



en Action

Federal Council
December 3, 4 and 5, 2002

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Happy Holiday Season !

The FIIQ is ours !

On Tuesday, December 3, around 2:15 p.m. the President, Jennie Skene, opened the Federal Council, highlighting that this was the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Federation.

"Welcome to you all on this 15th anniversary. Indeed, it was 15 years ago yesterday, December 2, that together we gambled on a wonderful dream! 15 years of struggles! 15 years of memories! 15 years of happy and not so happy moments, of difficult and sometimes even very difficult times! 15 years during which we laughed, cried and sometimes practised strategic withdrawals!

15 years that gave us the opportunity, all together, to shape our organization; to build an organization that is Solid in Solidarity; to have the FIIQ become the nurses organisation; to build an organization in our image: 45,000 women who are socially and professionally committed!

15 years ago, nurses gave themselves an unprecedented collective tool, that has since carved out an excellent place for itself on the labour and political scene in Quebec; an organization of which nurses are proud, an organization of which other women workers are envious!

Over the years, together, we took positions that received the support sometimes of a vast majority, sometimes of a small majority but, even then, we rallied — though sometimes with regret — and upheld the positions of the organization before members, the population and on the public scene; together, we set a course and guidelines for our organization. This was the case with regard to:

- free choice with regard to abortion;
- the recognition of midwives;
- the feminization of our language;;
- the Quebec national question;
- zero tolerance with regards to violence;
- the shift regarding the organization of work;
- neoliberal globalization;
- nursing training as a continuum between the CEGEP and the university;
- the statement of principles;
- national and international solidarity;
- new approaches in labour relations;
- protection of the public health network;
- the recognition of the value of work;
- an expanded role in nursing practice.

And the list could go on and on ...



In the past 15 years, we have taken positions together not only to preserve the quality of care and services to the population, but also to preserve and improve the working and living conditions of all Quebec nurses, regardless of what other union organizations think or say.

In the course of the past 15 year, we waged harsh struggles together and we resisted the oppression of the Bourassa and Bouchard governments. We faced and dealt with two iniquitous bills (160 and 72); we made it through several cycles of budget cutbacks and restraints, transformation of the network. Today, we must innovate and find new solutions, no matter how small, to make it through the current difficulties in the network. Do we not have to face up to and cope with an unprecedented nursing shortage?

In the course of the past 15 years, we developed a great capacity to pitch in and get down to work collectively. We can say, without any hesitation:

Together, FIIQ nurses have proven their mettle!

Happy anniversary to us all!"

The President then warmly greeted, in turn, the activists who were present on December 2, 1987; those who joined the ranks of the Federation in 1988; those who waged the battle for the first FIIQ collective agreement in 1989; those who joined the ranks of the Federation after the 1991 raiding period; those who were present at the time when nurses recovered the right to collective bargaining in 1995; those who were on the picket lines for 23 days in 1999; those who were present at the 2001 Convention and who confirmed their confidence and support for a strong and independent Federation; and finally, the President greeted all those who were attending the Federal Council for a first time.

The President's opening address ended with a thunder of applause. Proud of the work accomplished and confident in the future, the President invited delegates to hold debates and make decisions in the best interest of the 45 500 nurses which the FIIQ represents.

The Landry government trying to escape...

The executive officer in charge of negotiations, Lina Bonamie, presented the most recent developments concerning the schedule for the work on the issue of pay equity. Indeed, given the quantity of work left to be completed, it has become more and more evident in the past weeks that the December 31, 2002 deadline would not be met. The members of the interunion coalition (CSN, CSQ, FIIQ, FTQ, SFPQ) therefore met the representatives of the *Conseil du trésor* on November 29 past. To everyone's great surprise, the representatives of the *Conseil du trésor* then announced that, in their opinion, a settlement could not be reached before then end of June, and maybe even September, 2003. This is much later than the time we had estimated necessary to complete the work, that is early March 2003. The representatives of the interunion coalition therefore expressed their categorical refusal to postpone the completion of the work to such a

far-away date. Moreover, at this same meeting, the *Conseil du trésor* announced that it would proceed to adjust the salary scales as of December 31, 2002, in order to respect the commitment it made to the Pay Equity Commission. These adjustments would be calculated according to a new estimation method of salary differences, agreed to by the interunion coalition in November 2001. On the other hand, like in November 2001, the union organizations of the interunion coalition are opposed to having these adjustments implemented as



long as the current work is not completed. It is out of the question that we accept adjustments on the basis of the former evaluation plan, which is discriminatory and led to classifications that are not accepted by union organizations. Remember that the government has already made such a proposal in fall 2001 and that the interunion coalition had then argued before the President of the *Conseil du trésor* of the time, Mr. Sylvain Simard, that it would not be appropriate to pay adjustments on the basis of the former evaluation plan because this would create confusion and, consequently, this could discredit the current process. The interunion coalition had then agreed with the *Conseil du trésor* to postpone the payment of the pay adjustments to the time when the new job evaluation exercise would be completed.

Employees are mobilizing

Madame Bonamie also presented the first actions agreed upon by the Intersyndicale to counter the government's attempt to escape its obliga-

tions towards hundreds of thousands of women who work in the public and parapublic sector. Already, at a press conference held on December 2, the Intersyndicale asked to meet Premier Bernard Landry to ask him for a commitment on behalf of his government to complete the pay equity process as soon as possible. Moreover, public visibility actions will be organized throughout the month of December. After the vacation period, a vast mobilization campaign will be launched in all workplaces. Other information on this plan of action will be available, early January, in the next issue of *FIIQ Actualités*.

Lina Bonamie ended her presentation by stressing the importance of mobilizing nurses and all Quebec government employees: *"this is the best way of impressing on the government that it cannot go back on its commitment to achieve pay equity. The right of Quebec women to an equal salary for equivalent work is not only a question of right, but also and especially a question of recognition and respect."*

Note : For more information on the method for the estimation of pay differences, its usefulness and the November 2001 agreement, see the insert in the issue of FIIQ en Action published after the Convention, Vol. 14, No. 3 and FIIQ en Action, vol. 14, no 4. These articles are also available in PDF format on the FIIQ website : www.fiiq.qc.ca/equite.htm.

For 2003 priority actions in continuity with 2002



The plan of action 2003, composed of action priorities and regular actions carried out by each of the sectors and services of the Federation, was adopted by delegates. By adopting this plan of action, delegates decided to pursue work in priority on the organization of work, the renewal of nurses' work contract and violence at work. Moreover, decisions will eventually be made on the question of FIIQ TOMORROW and for delegates, new priorities with regard to the right to health are imperative.

Michèle Boisclair and Daniel Gilbert, both vice presidents of the Federation, presented this issue to the delegation. Thus, on the eve of an election year, when privatization is already at the centre of debate, it will be more than ever necessary to defend this network for which nurses give themselves body and soul. We must also attempt, yet again, to improve the functioning of the system so that nurses' working conditions may be substantially bettered, so that work-related risks may finally recede, if not disappear completely, and so that the desire to practice this profession, which many have chosen and in which all unceasingly invest their lives, may be revived.

This is why priorities for the year 2003 area continuation of the one just ending for some issues and, for others, they emphasize social and political questions. By adopting the plan of action, delegates gave the Federation the mandate to act on three priorities: the defence of the right to health, the defence of the right to provide care and the defence of the right to work in dignity. As for the issue of FIIQ TOMORROW, a specific plan of action was presented, but it will only be debated and voted on in April 2003.

The right to health care

Delegates once again confirmed the importance of preserving the public health-care network by:

- making use of every forum to defend and preserve the public health-care system;

- raising the awareness of members and the public regarding the stakes of privatization;
- denouncing the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

The right to provide care

For delegates, defending the right to deliver care means, among other things, acting on the organization of work and on working conditions:

Regarding the organization of work

Thus, delegates decided to increase nurses' control over the organization of work and reduce both the scope and effects of the nursing shortage by:

- continuing work on the organization of work in a decisive way so as to expand union intervention in labour relations;
- continuing work to carry out local projects on the organization of work (ILOT) and nursing workforce planning exercises;
- continuing work on workload complaints generated by problems with the organization of work, exacerbated by the growing nursing shortage;
- continued participation by the FIIQ in the work of the Quebec Forum on Nursing Workforce Planning and the working groups that are ensuring its follow-up;
- continued participation of the FIIQ in the work of the regional boards in the development and implementation of regional nursing workforce plans.

Regarding contractual working conditions

For delegates, it is important to improve nurses' working conditions by:

- continuing to work for the renewal of nurses' collective agreement.

Defending the right to work in dignity

Delegates believe that it is increasingly important to have violence-free work environments to enable nurses to work in a healthy and safe environment so that they can be respected as women and as caregivers – in short, so that they can work in dignity, by:

- continuing the *Taking Action* operation with the aim of continuing the awareness-raising and mobilization work begun with local teams and members.

Financial forecast

2003



Before discussing the financial forecast for the year 2003, the Treasurer of the FIIQ, Lise Martel, laid out the reasons why it is important to have an in-depth discussion on the finances of the Federation. Despite the efforts to analyze the priorities and question the importance of the Federation's interventions, the members of the Executive Committee note that the needs expressed by union representatives and nurses are constantly rising.

Madam Martel recalled the difficult context: negotiations with the government are almost permanent, from the overtime ban in 1998, bills 160 and 72, not to mention the fact that a bargaining round for the renewal of the collective agreement is beginning. The Treasurer also pointed out that, in order to meet constantly growing needs, the Federation has had to add personnel in labour relations as well as on specific issues (the organization of work, OHS, nursing workforce planning, FIIQ TOMORROW, pay equity).

Besides the services offered, we must take into consideration :

- the precarious nature of the negotiation reserve fund;
- that, to maintain current interventions and the services offered, the financial forecast shows a deficit for the coming year;
- the FIIQ TOMORROW plan of action and its financial impacts;
- the Federation's responsibility towards its employees with regard to the work on pay equity and the renewal of their collective agreement.

This is why, the Executive Committee considers that there must be a wide-ranging reflection in the coming months in order to make appropriate decisions for the financial health of the Federation and its capacity to intervene. A Special Convention dealing with finances will therefore be held in June 2003 because the Federation must have financial leeway beginning in January 2004 in order to pursue its mission and reach the objectives that were set by union representatives and delegates.

On the last day of the Federal Council meeting, delegates adopted the 2003 financial forecast as amended. They also decided to support the negotiations conducted by nurses in the private sector. Delegates agreed that the Federation pay 20 days of union leaves for local teams during their negotiations and 20 additional days for local units of 60 members and more. Delegates also voted a strike benefit for nurses at the Jardins du Haut St-Laurent, a private long-term centre, who are presently negotiating, should they have recourse to strike action.

The Federation's regular activities

Each of the sectors and services of the Federation has specific mandates and, to carry out their mandates, a certain number of specific activities to perform.

HERE IS A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Health-Care Sector

This Sector must develop a comprehensive intervention strategy which corresponds to the two-fold objective of the Federation, to improve the living and working conditions of its members and to be an agent of social change.

Task and Organization of Work Sector

This Sector works to help nurses to endow themselves with a form of work organization that corresponds to their reality and to the situation in their institutions.

Status of Women Sector

This sector carries out awareness-raising work and action on issues that concern nurses as women.

Social Security Sector

The activities of this sector focus around two subjects: retirement and the insurance plan.

Occupational Health and Safety Sector

The actions and demands of this sector are aimed at improving the health of women in general, and nurses in particular, by way of their health and safety at work.

Negotiation Sector

The main objective of this sector is to negotiate and sign, with the government and the employer associations (CPNSSS), the collective agreement of FIIQ nurses.

Labour Relations Sector

This sector must ensure consultant services, negotiations and support to union representatives in all aspects of local union life, as well as representation services.

Union Organizing Service

This service works to unite all nurses within the FIIQ, to foster active union life at the local, regional and FIIQ level and to develop a feeling of belonging to the organisation.

Education-Animation Service

The service works to develop and distribute pertinent material to support union representatives in organizing union life in their workplace and to help them see their practice and interventions in the light of the general context.

Communication-Information Service

The focus of this service is to inform, sensitize, mobilize and win support, among our members as well as in the general public.

In fact, all the sectors and services of the Federation work to defend, represent and support, directly or indirectly, FIIQ members, local teams and unions. Working for the 45,500 nurses of the FIIQ is a vast collective enterprise!

Group insurance plan

The fall Federal Council is the time for the renewal of the group insurance contract. Lina Bonamie, the executive officer in charge, began by reminding delegates that, at the time of the last renewal, nurses had had substantial increases, especially regarding the drug insurance and long-term disability insurance benefits.

Remember that at the time of the last renewal, certain factors had been identified as being responsible for the rise of the cost of group insurance: the reform of the health and social services network, government policies on prescription drugs, the number of retiring employees. This year still, we see that certain factors continue to have an impact on the plan, in particular the drug insurance and long-term disability benefits.

Analysis of the conditions for renewal

Basic drug insurance plan

At the time of the last renewal, the Sector had to reckon with underrating factors resulting from the 1998-99 call for tenders and the negative effect of the implementation of the CAPSS drug payment card. Thus, after negotiation, the insurer has agreed to lower the requested adjustment to 10.8%. We should remember that at the end of 2001, the financial statements (surplus/deficit) of Basic Drug and Extended Plan III showed a cumulative deficit of \$8,902,353.

Basic Extended Plan III

In the past few years, the data gathered show increased utilization of the services of health professionals, primarily massage therapists, osteopaths, psychologists and physiotherapists. The analysis of the actual data shows that the premium adjustments made to the plan at the time of the last renewal stabilized the claims experience of this benefit.

After analysis and discussion, the insurer has agreed to recognize an improvement in the utilization of this plan and to revise downward the projected trends for coverage other than travel insurance, which only costs \$0.041 per 14 days. This results in a 3.9% reduction for this plan.

Extended Plan I (dental care)

The dental care plan was one of the most stable plans for several years. However, at the time of the last renewal, deteriorating claims experience necessitated an upward adjustment of the premium rate. During the negotiations for the renewal of the plan, the insurer thus requested a 1% adjustment.

The insurer also notes a sharper increase in utilization of orthodontic and prosthodontic (prosthetic) care. After analysis and discussion, the insurer nonetheless has accepted to revise the trend and utilization level, resulting in a rate reduction of 2.3%.

Extended Plan II : life insurance

The basic life insurance and additional life insurance rates are both affected by the same factors, namely aging and the number of deaths in a given year. We proposed that the insurer revise the trend analysis by eliminating the last two years of claims experience (2000 and 2001), to which complete credibility cannot be given.

The insurer has accepted the union analysis, which has the effect of reducing the proposed basic life insurance rate adjustment to 4.4% and of maintaining the current rate for additional life insurance and dependent child(ren).

Extended Plan II : long-term disability

At the time of the last renewal, the FIIQ had to accept a sharp increase in the long-term disability premium rate, primarily because of the substantial rise in the number of nurses on disability. Again this year, an increase is noted in the number of nurses on disability for a period of less than 24 months. However, stabilization of the number of nurses with 30 to 36 months of disability is observed.

Following this new proposal, the Sector's arguments focus on the MSSS action plan, which has the objective of reducing the absenteeism rate by 17% over the next three years.

Consequently, after these arguments and considering the incidences projected from 2001-2002 for disability cases for a period of less than 24 months to which full credibility cannot be granted, the insurer has accepted to maintain the current rate, in the hope that the MSSS action plan, in which the FIIQ intends to take an active part, will become reality. We should note that the MSSS action plan aims to reduce the disability ratio to the 1998-1999 level.

The FIIQ hopes that the main factors of deterioration of nurses' claims experience, such as the health-care reform, government prescription drug policies, retirements and the deterioration of the work environment, will have less negative impacts on the plans.

If we want the long-term disability premium rate to be maintained at a more stable level, it is very important for the action plan drafted by the MSSS to be operational and for the FIIQ to be an active participant in this process. To ensure the success of this action plan, the FIIQ will ask the government to make a financial investment in rehabilitation programs.

Henceforth we can only hope that the trends analyzed over the past year will continue to improve.

The President of the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ)*, Madam Gyslaine Desrosiers, presented the new Nurses' Act to delegates.

Gyslaine Desrosiers stated that the adoption of the *Act to amend the Professional Code* on June 14 had marked a turning point for the history of the profession. This new bill is an important step towards the recognition of nursing work and matter of great pride for nurses. According to the President of the OIIQ, this new bill is a reflection of the practice of the profession which is both modern, complex and diversified. It recognizes the evolution of skills, confirms the scope of clinical judgement and professional autonomy and translates nurses' level of responsibility and decisional powers. This act also legitimizes the practices developed outside the current legislative framework, positions the profession in a changing environment, allows for its evolution and promotes interdisciplinarity. Although this act was passed by the National Assembly, it is still not ratified, which means that it is not yet in effect. The President of the OIIQ also called on nurses to be vigilant with regard to intravenous injections. She invited delegates to inform the OIIQ of any problems by sending a fax to Céline Mercier or Jocelyne Poirier, 514-935-3147.

Delegates had the opportunity to ask a certain number of questions regarding the sharing of responsibilities between the various health professionals.

Bill 90,
finally
adopted

RENEWAL

Rates in effect as of January 1, 2003

PLAN	CURRENT RATES	RATES AS OF 01-01-2003 ²	VARIATION
BASIC PLAN			
Basic Drug Insurance			
Plan Individual	\$16.95	\$18.78	
Single-parent	\$27.58	\$30.56	+10,8%
Family	\$41.36	\$45.83	
BASIC EXTENDED PLAN III			
Individual	\$4.32	\$4.17	
Single-parent	\$7.00	\$6.73	- 3,9%
Family	\$10.33	\$9.91	
EXTENDED PLAN I (dental care)			
Individual	\$10.41	\$10.17	
Single-parent	\$17.19	\$16.79	- 2,3%
Family	\$25.50	\$24.91	
EXTENDED PLAN II			
Life insurance and Basic ADD (\$5,000)	\$0.340/\$5,000	\$0.355 /\$5,000	+ 4,4%
Life insurance for dependent children (\$3,000/child)	\$0.08	\$0.08	0%
Additional life insurance and ADD (per \$1,000)	\$0.083/\$1,000	\$0.083/\$1,000	0%
Long-term disability	1.434% of gross salary	1.434% of gross salary	0%
			2.9% average weighted increase

¹ Extended Basic Plan III includes hospital expenses, the fees of health professionals, the cost of travel insurance and miscellaneous expenses (saccharometer, wheelchair, etc.).

² Rate excluding the 9% tax.

³ Rate including the employer's participation (\$0.92 for an individual plan and \$2.30 for a single-parent or family plan).



Violence Zero tolerance

The executive officers in charge of the Status of Women and Occupational Health and Safety sectors, Sylvie Boulanger and Sylvie Savard, reported on the work on the issue of violence. They spoke of the actions organized since the last Federal Council and announced the ones to come.

Thus, in the context of March 8, besides participating in the material produced by the Intersyndicale, the Federation should publish a first awareness-raising pamphlet on cultural diversity. Then, for May 12, an exploratory march will be organized in various workplaces in order to check the level of safety of the premises. For Nurses' Day, the Federation is also planning to organize meetings on a regional basis to give nurses the opportunity to exchange and unite around the issue of violence at work.

The executive officers in charge stated that, in 2003, meetings would continue to be an occasion for awareness-raising and information work. The right to work in dignity was identified as one of the organizations' priorities for the year 2003.





TOMORROW

After a year of collective reflection, the FIIQ TOMORROW work group presented an action plan with the aim of developing our organization, the FIIQ, to better adapt it to the realities of the 21st century. Resulting from the involvement of union activists and elected representatives, consultants, support staff and members of the coordinating team, this action plan reflects a new vision of the FIIQ which, far from breaking with the past, is meant to bring hope and renewal.

"Faithful to the values of solidarity, justice and equality around which the labour movement has developed, and faced with the rise of neoliberalism and the attacks of globalization unleashed against the achievements of the welfare state, the labour movement is reshaping itself. The FIIQ, like most Quebec union organizations, has not escaped this trend of re-examining its practice and strategies. Having taken the lead in such reflection, the FIIQ is on the eve of initiating the last stage of the process, by renewing its practice and expanding its power to influence" he pursued. Although the plan of action was presented to delegates it will only be debated and voted on at the April 2003 Federal Council meeting.

The action plan is meant as a message of solidarity, openness and strength, which the FIIQ is issuing to its union activists and members. As Daniel Gilbert pointed out, *"the plan of action is also a message it is addressing to its union partners and to all members of feminist and grassroots groups. Yes, tomorrow, the FIIQ will be even stronger and more united."*

The work group reminded delegates that the plan of action was based on a very broad participatory approach. Guided by the core values advanced by the labour movement, it is shaped by a reality specific to the FIIQ – a homogeneous membership (100% nurses) characterized by an exceptional proportion of women (92%). Exceptional, because in the Quebec labour movement as a whole, the FIIQ represents the largest organized group of women.

The action plan proposes that the union influence of the FIIQ be extended to every level of the organization, particularly in institutions and regions. Over the next few years, work must focus on members, and especially on grassroots union activists. Each level of the structure must be called upon so that union activists commit themselves and become involved in their environment. The objective is to firmly root, in nurses' working and living environments, the force that has always characterized the Federation at the Quebec-wide level, a force that must increasingly have a female visage.

We can already see the outlines of an organization that is both similar to, and different from, the one that now exists. Similar because this action plan does not make any changes in the political structure and the service structure. Similar also in that the union activists and members will recognize their union culture and values. The conditions and the development of a quality health-care network continue to be at the core of the FIIQ's concerns.

Similar, but also different, because it is more deeply rooted in a strong and expanded union practice, at every level of the organization. According to this vision, FIIQ TOMORROW will be open to local, regional, national and international alliances and solidarity, while keeping both feet well anchored in reality and in local, regional, national and - why not? - international action as well.

Articulated around five major lines, the plan of action is grounded in reality by realistic objectives and actions:

- **Line 1** : Education at the core of union practice
- **Line 2** : Increased union commitment based on trust and respect
- **Line 3** : A strong and expanded local union practice
- **Line 4** : Consolidating bargaining power
- **Line 5** : Expanding the power to influence

As requested by the delegation at the June Federal Council, a document that presents a financial analysis of the plan of action was presented to delegates. The document *Consolidating our gains: A unifying action plan*, will be debated and adopted at the Federal Council to be held next April. Meanwhile, the FIIQ TOMORROW work group will meet local union representatives, the members of boards of directors of affiliated unions and the employees of the Federation in order to discuss this plan of action. Keep an eye out for more on this question in April 2003

Solidarity

Solidarity with civil society in El Salvador

Delegates warmly greeted Germàn Jarèo Garcìa, an international representative of FESTES (*Federation of workers' unions of El Salvador*), which is part of the *Alliance of Citizens Against the Privatization Of Health*. Monsieur Garcìa spoke to delegates about the vast movement of mobilization that is organizing across the country to protest against the privatization of health-care and services. He also denounced the repression against health-care workers and physicians, on strike for over two months, and members of civil society who are opposed to privatization. Large numbers of delegates signed a petition that will be sent to the Salvadorian government.

The Proposed FTAA

In the pursuit of the work to expose the effects of neoliberal globalization, the FIIQ invited Mr. Dorval Brunelle, a professor at UQAM renowned for his denunciation of the proposed FTAA, as a guest speaker at the Federal Council meeting. Dorval Brunelle explained in practical terms the harmful consequences of the FTAA project (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) for the populations. However, to offset these gloomy prospects, Brunelle spoke of the international links of solidarity that are rapidly developing.

Dorval Brunelle also spoke about the vast consultation that has begun in Latin America since September. This consultation will extend to the three Americas and should be completed by spring 2003. In Quebec, the consultation is planned for the beginning of the year 2003.

Pay equity

MAKING HEADWAY



The work on pay equity is carrying on at an intensive pace. In the past weeks, consultants and union activists were busy drawing up a synthesis of the information compiled from the hundreds of questionnaires completed by nurses in different job titles, who work in all types of institutions and in different regions. These questionnaires represent such a wealth of information that it is undeniable that nurses who participated in the inquiries did so with all the professionalism they demonstrate everyday to provide quality care. Bravo and thank you to all who participated in these inquiries.

The procedure adopted by the *Intersyndicale* for the crucial stage of the evaluation of all job categories, predominantly female job categories as well as predominantly male ones, was presented by Sophie Fontaine, consultant for the Negotiation Sector. Three interunion and inter-sectoral evaluation committees (education, civil service and health/social services) have the responsibility to establish the value of jobs. To do so, the committee members must, on the basis of the information appearing in the synthesis (the duties and specific examples), make a judgement and agree on the level to be attributed, depending on those that appear in the evaluation plan for each of the 17 sub-factors. As an example, here are the levels for the sub-factor *Skills in inter-personal relations*:

1. The duties of the job require courtesy, politeness.
2. The duties of the job require that the employee show patience, tactfulness or sympathy, sensitivity, and express support and comfort to a person.
3. The duties of the job require that the employee show self-control or diplomacy with the other person; it is necessary to control one's emotions in difficult or tense situations, to be delicate in relations with people or to appreciate what should be said, done or avoided in relations with people.
4. The duties of the job require that the employee show true and sustained interest to establish contact with the person, while keeping a certain emotional distance. It is necessary to grasp a person's feelings, to listen to her and to understand what she expresses, without examining or exploring these feeling.
5. The duties of the job require that the employee lead an organized group to set objectives and pursue goals in order to influence action. It is necessary, in particular, to initiate action, to evaluate the progress of the group and to promote the emergence of a consensus, taking into consideration the inter-actions between all the members of the group.
6. The duties of the job require that the employee decode the problems and the concerns behind the feelings and statements that are only partially formulated or implied, understand the person's motivation, grasp the nuances and express this understanding. It is necessary to place oneself in the place of the other person, to see a situation like the other person sees it, while keeping control of ones own emotions. It is necessary to accompany and help the person to progress.

This work is first of all carried out within each organization, then an *interunion* consensus must be established; this consensus will be presented, discussed and argued with the representatives of the *Conseil du trésor*. It is in this way that a value will be attributed to each of the predominantly female and predominantly male job categories and then, later, there will be an estimation of the pay differences and the pay adjustments will be calculated.

This is the job evaluation work to which union activists and consultants will now be devoting their energy. By the time you read this article, a first group of 45 job categories will already be in the process of being discussed.



Newly-elected union officers

The Federal Council delegates elected four union representatives to sit on FIIQ committees. Welcome and good luck to all in their new positions!

For the Occupational Health and Safety Committee:

- Denis Nadeau, CHUS, Sherbrooke

For the Journal Committee:

- Dominique Phaneuf, Lakeshore General hospital, Montreal

For the Negotiating Committee (substitutes):

- Céline Gagnon, Centre hospitalier et d'hébergement de Rivière-du-Loup (CHR Grand-Portage), Rivière-du-Loup
- Édith Pouliot, Centre hospitalier Pierre-Boucher, Longueuil



15 years



A festive evening!

WE COULD NOT PASS THE 15 YEARS OF THE FIIQ OVER IN SILENCE. THUS, ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 3, WE TOOK A PAUSE TO CELEBRATE THE FIIQ'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY.

"So many happy moments...difficulties settled... victories obtained... in the course of these 15 years."

It was with these words that Lucille Auger, consultant for the Education-Animation Service and Jean-Francois Charlebois, secretary and person responsible for the website, launched the 15th anniversary celebrations.

After enjoying a good meal, delegates chatted and laughed, during the presentation of the guest members of the FIIQ Club, as well as during the wonderful show given by Clémence Desrochers.



A PARODY OF A TELEVISION PROGRAMME, CLUB LABRECHE, WAS PUT ON. IT WAS CALLED THE FIIQ CLUB.

The guests were: for Canadian solidarity, Linda Silas, ex-President of the New Brunswick Nurses Union (NBNU); for the status of women, Lise Lamontagne, from the Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes; for labour relations, Michel Grant, UQAM professor; for the profession, Gyslaine Desrosiers, president of the OIIQ, for Quebec solidarity, Robert Caron, ex-President of the SPGQ; and as ex-officio member, the President of the Federation, Jennie Skene.

All the guests who had to deal with the Federation over the years told delegates how they perceived the FIIQ. All the guests arrived at the same conclusion: the FIIQ is a union organization that has left its mark on the political and labour scene in Quebec.



Happy Holiday Season !

FIIQ EN ACTION

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THERE WAS A WONDERFUL SURPRISE IN STORE FOR DELEGATES. Clémence Desrochers once again presented a moving show, with monologues, poems and a few songs. Thank you Clémence for these beautiful moments!

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PRIORITIES

Proposed Contract Demands

Nego



After the first consultation of members held last November, the Negotiation Coordinating Team – Lina Bonamie, Sylvie Savard, Richard Beulé and Linda Perron – presented the proposed contract demands to Federal Council delegates. This first consultation, you will recall, focused on the following six priorities: restructuring of work time, stabilization of positions, maintenance and development of competencies, prevention of violence, accelerated dispute settlement and access to child care in the workplace. Based on these priorities, more specific demands were formulated to define their scope more concretely. More general demands were also introduced in the preliminary draft, either to correct problems often reported by union reps, or to harmonize the wording of certain clauses of the collective agreement with the amendments made to various legislation.

Based on priorities

The first part of the preliminary draft seeks to define more precisely the demands resulting from the priorities adopted.

• Restructuring of work time

The proposed work time restructuring model introduces twenty recommendations concerning the regular work day and work week, the definition of overtime, the premium rates for evening, night and rotating shifts, the annual vacation period and quantum, accumulation of experience, supplemental benefits for nurses who voluntarily delay their retirement, and compensation for statutory holidays.

• Stabilization of positions

The process intended to grant incumbency to all nurses with casual status and stabilize the positions in the centres of activity serves as the basis for several recommendations. The creation of a parity committee and a union leave bank is essential to the application of the new work time restructuring model. In addition, the mechanisms for granting work days that will be freed up and the creation of positions in the centres of activities, based on the assessment of the needs of the regular teams and replacement needs, would become specific mandates of this committee. Finally, the reduction of the normal annual vacation period and the obligation for the Employer to maintain full-time positions when the needs justify it are also part of the dozen recommendations regarding this priority.

• Maintenance and development of competencies

The Negotiation Coordinating Team explained to the delegates that the priority recommendation concerning recognition of nurses' experience and expertise when awarding positions will be the object of specific recommendations when the work on classification of nursing jobs is more advanced. One of the objectives will be to limit the requirements for the position to allow nurses to take on new challenges and explore new clinical fields.

Regarding the human resources development plan (HRDP), the Employer's obligation to develop it jointly with the Union and the various programs it must include (welcoming and orientation, adaptation,

training, evaluation and planning of training needs and motivation/enhancement) are covered by specific recommendations. This priority also includes the right for all nurses to benefit from five days of in-service education per year in addition to the work days stipulated in their centre of activities.

• Prevention of violence

The demands regarding prevention of violence at work range from the introduction of a definition of violence in the collective agreement to the implementation of a policy to counter violence in all institutions. A declaration of principles should also be included in the institution's Code of Ethics, as prescribed in the policy developed by the FIIQ. A demand to introduce a mechanism in the collective agreement for handling complaints is also an integral part of the preliminary draft. So is the addition of a mandate for the local Joint Health and Safety Committee to develop a program to prevent violence at work.

• Accelerated dispute settlement

The ten recommendations arising from this priority are intended to streamline the dispute resolution process, making it faster and more efficient. Recommendations regarding the selection and appointment of an arbitrator and the use of a summary procedure when the dispute concerns certain common issues were introduced. In addition, the impossibility for an employer to terminate an employee on disability and the maintenance of salary insurance benefits during a dispute concerning the physician's recommendations are covered by specific recommendations. Finally, since the introduction of medical arbitration to settle disability disputes has been accepted as a priority, it can be found in the preliminary draft in the form of a recommendation.

• Access to child care in the workplace

A recommendation to encourage employers to evaluate the workplace's needs regarding access to a child care service, particularly for nurses working evenings, nights and weekends, is also submitted for discussion. Regardless of whether the child care service is in the workplace, at home or in a family environment, the Employer would also be responsible for organizing it.

OTHER DEMANDS

The second part of the preliminary draft, with its more general recommendations not necessarily related to the priorities adopted, is intended to harmonize the content of certain clauses of the collective agreement with those of various laws (Act respecting labour standards, Act instituting the civil union and establishing new rules of filiation) and to resolve certain difficulties raised in the application of the collective agreement.

• Amended laws, an adapted agreement

Recommendations to recognize the civil union on the same basis as marriage and the parental rights of same-sex spouses are proposed in the preliminary draft. Harmonization of the texts concerning the right to a greater number of days of leave for parental and family responsibilities and the amendment of the grounds for this leave is also proposed.

• Solutions to the problems encountered

There are 37 demands for the purpose of solving difficulties of application of the collective agreement. They concern the working conditions of nurses in all types of institutions and amend nearly 20 clauses of the collective agreement. Here is a summary of the main demands.

- Leave without loss of pay for a nurse who serves on the board of directors of the institution or of the regional board or who is a member of the Regional Nursing Commission.
- Automatic removal of disciplinary notices from the employee's file after one year.
- Protection of the bargaining unit by ensuring that the Employer assigns tasks within the jurisdiction of the nursing profession not to management nurses, as is the case in several long-term residential care centres, but to nurses who are part of the bargaining unit.
- Extension of time limits (60 days or 6 months) to submit a grievance to arbitration in order to facilitate investigations by union agents and encourage settlements before the grievance is filed, in some cases.
- Recognition of seniority only from the date when the employee begins working in a position covered by the bargaining unit.
- The time limit allowed for an employee who leaves her position to occupy positions outside the bargaining unit.
- The possibility for an employee to leave a replacement when the number of replacement days is increased, regardless of the reason.
- The possibility for a nurse on availability (on call) not to report for work in the shift after an on-call shift when she was recalled to work and required to work for more than half of her on-call shift.
- Minimum compensation of two hours at straight time in the event of a recall, in addition to the availability premium and the compensation for time spent on the telephone, if the nurses provides telephone service from her home.
- Possible postponement of the annual vacation during the holiday season (December 15 to January 15) for nurses working in a CLSC and the possibility for school nurses to take their annual vacation during the week of school break.
- Exclusion of the period when no benefit has been paid to a pregnant employee for the calculation of the average base salary serving to establish her maternity leave benefit.
- An advance paid by the Employer on the income replacement benefit in the event of a request for protective reassignment of a pregnant worker.
- A substantial increase in the Employer contribution to the basic drug insurance plan.
- The right to obtain a partial leave without pay when the illness of the employee's father, mother, spouse or one of her children requires her presence.
- Access, on the recommendation of the employee's attending physician, to a professional rehabilitation period in accordance with her residual capacity, earlier in the disability period and for a longer period if this favours the employee's professional rehabilitation.
- Refunding of fees for forms required by the Employer certifying the employee's disability.

- The right to the evening premium starting at 4 p.m. when the employee begins her shift before 2 p.m. and ends it after 6 p.m.
- Improvement of isolation benefits and premiums: outings for dependents, addition of localities to certain sectors, additional education days for employees working in these sectors.
- Access to education leave without pay or partial education leave without pay once the probation period is completed.
- The right to a three-month deferred payment leave to pursue full-time studies.
- The obligation for employers to transmit to the Union representative any accident report or any request for protective reassignment of a pregnant employee.
- The right to floating holidays for employees working in a CHSLD prosthetic unit.
- Standardization of payment of overtime for all employees, regardless of their job title.
- The introduction of a schedule concerning special conditions for candidates for the practice of the nursing profession and student nurses: their status, their right to be included on the availability list, recognition of their seniority, their membership in the drug insurance plan.

In conclusion, we should remember that these contract demands will be the basis for the second consultation in view of producing the draft collective agreement. This consultation should be held in all institutions affiliated to the FIIQ during the weeks of January 13, 20 and 27, 2003. At these local general meetings, the nurses will be able to amend these recommendations, add new ones or simply adopt them. It will be up to the delegates at the Special Federal Council early next spring to adopt the final draft collective agreement.

These consultation meetings are important... so help ensure a big turnout!

Nego

The consultation on negotiations... telling results!

The local general assemblies on the negotiation priorities for the next bargaining round confirmed the importance of an in-depth transformation of the conditions in which nurses practice and work.

A large number of nurses attended the local general assemblies and a vast majority of them supported the position that it is time for a radical shift in the organization of work time and the stabilization of positions and regular work teams in the centres of activities. The results obtained lead us to believe that FIIQ-affiliated nurses will stand massively behind the process of negotiations for their future working conditions. A very strong majority of nurses voted in favour of the six priorities:

- restructuring of work time (97%)
- stabilization of positions (98%)
- maintenance and development of competencies (99%)
- prevention of violence (99%)
- accelerated dispute settlement (98%)
- access to workplace daycare centres (98%)