

# CSQNews

January-February 2005

**Time  
for  
work,**

**time  
for kids,  
time for  
bed**

**Phew!**

Jewish Rehabilitation  
Hospital of Laval  
A stimulating  
professional  
environment

The CSQ listens to  
Québec's Native  
Peoples

And if we  
got tired  
of waiting?



# Time for work,

Luc Allaire  
Chief editor

Marianne Mongrain can no longer work during the day. Not because this part-time nurse is ill or less available, but because of an administrative decision.

Instead of starting at 7:30 in the morning, she must now start at 7:00 a.m., since the management of the residential long term care centre (RLTCC) decided to overhaul work hours. In fact, although for 45 years, work organization was based on a 7:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.—11:30 p.m. schedule, the schedule was unilaterally changed to 7:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m. The change took effect on November 15, 2004 at the résidence Cooke, then gradually in three other residences of Le Trifluvien. Why? “To reduce the number of patient care hours by 8,000 and apply the formula *do more with less*,” deplores the President of the Syndicat des infirmières et infirmiers Mauricie/Coeur-du-Québec (SIIMCQ), Claire Montour.

This decision has turned the life of Marianne Mongrain upside down. She has two children aged 5 and 9 years. “I can’t leave my 5-year-old daughter alone in the morning while I leave for work. My partner has already left by that time. I will have to take night and weekend replacements. But I will be working less. Fortunately, I also work

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# Phew!

on-call at the Centre hospitalier régional de Trois-Rivières (CHRTR) and there, we start at 8:00 a.m.”

Stéphanie Paradis is also upset by this change. “It’s impossible to take the children to daycare when it opens at 7:00 a.m. and then get to work on time.” Her nurse colleague Guylaine Rivard has simply decided she will arrive late. “I don’t have a choice. I will not wake up the neighbours to take care of my daughter. That’s for sure.”

The Vice-President of SIIMCQ, Luc Bourassa, did all he could to give an in-depth explanation of how this change would cause difficulties for all people with children. The administration wouldn’t budge. “It’s a personal problem,” was the administration’s response.

This “personal problem” may well turn into a more serious problem, i.e., a shortage of nurses at Le Trifluvien RLTCC. In fact, like everywhere else in the health and social services system, many nurses will be retiring in coming years. Such work schedules will certainly not be a recruitment incentive for young nurses and nursing assistants.

The solution:  
reconciliation  
of work  
and  
family life

It is hard for us to imagine that even today, in 2005, with Québec’s declining birth rate problems, we have to fight in the public sector, institution by institution, just to win respect for the rights of employees with children.

Yet this is precisely the situation, as the behaviour of the Le Trifluvien RLTCC administration demonstrates. Moreover, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec has made the reconciliation of work and family life one of its main demands for renewing the collective agreement.

“We formulated a proposal that we presented to the other organizations for the Common Front, the CSN and the FTQ, who accepted it,” explains assistant coordinator of province-wide negotiations, Yves Lanctôt. This demand aims to create local reconciliation of work and family life committees composed of union and employer representatives.

Once they are put in place, these committees will be given the responsibility for implementing local reconciliation of work and family life programs. They will be able to submit, for funding purposes, their program to the province-wide committee. Each year, this committee will be provided with a sum equivalent to 0.3% of the total payroll.

"This demand aims to adapt workplaces to the reality of families," explains Yves Lanctôt. "Currently, our collective agreements contain no provisions on this issue." In fact, what they contain are leaves. The Commission des normes du travail provides for 10 days of unpaid leave for family reasons, regardless of the family relationship. The collective agreements of the CSQ provide for fewer days of paid leave for immediate family (father, mother, and children).

Which is better? "We are asking for 10 paid days for all family members, including common-law spouses and same-sex couples," replies Mr. Lanctôt. But he insists: "Offering time for families is fine, but we have to go further. Workplaces must adapt to the family."

Strangely enough it is in private sector collective agreements that the most innovative measures are found. For example, one business hired people who go to pick up children at daycare or at school when parents have to work overtime.

### People make the best arrangements they can

In the absence of real reconciliation of work and family life measures, CSQ members make the best arrangements they can. Some find good solutions, others don't.

For instance, Vicky Bergeron teaches English at Saint-Boniface in Mauricie. She has three children aged 9, 6 and 3 1/2. "What I did to maintain my mental health is unusual," she says. "My father lives with us at home. Because he has heart problems and can no longer work, he doesn't have many financial resources. So he is housed, fed, heated, has cable TV and the Internet... all for free. In return, he takes care of his grand-daughters. Since he has been with us, my quality of life has improved 100%, without taking into account the fact that I save \$280 a month in daycare costs and he saves \$500 a month in living expenses. We are not giving him charity. On the contrary, this is a lovely little intergenerational story."

But not everyone has such luck.

Bruno Tremblay is a guidance counsellor at CEGEP de Limoilou in Québec City. He has five children ranging in age from 7 to 16 years, including a disabled son who has spina-bifida. Since May 2002, he has benefited from the Programme volontaire de réduction de temps de travail (PVRTT), a measure introduced in the 1999-2002 collective agreement. "I work 7 1/2 hours a day instead of 7 hours. In this way I can get a day off, Thursday, every two weeks. It is not the best program for reconciliation of work and family life," he says, "because it is not very flexible. It is not always easy to match doctors' appointments with my day off. In fact, this program is more designed to save money for the employer than to improve living conditions."

### More flexibility please

It is not only workplaces that must adapt to new family realities. Union organizations must do so as well. Claudia Cousin has been Vice-President of the Syndicat de l'enseignement des Vieilles Forges à Trois-Rivières since 1999. She has two children aged 10 and 13 years. "I really like my work, but I could not continue if my colleagues were not so understanding. Fortunately, the other members of the Board of Directors Executive Board agree that I can miss a meeting to meet family responsibilities."

In contrast, Éric Bédard, President of the Syndicat de l'enseignement de la Haute-Yamaska, experiences problems in reconciling work and family life. The father of four children aged from 6 to 12 years, he does not see himself continuing to work 60 hours per week. "However, I have found a solution that will apply at the end of my mandate, on June 30. I announced to the members of my union that I will run for election this spring with a request to liberate one additional person who could help me out at the office. If they agree to the necessary increase in dues, that should let me leave the office at a normal time. If they refuse,



The father of five children, Bruno Tremblay finds it hard to reconcile work and family life.

I will return to teaching and I will have normal working hours again. Whatever the outcome, I'll come out a winner," he concludes.

All in all, the reconciliation of work and family life has many faces. That's why finding solutions adapted to each workplace is so necessary.

# A stimulating professional environment

**Hélène Le Brun**

CSQ Advisor

Few institutions in the health and social services system are growing. The Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital of Laval (JRH), an acute care hospital affiliated with McGill University is one such place.

Primarily focused on adult rehabilitation, the hospital has recently implemented a pediatric program as well as pulmonary and oncology programs.

Innovative research is also part of the hospital's activities. For example, JRH is the only institution in Québec that has developed a hospital-home transition unit for traumatic brain-injury victims. The institution is called TransACC Transition House. It offers accommodation supervised by educators and a natural environment for people who need to prepare to return home.

In addition, the institution's university mission allows professional personnel to develop innovative clinical projects through teaching and research activities. Professionals are encouraged to participate through release from duties.

"The entire professional environment is very stimulating for professional and technical staff," says Daniel Tessier, President of the Syndicat du personnel professionnel de la santé et des services sociaux de la région de Laval. "But there is a downside to this development. There are not enough employees to keep up with the pace."

"We are living in a constantly changing environment; some professionals work in temporary, inadequate facilities, and at the same time they must deal with new mandates and new challenges," explains the union President. The local labour relations committee therefore has its work cut out for it. "Regular meetings take place with the

employer, to improve working conditions as well as the conditions for attracting and retaining staff. In November, our union reached an agreement with the hospital administration to create 14 new permanent positions for professionals represented by our union. It was a great victory," says Daniel Tessier with satisfaction.

All the more so since clinical vision and practice continue to be part of multidisciplinary intervention. The centre provides many specialized rehabilitation services and programs for persons with serious injuries caused by falls, occupational and car accidents, or criminal acts. Brain tumour

or cerebro-vascular accident victims also need services when they sustain cognitive or motor impairments.

The services are provided by teams bringing together a variety of professionals and technicians including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, dieticians, physical education instructors, psychologists, social workers, specialized educators, radiology technicians and others. These teams take an interdisciplinary approach. That means that each member of the team works in his or her speciality together with other members to reach a common goal for the patient: for example, to return to work for seven hours per week.

"Multidisciplinary work is instrumental in achieving better and more comprehensive patient rehabilitation results much faster," says Sylvain Miljours, a neuropsychologist. "Only the public system allows this kind of concerted team approach with results that exceed the sum of its parts. A patient would never attain such a significant level of functional rehabilitation if he



The executive committee of the Syndicat du personnel professionnel de la santé et des services sociaux de la région de Laval: Jacques Desaulniers, Sylvain Miljours, Brigitte Michaud, Anne Guèrehe, Daniel Tessier and Simma Poznanski.

or she were seeing each of these specialists separately, in the private sector." Collaboration with community and professional environments is facilitated as a result. For example, professional staff members go out to workplaces to adapt the work station to the employee's altered abilities. That is the best way to maximize people's functional autonomy and their social, professional and community reintegration.



Michel Drolet

# Union reorganization at the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Québec



Suzanne Montreuil

PIERRE BROUSSEAU

Interview with Michel Drolet, President of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de la santé et des services sociaux de la région de Québec, and Suzanne Montreuil, occupational therapist, at the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Québec (CHUQ) by Hélène Le Brun, advisor.

**Q. When and why did your union choose to affiliate with the CSQ?**

Michel Drolet: In 1988, we were looking for a union organization that had a better focus on our fields of professional interests. The CSQ (at the time the CEQ) offered us the kind of representation that best suited our values and our professional identity. The federations of the CSQ mainly come from the public sector and they represent all personnel categories. The CSQ therefore has a multidisciplinary vision of the delivery of public services. You can find your place there, while benefiting from the strength of a union confederation and the diversity of other groups.

**Q. Has affiliation with the CSQ allowed you to secure significant gains for professional personnel?**

Michel Drolet: Yes, at the beginning of the 1990s, the CSQ conducted job evaluation work that led to wage adjustments for occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, psychoeducators, human relations agents,

information agents, and others. As well, the CSQ was the first union organization to obtain recognition of schooling for jobs requiring a master's degree. In this way, psychologists, speech language pathologists and audiologists were able to benefit from higher salary steps.

**Q. In professional terms, what are the advantages of being CSQ members?**

Suzanne Montreuil: The political and public representation of our union organizations constitutes a forum that makes it possible to formulate effective counter-positions to advocate the kind of organization of services that facilitates the improvement of quality in service delivery in health and social services and to defend the improvement of our professional practice conditions. The CSQ has long demonstrated its expertise in this area. For the Fédération des syndicats de professionnelles et professionnels de la santé et des services sociaux (FSPPSSS-CSQ) with which we are affiliated, demands concerning work organization and professional autonomy are important.

**Q. How does this work out in tangible terms?**

Suzanne Montreuil: The health and social service federations of the CSQ were the first in the system to impose the setting up of a local labour relations committee in every workplace. This is where all issues pertaining to duties and work organization are discussed. It is also where local professional concerns, workload and the distribution of duties as well as ways of increasing employees' job satisfaction and validation are examined.

Michel Drolet: The expertise that members have developed in these committees will be a precious tool when the

law requires local negotiation of many job duty-related issues.

Suzanne Montreuil: Also, our collective agreements are the only ones that protect professional autonomy by requiring employers and wage-earners to comply with the good practices recognized for the field in question and the applicable ethical standards.

**Q. On the whole your union affiliation with the CSQ has proven more than positive...**

Michel Drolet: Absolutely. And we are persuaded that this will also be the case for other colleagues, technicians and professionals currently represented in other union organizations, if during this forced allegiance campaign they were to choose to join forces with us.

**Legislation forces the merger of union accreditation units**

Bill 30 initiated the complete overhaul of union accreditation units in the health and social services sector. This bill constitutes a vicious attack on freedom of association. It denies the right recognized in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms of all wage-earners to belong to an association of employees of their choice. The Minister is compelling many unions to conduct a campaign that they did not choose. The primary union organizations are currently contesting this legislation before the courts.

# The CSQ listens to Québec's Native Peoples

**Réginald Harvey**  
Independent Journalist

More than 1,200 people working in the northern areas of Québec are members of the Northern Quebec Teaching Association (NQTA), a union representing people from the South and the Native peoples who have lived on this land for many centuries.

Native peoples, i.e., the Cree and the Inuit dominate the support sector and increasingly, they are filling teaching positions. The Cree now make up more than 40% of personnel. In union terms, the growth of Native personnel raises an important issue: in many respects, union concerns for workers from the South and for workers from the North are not the same. Réjean Parent, President of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, recently visited Val-d'Or to gather testimony from NQTA members, including James Jonah, a Cree elementary school teacher of the Waskaganish community.

Mr. Jonah has been teaching for a very long time although he doesn't specify the exact number of years, as the culture views time differently. He uses the "Cree Immersion Program" in his teaching practice. He formulates his interest in unionism from an independent, assertive perspective: "Sometimes, I think that the union gives more importance to non-Native problems." He acknowledges the advantages of unionism, but expresses serious reservations: "I recognize the value of job security that unionism provides, but in some instances, I feel that Native people are not fully represented." In addition, he mentions that the Cree do not derive the same benefits from belonging to the union as teachers from the South: "It is unfair that people in the community are treated this way and that they are penalized. Yet they are part of the

same school board and pay the same union dues."

To remedy the inconsistency, he considers the following solution: "I believe that a great many Native people are not familiar with union activities. I think they won't be for as long as they are not fully represented and they do not have their own union within the CSQ." He mentions that he addressed the issue with the President of the CSQ during his visit to Abitibi.

## A framework of specific demands

Réjean Parent became aware of this reality at this meeting: "Native people are showing a strong desire to play a full role in the union organization, as well as a strong interest in receiving training. They want to know how issues are dealt with and they are seeking greater consistency with all wage-earners in the North. This is a very interesting development."

"In coming years there will be many more Native teachers," Réjean Parent explains. "For a long time, people from the South dominated the union, and it stressed demands specific to their home communities that aimed to reduce the stress of isolation. The situation for Native people is different. This is their land. Their roots are here. As a result, the framework for Cree demands will be different from ours."

To this end, school calendars and work organization will have to reflect the culture and traditional activities of Native peoples. Given the scope of the



STOCK/J.-F. LEBLANC

In a classroom of the Waswanipi elementary school.

problems and their complexity, the CSQ President observes that the idea of setting up a Native people's committee in order to reflect on the overall reality of First Nations is making headway at the CSQ.

The new president of the Northern Quebec Teaching Association, Patrick D'Astous takes a practical approach to the issue: "People's concerns are different. The more we secure gains for our people of the South to protect them and give them better living conditions, the more our Native members feel left behind by our union. We have significant thinking to do so that our union becomes more inclusive of others."

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9405, Sherbrooke East St. Montréal (Québec) H1L 6P3

• Phone: (514) 356-8888 • Fax: (514) 356-9999

Director of communications: Louise Rochefort

Chief editor: Luc Allaire, allaire.luc@csq.qc.net

Editorial staff: Réginald Harvey, Hélène Le Brun

Production secretary: Louise Pagé

Translation: Carolyn Perkes

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## And if we got tired of waiting?

**Réjean Parent**  
President

The collective agreement, which was supposed to expire on June 30, 2002, was extended to June 30, 2003 to allow us to settle the pay equity issue and to avoid playing this issue off other negotiation issues. Here we are in January 2005 and we're compelled to observe that neither one nor the other has been settled. Worse yet, the government tabled wage offers that are based on a financial framework clearly indicating that equity gains will be absorbed through negotiations. And if that weren't enough, work at the sectoral tables has bogged down.

Although we tabled our demands long ago, despite the severity of the problems that we want to solve in the area of public services for the most disadvantaged, nothing seems to make this government more aware of the needs of the public and the concerns of its wage-earners. Yet this is not for lack of trying. We have drawn its attention to a declining graduation rate, the risk of personnel burnout, the need to reconcile work and family life, the lack of resources required to deliver services to students with impairments and learning and behavioural problems and to patients who are suffering as well as hazardous conditions in some workplaces, but nothing has worked up to now.

Without drums or trumpets, 18 months have already elapsed since the expiry of the extended collective agreement. Most likely, accreditation mergers in the health sector and our habits of waiting for the employer offer to be tabled before mobilizing explain the restraint of anger that should have been expressed long ago. Employers have launched major attacks on work organization whereas the employer mantra is flexibility. To date, what has whet the appetites of employers at the various bargaining tables has been to do what they please with whom they please, without putting any substantial, clear offer into the hands of our negotiators.

All the same it is a paradox that a government which has been attacking us on all fronts as we have never seen before in at least 25 years, has not, until now, had to contend with a stronger response. Mobilizing behind the employer's offer or waiting for perfect unity could prove to be dangerous courses of action and reinforce the employer's positions, if we do not engage in innovative action in the coming weeks.

To conclude, I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year in 2005, filled with resounding action that will bring us closer to a satisfactory outcome for equity and negotiations. Darity will prevail over a government that wants to strip us of our public heritage.



During this special holiday season when everyone comes together to celebrate, SSQ would like to wish each and every CSQ member our very best wishes for peace, happiness and good health throughout the year.

Happy New Year  
2005!



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