

“We’re not ready!”

- *The Management Bargaining Committee*

The Comité patronal de négociation de la santé et des services sociaux (CPNSSS – Management Bargaining Committee for the Health and Social Services Sector) had another unpleasant surprise for us at the meeting on Tuesday, February 22. Once again, the management committee changed the calendar of bargaining talks that both sides had previously accepted. CPNSSS spokesperson Jean Pomminville announced at the start of the session that he wasn’t ready to respond to the contract demands that the FSSS filed 16 months ago, on September 29, 2003.

Nor was the CPNSSS ready to present its position on the review of job titles. This is the third time it has postponed work on this issue, although it had asserted last December that it was ready to proceed.

At the same time, the management committee spokesperson asked that meetings be suspended until March 15, claiming that management needs more time to respond to our demands and prepare arguments on management’s June 2004 offers. This is after proposing three bargaining sessions a week to the arbitrator last December, claiming that they were determined to reach a settlement quickly. The mediator must have taken management’s “good intentions” with him when he left...

At our request, however, the March 1 bargaining session was not cancelled.

At the February 8, 10 and 17 bargaining sessions, we presented all our demands in detail to the employers, and the latter had every opportunity to ask questions about each of them. We reminded the employers that they have had our demands in hand since September 2003. “How can you justify the fact that you aren’t ready to respond at this stage in bargaining?” we asked. Mr. Pomminville had no answer...

A lack of respect

We think that management’s conduct shows a lack of respect for the 100,000 union members that we represent.

Although Jean Charest’s election slogan was “**We’re ready!**”, neither his government nor the CPNSSS that it has mandated comes anywhere near to living up to this claim. Conseil du Trésor head Monique Jérôme-Forget claims that she has given the various management bargaining committees all the mandates they need, but the only mandate we can detect so far for the CPNSSS is a mandate to stall. **No, they’re not ready!**

Our collective agreement expired on June 30, 2003 – more than 18 months ago. We are asking the employer party to demonstrate a minimum of seriousness and engage in talks with us on the renewal of our collective agreement. It would be more useful than wasting its time writing a propaganda screed aimed at covering up what’s really at stake with Bill 30.

You can download this *Express de la négo* at www.fsss.qc.ca

National arbitration on recognition of seniority

The national arbitration on the recognition of seniority was heard as scheduled on February 15, by the arbitrator Mr. François Hamelin. We disagree with the employer party on how to interpret the recognition of seniority following the certification of new unions as a result of the votes imposed by Bill 30.

Management wants to maintain the “virtual” existence of the former bargaining units with respect to seniority, meaning that seniority would be applied by silo (former bargaining unit) until a settlement is reached in local bargaining. Our position is that seniority should be recognized throughout the newly certified bargaining unit as soon as its certification is confirmed by the Commission des relations du travail (CRT – Labour relations board).

Mr. Hamelin has promised to render a decision by February 28.

Certifications postponed again

On Wednesday, February 23, the Commission des relations du travail announced that it would be another month before it issues the new certifications.

The postponement to March 31 is necessary because of the scope of the challenge to Bill 30 filed with the CRT by all the union organizations, including the CSN. The last hearing was held on February 10, forcing the CRT to postpone for one month the certification of the new unions resulting from the first wave of votes held in September and October 2004.

Campaign to resist the decentralization of collective bargaining

New tools for FSSS–CSN unions

In the next few days, FSSS unions will receive their first information and visibility materials for our campaign to resist the decentralization of collective bargaining.

The sticker and pin that will be distributed to unions is illustrated to the side. A special Info-négo newsletter on the decentralization of collective bargaining and a first series of posters will be sent out in the first week of March.

Note that the FSSS action plan adopted by the Federal Council for Consolidated Bargaining at its February 14-15 meeting in Saint-Hyacinthe calls for a National Day of Protest against the decentralization of collective bargaining on March 15 in all institutions where we have members. This day of protest will be an opportunity for you to return copies of the management newsletter *Le Porte-parole* to your bosses, along with the FSSS rebuttal, entitled *The duty to inform accurately*.

