and parental rights

Mario Labbé

CSQ Social Security Advisor

Since January 2006, many things have changed in the area of parental rights. First, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) replaced employment insurance maternity and paternity benefits for all residents of Québec. In addition, parental rights provided for in the public and parapublic sector collective agreements were significantly amended by Bill 142 and its unilateral application by the government in new provisions binding union and employer. The number of people affected by parental rights in these sectors has grown, considerably. That is because employees are younger and because Québec's birth rate has risen. Québec's birth rate jumped by 8% in 2006 over 2005, the most striking increase since 1909!

Unique expertise

In this context, over the past 18 months, CSQ Social Security has invested a great deal of energy in developing the greatest possible expertise in parental rights, both in terms of the provisions binding unions and employers and the QPIP itself. This is the CSQ's main interest with respect to

QPIP clients and employers: to be able to make connections between the QPIP and the parental rights stipulated under the "binding provisions."

What's more, we have held three training sessions for those responsible for the application of parental rights in CSQ-affiliated unions. Through your local union, you can reach a trained representative who can answer all of your questions and who will do everything to solve your problem. If difficulties arise, the representative can contact me.

I am also available to provide information sessions tailored to members' needs.

If you are interested, please talk to your local union. If your union agrees, I will be pleased to meet with you.

I would also like to tell you that a CSQ guide to parental rights (public and parapublic sectors) and the QPIP will be available in June 2007 on the CSQ Web site (www.csq.qc.net) and at your local union office.

Please be advised that often, there are important aspects that no one else may have told you about that you need to consider and that may have an impact on your leaves (preventive leave, complications with pregnancies, maternity, paternity, adoption, etc.) and also on the income to which you are entitled (CSST benefits, disability insurance, additional employer ben-



PHOTO : MARIE-HÉLÈNE TREMBLAY

If you are pregnant, if you are about to become a father or if you want to adopt a child, I urge you to meet with your union representative responsible for parental rights. Your union representative is by far in the best position to examine your case to ensure that all your rights are respected.

efits, QPIP benefits, etc.). Please don't hesitate to ask! It's in your interest and the interest of your future family!



The CSQ complete guide to parental rights (public and parapublic sectors) and the QPIP will be available in June 2007.

LABOUR RELATIONS

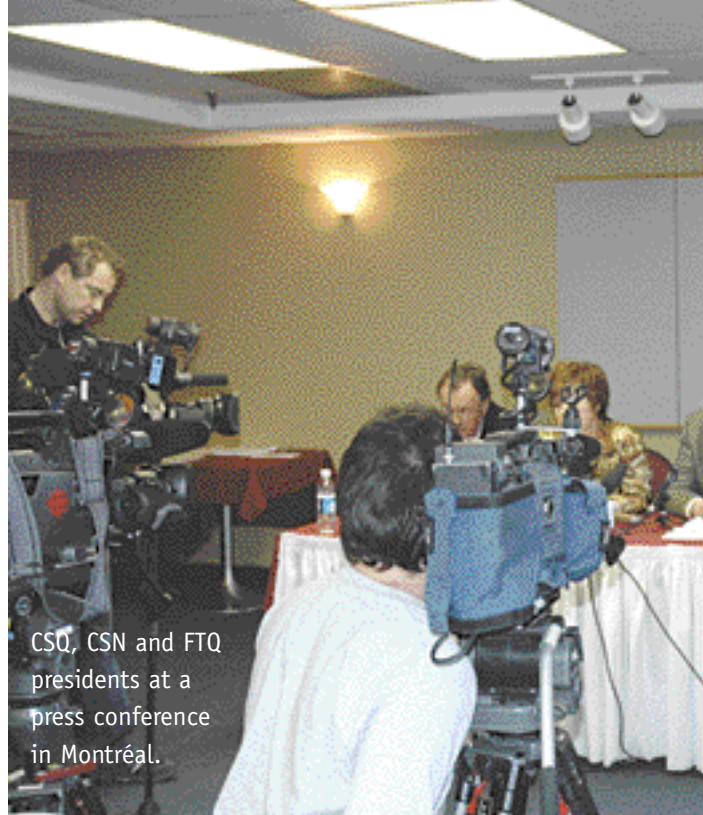
Public sector negotiations

U.N. agency condemns the order in council

François Beauregard

Editor

The International Labour Office (ILO) has condemned the government order in council that imposed working conditions on 500,000 Québec public sector workers at the last negotiations. “The ILO proved us right all down the line,” asserted the leaders of the three largest Québec union confederations at a press conference. For CSQ president Réjean Parent: “This is an important victory that weighs heavily on Jean Charest’s new minority government. He now has the opportunity to remedy an injustice and to make a gesture of openness and good faith.”



CSQ, CSN and FTQ presidents at a press conference in Montréal.

The international undertaking with the ILO was initiated by all public sector union organizations. It illustrates how important it is for unions to intervene internationally to ensure respect for the rights of the people they represent. According to the ILO, Bill 142 (now Act 43), passed under a gag order in December 2005, goes against international labour conventions.

The union organizations alleged that this legislation violates international law and undermines the right of unions to freedom of association because it abruptly ended collective bargaining without valid reason and because it deprived employees of an essential means of promoting and defending their economic and social interests, i.e. the right to strike. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recognizes that the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike constitute fundamental aspects of freedom of association protected by international conventions.

In its decision, the ILO urgently requested that the Liberal government of Jean Charest amend Act 43 to ensure it complies with convention no. 87 on freedom of association and protection of the right to organize and convention no. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining. The ILO Committee also “urges the Government to avoid in future having recourse to legislative intervention imposing conditions of employment without full and frank consultations with the parties concerned.” The ILO Committee also urges the Government “to consider submitting, in case of a conflict, disputes to impartial and independent arbitration.” The ILO Committee expects that the next round of negotiations will be held in accordance with these principles and it wants to be kept informed of developments.

It also calls for a review of the “excessive sanctions” contained in Act 43. It requests the government to establish a “bargaining procedure that has the confidence of the parties concerned and allows them to settle their differences, especially by having recourse to conciliation or mediation and arbitration, and by voluntarily calling on an independent arbitrator to resolve their differences, on the understanding that the arbitration decisions are binding on both parties and are fully and swiftly executed.”



Media turnout was impressive at the press conference given by the three union leaders.

PHOTOS : FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD

The International Labour Organization and the International Labour Office, what are they?

The mission of the International Labour Organization (ILO) is to promote social justice, in particular to ensure respect for human rights in the world of work.

The ILO implements international conventions and recommendations that define minimum standards to be respected in the fields of its jurisdiction: freedom of association, the right to organize and to collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, equality of opportunity and pay equity, etc. The International Labour Office is the permanent secretariat of the ILO; it is the headquarters for all of the activities it implements under the jurisdiction of its executive.

The ILO goes even further and recommends that the government not wait for the next round of negotiations and “adopt a flexible approach, should the parties be willing to modify the so-called ‘presumed agreement’, which is in fact a settlement imposed by legislation.”

“The ILO recommendations do not carry any restrictive legal significance for the Québec government,” says François Meunier, attorney with CSQ legal services. However, they do apply moral pressure by publicly establishing that the government failed to meet its obligations with respect to international conventions ratified by Canada,” explains the legal officer.

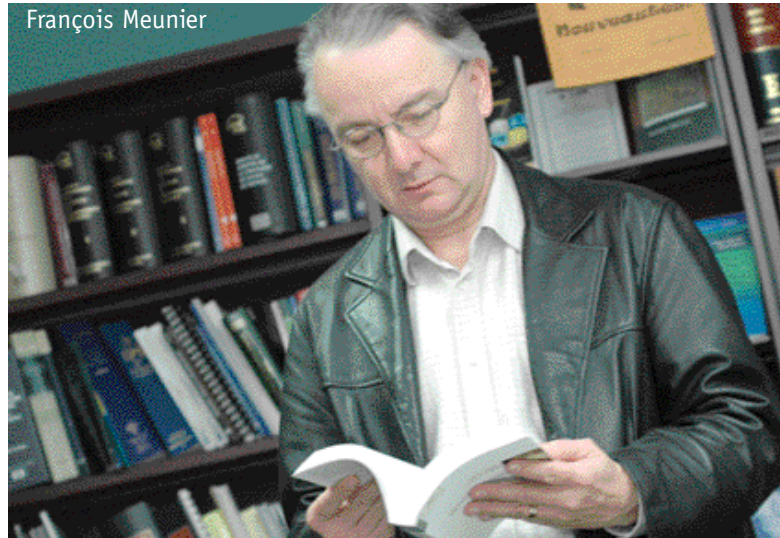
The Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics (SISP) is calling on the new government and the opposition parties to implement the ILO recommendations. The union organizations expect the government to convene the parties to review the working conditions of government employees in accordance with the spirit of the ILO decision.

The impacts of this legislation are disastrous, particularly for remuneration and the purchasing power of government employees. The salary gap continues to grow between other Québec employees who perform similar work. The total remuneration of government employees in 2006 was 15.2% lower than those in the private sector, according to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, an agency that is under the jurisdiction of . . . the Finance Minister. “The fight for salaries is not only that of protecting purchasing power and recognizing the fair value of our work in the public services, it is also about attracting and retaining personnel, in a context of significant labour shortages. Shortages which may become more pronounced in coming years, given the demo-

graphic context,” says CSQ president Réjean Parent.

The CSQ is calling on the government to follow up these recommendations, to comply with the principle of freedom of association and to restore the right to strike to thousands of workers in accordance with international law.

François Meunier



Claudine Morin

Excerpt from the recommendation of the Committee on Freedom of Association Cases of the International Labour Office:

“The Committee considers that the agreements concluded in a precipitate manner, under the threat of the adoption of a law providing lesser guarantees and without their exact terms being known, are not voluntary in character and do not respect the obligation to negotiate in good faith” (para. 575).

An e-mail to your MNA



CSQ members are asked to send an e-mail message to their MNAs urging them to intervene with the government and ask it to comply with the International Labour Office recommendations as soon as possible. A model message as well as the addresses of MNAs are available on the CSQ Web site: www.csq.qc.net. Don't forget to sign your

e-mail message before sending it, explaining that you are a resident of the riding.

Educational mission and accessibility: Priorities

France Bernier
CSQ Advisor

Consultation and discussion with the college federations as part of the campaign on education will be completed by summer 2007. Having taken part in preparing the consultation dossier on higher education, the federations involved have established a number of strategic issues pertaining to the four themes selected for the campaign which members will be called upon to discuss:

- Maintaining and increasing the accessibility of postsecondary education
- Initiating a major reinvestment in high education by ensuring adequate funding of educational institutions in order to guarantee, in particular, the sustainability of the college network
- Defining the conditions for success for young people
- Recognizing the contribution of all educational institution personnel to the educational mission for young people



PHOTOS : JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEBLANC

The larger context magnifies the challenges to be met in protecting the educational mission of institutions of higher education from the commercial and economic goals that threaten them. Like UNESCO, we are compelled to note that although the movement of university-level students and researchers among different countries is not a new phenomenon, we are witnessing the expansion of international mobility of students and education programs and providers for commercial purposes.¹

Furthermore, the decentralization imposed on the CEGEPs, which is tied to the flagrant under-funding of the college network, has contributed to growing competition among educational institutions throughout Québec, at the risk of threatening the survival of a number of them, thereby undermining the accessibility of a college education. Many, such

as Gaz Métropolitain and TD Canada Trust, are calling for a thaw of the tuition fee freeze, and this is part of the same context. With the increase of ancillary fees in the college network and the prospect of thawing the university tuition fee freeze, the accessibility of postsecondary education would slowly but surely be reduced.

Need we recall that in most of these speeches promoting tuition fee hikes, no reference is made to the right to education, its importance in transmitting societal values or to the very mission of educational institutions?

“Higher education,” as UNESCO notes, “in its knowledge producing and disseminating function is recognized as an essential driving force for national development in both developed and developing countries.”² Therefore, public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure a balanced achievement of educational and social missions. The role of the State is essential in this regard,³

Public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure a balanced achievement of educational and social missions. The role of the State is essential in this regard.



and must translate into adequate public funding. It is an essential condition for guaranteeing access to postsecondary education and for implementing measures to promote the success of young people in accordance with the social and educational mission of institutions of higher education.

To pursue these objectives and seek solutions, the CSQ undertook this consultation on issues in higher education, which will continue through June.

1 UNESCO, *Higher Education in a Globalized Society*. Position Paper. Paris, 2004.

2 *Ibid*, p. 7.

3 UNESCO, *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action*, Article 14, 1998.



Young members speak up

**SPECIAL ISSUE
YOUNG MEMBERS**

The CSQ youth network meeting gave our magazine CSQ News the opportunity to gather young members' stories about their entry into the workforce. Members from all backgrounds spoke to us frankly about their experience starting out in a career. Here are their stories, in their own words.

François Beauregard
Editor



Diane

PHOTOS : FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD

Diane Colgan is a history and geography teacher at Polyvalente des Abénakis de Saint-Prospère in the Beauce. It was only in her third year on the job that she obtained professional support, when the principal decided to meet with all teachers for this purpose.

The proposed support took the form of mentoring. Young teachers could choose teachers with whom they felt comfortable about sharing their concerns. The meetings were held once a month, and the mentors were released from their duties to provide the support.

“My experience with mentoring was positive, because during the first year, we have a lot of questions about classroom management and the subject. What’s more, I liked the idea that it was informal, and especially that the support was provided by a colleague. I didn’t feel as though I was being assessed. I felt comfortable talking openly about problems that concerned me,” explains Diane Colgan.

“On the other hand,” says the young teacher, “now, the school board wants to impose mentoring. That is not a good idea, because when you feel you are required to do it, it becomes obligatory and the communication is not as good. Mentoring is a good idea, but it should not be distorted by bureaucratic constraints.”

Annie-Christine Tardif has been a grade-one teacher for nine years at École du Joli-Bois in Valcartier. “I got along pretty much on my own during my early years in the profession. It was really difficult. I had to find help when I needed it, because nothing was organized.”

Annie-Christine thinks that all too often, young teachers are reluctant to ask for help because they fear their request will be interpreted as incompetence or an inability to manage their classes. “Young teachers have to take the initiative,” she says, “because nobody asks you how things are working out with your class. On the other hand, when you see your colleagues dealing with work overload, you don’t always feel comfortable about asking them for help,” she admits.

The Commission scolaire de la Capitale is establishing a mentoring program which includes compulsory training. It also contains a special assistance service for teachers working in disadvantaged communities. “Coaching is good, but the compulsory nature of it is not so appealing. I think there is a risk of bureaucratizing mentoring programs which will render the program less appealing.”

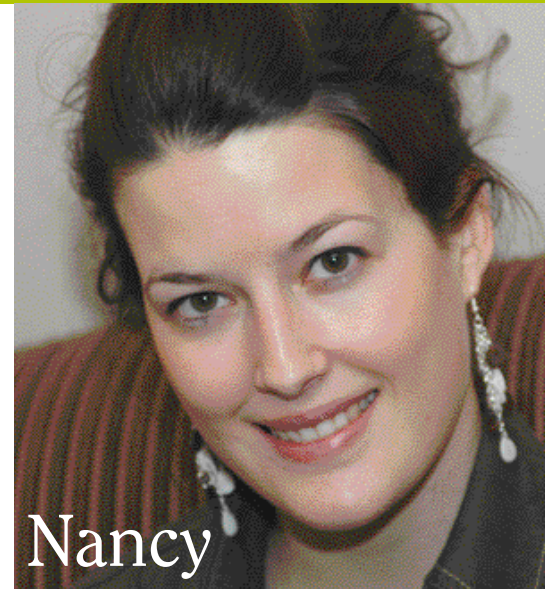
“Young teachers who experience problems with certain students should not wait before speaking to the psychologist, the special education teacher or the special education technician, when they are available, of course, which is not the case in all schools. If we want young teachers to integrate successfully into the profession, they must have access to mutual assistance networks.” Unfortunately, the burden of the task and a lack of employment security are obstacles to establishing networks that would help improve the integration of young teachers into the profession.



Annie-Christine



Ève



Nancy

Ève Dutil-Paquette is a social worker at the Institut Raymond-Dewar (IRD), an agency that assists the hearing-impaired. Before joining the IRD, she had a painful work experience in a youth centre. From the outset, she was in charge of 30 cases, and no one had the time to give her any supervision. “There was no ill will, everyone was overworked. You have no experience and you lack confidence. No matter how resourceful you are, it’s difficult to improve without some support, especially when you are constantly living with a sense of urgency. When you start a job, you need someone to back you up.” In the three youth centres where she worked, Ève witnessed several instances of burnout among young professionals starting their career. “I saw many colleagues who panicked, cried, and felt pushed to the brink. I decided that that was not going to happen to me, and I left the centre.”

At the IRD where she now works, things are much better. The deadlines are not as tight, and Christiane Dupré, an experienced social worker, provides her with support in an informal way. “I have a great deal of affinity with Christiane; I trust her, and she is very generous with her time. Just knowing she is available to answer my questions relieves me of a lot of pressure. I feel very lucky to be able to get validation from her. At the IRD, people are happy at work; we often have team meetings to share our concerns and discuss our experience. It’s fantastic!”



Janique

Janique Fournier is an emergency room nurse at the Centre hospitalier de Gaspé. When she graduated, she was unemployed for four years because of ambulatory care. When she started, she was provided with the coaching of an experienced nurse, in order to help her assimilate intervention techniques. “It is essential to have access to effective support when we are starting out. We work with people, and mistakes can have serious consequences. Support for new nurses is indispensable because the reality is far removed from the theory we learn at CEGEP and university,” explains the young nurse.

Young nurses entering the profession no longer want to work evenings and nights. That creates problems because of staff shortages. Janique, however, likes working evenings or nights: “There are fewer of us. There is a positive atmosphere, and it’s easier to integrate into a team. For young mothers, the profession is demanding, because we can be called two or three times a week to do an extra shift. That discourages more than a few nurses.”

Janique loves her work and she has never considered leaving her profession like so many other nurses who suffer a burnout. When she is asked what she has to say to young people who want to become nurses, she says: “I would tell them that it’s a good profession, but that it is demanding, and I would tell them that they will have to work every other weekend throughout their entire career. So, I would say: think it through very carefully.”

“Usually, a nurse will have two years of experience and should feel comfortable in the profession before being assigned to emergency. Today, because of the shortages, people with little experience are being assigned; this puts enormous pressure on young nurses.”

Nancy Noël is a guidance counsellor at École secondaire Manikoutai in Sept-Îles. “When I started, I was only entitled to two weeks of training. That is very little training for replacing a counsellor who was retiring and taking her 33 years of experience with her.” The experienced counsellor, France Martel, agreed to supervise Nancy without remuneration. She answered her questions on the phone and even agreed to have lunch with her young replacement once in a while. “I owe my success in my career to her,” says Nancy.

“During the 1970s, there were ten professionals in this school. Today, there are only three,” she points out. “I am on my own responding to the counselling needs of 1,500 students, and this is very demanding. Support is important when you are starting out in a profession; you have so much to learn. If I had not taken the initiative of asking for help, I would have been sitting alone in my office with my questions and doubts, but I’m not that type of person. I went to find answers to my questions from competent people, and every time, I met with a positive response. Guy Buteau, the president of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels en milieu scolaire du Nord-Ouest, often gives me advice.”

“The worst attitude a young teacher can have at the outset of her career is to behave as though she knows it all and has nothing to learn, because that is simply not true; in fact, quite the opposite is true. When you conquer your reluctance and you seek help, you realize that most of the time, people are happy to share their knowledge; all you have to do is take the first step,” the young counsellor concludes.



Yves

Yves Brouillette is a data processing technician at the Commission scolaire de Laval. He thinks young employees have to make a place for themselves. “It’s alright to rely on others, but you also have to take the initiative and get information from more experienced people. Even if you don’t have permanent status, you have to ask for information and not be afraid of being judged; in the beginning, it’s understandable not to know everything.”

Yves feels his integration went rather well, despite some normal difficulties at the beginning. “I’ve never been shy, I go and find information where I can get it, and usually I get the right answers. There is room for young employees who want to carve out a place for themselves. The proof: our union in Laval elected three young members to the executive in April.” However Yves thinks it’s regrettable that too many young people without job security are afraid of getting involved with unions for fear of making a negative impression on employers. “Union education should be taught in secondary school and at CEGEP, as it is in the CSQ youth network. The history of the labour movement is important.” He thinks that “it is easier to know where you’re going when you know where you come from.”



Félix

Félix Beaudry has been a nursing assistant at the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de Trois-Rivières for eighteen months, and he is also a grievance officer with the Syndicat des infirmières, inhalothérapeutes et infirmières auxiliaires Cœur-du-Québec (SIIIACQ) (CSQ). Before, he worked for four years in Ontario. When he began working in Québec, he was shocked. In his view, the contrast between the two provinces is striking: “In Québec, there are far fewer resources and the quality of care is clearly lower. The working conditions are also less appealing. Not only is salary lower in Québec, in Ontario, I got a full-time position the first year I was hired. In Québec, you can remain in a temporary part-time position on call for several years before hoping to be able to get a full-time job!” he exclaims

In Ontario, the orientation period for new nursing assistants is longer: ten shifts and sometimes more. In addition, people who provide coaching are released from their duties, which is not the case here. In Québec, a lot of young nursing assistants leave the profession within the first few months. The obligation of working additional hours on a regular basis and unstable work schedules are the causes. “Bill 142 (now Act 43) has aggravated the situation. This legislation dashed people’s hopes of improving their working conditions. It’s alarming, when we know we are having difficulty recruiting qualified personnel, and that many people do not stay on because of poor working conditions. I have the impression that we’re on a Formula One track heading straight for the wall, and that no one is putting on the brakes,” warns the young nursing assistant.

Are young women feminists?



The last CSQ women's network meeting (Réseau des femmes de la CSQ) provided us with an opportunity to assess feminism and unionism at an open discussion with seven young women: Marjolaine Allard, Syndicat du personnel de soutien en éducation (CSQ), Vicki Blondin, Syndicat de l'enseignement de la région de Drummondville, Julie Dauphinais, Syndicat de l'enseignement Val-Maska, Melony Gauthier, Syndicat de l'enseignement du Bas-Richelieu, Maylissa Maheux, Syndicat de l'enseignement du Lanaudière and Annie St-Amant of the Syndicat du personnel professionnel du Cœur du Québec. The debate was lively. Dynamic and committed? Of course!

Chantal Locat

Status of Women Committee (CSQ)

Feminism?

In their view: "Feminism is a movement that defends, promotes and strengthens the rights of women in order to achieve equality between the sexes. It makes it possible to raise the awareness of girls and women, to make progress and to become aware of persistent inequalities. The more aware we become the more we realize that there is still much to be done. Today, the inequalities are more subtle and more difficult to demonstrate." One of the women adds: "We've got the tune down, but not the whole song!"

Are these young women, feminists?

Yes, based on their definition of feminism, but they quickly qualify it. "We are not radical feminists, we aren't going to war to defend it, we experience our commitment in everyday life." Most of them come from families that always encouraged them to take their place: "It's when

we get to university or the workplace that we see inequalities."

Is the CSQ attentive to their concerns?

The immediate response: "The CSQ defends the values that we cherish. We are proud that the CSQ promotes a world without poverty, without violence, a world that is more fair and egalitarian and that shows concern for the environment. This speaks to us and is one of the reasons for our commitment."

"Balancing work, family life and working conditions should be at the core of future negotiations." These women are young, not all have children, but it's not easy to balance everything. One of them explains: "I don't have a child; but I chose to work 75% because the working conditions are too difficult, sometimes even exhausting. I know many young mothers who have decided to work 80% for the same reasons. It shouldn't be this way." What's

more, for young mothers who want to take part in activism, it is hard to balance family, work and activism: "There should be measures to facilitate this, such as daycare services on the premises during meetings."

"Everyone should receive the information and the training that we have at Réseau des femmes. It's an important place for union education." In their view, it allows them to gain a better understanding of the issues related to their living conditions as women, workers and citizens. It has been their gateway to union activism. As another explains: "We should be given a greater role in our unions so that we can share the information we have. After network meetings, our batteries are charged, and we would like to share our experience with others."

Young union activist

What does it take?

Pierre Lefebvre

CSQ Advisor

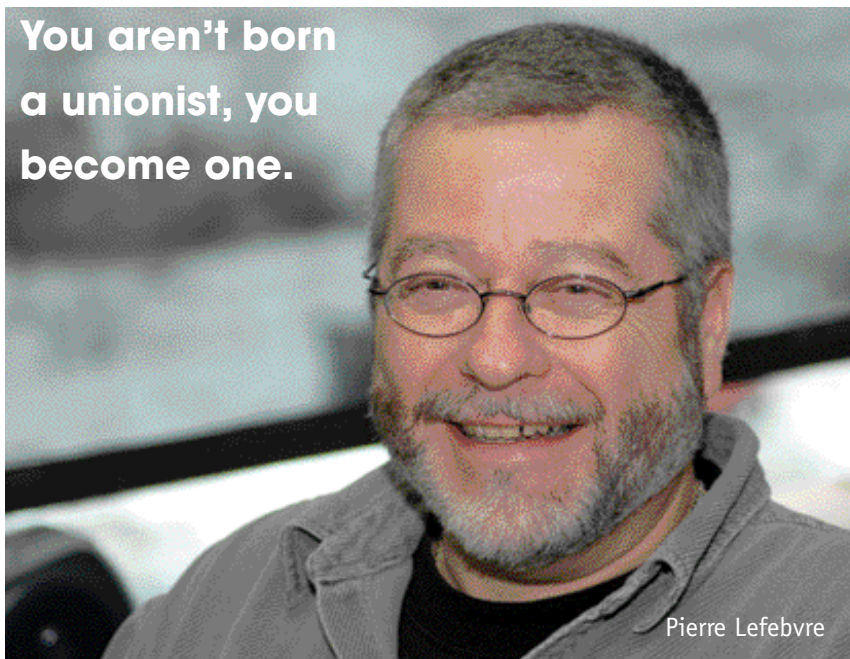
When CSQ News asked me to contribute to this issue's theme, I wondered from what vantage point I would address the issue of youth and unionism. I was relatively young when I started out, became a union delegate at age 21, a member of my union's executive board at 22 and joined the executive of my federation at 25. My salt and pepper hair (more salt than pepper) reflects (apart from my genetic background), a number of rather long days over the course of the last thirty years.

Bearing that in mind, along with a review of the literature that I did for a Master's thesis ten years ago, I decided to assert, as does the CSQ's union education team, that you aren't born a unionist, you become one! And to recall that there are conditions that encourage union commitment of youth.

What stands out above all in the research on this issue is that the most important factor is attitude toward union commitment. It may sometimes, but not always, arise from frequenting the union community outside life in the workplace, for example, at home where a unionist father, mother or spouse encourages discussion of union issues. I know many people at the CSQ who are the "daughter" or "son of . . ." But, fortunately, that is obviously not the only factor!

For others, a union can be a place for socializing or of solidarity, a place of respite from pervasive individualism. For some, unionism is a place of political expression, referring of course, to union values and practices based on internal democracy and information. The ability of unions to take into consideration and be responsive to the interests of youth undoubtedly has a positive influence on people's willingness to take part in union affairs.

**You aren't born
a unionist, you
become one.**



Pierre Lefebvre

PHOTO : FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD

Personal factors facilitate or limit the degree of commitment. Employment status, or factors related to private life (education, family responsibilities or not, attitude of family and friends, etc.) play a role in attracting youths to union commitment, or in putting them off, depending on the individual.

Asked a few years ago about the rising generation of singers, Gilles Vigneault, with his usual wit, quipped: "But tell me, who fell?" In the union community we often talk about a rising, new generation. We could also wonder who has fallen . . .

Nevertheless, we have to admit that every year, the ranks of the A.R.E.Q. are swelling with the youth of thirty and thirty-five years ago. Renewal of the membership necessarily implies renewal of union administrations.

What has undoubtedly changed is the perception people have of "age." In the introduction to a presentation he gave at

a conference on "managing age" organized by the industrial relations department of Laval University, Christian Payeur, director of research at the CSQ, recalled that when elected president of the CEQ, Yvon Charbonneau was 29 years old, and he negotiated with a premier who was 33! Today, both of them could well be urged to do a short apprenticeship, the first with the CSQ Youth Committee, and the second with the youth commission of the Québec Liberal Party!



Jack Layton, Réjean Parent and Gilles Duceppe

PHOTO : FRED CHARTRAND, PRESSE CANADIENNE

The CSQ supports employment insurance reform

At a press conference in Ottawa, the CSQ joined with other union confederations and groups of the unemployed to applaud the major reform of employment insurance proposed by the three opposition parties in the House of Commons.

Bill C-269, first introduced by the Bloc québécois and now supported by the other two opposition parties, aims to restore the right of thousands of unemployed workers to receive fairer benefits. Remember that less than 50% of unemployed workers are currently entitled to receive employment insurance benefits. That is one of the major reasons why, every year, thousands of Canadians are placed in a situation of poverty.

“This compromise formula concerns sensitive issues such as a lowering in the eligibility criteria by 70 hours, eliminating the waiting period, an additional five weeks of benefits and increasing the insurable remuneration from 55% to 60%, based on the best 12 weeks. Workers who lose their jobs and seasonal workers will have some relief,” indicated CSQ president Réjean Parent

Unfreezing tuition fees The CSQ supports the student movement

On the eve of the provincial elections about one hundred CSQ delegates meeting in General Council turned out to support various student groups who were demonstrating to maintain access to higher education. The demonstrators gathered at Émilie-Gamelin park and then walked to the office of the premier in downtown Montréal.

A few hundred CEGEP and university students gathered to demonstrate their opposition to the government's intent to unfreeze tuition fees which, in their view, would reduce access to education and increase student debt.

“If Québec wants to maintain its place on the international stage and continue making progress, it must invest heavily in postsecondary education. It must also ensure that all young people who want to go to university, who have the will and the ability, have access to it, regardless of their background. That is called access to education and it requires maintaining the tuition fee freeze,” concluded Christian Bélair, president of the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, at the end of the demonstration.



Bill 142 (Act 43)

The Syndicat de l'enseignement de Champlain found an original way of demonstrating its opposition to Bill 142 (now Act 43) that abruptly ended public sector negotiations. At the CSQ General Council of March, early in the morning, this union put up posters demanding the withdrawal of Bill 142 on street lights in Montérégie.

In addition, the union unfurled huge posters and prominently displayed them on the facades of certain buildings in the Montréal area.

Qui aura le courage de la retirer ?



Nous avons droit à une vraie négociation!



Daycare workers

The CSQ demands justice

The passage of Bill 8, under a gag order in 2003, preventing the unionization of home childcare workers created serious injustice for these workers who are not entitled to any form of the social safety net. They are not even marginally covered by minimum labour standards. This arbitrary situation has created keen dissatisfaction at the CSQ which now plans to call on the new government and the opposition parties sitting in the National Assembly to correct a situation that is profoundly unfair for these workers.



PHOTOS : FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD



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\$69,294 vs \$37,178	\$80.00 \$80.00	\$5.00 \$15.00	\$5.68 \$16.45	\$7.48 \$18.65
\$67,179 vs \$59,686	\$80.00 \$80.00 \$50.00	\$5.00 \$15.00 \$87.00	\$7.68 \$19.20 \$34.86	\$5.38 \$15.80 \$35.44
\$68,696 vs \$74,357	\$80.00 \$80.00 \$40.00	\$5.00 \$15.00 \$27.00	\$9.48 \$21.20 \$38.16	\$5.88 \$13.80 \$24.84

For more information, contact the local Fund representative (LR) in your workplace. For questions regarding the LR network, contact Pierre Teller, CSO Coordinator at the Fund.



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