



# en Action

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## FIIQ TOMORROW

### President's address

After having welcomed delegates, the President of the Federation, Jennie Skene, briefly presented the main subjects and issues that would be dealt with at this Federal Council, the last before the summer period.



*"At the last Federal Council, we set a calendar for the renewal of our collective agreement. Thus, we will begin this meeting with the issue of negotiations. Indeed, we will discuss and adopt a negotiation structure, which is the backbone of the democratic process during negotiations. The Executive Committee will propose modifications to the Info-Support structure, following up on the*

*evaluation of the last bargaining round that had identified certain difficulties in the transmission of information and in obtaining feedback. We believe that the modifications proposed will help to resolve these difficulties."*

The President reminded delegates that debates would be pursued on the orientations proposed in the context of the work for FIIQ TOMORROW. At the March Federal Council, delegates had decided to postpone the adoption of these orientations in order to enable each local team to gain a better grasp of the underlying analysis, leading to the plan of action for FIIQ TOMORROW.

Madam Skene also indicated to delegates that the issues of finances and the group insurance plan were on the agenda. *"Through the financial report you will be able to see that we have preserved financial balance, which is extremely demanding in a context where the demand for services is constantly growing. Concerning the insurance plan, we will receive a report on the results of the survey conducted in April with regard to the benefits offered by our group insurance plan and the preferred choices regarding the renewal of our contract."*

The President rapidly went over the other subjects up for debate, that is the adoption of the new statement of principles, elections and, more specifically, the election of the new Youth Committee. Delegates will receive progress reports concerning pay equity and nursing workforce plans, among others.

Before closing, the President, Jennie Skene, paid a tribute to Madam Raymonde Bossé, who passed away a few weeks ago. Madam Bossé, a founding member of the FIIQ, sat on the Executive Committee for more than ten years. The President also lamented the death of an employee of the Federation, Nicole Gosselin.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

The FIIQ TOMORROW working group, composed of Daniel Gilbert, executive officer, Marie-Andrée Comtois, Sylvie Dallaire, and Richard Laforest, consultants, and Benoît Lavallée, coordinator, presented a round-up of the work on the issue of FIIQ TOMORROW. The working group began by explaining their mandates, then revealed to delegates the results of the survey conducted among nurses, and lastly presented all the orientations put forward for debate at the March Federal Council.



### SURVEY RESULTS POSITIVE FOR THE FIIQ

The FIIQ TOMORROW working group presented the results of a survey conducted by Léger Marketing among 1001 nurses across Quebec and intended to measure the degree of membership commitment to their union organization.

Remember that this survey falls within the mandate of the FIIQ TOMORROW working group which has been working since the fall, through a broad-based consultation of various FIIQ stakeholders, to identify the means required to better adapt the union practice of the Federation to the requirements of the current context. The Executive Committee considered it important, at this point, to verify with members the level of their commitment to the FIIQ.

The Léger Marketing firm, together with the FIIQ TOMORROW working group, therefore formulated an interview questionnaire to measure members' attitudes with regard to the labour movement in general, their perception of the FIIQ's usefulness and instrumentality regarding their working conditions, and their level of commitment to their profession, to their institution and, more generally speaking, to the health-care network. We also took advantage of this survey to seek members' opinions regarding other matters on which the Federation is currently intervening, namely nursing practice and violence in the workplace.

The working group began by telling delegates that the result of this survey was very positive for the organization and an element that stood out was nurses' pride in their profession, their strongly pro-union attitude and their positive perception of the FIIQ's usefulness regarding their quality of life and working conditions. Moreover, the information gathered is encouraging and provides a stimulus for seeking new ways to improve the FIIQ's union practice. Finally, the survey results open the door to reflection which is promising for the FIIQ both today and tomorrow.

# SURVEY • A few highlights

## Union affiliation

- The union approach is perceived positively by over half the nurses (56%).
- Nurses' unity and solidarity in dealing with their employer and the government is important (97%).

## Sense of commitment

- In general, nurses are proud to practice their profession (92%).
- The vast majority of respondents are proud to work in their institution (84%) and in the health-care network (72%).

## Usefulness and performance of the FIIQ

- In general, members have positive attitudes and opinions regarding the FIIQ. Thus, more than half of the respondents have confidence in the FIIQ's capacity to solve their problems (56%) and think that the FIIQ defends their interests well with the government (57%).
- A strong majority of members believe that the FIIQ defends their interests with the general public (75%), deploys the necessary efforts to solve their problems (66%), intervenes satisfactorily on social and political issues (68%), respects their points of view (59%) and communicates the results of these interventions well (72%).
- Nurses are more critical regarding the results obtained by the FIIQ. Since the workload and nursing shortage in Quebec are crucial issues for nurses, these are the issues that provoke the greatest dissatisfaction among FIIQ members. Thus, the dissatisfaction rate is 62% regarding the FIIQ's intervention on the workload and 54% regarding the issue of the nursing shortage in Quebec.
- More than half the nurses are dissatisfied with the results obtained by the FIIQ in its interventions (52%) and the tactics used by the FIIQ to solve their problems (51%).
- The FIIQ is perceived as having an attitude that is more reactive (60%) than proactive (36%).

## General satisfaction with the FIIQ

- More than half (55%) the members are satisfied with the work accomplished by the FIIQ over the past five years. This is a good satisfaction rate.

## Redefinition of the role of nurses

- This responsibility primarily belongs to the OIIQ (51%) rather than to the FIIQ (21%). However, the FIIQ should intervene more on issues concerning the role of nurses (69%).
- The FIIQ should be concerned about issues regarding the professional aspects of nursing (91%).

## Violence in the workplace

- Two thirds (67%) of nurses have been victims of violence at work in the past 5 years.
- One quarter (26%) of nurses do not feel safe in their work environment.
- In most cases, acts of violence were perpetrated by patients (63%), and were psychological and verbal in nature (62%).

On the whole, the image provided by these results is positive. The results regarding the three initial factors – pro-union attitude, organizational loyalty which is very strong in this survey and the perception of the FIIQ's instrumentality suggest that the nurses' commitment to the FIIQ is fairly strong. However, the data regarding the nursing shortage and workload, two crucial problems currently confronting nurses, temper the perception of the instrumentality of the labour movement in a context where decision-making is, at one and the same time, located in the institution and displaced to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, bond rating firms, etc.

Nonetheless, nurses expressed a degree of satisfaction of which the FIIQ should be very proud, according to *Léger Marketing's* experts. Their experience tells them that for an organization like the FIIQ, the results are surprisingly good, especially considering the tough battles in which nurses have been involved. Moreover, in all modesty, it can be argued that the degree of satisfaction would be much higher if the nursing shortage were eliminated and the workload problem resolved by adequate funding of the health-care system, among other solutions. But aren't the FIIQ, its affiliated unions and local teams doing everything in their power to make this a reality?

## FROM ORIENTATIONS...

# To a plan of action

**On this issue, eleven recommendations were presented dealing with the various factors to be considered if the FIIQ is to better adapt its union practice to the requirements of the current context. These recommendations revolve around six important issues. We present hereunder the recommendations adopted by delegates and the issues at stake.**

### UNION ACTIVISM, MOBILIZATION and POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

**"That the FIIQ encourage and support union practice based on local, regional and FIIQ collective action, in a spirit of respect for local and regional unions. Thus, the FIIQ will have to orient its action in accordance with local and regional unions."**

**B**ecause nurses are prepared to get involved and fight to solve the problems that concern them and defend their interests, and because the solutions to the problems related to the organization of work require collective and local action, the FIIQ and its affiliated unions must take the means to contact, listen to and support nurses in their work environment.

This displacement of the Federation's action towards the local or regional level will require a modification of the role of the organization's resources. These modifications are necessary if we want the solutions put forward to be personalized and to take into account the specific reality of each institution.

**"That the FIIQ promote the involvement of young nurses to ensure that the organization can count on young union activists to take over."**

**U**nion activism is the cornerstone of an organization like the Federation. An organization must always take care to prepare for younger activists to take over. To this end, we must arouse interest among young nurses in order to promote more sustained participation and involvement. In passing, at this Federal Council, five young union activists under 30 years of age were elected to the first Youth Committee of the FIIQ.

**"That the FIIQ encourage debates, at all levels of the organization, to enable union activists to situate the issues addressed and the actions proposed by the organization in the broad social and political context."**

**T**he FIIQ must be able to make judicious choices in order to position itself on the labour scene. In order to remain strong and credible, the Federation must also be able to count on the support of the largest

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number of members possible for the decisions made by delegates. It is therefore imperative that everyone understand the importance of sharing information, holding debates and thus promoting greater adhesion of nurses to the decisions made.

## Bargaining POWER

**“That the FIIQ look for ways to strengthen its bargaining power at the central and sectorial bargaining tables.”**

This recommendation concerns the Federation’s role as bargaining agent for its 45,500 nurses during the bargaining rounds in the public and parapublic sectors. If we do not try to increase our bargaining power, we risk having to continue waging the struggle alone, having a secondary role in determining the general pay raise percentages or in the negotiation of pension plan clauses, being hit by repressive legislation alone, we also risk being increasingly isolated by the other union organizations or by the government. On the contrary, consolidating bargaining power means demanding, together with other union organizations, adjustments to an unsatisfactory system of negotiations for the union party, taking advantage of the interest which these union organizations have shown for the Federation on account of its strategic position in the health-care sector. It also means making commitments towards others and respecting these.

**“That the FIIQ explore the relevance of new conflict resolution mechanisms applicable to the health-care sector.”**

This recommendation concerns the FIIQ as provincial party in the negotiations and raises the question of the setting up of a more adequate labour relations system. It is evident that it would be easier to find solutions and to have them accepted if the analysis was conducted jointly with other union organizations. Can we envisage a special system of negotiations for workers who are considered to be essential for the delivery of health-care? We know that such a system already exists for policemen and firemen: that is, arbitration. Why is the essential nature of services not recognized? There are other mechanisms to explore and this is the sense of this recommendation.

**“That the FIIQ study ways for members and local teams to have more control over the negotiation of their working and living conditions.”**

This recommendation concerns the organization as a whole, and not only the local and regional levels. The objective is not to shove problems back to the local level. On the contrary, it will force the FIIQ to polarize its energy and to devote more energy to supporting local union action during the provincial bargaining rounds, to support interventions on the organization of work or to negotiate, if need be, adjustments or adaptations of the collective agreement. On the other hand, we have to look for means of giving members and local teams a better handle on the determination and enforcement of their working and living conditions.

## The power to INFLUENCE

**“That the FIIQ study ways that would allow it to better exercise its power to influence at the local, regional and Quebec-wide levels, by relying on the fact that members are women, nurses and citizens.”**

As opposed to others, this recommendation concerns all the actors of the organization.. As the representative of nurses, the organization is acknowledged to be representative and credible on subjects that concern health and the working conditions of Quebec nurses. It is necessary to have another place of representation based on the fact that 92% of members are women. This represents great potential for representation and influence. The many feminist coalitions in which the Federation participates are levers for action.

**Certain of these orientations are already laid out in the FIIQ’s general policy statement or correspond to the general mandates of a union organization like the Federation. However, it seemed important, at this stage in the development of the organization, to express these orientations in a formal way, given the formal and specific measures that should flow from these in the plan of action that will be debated next fall. We will keep you posted on the progress of this work.**

## The organizational CLIMATE

**“That the FIIQ explore the dynamics of power exercised by women:**

- to identify the impacts on its democratic life;
- to examine how in this perspective, the organization could better support its leaders at the local, regional and FIIQ level;
- to identify the conditions that will provide its leaders with the latitude essential to informed decision-making.”

The issues underlying such an orientation are directly related to how delegates and union activists intend to revitalize debates and support informed decision-making — a must for any democratic process. Such an orientation is also based on the need to better support our leaders and to ensure that others will be prepared to take over.

**“That the FIIQ seek means to be implemented that would give members and activists the possibility of knowing and evaluating the social and political context in which the FIIQ carries out its mandates.”**

The Executive Committee believes that a better understanding of the context prevailing for the labour movement in general, and the FIIQ in particular, would enable union activists to better assess the metes and bounds of their demands. A formal evaluation of the context, which would be an intrinsic part of setting mandates in Federal Council meetings, would facilitate, in its opinion, the expression of realistic expectations and realizable mandates.

## Union EDUCATION

**“That the FIIQ encourage union practice based on political education, which promotes and develops collective consciousness and a spirit of solidarity within its ranks.”**

This recommendation is designed to institutionalize political education in our ranks and develop social consciousness, a union culture, collective values rather than individual ones and solidarity. It will serve as a structural guide for the Federation’s union practice.

## RESOURCES

**“That the FIIQ ensure that it has sufficient financial resources to shoulder the responsibilities inherent to its nature and mission, after an analysis of the costs inherent to the FIIQ TOMORROW plan of action and a presentation of these costs to the Federal Council.”**

It is always very touchy to discuss the financial needs of an organization when its only source of revenue are the dues paid by the members it represents and defends. However, the exercise which consists of reviewing and changing ways of doing things internally in order to maximize the use of resources was already done on many occasions, and it is essential that the debate now explore other avenues. Beyond the regular discussions on the financial statements and financial forecasts, FIIQ delegates will seriously have to examine, at a convention meeting, sustainable solutions for FIIQ TOMORROW to become a reality.

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# 0 REPORT

## Staying on course

The Treasurer of the FIIQ, Lise Martel, presented the financial report for the year 2001 and the audited financial statement. As delegates noted when looking at the expenditures, the year 2001 was a very active one for the Federation. There was the FIIQ's triennial convention, the period of change of union allegiance, the work on pay equity, the beginning of the work on Nursing Workforce Planning (PMOI) and a rise in the demand for services. Nevertheless, we maintained financial balance. The

FIIQ's financial situation is sound and the financial difficulties of prior years have been checked. The FIIQ can count on a serene financial climate to conduct its activities. Delegates unanimously adopted the audited financial statement as of December 31, 2001. The delegation also received the report of the Internal Audit Committee that congratulated the Treasurer and her team for their work.

### ADMINISTRATION FUND

	2 001 (12 months)	2 000 (12 months)
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Regular Dues	12 844 645	12 574 225
Interest	259 035	154 235
Grants	41 885	40 160
Other revenue	<u>12 927</u>	<u>11 230</u>
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>13 158 492</b>	<b>12 779 850</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Meetings and elected union officers Sectors	881 169	753 511
Negotiations	0	0
Labour Relations	5 826 536	5 394 029
Sectors and Services	515 723	493 777
Health-Care	172 930	177 145
Status of Women	102 154	106 593
Health and Safety at Work	128 770	112 896
Task and Organization of Work	172 671	143 015
Social Security	<u>197 049</u>	<u>188 204</u>
<b>Total for the sectors</b>	<b>7 115 833</b>	<b>6 615 659</b>
Services		
Education-Animation	358 947	329 320
Union Organizing	290 154	274 763
Communication-Information	272 577	234 434
Translation	99 387	89 451
Total for the services	1 021 065	927 968
Equalization	240 831	215 863
General Administration	2 945 683	2 923 988
Human Resources	<u>538 913</u>	<u>421 100</u>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>12 743 494</b>	<b>11 858 089</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>414 998</u></b>	<b><u>921 761</u></b>

### BALANCE SHEET AS OF DEC. 31, 2001

	Union Defence Fund	Adminis- tration Fund*	Total
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash	1 258 544	1 352 698	2 611 242
Temporary investments	0	3 566 491	3 566 491
Advance of benefits	7 217	0	7 217
Advance to the Administration Fund	118 780	0	118 780
Debtors	2 652	1 387 996	1 390 648
Expenses computable on next period and long-term	0	135 056	135 056
	<u>1 387 193</u>	<u>6 442 241</u>	<u>7 829 434</u>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>786 328</u>	<u>786 328</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1 387 193</b>	<b>7 228 569</b>	<b>8 615 762</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Suppliers and accrued liabilities	461 700	559 856	1 021 556
Deferred income	0	0	0
Dev't of human resources	0	104 453	104 453
Advance of FDS	0	118 780	
Debt coming to term within a year	0	0	0
Accounts payable	2 148	2 562 008	2 564 156
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>463 848</b>	<b>3 345 097</b>	<b>3 808 945</b>
<b>LONG-TERM DEBT</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<b>463 848</b>	<b>3 345 097</b>	<b>3 808 945</b>
<b>MEMBER'S EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated surplus	923 344	2 815 790	3 739 134
Reserve for negotiations	0	778 643	778 643
Solidarity reserve	0	(3 109)	(3 109)
Reserve for convention	0	<u>292 149</u>	<u>292 149</u>
	<u>923 344</u>	<u>3 883 473</u>	<u>4 806 817</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>1 387 192</b>	<b>7 228 570</b>	<b>8 615 762</b>

\* negotiations, solidarity and Conv.&F.C. meetings.

### REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD AND BALANCE OF ALL FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2001

	Union defence Fund	Adminis- tration Fund	Negotiation Reserve	Solidarity Reserve	F.C. and convention Reserve	Total
<b>BALANCE</b>						
As of 31-12-00	1 951 774	2 400 792	244 141	(329)	856 231	5 452 609
Adjustment	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Balance after correction as of 31-12-00	1 951 774	2 400 792	244 141	(329)	856 231	5 452 609
Income for the 2001 period	480 781	13 158 492	983 762	40 256	843 986	15 507 277
Expenses for the 2001 period	<u>1 509 211</u>	<u>12 743 494</u>	<u>449 260</u>	<u>43 036</u>	<u>1 408 068</u>	<u>16 153 069</u>
Excess for the 2001 period	(1 028 430)	414 998	534 502	(2 780)	(564 082)	(645 792)
<b>BALANCE</b>						
<b>AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2001</b>	<u>923 344</u>	<u>2 815 790</u>	<u>778 643</u>	<u>(3 109)</u>	<u>292 149</u>	<u>4 806 817</u>

Note: Difference is due to rounding off of decimals



# on course

# REPORT staying on course

## UNION DEFENCE FUND

	2 001 (12 months)	2 000 (12 months)
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Administration Fund Contribution		
Benefits		
Regular dues	151 060	148 757
Donations	470	35 390
Interest	0	15 665
Union Organizing		
Regular dues	302 225	299 883
Interest	27 026	0
<b>Special projects</b>		
Other revenue - Distribution of penalties	0	(14 304)
<b>Total income</b>	<b>480 781</b>	<b>485 391</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Benefits</b>		
Union Defence Fund Committee	687	1 890
Salaries and fringe benefits	0	0
Fines and legal expenses	185 989	3 000
Professional fees	6 373	6 105
Interest and bank charges	18	34
Other expenses	42 055	46 598
Financial aid - strike	0	126 905
	235 122	184 532
<b>Union Organizing</b>		
Salaries, union leaves & fringe benefits	653 004	41 338
Travelling expenses	178 329	138
Rental expenses	34 429	207
Printing expenses	73 318	57 209
Courier and communications	27 736	0
Professional fees	26 889	14 561
Other expenses	4 672	474
	998 377	113 927
<b>Special projects</b>		
Salaries and fringe benefits	0	0
Travelling expenses	0	0
Financial aid - strike	275 711	(20 024)
Other expenses	0	0
	275 711	(20 024)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1 509 210</b>	<b>278 435</b>
<b>EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUE</b>	<b>(1 028 429)</b>	<b>206 956</b>

## RESERVE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

	2 001 (12 months)	2 000 (12 months)
Correcting entry, Dec.31 2000	0	0
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF PERIOD	244 141	657 500
<b>ADMINISTRATION FUND CONTRIBUTION</b>		
Regular dues	981 887	966 926
Special assessment	0	0
Other revenue	1 875	23
<b>Total contribution</b>	<b>983 762</b>	<b>966 949</b>
<b>PROVINCIAL NEGOTIATIONS</b>		
Salaries and fringe benefits	260 636	422 248
Travelling expenses	38 312	70 647
Rental expenses	0	3 358
Printing expenses	33 185	228 946
Courier and communications	5 612	37 338
Professional fees	88 219	38 834
Publications	0	69 776
Special projects	0	364
Federal Council meetings	0	469 760
Other expenses	2 844	37 595
Private sector negotiations	20 450	1 444
<b>Total for negotiation expenses</b>	<b>449 258</b>	<b>1 380 310</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE / EXPENSES BEFORE CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>534 504</b>	<b>(413 361)</b>

## RESERVE FOR CONVENTION & F.C.

	2 001 (12 months)	2 000 (12 months)
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Contribution from administration fund	843 986	847 291
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Convention & F.C. meetings	1 408 070	447 938
<b>EXCESS OF EXPENSES / REVENUE</b>	<b>(564 084)</b>	<b>399 353</b>

## SOLIDARITY RESERVE

	2 001 (12 months)	2 000 (12 months)
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Administration Fund Contribution	40 256	41 066
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Solidarity	43 036	41 905
<b>EXCESS OF EXPENSES / REVENUE</b>	<b>(2 780)</b>	<b>(839)</b>

## The Legault incentives for the summer

Delegates at this Federal Council questioned the incentives (premiums) offered by Minister François Legault to counter the nursing shortage during the summer period. Delegates noted that the application of these measures by employers was confused, uneven and sometimes obscure. For some delegates, these measures should have been offered to all nurses in order to avoid outbidding and inequities. Other delegates denounced the fact that measures were not applied in their institution despite the shortage and the overtime worked by nurses. Delegates thus adopted a motion demanding that the FIIQ publicly denounce the inequitable application of these measures.

## The current plan is maintained

On the last day of the Federal Council meeting, delegates discussed the issue of group insurance. Lina Bonamie, executive officer in charge, and Francine Tisseur and Aline Michaud, both responsible for the insurance plan, gave an extensive presentation of the survey conducted in the spring among 1000 nurses of the FIIQ.

From the outset, Lina Bonamie reminded delegates that, in recent years, the premiums of the group insurance plan for FIIQ nurses had suffered considerable raises. This is why the Executive Committee recommended that a survey be conducted to evaluate nurses' needs with regard to group insurance. Thus, we questioned nurses on modifications that would generate a drop in premium rates or that would improve certain existing benefits, and the results of this survey were divided into three large categories. However, before examining each of these, Lina Bonamie reminded delegates of three definitions.

### To be insured is...

is to protect oneself against a risk that can affect one's income more or less seriously.

### A group insurance plan is...

the pooling of the sums of money paid by each participant for all the persons who need the benefits of the plan to continue living decently. Group insurance is an gesture of solidarity between members.

### Anti-selection ...

occurs when the risk is not shared equally by all participants, that is, participants choose the plan that best responds to their individual situation and not to the needs of the group.

There is no anti-selection in the current plan since the premiums paid by nurses are pooled and used for the reimbursement of benefits.

## Health Insurance

A very small majority of respondents, 50.8%, want to change the structure of the plan, i.e. they want to be able to choose the coverage that suits them best personally and, of this number, 42% would opt for an improved plan, that is a plan that would cover a larger number of health professionals and for whom the amount of the reimbursement would be higher.

49.2% of respondents did not want any modification of the current structure and, among these, 71% would choose the current plan in the event of a new structure for the insurance plan.

On account of the anti-selection, the implementation of a new structure for the group insurance plan would lead to a raise in the premium rate for the same benefits. This greatly influenced delegates in their final decision not to make any changes in the current structure of the group insurance plan.

Moreover, nurses who participated in the survey unequivocally rejected all other modifications of the health insurance plan, including the reduction of co-insurance, the introduction of a deductible, the addition of a travel cancellation benefit, the addition of professional services, etc.

## Dental care

A vast majority of respondents (80%) rejected all the possible modifications analyzed in view of offering more flexibility, a reduction of the premium or, even, an improvement of current benefits. Nurses were strongly opposed to the introduction of a deductible and the increase of the overall annual maximum.

## Other modifications

At the November Federal Council, delegates had asked that certain modifications of the long-term disability insurance plan and the premium waiver be examined. Concerning the disability insurance, a vast majority of respondents rejected the reduction of the amount of the benefits that would generate a drop in premium rates, but which would, at the same time, place disabled nurses in a difficult financial situation. As for the abolition of the premium waiver for nurses on disability, two-thirds of respondents were against.

**Thus, after having discussed, questioned and clarified the results of the survey, delegates decided to maintain the current plan and to ratify the renewal of the contract in the fall, as planned.**

## VIOLENCE AT WORK TAKING ACTION

Taking action is necessary if we are to put a halt to violence in the workplace. Around 200 delegates took part, before the beginning of the Federal Council meeting, in an awareness-raising workshop on the theme: *FROM POWERLESSNESS TO POWER*.



Mireille Brais, from the group *Cran des femmes* who led this workshop, proposed that participants think together about situations of violence and experiment concrete ways of moving from a feeling of powerlessness to a feeling of power when they are confronted to such situations. With dynamism and humour, Madam Brais discussed various ways of preventing and putting an end to situations of violence. Participants gave first-hand accounts of cases of violence experienced in their workplace. This workshop was greatly appreciated!

# THE NEGOTIATION STRUCTURE

## A TOOL FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

The adoption of the structure for negotiations was the first step taken by delegates that will lead to the renewal of the collective agreement. As the executive officer in charge of negotiations, Lina Bonamie, and the Negotiations coordinator, Richard Beaulé, pointed out, the negotiation structure is not an end in itself but rather a means that the organization takes to conduct successful negotiations. It is composed, on the one hand, of the decision-making structure and, on the other, of the information and support structure. The purpose of the negotiation decisional structure is to provide a way of proceeding and making decisions which respects democracy. On the other hand, the information and support structure proposed today is significantly modified to make it more efficient and more liable to inform FIIQ members in a relatively short lapse of time.

### The decision-making structure

In addition to the decisional bodies of the Federation, that is the Executive Committee, composed of eight nurses, and the Federal Council composed of around 600 nurses, delegates added the Negotiating Committee and the Steering Committee.

#### The Negotiating Committee

The Negotiating Committee is the key body in any bargaining structure. Composed of nurses from the various categories of institutions (six from CHPs, two from CHSLDs, EPCs and CRs, three from CLSCs, regional boards, Health centres, outposts and northern clinics), the Negotiating Committee's main responsibility is to support members' demands. Moreover, it is responsible for seeing that proposals and counterproposals made at the bargaining table make progress, guided in this by the priorities set by members. Finally, this committee will have to make wise choices in order to optimize the Federation's bargaining power in order to obtain better working and living conditions for members.

#### The Steering Committee

This committee, composed of two members of the Executive Committee and two consultants of the Negotiation Sector, in close contact with all the other levels of the negotiation structure and is responsible for co-ordinating all the activities related to the negotiations. Throughout the negotiations, it makes recommendations to the Negotiating Committee, on questions of strategy as well as on the technical aspects of the wording of contract clauses.

#### DECISIONAL STRUCTURE



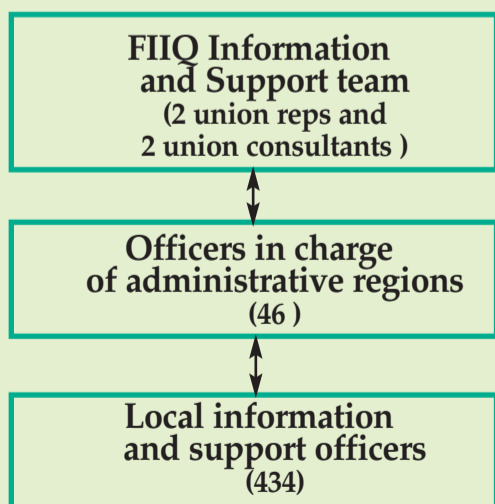
### The information and support structure

Given the comments formulated and the modifications suggested at the time of the adoption of the 1998-2000 Negotiation Review, delegates adopted a pyramid-like information and support structure that would be present at three levels: FIIQ, regional and local.

As in the past, each certification will have to appoint a local information and support officer. All these local representatives will now receive and transmit information to the information and support officer for the administrative region. These regional officers, 46 in all, will be chosen on a regional basis among the union activists of the region. These regional officers, for their part, will be in contact with the representatives of the FIIQ Information and Support team. The two officers on the Information and Support team will therefore be responsible for communicating with the regional officers of the regions of which they are in charge. Finally, two consultants, one more specifically in charge of information and the other working in close cooperation with the activists on the FIIQ Information and Support team, will also be assigned to this information and support structure.

The role and duties of all the members of the Information and Support team revolve around the implementation of the Federal Council and Negotiating Committee decisions. As in the past, by adopting the Negotiation Structure, delegates reasserted the importance of the involvement of nurses in the bargaining process.

#### INFO-SUPPORT STRUCTURE



## Pursuit of the work on pay equity

# The surveys, at last!

On the first day of the Federal Council meeting, Sophie Fontaine, consultant for the Negotiation Sector in charge of the pay equity work, presented a brief report of the work accomplished by the Intersyndicale (the inter-union coalition) and the Federation. Since the presentation of the job evaluation plan at the March 13 Federal Council, a lot of work has been done on this issue. The survey questionnaire, the organization and analysis of the pre-test and sampling were at the heart of discussions. In early April, the *Intersyndicale* and the *Conseil du trésor* agreed on a questionnaire.

The organisation of the pre-test serving to validate the evaluation plan, the questionnaire and the survey method took up a lot of our time in April. For all sectors of activities together, over 80 people, four of which were from the FIIQ, participated in the pre-test. This important step enabled us to make some modifications to the questionnaire in view of facilitating



data collection from those taking part in the survey. In parallel, several documents were produced to facilitate data collection: training and manual for surveyors, preparatory document for those taking part in the survey.

Since the summer period has begun, with the staffing difficulties and the initiation of newly-hired nurses, it was agreed not to conduct surveys during the vacation period. Given it was impossible to conduct all surveys during the month of June, the *Intersyndicale* and the *Conseil du trésor* agreed to begin by identifying a few institutions where it would be possible to conduct inquiries during the weeks of June 10, 17 and 24. During this period, almost one hundred inquiries will be completed by nurses of the various job categories represented by the FIIQ. The surveys will resume in mid-August until the end of September.

Ten union activists were chosen to support nurses in filling out the questionnaire and to take part in the data collection and job evaluation work. Four of these will be granted union leaves in June to work on the surveys. Others will be granted union leaves at the end of the summer for the pursuit of the work in its most intensive phase but, for the time being, the number has not yet been determined since we have not yet agreed on the final number of surveys. Discussions on the overall sampling should be completed soon.

In closing, Sophie Fontaine reminded the delegation that the members chosen to participate in the pay equity survey will receive a document to help them prepare for this activity.

# WELCOME TO NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The members of the  
new Youth Committee  
were elected

Five young nurses were elected to face a new challenge, that is to represent the young nurses of the Federation, to inform the Federation on the reality of young nurses and to ensure that young activists will be prepared to take over tomorrow.

The setting up of this committee met with a lot of enthusiasm on the part of young nurses since 21 nurses applied for the positions. Their union involvement is very encouraging for the future of the organization. It is essential for the Federation to promote the regular participation and involvement of young people. Thus, the Federation will support the members of the Youth Committee throughout their integration in this new committee.

## Congratulations to all newly elected officers

- Danielange Charles  
*CHUQ, pavillon St-François-d'Assise*
- Audrey Émond  
*Centre Le Jeannois, pavillon Hôtel-Dieu d'Alma*
- Isabelle Horth  
*CHUM, pavillon Saint-Luc*
- Isabelle Pouliot  
*CHUQ, pavillon CHUL*
- Réjean Savard  
*CLSC et Centre d'hébergement Manicouagan  
(CLSC Aquilon)*

Elections were also held to fill vacant positions on three other committees.

### Union Defence Fund Committee

- Stéphane Gagnon  
*Centre hospitalier régional de Lanaudière*

### Education-Animation Committee

- Diane Gaze  
*Hôpital Sacré-Cœur de Montréal, pavillon Albert-Prévost*

### Occupational Health and Safety Committee

- Jean Renaud  
*Centre hospitalier Robert-Giffard*

Congratulations to all and good work!

# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

At the last FIIQ Convention, delegates adopted a recommendation to include, in the FIIQ *Statement of Principle*, principles and policies that further define the struggles and the demands of the Federation. Here is the modified text of the *Statement of Principle* that was adopted by the delegates at this Federal Council meeting.

## PREAMBLE

In the field of labour, social and economic struggles, the *Fédération des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* is committed to promoting, through its orientations and action, a society that recognizes the primacy of human rights over economic imperatives, and that seeks greater justice and a more equitable distribution of wealth and power, and this without affiliation to any political party.

Consequently, the FIIQ upholds and promotes the principles contained in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.

## THE FÉDÉRATION DES INFIRMIÈRES ET INFIRMIERS DU QUÉBEC

The FIIQ is a labour organization dedicated, first and foremost, to the defence and promotion of the economic, social and professional interests of its members.

It strives to be a collective tool for consciousness-raising and a pressure group.

## AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS OPEN AND DEMOCRATIC

The FIIQ is a democratic organization which promotes, by its internal structure, the participation of the largest number of members in decision-making.

Its action rests on the mobilization of its members; it therefore strives to ensure that all its members have access to the same quality of union life.

Thus, it recognizes the right to information, union education and the freedom of choice of union structure (local, regional or sectional), as essential to the practice of democracy within its ranks.

## AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS

In the field of negotiations and labour relations, the FIIQ, while taking into account the specificity of its membership, promotes and strongly upholds the right to free collective bargaining, and to decent working and living conditions, as well as the right to work in a sound environment.

## AN ORGANIZATION ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH

Key actor in the field of health, the Federation has a leading responsibility in the debates concerning the accessibility, universality, free-of-charge nature and quality of health-care services. The FIIQ is present in the debates on the choices that need to be made in the field of health services and it makes it its duty to denounce all sorts of abuse. The FIIQ promotes and defends the public's right to health and nurses' right to deliver care in a climate of respect and dignity.

## A LABOUR ORGANIZATION THAT PROMOTES WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The FIIQ recognizes that a society cannot progress without promoting women's rights. In view of this, it works actively, together with other women's groups, at promoting and upholding these rights, and publicly denouncing the iniquities and prejudices suffered by women. More specifically, the FIIQ pursues the struggle to counter poverty and violence, a struggle launched by the international women's movement and which is part of a broader movement of opposition to neo-liberalism and globalization that flouts human rights and women's rights.

## AN ORGANIZATION UNDER THE BANNER OF SOLIDARITY

Whether at the regional, national or international level, the FIIQ participates, initiates or strengthens ties of solidarity with other labour organizations and community groups, in accordance with its general orientations. The FIIQ also works to reinforce solidarity among its members.



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