

# WITH NEGOTIATIONS, EVERYBODY WINS!



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## A last chance for bargaining before turning to mediation

On April 7, leaders of the union organizations that constitute the Common Front decided to give negotiations a few more days before resorting to mediation. By April 20 at the latest, Common Front organizations that haven't reached a sectoral agreement will apply for mediation on a co-ordinated Common Front basis. In the meantime, the various bargaining committees will try to get talks back on track with the goal of reaching satisfactory agreements as soon as possible.

If we do have to resort to mediation, we will do our best to make it an active process. Although it is a necessary, legally imposed step, we would like the mediation period to contribute to progress towards negotiated settlements. In our mobilization and communications work, we will use the period to continue building our bargaining clout. Similar, if it comes to that, we will make maximum use of the period for preparing lists of essential services in health care and social services.

### The blitz: a missed chance

After analysing how discussions went at all the tables, the Common Front concluded that the blitz announced by Conseil du trésor Chair Monique Gagnon-Tremblay had not produced the expected results. It seems, though, that there is still some room for bargaining to try and reach negotiated agreements.



Delegates from the four CSN public-sector federations took stock of the situation when they met at the Palais des congrès in Montréal on April 8-9.

The past few days' discussions took place essentially at the various sectoral tables. All the organizations are faced with demands for concessions from employer bargaining committees that are more interested in rolling back working conditions even further than they are in proposing real solutions. This is the case in health and social services as well as in education and the public service. Since work at the various tables is progressing at different rates, the Common Front organizations reiterated their firm intention to make sure that no group is left behind and that the government can never play us off against each other..



## Central table

At the central table, the work on parental rights is just about completed; all that remains is to formalize the results in the framework of a comprehensive agreement. Discussions on pensions have progressed well and the parties have a very clear grasp of what is at stake. We expect to achieve our goals, in particular the review of the method for funding the pension plan and a stabilization of fluctuations in contribution rates. Normally, discussions should resume shortly.

On pay, there have not been any discussions in recent weeks. The government is sticking to its intention to leave us poorer by offering less than half the rate of inflation.

During the blitz, the government also presented a document on the organization of work and a reform of the system of collective bargaining. Generally speaking, the government seems to want to establish some guidelines for the reorganization of work at the local and sectoral levels. As these lines are written, we have a number of questions that have not yet been unanswered; we will come back to this in a future Info-négo with more details.

## Action and information plan

On April 8-9, delegates from the four CSN four public-sector federations met in Montréal to take stock of negotiations and refine the action-information plan for

the CSN's public sector. We agreed to use all the time at our disposal to push for negotiations and publicize what's at stake. For instance, we will use the periods of mediation and preparation of essential services in health and social services as leverage points for maintaining mobilization, sustaining our bargaining clout and making our voices heard. The plan is based on heightened mobilization to obtain satisfactory collective agreements. We will invite CSN unions to hold a first round of general membership meetings in May aimed at debating the use of strike action and other disruptive tactics. After this first round of meetings, the federations will take stock of the situation and decide on the mandate they want to put to a vote in a second round of general meetings early in the fall.

There will be numerous local and regional mobilization activities in April, May and June. As well, the plan is to continue the mobilization during the summer, which is usually a slower period for mobilization in the public sector. We will be putting together a bank of active members ready to take part in one or two actions during the summer. If you're interested, stay posted for further information. In terms of communications, there will be poster and advertising campaigns. Stronger tactics are planned for the fall. This action plan will be harmonized as much as possible the plans of our Common Front allies. And in a few weeks, a brand-new CSN caravan will begin to criss-cross the regions of Québec to provide support for CSN union activities, meet with people and get people talking about our negotiations.



From left to right: Francine Lévesque, FSSS-CSN president; Denis Marcoux, FEESP-CSN president; Jean Trudelle, FNEEQ-CSN president; Michel Tremblay, FP-CSN president; Guy Bilodeau, CSN spokesperson at the central table; and Louis Roy, CSN vice-president.

In short, we're not about to respond to problems by giving up. On the contrary, together with their Common Front allies, CSN unions will step up their efforts to obtain negotiated agreements that provide solutions the problems we experience.