



# en Action

Federal Council  
February 16, 17, 18, 19 (p.m.)  
and 20  
Special Convention  
February 19, 2004 (morning)

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 1 MARCH 2004

## A union force THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED

The President of the FIIQ opened the Federal Council of February 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 with an appeal to all nurses and an invitation to nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, perfusionists, child nurses and extra-corporeal circulation technicians. Venturing that perhaps within a year, we will all be together in unions configured according to the new local integrated services organizations, Jennie Skene emphasized the importance of this meeting, which concerns union leaders to the highest point. *"Beyond the inevitable emotions and grieving, what we must do today is reiterate the choice of nurses to build a union force in Quebec, making room for new partners whom we work with every day, in any case, at the patients' bedside. All together, we must prepare to build FIIQ TOMORROW, by transforming our unions to adapt them to the announced upheavals. With them, and as nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, perfusionists, baby nurses and extra-corporeal circulation technicians arrive, we will consolidate our organization and transform it in the pursuit of a common objective: to develop an indispensable union force."*



pendent organizations. But it is possible to reverse the momentum and make this period an opportunity to consolidate our forces. This is the path the FIIQ intends to follow. Beyond the legal challenges, there are rank-and-file union members, caregivers whose working conditions are increasingly difficult. There are also practitioners who will see their everyday lives transformed by the creation of local integrated services organizations and who see their practice being constantly altered under the influence of institutional changes on the technological, professional or organizational levels. For all of them, the FIIQ and the labour movement as a whole must be present, functional and militant. *"This is why we have decided to welcome our new partners as soon as possible. We cannot permit ourselves to block the union transformation process decreed by the legislation, by provoking a do-nothing approach that would leave union members defenceless in facing the upheavals that lie in store for the health and social services network. Now that the laws are adopted, and until they are declared illegal, we will comply with them and – who knows? – by working together, consolidate new bonds of solidarity among ourselves and develop new solidarity with all nursing and cardio-respiratory caregivers."*

### Assuming our union responsibilities

*"Of course," she added, "we didn't want these changes, we even contested them and we will continue to do so by denouncing the attacks on freedom of association represented by Bill 30, which was adopted under closure last December. Our Legal Service is preparing a motion for a declaratory judgment to have certain aspects of Bill 30 declared contrary to the Canadian and Quebec human rights charters."*

But in the meantime, union organizations have the duty to do everything possible to support the Quebec labour movement. This movement is under threat from transformations yet to come, which, if we do not take care, can lead to divisions between different job titles, between unions, and between central labour organizations and inde-

### Resisting the temptation of ignoring the problem

*"Of course," she also suggested, "we can indulge ourselves and decide to paralyze the merged unions, but what would become of the members we represent? What would happen to the defence of their interests? What would become of the union responsibility we have always assumed as an agent of change in the pursuit of social justice and equality between men and women? Refusing to allow ourselves to be locked into sterile gestures, we have decided to take the battle where it ought to be, onto the public stage, in our regions and at the national level, by fighting the threats to democracy, justice and social solidarity represented by the Charest Government and its reengineering plan."*

### Unity, solidarity and loyalty

The President concluded with an appeal for unity, loyalty and solidarity in the months ahead. *"In these times of upheaval, we must continue to serve our members, offer them the best possible services and defend them in every forum. Together, with our new partners, we have a union force to consolidate and new solidarity to develop."*

With March 8, 2004 approaching, the members of the Status of Women Committee and the Réseau des femmes took the opportunity to voice their anger about certain reforms or budget cuts introduced by the Charest Government, with disastrous repercussions for women. Taking their inspiration from the March 8 pamphlet, they levelled an indictment against the Government on several counts:

Regarding the increase in child-care fees from \$5 to \$7, they reminded the Government that women will have less money to support their children.

Regarding the \$111 per month cut to social assistance, which will primarily penalize one-parent families with dependent children, they reminded the Government that its plan to fight poverty is in fact a declaration of war on poor people.

Regarding subcontracting, they reminded the Government that women hold the jobs most vulnerable to subcontracting and that this means that these women workers will grow old in poverty.

Regarding the cuts in the education system, they condemned the Government for compromising access to free schooling.

Regarding the structural reform of the health-care system, they again expressed their disagreement, denouncing the fact that they have not been consulted and that, reform after reform, governments always seem to know more than nurses about the health-care system's real needs.

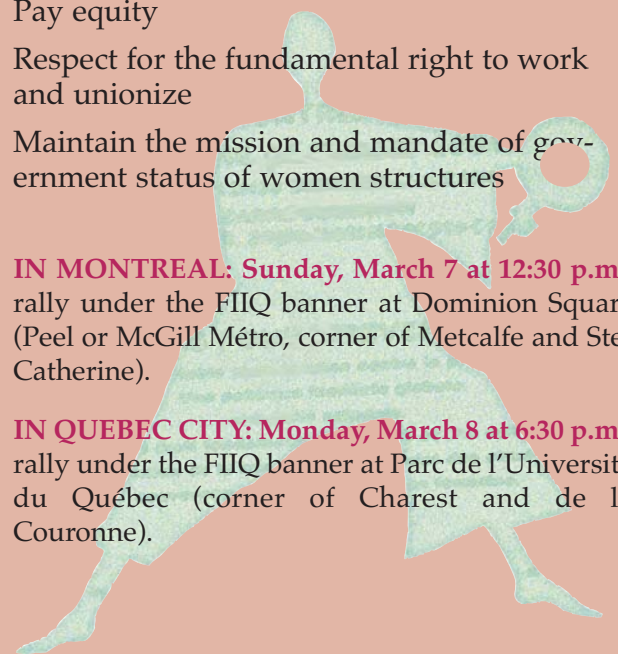
### International Women's Day

#### MARCH FOR:

- A true action plan against poverty
- An all-inclusive family policy
- Pay equity
- Respect for the fundamental right to work and unionize
- Maintain the mission and mandate of government status of women structures

**IN MONTREAL: Sunday, March 7 at 12:30 p.m.,** rally under the FIIQ banner at Dominion Square (Peel or McGill Métro, corner of Metcalfe and Ste-Catherine).

**IN QUEBEC CITY: Monday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m.,** rally under the FIIQ banner at Parc de l'Université du Québec (corner of Charest and de la Couronne).





# New legislation creates upheaval

## THE HEALTH-CARE NETWORK AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Health-Care and Negotiation Sectors and the Union Organizing Service gave delegates a presentation on Bills 25 and 30, as adopted by the Charest Government last December. Delegates thus learned of all the amendments tabled and studied together the consequences of these laws.

Around the end of April, the local health and social services development agencies (the former regional boards) will propose an organizational model to Minister Couillard based on one or more local integrated services organizations, which will cover the entire territory of each agency. The FIIQ expects that the establishment of the local integrated services organizations and the resulting institutional mergers, will take place from September to December of this year.

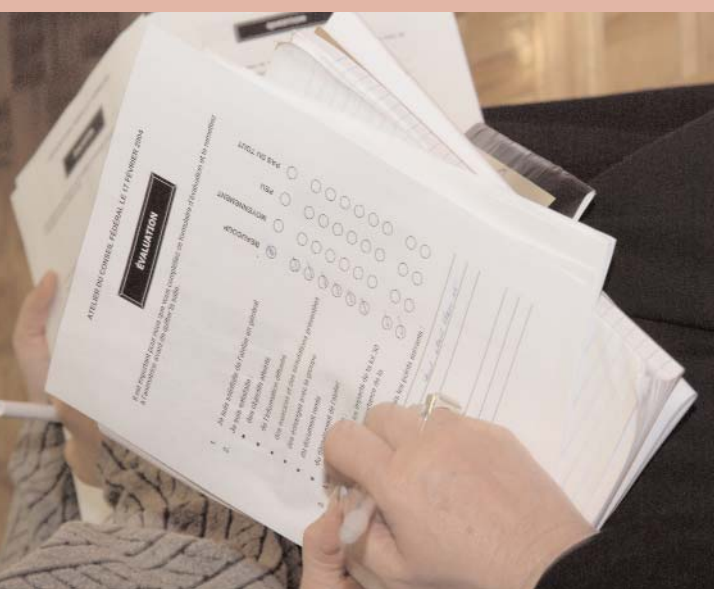
The merger of the bargaining units in the health care network will probably occur in two phases. The Minister will determine the date when the institutions excluded from the new local integrated services organizations (CHU, CHA, Youth Centres and integrated services organizations already in place) will have to combine the bargaining units by category of personnel. He will also determine the effective date or dates of the coming into effect of the provisions for determining a new bargaining unit in the institutions that will be included in the local integrated services organizations.



## A Special Convention that's truly special

A truly special Convention was held the morning of February 19. There was only one point on the agenda, the postponement of the next Regular Convention and, consequently, the extension of the mandates of the Executive members. Instead of ending in May, as prescribed in the FIIQ's Constitution and By-laws, the next Regular Convention, and the elections to the Executive Committee, will be held in June 2005.

Within the context of the coming upheavals, such as the amalgamations of bargaining units, the institutional mergers for the creation of local integrated services organizations, the equity negotiations, etc., it quickly became apparent that the postponement resolution was necessary, even essential. The Executive Committee proposal was adopted by a very large majority. On the other hand, it can be foreseen that other special conventions will be called this year, precisely because of the announced upheavals. To welcome new members from other union organizations or other job categories, among other actions, we will have to adapt our Constitution and By-laws, which can only be done at a Convention. In this turbulent year, many changes are impending in our organization, in our unions and in our centres of activity. We have to invest our energies in the right place.



**In workshops**, 600 Federal Council delegates discussed the changes generated by the merger of bargaining units, a merger imposed by the adoption of Bill 30.

Based on four local health and social services network scenarios, delegates identified the changes that will occur in their institution and the impacts on their union representation. Finally, they assessed the consequences of these changes for the FIIQ's role in the Quebec labour movement. From the exchanges of views during the workshops, delegates realized the essential ingredients required to get through this delicate period: unity, cohesion and leadership, associated with the mobilization of all nurses for a common objective, a strong and broader-based FIIQ.



# Our strength: cohesion, unity and solidarity

The primary objective of the controversial Bill 30 adopted by the Charest Government is to force bargaining units in the institutions of the health-care network to merge in order to reduce their number and then decentralize the negotiation of certain matters to the local level. The Government therefore unilaterally decided that nurses, nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, perfusionists, extra-corporeal circulation technicians and baby nurses would form a single group – Category 1 : nursing care and cardio-respiratory personnel – and would be included in one and the same bargaining unit.

These changes will alter the ways things are done in the FIIQ and each of its affiliated unions. To prepare for the changes, the Executive Committee proposed that delegates collectively adopt basic principles and rules of operation to guide their actions throughout the bargaining unit merger process. These principles are based on ethical values that delegates were discuss after the presentation of a document on this question.

## Impending changes

To better understand the impending changes, delegates split up into workshops, in which they discussed the importance of adopting principles and rules that will enable nurses to remain in a union organization that will still bring together the majority of Quebec unionized nurses. Based on the examples provided, the delegates drew two conclusions:

1° : The nurses will have to vote in almost every institution in the network. Why? Because the majority of nursing assistants, who henceforth will be part of the same bargaining unit as the nurses, are currently represented by central labour organizations (CSN, FTQ, CSD, CSQ)

2° : Several of the FIIQ's affiliated units will end up with the same employer and will have to merge into a single union. Why? Because with the creation of local integrated services organizations, there will be institutional mergers and mergers of bargaining units. In the event that one CH, two CLSCs and three or four CHSLDs become a local integrated services organization, and thus an institution, it is likely that these members are currently represented by one, two or even three unions affiliated to the FIIQ.

## The importance of **NOT SPLITTING THE VOTE** of FIIQ nurses

The two types of unions that exist in the FIIQ, regional and local, will undergo major changes, both in the composition of their membership and in their political structure. On the one hand, nurses will no longer be part of bargaining units that are exclusively reserved for them. On the other hand, their unions will be transformed. Before embarking on this important union allegiance voting period, delegates reaffirmed their adherence to the basic principles that will guide their conduct during the bargaining unit merger process:

- Respect for union democracy;
- Consensus-building to maintain union unity;
- Strengthening union solidarity for the first local negotiations.

The delegates agreed that it is essential to rely on the cohesion and union unity of all Quebec nurses to rally all nurses in the same institution (or local integrated services organization) exclusively under the FIIQ banner. To avoid splitting the nurses' vote among several FIIQ unions, the delegates chose to adopt rules of procedure that will allow nurses a free choice of the union organization that will represent them while staying with the FIIQ, a FIIQ that should soon represent the vast majority of *nursing and cardiorespiratory personnel*. Everyone agreed that splitting the nurses' vote could allow a rival organization to obtain the most votes and become the union certified to represent the nurses.

## Rules based on **UNITY, COOPERATION** and **SOLIDARITY**

Delegates opted for a strategy based on cooperation among the unions affiliated to the FIIQ. This will have the advantage of not splitting the nurses' vote and foster the creation of stronger unions. Therefore, the unions representing groups of nurses with the same employer, identified by the Minister to initiate mergers of their bargaining units, will meet to agree that the name of only one FIIQ-affiliated union will appear on the ballot.



The nurses will be invited to attend information meetings to study and ratify the understanding reached by the unions. They may also be asked to participate in a pre-referendum vote, to choose the name of the FIIQ union that will appear on the ballot.



## A union force focused on the future

Fifteen years ago, nurses chose to join forces within the FIIQ to give themselves a single voice, a single strong organization representative of its members. We must continue to operate in a spirit of unity and solidarity. Apart from the 45,500 FIIQ nurses, 11,000 nursing assistants, over 2,500 respiratory therapists, about 65 baby nurses, 50 perfusionists and 50 extra-corporeal circulation technicians could be part of this new union force. On the strength of its numbers, the issues addressed, its solid organization and its expertise, the FIIQ will be the anchor point of this new force. This will give the FIIQ a preponderant role on the public sector labour scene, primarily in the health-care sector. Indeed, this will be the only union organization with a membership composed exclusively of care providers, 90% of whom are women. Its role as an important stakeholder in the field of health care will only be strengthened.

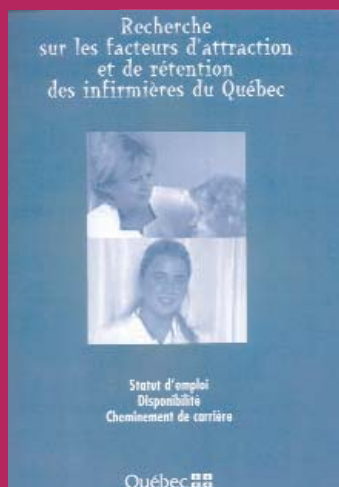
# Nursing practice at the crossroads

On February 9, 2003, the FIIQ deposited its draft collective agreement with the *Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux (CPNSSS)*. The demands related to the "classification of nursing jobs" issue were not included, because the reflection and discussions were not yet completed.

An analytical document entitled *Nursing Practice at the Crossroads* was therefore presented to the delegates. The purpose of this

analysis is to fuel the discussions that ultimately will lead to specific demands, which will be integrated into the negotiation process for renewal of the collective agreement.

To guide the development of this issue, an analytical framework has been designed, presenting an integrative approach to the changes in nursing practice in the various health and social services environments.



## Interesting research results

The very interesting results of the research conducted by a subcommittee of the Working Group on Nursing Workforce Planning, attached to the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux*, were presented to the delegates<sup>1</sup>. The FIIQ, more than any other union organization, participated fully in this research. It did so by providing the necessary database for this research and through the contribution of Thérèse Laforest, consultant with the FIIQ Task and Organization of Work Sector. This research sought to identify the factors that could lead nurses to offer more availability or stay at work longer. It also sought to specify what a career path means to them. To accomplish this, the researchers performed descriptive exploratory research by using a twofold approach: focus groups facilitated by the Léger Marketing polling firm and a telephone survey conducted by the SOM polling firm. After completing this research, the Group formulated recommendations to improve financial conditions, reduce the excessive overload and restructure work time. Other recommendations dealt with professional practice, education and professional development, supervision and the work environment.

Following the keen interest expressed by the delegates when this research was presented, the FIIQ has decided to prepare a special publication on this issue to share information with the entire membership.

<sup>1</sup> Québec (Province), (2003). *Recherche sur les facteurs d'attraction et de rétention des infirmières du Québec, Statut d'emploi, Disponibilité, Cheminement de carrière*, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 122 pages.



This framework shows the central role played by the nurses' career path in the treatment of this issue. It is up to the FIIQ to facilitate the professional advancement of all nurses by restricting, as much as possible, the barriers likely to limit their professional options.

This framework also reveals a set of factors that have influenced and marked the evolution of the nursing profession and practice over the past decade. It begins by considering the environmental change factors (institutional, technological, organizational, professional), which have profoundly altered the practice of the nursing profession. These changes have altered nurses' knowledge, savvy and know-how to respond properly to the needs and expectations of various clienteles. These knowledge categories, which are complementary, represent the cornerstone of the classification of nursing jobs, the requirements giving access to the different job titles and the fit between nursing functions and the academic education required. In short, this framework shows that, in the final analysis, the professional advancement of nurses is heavily dependent on factors gravitating around it.

To finalize the demands related to this issue, two phases are yet to come. The first phase will allow all members to share the analysis of this problem. To accomplish this, local teams will receive material by the beginning of May. The second phase will involve a vast consultation that should follow the May Federal Council meeting. All this will materialize in specific demands to be included in our draft collective agreement.



# SPECIAL ISSUE on Negotiations

The Vice-President and Executive member responsible for Negotiations, Lina Bonamie, after introducing the negotiation coordinating team, began this day at the Federal Council by reminding delegates about the current issues: the 2% salary increase for 2003, the pay equity exercise and the return of the consultation on the general increase rates and the pension plan. These issues were then the subject of a detailed report to the delegates.

## Pay equity

On January 9, Honourable Judge Carole Julien of the Superior Court overturned Chapter IX of the Pay Equity Act. This was a major victory for all Quebec women. According to the judgment, because of the second class status instituted by Chapter IX, Quebec women do not have access to a pay equity program established in accordance with the Pay Equity Act. For a clear understanding of this judgment's scope, it is important to recall the main stages of implementation of the Pay Equity Act.

### A reminder

On November 21, 1996, the Government adopted the Pay Equity Act, which came into force on November 21, 1997. This Act applies to all Quebec enterprises with 10 or more employees. These enterprises had a maximum of 4 years (up to November 21, 2001) to set up a pay equity program, which must allow correction of wage discrimination against women.

However, Chapter IX of the Act provided that enterprises that began or completed pay relativity or pay equity work before November 1996 could ask that this be recognized in compliance with equity principles to avoid having to repeat the exercise. The Government of Quebec, like over one hundred other Quebec employers (*Mouvement Desjardins, La Capitale Assurances, Concordia University, etc.*) therefore addressed such a request to the *Commission de l'équité salariale (CES)*.

As early as March 1999, the FIIQ had informed the CES ([www.fiiq.qc.ca/equsal/obsequite.htm](http://www.fiiq.qc.ca/equsal/obsequite.htm)) that the Government pay relativity program (16 factors) did not make it possible to achieve pay equity and that the CES therefore ought to reject the Government program.

In January 2001, the CES approved the Government pay relativity program (16 factors), except for the pay gap estimating method. The CES asked the *Conseil du trésor* to review the method of calculating the gaps between wages for predominantly female jobs and predominantly male jobs. By invoking this CES decision, the Government claimed to have fulfilled its pay equity obligations.

In March 2001, the FIIQ, like several other union organizations, addressed the Superior Court to have this decision overturned. Given the large number of challenges filed against CES decisions, Judge Carole Julien was appointed to hear all the cases.

In April 2001, despite this CES decision, the Government nonetheless began working with the *Intersyndicale Équité* (CSN, CSQ, FIIQ, FTQ, SFPQ) to review its job evaluation program. Within the context of this work, agreement was reached on a new wage gap estimating method in November 2001. This method generated a relativity adjustment of around 1.06%, payable in 5 annual adjustments starting November 2001. Nurses had already benefited from a first adjustment, based on the estimated gaps, when the collective agreement was settled in January 2000. On that occasion, the FIIQ had succeeded in negotiating a top-of-scale salary adjustment of 2.7% for nurses and 7.3% for Baccalaureate Nurses, in addition to payment of a 3% lump sum for the period from April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000. This settlement negotiated by the FIIQ was subsequently extended to all other Quebec nurses.

In March 2002, the *Intersyndicale équité* and the *Conseil du trésor* reached an agreement, first on a new job evaluation plan and secondly on a questionnaire. After the survey phase (June to November 2002), involving 13,000 employees in hundreds of job categories, the job evaluation process (job category by job category, subfactor by subfactor) could begin, and is still ongoing. However, it must be observed that pay equity was very far from the Charest Government's concerns, which explains the major slowdown of the work by the employer side since last May.

### Ruling

On January 9, 2004, the Honourable Judge Julien tabled a judgment containing 347 pages, plus 300 pages of appendices. This judgment began with the following prefatory comment:

*"The admission of women to complete equality would be the surest sign of civilization, and would double the intellectual powers of the human race."*

*Stendhal (1783-1842)*

The judge ruled Chapter IX of the Act invalid, in that it infringes not only the dignity of persons who hold a job in a predominantly female job category but also infringes the right to equality between men and women prescribed in the Quebec and Canadian Charters.

On February 5, the Government announced that it would not appeal this judgment and that it would resume the work carried on with the union organizations.

### Follow-up

A first work session with the *Conseil du trésor* was held on February 13. The main question on the agenda was how to integrate the work carried on since April 2001 into the general system prescribed in Chapters I to VIII of the Act. Asked to specify the scope of such a question to the delegation, Lina Bonamie gave the following example: *"the general system provides that once the parties have agreed on an evaluation plan, they must post it for 60 days in the workplaces and receive the employees' comments"*. Since the work performed at the *Intersyndicale* was not subject to the provisions of the general system, this posting has not been done. Without having the legal obligation to do so, each of the *Intersyndicale's* member union organizations has presented the job evaluation plan to its delegates, summarized it for internal publication, and made this plan accessible on its web site. We may not have observed the letter of the law, but we have certainly respected its spirit!

The Government has asked the union organizations, by the end of March, to give their answer and specify what route they prefer to complete the pay equity work promptly.

For the FIIQ, the work carried on since April 2001 is very consistent with the Pay Equity Act and should finally make it possible to achieve equity, both for nurses and for all working women in the Quebec public and parapublic sectors.

## 2% salary increase

You will remember that at the last Federal Council, delegates had mandated the Executive Committee to negotiate a one-year extension of the collective agreement, along with a 2% salary increase for 2003.

After a meeting with the *Conseil du trésor* on December 11, the latter informed the negotiating coordination team on February 6 that it was willing to enter into such an agreement with the FIIQ. However, the *Conseil du trésor* specified that, in the case of salary policy, the same parameters apply to all public and parapublic sector employees. This is why the agreement will have to adhere to the same rules as those negotiated in spring 2002 and applied in 2003 to the other employees in the public and parapublic sectors.

# SPECIAL ISSUE on Negotiations

Remember that salary increases are applied on January 1 of each year of the collective agreement, despite the fact that it comes into force on July 1. Thus, a last increase was paid on January 1, 2002 and covered the entire year 2002, even though the collective agreement expired on June 30, 2002. The negotiated agreement will therefore have the effect of granting a 2% salary increase for 2003, while extending the collective agreement to June 30, 2003.

Thus, the salary rates and scales in force on March 31, 2003 will be increased by 2% effective April 1, 2003, as was the case for the other employees in the public and parapublic sectors. The increase provided for the first three months of 2003 will be paid as a lump sum, with the months of April, May and June 2003 as the basis of calculation.

As we go to press, the texts of the agreement are not yet finalized. As soon as they are, the FIIQ will sign this agreement, which will then be subject to ratification by the local general assembly. Watch your bulletin boards so that you don't miss this meeting.

## IN BRIEF:

**Expiration date of the collective agreement: June 30, 2002.**

**Expiration date following the national agreement: June 30, 2003.**

**Salary increase: 2% effective April 1, 2003.**

**Lump sum of 2%: to compensate for the months of January, February and March 2003 and calculated on the salary paid for April, May and June 2003.**

**Retroactive pay: from April 1, 2003 to the date the agreement is signed.**

### EXAMPLE : In the event of the signature of the Quebec agreement by the FIIQ on March 20, 2004\*



\* Hypothetical date since the agreement is not finalized at the time of going to press

## Feedback from the consultation

At the Federal Council, half a day was dedicated to the feedback from the consultation on the salary increase rates and the pension plan. This consultation, held in institutions in January, produced forty recommendations. These recommendations were debated along with those proposed by the Executive Committee last December.

The recommendations of the draft collective agreement were adopted in their entirety by the delegates, often even unanimously.

### Regarding the rate of pay raise:

The general rates of increase for three years of:

- 4.5% on January 1, 2004
- 4% on January 1, 2005
- 4% on January 1, 2006

Indexation in case of a positive variance between the projected CPI rate and the actual CPI

### Regarding the pension plan:

- More equitable indexing of the total pension;
- Improvement of the deferred pension;
- Elimination of prejudice in the exercise of parental rights;
- The possibility of buying back the years reimbursed;
- The possibility of extending the term of gradual retirement;
- Negotiation of the Government's commitments to funding of the pension plan;

Increase in the Pension Committee's power over administration and funding of the plan.

Regarding the new proposals which came out of the consultation and which were adopted by delegates at the Federal Council, they pertain to:

The accumulation of experience in accordance with the position held at the time of gradual retirement;

And the employee's right to maintain participation in the pension plan during partial leaves without pay for education or by exchange of positions.

All these recommendations will be promptly deposited with the *Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux (C.P.N.S.S.S.)*. The demands regarding the classification of nursing jobs will be covered by a presentation and specific consultation in the spring. This last step will conclude the tabling of the draft collective agreement to be negotiated. Stay tuned for new developments in the next issues of *FIIQ En Action*.



## Education for union reps: a continuum

To meet new needs and adapt to the expectations expressed by union reps during the FIIQ TOMORROW process, the FIIQ decided that union education would take on a strategic dimension. It would become a preferred strategy for providing union reps with training and resourcing opportunities, and with the tools needed for increasingly complex union action. The various education programs offered will then be part of a continuum, allowing union reps to evolve and deal with the multiple complex issues they have to address.

## Replacement in a management position: consult your union rep

It isn't unusual for one of our members to be called upon to work as a replacement in a management position. Some say that this is happening more and more often. After considering this question, the FIIQ Research Sector has proposed some guidelines for clause 13.24 of the current collective agreement. It is therefore essential that nurses who are preparing to accept such a replacement contact their union representative.

## A better understanding of the ins and outs of government procurement

The Federal Council had the opportunity to hear a more detailed presentation regarding the trade agreements on government procurement, a subject already discussed in the last edition of *FIIQ Actualités* (Vol. 15 Special Edition). In addition to the document entitled *Public Procurement in Health Care*, a second document, *Appendices*, distributed at the Federal Council, presents the highlights of the three main agreements concerning government procurement: WTO, NAFTA, AIT. To our knowledge, the FIIQ is one of the first organizations, if not the only one, to have explored the issue of government procurement in such depth, given that it was essential to know the processes to which the health and social services network is now subject. People who want to know more about this question can visit the FIIQ Web site at [www.fiiq.qc.ca](http://www.fiiq.qc.ca)

## To maintain the *Conseil du statut de la femme*: A new kind of petition

Persistent rumors are circulating that the Charest Government is preparing to dismantle the *Conseil du statut de la femme*, abolish the *Secrétariat à la condition féminine* and eliminate the respondents for the status of women in the various government departments. Within the context of the rollbacks imposed by this Government, these bodies are more necessary than ever to defend women's interests. Women have therefore decided to issue an appeal to the Government: No to savings at the expense of Quebec women. If you want to support this new kind of petition, get people in your community to sign the following text. Then send the list of names of those who signed it, along with their profession, to the following email address: [sisyphesite@yahoo.ca](mailto:sisyphesite@yahoo.ca)

### We demand from the Government of Québec:

1. Maintenance of the *Conseil du statut de la femme* in its entirety.
2. Maintenance of the *Secrétariat à la condition féminine*.
3. A Minister responsible for the status of women, with the necessary budgets.

Your local team should have received the petition already. Otherwise, you can download it from the FIIQ Web site at [www.fiiq.qc.ca](http://www.fiiq.qc.ca).

Male delegates to the Federal Council were also invited to sign a petition of solidarity on this issue.

## Iraq one year later: WORLDWIDE ANTI-WAR PROTEST

In solidarity with the Iraqi and Afghan people  
Together let's demand more money for education,  
for health care,  
for development

The FIIQ, an active participant in the *Collectif Échec à la guerre*, invites you to join the demonstration

**SATURDAY, March 20 at 1 p.m. in Montreal** (*Dominion Square, corner of Peel and René-Lévesque*)

# A network with long tentacles ...

The *Réseau de Vigilance* is made up of more than fifty groups and organizations from every sector of Quebec society – union organizations, community groups, groups defending social rights, women's groups, etc. – which have decided to work together, as a network, to counter the social and union rollbacks announced by the Charest Government. The FIIQ participated in the creation of this network last October. Given that the delegation has included resistance to the neoliberal project in its action priorities, a network of regional respondents has been set up. They will play an active part in the joint action tables and actions organized by the *Réseau de Vigilance* in their region. The regional respondents will connect with local respondents in the institutions to organize mobilization.

### Regional respondents:

Lower St-Lawrence :	Andrée Lamontagne
Chaudière-Appalaches :	Carl Picard
Quebec City :	Danielle Matte Rita Lamonthé
Abitibi-Témiscamingue:	Annie Vallée
Montreal :	Joane Aubut Susan Mullen
Eastern Townships :	Brigitte Fauteux
Laurentians :	Josianne Ouellette
Mauricie-Bois-Francs :	Mireille St-Arnaud
Outaouais :	Steve Paul
Lanaudière :	Daniel Cyr
Saguenay-Lac St-Jean :	Martine Côté
Gaspésie- Iles-de-la-Madeleine :	Louise Gagné
Montréal :	Johanne Lafond Hélène Brault

In some regions, nurses are already participating in the regional *Table de Vigilance*. We hope that these initiatives will multiply and that soon nurses will be active in the resistance movement throughout Quebec.



## Priority actions for 2004

FIIQ Vice-President Daniel Gilbert presented to delegates the priority actions identified by the Executive Committee for 2004. He set out the two major challenges posed to the FIIQ by all the changes imposed by the legislator, changes not wanted by the majority of union organizations, social organizations and women's groups:

- 1- Faced with the plans to reengineer the Quebec State, FIIQ members will have to fight hard to preserve social gains, resist the Charest Government's will to weaken union organizations, and prevent this Government from reducing public services to the status of a commodity.
- 2- With the merger of the bargaining units, the FIIQ and its affiliated unions are preparing to embark on the most far-reaching union allegiance vote ever undertaken in virtually all institutions of the health and social services network.

Despite the storm that the FIIQ is preparing to weather, the uncertainty around the reorganization of health-care institutions and bargaining units must give way to solidarity and alliance building. Today, more than ever, it is essential to create and maintain alliances with other union organizations, community organizations and women's groups, both here and elsewhere, to withstand the neoliberal wave.

While being aware of the necessity of pursuing its regular actions, the FIIQ, in this context, will seek three objectives for the coming year: informing, educating and taking action. The interventions to be carried out in the year ahead, on the Québec-wide, regional and local levels, have been articulated around three themes: solidarity, resistance and preparation for change, thus guiding the choice of the priority actions adopted by a majority vote of the delegates.

### Solidarity

- defend workers' rights (freedom of association, decent working conditions, pay equity) and the right to dignity (social solidarity),
- negotiate together against the neoliberal government,
- join forces in initiating a new local union life, create ties that will make the FIIQ stronger in defending its members, and ensure cohesion within its ranks;
- develop ties with the other health-care workers.

### Resistance

- challenge the legality of the laws,
- publicly express our opposition to the Government's neoliberal agenda,
- thwart the Government's will to weaken union organizations,
- encourage mobilization of members and the general public,
- develop the FIIQ's visibility as a key player in popular resistance.

### Preparing for change

- prepare the FIIQ for the diversity it will experience in its ranks, and support local teams and unions in the changes;
- win the confidence of nurses, nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, etc., to create a new union force;
- prepare the organization's members and union reps for the local negotiation process and inform the union reps about the content of Bill 30, particularly regarding the decentralization of the negotiations;
- support affiliated unions at the regional level in their interventions on the scenarios proposed by the institutional mergers and the resulting organization of local integrated services organizations, and inform the union reps about the content of Bill 25, particularly regarding the creation of regional agencies and local integrated services organizations;
- support members in the changes made to their practice by the integration of services and the methods engendered by the new definition of their profession.

## ACTIONS

- an awareness campaign on the legislation, the turn to the right and the local integrated services organizations with mobilization and visibility days
- the active participation of the FIIQ and its affiliated unions in the actions of the Réseau de vigilance at the Québec-wide and regional level
- a round of the regions by the FIIQ Executive Committee to unify activists around priority actions, share the analysis of the upheavals that have changed the union playing field, and start thinking about the new form of union life
- public interventions on new developments in the application of Bills 25, 30, 31 or other legislation contrary to our union and social values
- an information and mobilization campaign to send a message about the FIIQ's strength and expertise, in support of the union allegiance votes during the bargaining unit mergers
- a legal challenge to Bill 30 and denunciation of the inconsistencies and obstacles to union activity and negotiation in the application of this law
- exploration with the Réseau de vigilance of the possibility of organizing Estates General bringing together the progressive forces in Quebec.

All of the priority actions adopted are available on the FIIQ web site at [www.fiiq.qc.ca](http://www.fiiq.qc.ca).



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