



ONE YEAR LATER AND STILL... CRICKETS

One year after tabling our demands in public sector negotiations, we regret that the sound of crickets is practically the only response from the Conseil du trésor.

Faced with the genuine crisis in working conditions currently raging and threatening the quality of services to the population and families of Québec, the president of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), Sonia Ethier, invites the president of the Conseil du trésor, Sonia LeBel, to open her eyes to the realities experienced by staff in schools, health establishments, and CEGEPs.

Note that since the start of negotiations, very little progress has been made on our demands.

New government filings at sectoral tables

The week of October 19, 2020, was marked by new, reduced employer filings. Management negotiating committees announced the withdrawal of some demands presented in their sectoral filings. However, withdrawal announcements are varied, ranging from thinly written statements, often made verbally in previous meetings, to more substantive announcements.

Among the withdrawal announcements, some relate to the following:

- ✓ union prerogatives
- ✓ arbitration (expiration period)
- ✓ obligations to take certain leaves
- ✓ quanta modifications which reduce demand (50 km limit and restrictions on time slots)

At some negotiation tables, the withdrawals are more significant and concern assignments, the concept of position, and some elements regarding precariousness.

In short, what should be remembered from the latest employer filings is the abysmal absence of responses to sectoral union demands with monetary implications. The federations whose expectations are higher relative to these demands are particularly left out in the cold, the government not having moved a single iota on its financial framework.

The tabling of an inter-union proposal

On May 5, 2020, the General Negotiating Council (GNC) mandated the CSQ negotiating team to submit a comprehensive counter-proposal to the government in response to their offers submitted last April 27.

In this counter-proposal, the Centrale agreed to set up a working committee on the Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan (RREGOP), whose work would begin after signing the collective agreements. Thus, the parties' respective demands concerning the pension plan would not be dealt with in this round of negotiations but would rather be the subject of discussions within this committee, which is in line with the GNC's priority not to coordinate the additional Québec Pension Plan (QPP+) with the RREGOP.



This same counter-proposal also modified the committee's mandate and its composition concerning the government's proposal. On the one hand, we asked that the working committee not be mandated to negotiate changes to the pension plan but submit recommendations to the negotiating parties. On the other hand, it seemed important that the committee on which we agreed to work be made up of the three major union organizations that share the same goals concerning our pension plan.

With that in mind, the CSQ, the CSN, and the FTQ, under the recommendation of the Intersectoral Negotiations Council, submitted a new proposal to the government concerning the working committee on the RREGOP.

This proposal, submitted simultaneously by the three union organizations on October 23, fully meets the goals of the GNC. This inter-union approach aims to create movement at the intersectoral table, while the Conseil du trésor has remained attached to its mandates since last May.

Although we are not a common front, we maintain close communications with the other two union organizations. On this subject, in particular, it seemed appropriate to join forces to push the Conseil du trésor.

This collaboration is also part of the desire expressed by CSQ bodies to promote union alliances and could extend to other issues with common goals. It goes without saying that if new inter-union approaches were to be promoted to achieve our negotiating objectives that our bodies would be consulted.



AT THE SOUND OF CRICKETS

To mark the first anniversary of the filing of our demands, we have launched Operation Cricket, which is a three-step operation.

On October 23, we carried out the first step by broadcasting the sound of crickets in front of the Conseil du trésor. This action is currently being shared on social media.

Then, we issued a [press release](#) calling on the government, reminding them "our members are driven by a deep conviction that things must change in their workplaces now. [...] We will consider all means at our disposal to exercise our right to negotiate as a union organization, including more substantial means of action in the face of the current deadlock."

Finally, a radio ad will be broadcast during the week of October 25 on various stations across Québec. You can listen to and share the ad [here](#).

To view the French version of this newsletter, visit the [Info-Négo](#) section of our website.

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