



STAND with us

to defend our public services

BARGAINING UPDATE # 1

DECEMBRE 16, 2014

ARROGANT, CONTEMPTUOUS AND INSULTING OFFERS

The Liberal Government, by way of the President of the Treasury Board, Martin Coiteux, made its “offers” to Quebec’s public sector workers known last December 15. Offers that in no way respond to the various problems identified by the Common Front, when it tabled its bargaining proposals earlier this fall.

In terms of salaries, the Government is proposing to freeze the salaries of its employees over the next two years, then would grant increases of 1% for each of the following three years. This 3% increase over five years would have the consequence of doubling the salary disparity that currently separates public sector employees from what is being paid to other Quebec employees, a disparity that is already equal to 7.6%.

The Government’s attack against its employees is equally brutal with regard to their pension plan. The Government wants, amongst other things, to:

- Reduce retiree benefits by increasing the period for calculating an employee’s average salary from five to eight years;
- Postpone the age of the retirement from 60 years old to 62 years old, without any actuarial reductions;
- Introduce a mechanism to have the age of retirement increase in the future based upon the evolution of people’s life expectancy;
- Increase the actuarial reduction for people taking early retirement from 4% to 7.2% per year.

A set of proposals that were immediately characterized as being of a “rare violence” by the Common Front’s negotiators to their vis-à-vis at the Treasury Board.

The government also lashes out at contingent, part-time and precarious workers by seeking to reduce their benefits whenever they would take a parental leave.

With regard to the regional disparities, rather than respond to our proposals designed to resolve the many problems that we already know about, the Treasury Board is demanding to remove the 8% retention premium that is currently given to people who working in Sept-Îles and Port-Cartier.

Meanwhile, the Couillard Government has remained totally silent regarding the proposals that we tabled to their spokespersons last October 30. Faced with our determination to reduce job insecurity, that affects one out of every three employees, to put an end to subcontracting and the privatization of our public services and to stop the erosion of our professional autonomy, the Government simply doesn’t address any of these issues. In the same way that it turns a blind eye to our proposals seeking to improve the measures that would foster work family-education balance.

The Common Front is quite obviously planning to react forcefully to such an affront. Already, we’ve seen the mobilization take off, both in terms of our activities organized around the Common Front’s regional tour and in the many actions that have been taken in every one of the four corners of Quebec in the course of our fight against the Government’s austerity policies.

Once we get back from the Holidays, we’ll have to pick up the pace. Our mobilization must be commensurate with the contempt being shown by the Couillard Government towards the workers who every day of the week shore up our public services by the sweat of their brow. Our bargaining proposals are fair and legitimate: public sector workers, 75% of whom are women, want to be treated like all other Quebec workers.

The Government feels that we’re worth less than others? Well, our mobilization will show them that this is definitely not the case.

Solidarity Forever!