



## BULLETIN EXPRESS

### TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST GOV'TS BILL

#### A FIRST AT THE CSN: JOINT FEDERAL COUNCILS

For the first time in the CSN's recorded history, the main decision-making bodies of the Public Sector Federations (FAS, FNEEQ, FESP, FPPSCQ) have met to work on a common plan for action.

More than 1,000 members were on hand in Quebec City, last Wednesday, to take a public stand against Michel Clair's proposed legislation to reform the public sector negotiating system.

Since such joint Federal Councils aren't a statutory decision-making body; each Federation voted the same plan of action beforehand. But this afternoon-long meeting was an opportunity for the delegates to express their shared commitment to keep the right to negotiate they won in 1965. On the eve of the Parliamentary Commission, holding a meeting of this size was also a way of showing the government the CSN's opposition to this law isn't just the leadership's idea.

However, despite the importance of this event and the reporters on hand, the news media didn't report it.

#### CSN AT PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION

Because the Parliamentary Commission on the draft legislation concerning the Public sector negotiating system is an important forum the CSN decided to testify to state its case in this vital debate, and explain why it demands withdrawal of the bill. On Thursday, January 31st we presented a brief, re-affirming the position submitted to Union General Meetings (See report: Public Sector Negotiation System Reform: What's at Stake). It mainly covered pay issues, decentralization, the right to strike and essential services. (A copy of the brief will be available in each union soon). Gérald Larose and Monique Simard, along with their fellow CSN Executive members Michel Gauthier and Léopold Beaulieu and the 4 public sector federations presidents (FNEEQ, FAS, FESP, FPPSCQ) testified that the 350,000 public sector workers (115,000 of whom are CSN members) are average citizens who work in schools, cegeps, hospitals, etc. and who have the job of serving the community at heart. Two thirds of these public service workers are women, a fact the government likes to play down.

For example, during the dispute at St-Ferdinand hospital, the Social Affairs Minister referred to workers in the masculine gender only ("ouvriers") although this hospital employed around 500 women workers and a few dozen men! When the government tries to decree salaries and pattern them after those paid in the private sector, it is linking the salaries of women in public services, who have managed to limit sex discrimination, to their private sector counterparts. And yet, we know the private sectors where women are in the majority (garment, offices) are low-paid job ghettos. On this subject, Conseil du Patronat Chairman Ghislain Dufour said he was far more interested in pay issues than in decentralization or essential services. He even wants private sector partners to sit on the Pay Research Bureau. The President of the Manufacturer's Association complained that in his region, he couldn't make initial wage offers lower than public sector salaries.

The CSN feels the issues in the current debate aren't labour issues alone. They have a political and social impact. They concern all Quebec workers, both union members and non-union members and are related to the Beaudry Commission's Labour Code reform. These issues also concern the people who use public services. For example, the decentralized negotiations open the door to disparities among institutions and regions.

## APPENDIX "A"

On Wednesday, January 30, Michel Clair finally made public long-awaited Appendix "A" of his draft legislation and which includes the issues to be negotiated on the local level. This list will soon be available in your unions, along with a study of the consequences which may result.

### COALITION FOR THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE

It's an unprecedented coalition and the news media gave it warranted coverage: fifteen labour organizations representing all public sector workers met with a large delegation present from each of their affiliated unions.

This meeting took place at Place des Arts on Saturday, February 2nd. It was intended to adopt an inter-union platform on the Public Sector negotiating system. The meeting called for withdrawal of the preliminary draft which denies the right to negotiate. In the morning, the union leaders spoke, and in the afternoon, union members took the floor: the latter were determined to fight the bill.

The Status of Women Committees issued a statement which was greeted with enthusiasm. They pointed out that the gap between men's and women's pay runs as high as 18% in the public sector, and in the private sector, this gap runs as high as 64%. This was seen as proof of the importance negotiations have for women in the public sector.

How can the government contemplate voting legislation so many have gone on record against!

The following organizations in the coalition were present:

- Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec (CEQ)
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
- Fédération des travailleurs du Québec (FTQ)
- Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)
- Provincial Association of Catholic Teachers (PACT)
- Association provinciale des enseignants protestants (APEP)
- Cartel des organismes professionnels de la santé (COPS)
- Fédération des associations de professeurs d'universités (FAPUQ)
- Fédération des infirmières et infirmiers unis (FIIU)
- Fédération des syndicats professionnels d'infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (FSPIIQ)
- Fédération québécoise des infirmières et infirmiers (FQII)
- Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels des services éducatifs du Québec
- Syndicat des fonctionnaires provinciaux du Québec (SFPQ) (FPSEQ)
- Syndicat des professeurs de l'Etat du Québec (SPEQ)
- Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ)

FOR THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE  
NO PERMANENT DECREES

