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BULLETIN EXPRESS

THE GOVERNMENT TABLES ITS AUTHORITARIAN

ANTI-PUBLIC SECTOR BILL

The PQ government keeps beating around the bush about the time to call General Elections after more than four years in power and credibility on the decline. It had no such hesitations about its attack on Quebec workers' democratic rights, and kept right on schedule.

On Thursday, May 2, Michel Clair tabled his Bill137 amending the public and para-public sector bargaining system. The contents of this bill are the same as announced on April 12, (see Bulletin Express no. 11) by René Lévesque, and differ little from the preliminary draft (avant-projet) made public in December, 1984:

- right to strike virtually eliminated in the public sector
- an Essential Services Board empowered to issue court orders (ex: award damages for an action) which would have the same force as Superior Court rulings
- salary negotiations with right to strike only one out of three years - decess the other two
- creation of a Pay Research Bureau whose work would be a "guide" to pay negotiations
- local negotiations with no right to strike on around 60% of non-monetary (normatif) clauses covering teachers (elementary, secondary and CEGEP) and CEGEP Professionals. These local negotiations mean desynchronized bargaining and continuing negotiations bases on the decree
- local arrangements in the clauses to be negotiated Quebec-wide for the other groups (social affairs, support staff etc.).

With its new system, the Quebec government claims to want to put a stop confrontation and save money. We don't think this will happen. When you take away peoples' right to effectively negotiate their working conditions, they won't stand for it indefinitely. No other means exist of improving their constantly deterioration working conditions, and the array of repressive measures brought in (complex legal red tape, mediation, special powers granted the Essential Services Board, etc.) can't change this.

As for the savings this system could mean, these remain to be seen: how much will this Pay Research Bureau's operations cost? (The law grants the Bureau the power to borrow 1 million dollars, not counting the 19 members and their staff hires to do the Bureau's work). How many arbitrators, mediator-arbitrators, negociators, lawyers, etc. must the government hire to run this new "decentralized" bureaucracy destined to decide the fate of 366,000 union members?

But another kind of savings is predictable: private sector employers will follow the lead set by the decline of working conditions in the public sector.

366,000 UNION MEMBERS AGAINST THIS BILL

This bill is an outrage for all workers in Quebec. The "Coalition for the right to Negotiate", representing labour organizations (including the 3 labour confederations) is a clear sign of workers' indignation. This is also the message the Coalition wanted to convey at its May 3rd press conference, and by the protest held on April 20th, when 20,000 people demonstrated outside the National Assembly in Quebec City. During the Parliamentary Commission set this May 15th and 16th, the labour organizations will once again take a stand as a Coalition, with a single message: DOWN WITH this anti-democratic bill.

The government will run up against our Coalition once again during the by-elections and the Cabinet Ministers' rounds of visits in May-June. Not to forget the Coalition's public relations campaign on the radio and public transit vehicles with the slogan "The government has to listen to reason".

On every occasion, we must aim for "high visibility" and protest this authoritarian legislation. As voted in the CEGEP Sector Workshop held late in April, FNEEQ will hold a press conference linking the new labour relations system and teaching conditions in our CEGEPs as of spring'85, while dozens of teachers are still losing their jobs or being put on "availability". We must also speak out to our direct employer, la Fédération des CEGEP, whose lobby with the government got them Appendix "A" (subjects for local negotiations) containing the items they were counting on.

RESIST THIS LEGISLATION IF IT PASSES

We have to go on record against this legislation. But as we all know, the real battle will come when we have to negotiate. Our goals are clear: similar working conditions for all CEGEP teachers, regardless of their region or their CEGEPs "rating", and a consistent quality of education available throughout Quebec. This is why CEGEP unions must work on a single contract draft for all teachers, to be counterposed to the "local" employers "contract demands", strongly backed by the Fédération des CEGEP. This is the consensus which must come out of our local General Assembly consultations in May on the mechanisms to concretely express our negotiating priorities. At the Conseil fédéral set for mid-June, a CEGEP sector workshop will study our bargaining and action strategy for this fall.

NEGOTIATIONS are a right.

DOWN WITH the permanent decrees.

YOUTH WEEK AT ROSEMONT CEGEP

AN INTERESTING IDEA

A Youth Week was held at Rosemont CEGEP last April 22nd-25th, with the theme "on est capable" - "we can do it".

This week was organized by the teachers and students in the Social Sciences department, and was intended to spotlight young people's creativity, stress their abilities and provide a forum for their demands. The week's activities included an exhibit of cultural work, a panel discussion and a debate with several groups invited (ENGAJ, RAJ, table de concertation Jeunesse-Travail, secrétariat de la Jeunesse). More than three hundred students took the time to attend the panel discussion, but the government failed to show up. Its absence raised many comments, and most of these were bitter indeed.

The individual solutions to youth unemployment put forth by ENGAJ were criticized by many, in very harsh terms.

The very strong participation at this event was proof of how much students feel the need to make their demands and their abilities known.

CEGEP teachers are in a much better position than most adults to promote this kind of event. This is why the organizers would like to see other members of the educational community follow suit, as their contribution to International Youth Year.

P.S. The programme of this Youth Week is available at Rosemont CEGEP
514-376-1620 (extension 216)

