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BARGAINING UPDATE n° 6 • CENTRAL BARGAINING TABLE • NOVEMBER 12, 2015

A CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT OPENING

The determination and very massive mobilization of the members of the Common Front, as was obvious during the first series of strikes at the end of October, compelled the Liberal Government to move off its positions and to modify its offers. However, the offers that were presented last Friday are clearly insufficient to enable us to envisage any kind of settlement, that is why we are continuing with our mobilization and ramping up our job actions. The Common Front is seriously examining the new proposal tabled by the Treasury Board in order to continue our discussions and try to arrive at a satisfactory negotiated agreement, as soon as possible.

Here are the salient points of the Treasury Board's new proposal:

SALARY INCREASES

The Treasury Board is rearranging the salary increases: rather than offering 0 – 0 – 1 – 1 – 1, it is now proposing 0 – 1 – 1 – 1 – 0. Although it is bringing its meagre salary increases forward in time, the financial framework remains the same: 3% over five years, including two years with a wage freeze. A proposal that was immediately denounced by the Common Front, since it does not respond to our wish to put a stop to the impoverishment of public sector workers, nor does it put an end to the disparity in their total compensation compared to other Quebec employees.





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1. Daniel Boyer, Louise Chabot and Jacques Létourneau, the Common Front spokespeople
2. Common Front demonstration in Joliette, last November 9
3. Centre du Florès, Saint-Jérôme.
4. Demonstration at the Centre hospitalier de Gatineau
5. Common Front demonstration in Rouyn-Noranda



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PENSION PLAN

The government has withdrawn its demand to extend from five to eight years the reference period for calculating one's pension. However, it maintains its desire to increase the actuarial penalty from 4% to 7.2% per year if one takes an early retirement. It is still asking for the age of the retirement to jump from 60 to 62 years old, but in a progressive fashion: namely, 61 years old, on July 1, 2017, and 62 years old on July 1, 2019. At the end of the day, the Treasury Board's demands would still have the same effect: lowering the benefits received by many State retirees, while the RREGOP, capitalized at 98.4%, is in excellent financial health.

SALARY RELATIVITY

Over the summer, the Treasury Board indicated to us that they wanted to resolve certain incoherences in the public sector salary scales. The Common Front accepted to study the subject, but put forward certain very crystal-clear conditions:

- The exercise would not be done on a zero cost basis;
- Nobody should come out a loser at the end of the operation: an increase in the salary of one job classification could not be done at the expense of another one;
- For the process to be a positive one, the Government must put aside the perspective of a wage freeze. This exercise does not dispose of our demands to increase the salary parameters.

It should be noted that the negotiations on salary relativity began in a sub-committee on public and parapublic blue-collar workers and civil

servants. They are thus included in this proposal.

In its new proposal, the Government would inject an additional sum of \$550 million, which would correspond to a 2.3% overall increase to the State's payroll. However, it is important to make clear that it is far from everyone who would benefit from the foregoing, since the integration into the new scale would be done "at an equal or immediately higher salary". Accordingly:

- Thousands of people would not receive any adjustment at all thanks to this process;
- Thousands of others would receive adjustments of about 0.2% or 0.5%;
- About 18,000 people would see their salary decrease as of April 1, 2020;
- About 15,000 other people would not see their salary fall, but would never be able to reach the maximum salary that they could have hoped to achieve at the beginning of their career, since the summit of their salary scale would be adjusted downwards.

It's also important to mention that in the case of several salary scales, the Government proposes to increase the salary at the summit of the scale, but decrease the salaries at the bottom levels or in the middle zone as one is moving up. Accordingly, the Government is seeking to partly finance its salary reorganization on the backs of young people and future government employees. It is not by decreasing entry level salaries that we will be able to attract the workforce we need to our public services, in order to put an end to the workforce shortage problems that we're encountering in our systems.

The Treasury Board is thus not respecting the

conditions that we laid out at the beginning of this exercise. That is why we cannot accept the Treasury Board's proposal on salary relativity.

OTHER PROVISIONS

Without drawing up an exhaustive list, let's also mention that the Treasury Board has withdrawn its request to put an end to the 8% retention premium that covered employees in the Sept-Îles and Port-Cartier regions. However, it wants to introduce a mechanism and indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of this premium, and this, no later than six months before the end of the collective agreement. The Government has thus not given up on calling into question whether this premium is worthwhile or not. Finally, let's likewise mention that the Government is now proposing an 8% premium for certain skilled workers.

A SERIOUS ANALYSIS TO BE DONE

At we write these lines, Common Front leaders are seriously examining the terms and conditions in this new management proposal. Meetings are scheduled throughout the week in order to define the next steps to be taken. Of course, we will keep you up to date and informed over the next few days.

It is crucial to keep up the pressure on this Government. The first series of strikes, from last October 26 to 29, have had an effect: forcing the Government to move from its positions. That is why we must persevere in our determination and do everything that is in our power to arrive at a satisfactory and negotiated collective agreement, and this, as quickly as possible.

Solidarity!