

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 / A Word from the Secretary General**
- 2 / On Strike!**
- 2 / General Council of October 7 and 8, 2015**
- 3 / Why Negotiate?**
- 3 / What is CUPE?**

## 2015 Calendar

**General Council**  
Sheraton Laval Hotel  
December 9-10 2015

# The Review

## WHO IS MARTIN COITEUX?

by José Carufel

MARTIN COITEUX IS THE CHAIR OF THE CONSEIL DU TRÉSOR DU QUÉBEC (QUÉBEC TREASURY BOARD), BUT WHO IS THE MAN BEHIND THE TITLE?

We know that he spent 20 years at HEC Montréal (business school affiliated with the Université de Montréal), first as an assistant professor, then as an associate professor. He has also been the Bank of Canada's principal Québec representative, and was a university partner of Étude économique conseil (EEC Canada) for 18 years.

As well, Coiteux worked as a journalist for La Presse and was a radio announcer with Dominic Maurais on "trash talk" radio station Radio X.

Before entering the political arena, he was a blogger, but unfortunately his blog was shut down, making it difficult to unearth his right-wing statements on the economy.

MNA Jean-François Lisée knew Martin Coiteux at the Université de Montréal. In his words, "*Deep down, Martin Coiteux is a conservative. Even the CAQ's plans for the economy would have been too much interference for his taste. Coiteux has given presentations on behalf of the Libertarians. In his opinion, Québec never had the means to spread the wealth, even in prosperous years. He was against the universal daycare model and thought daycare should be in the hands of the private sector.*" (translation)

To understand Coiteux better, I quote from Léopold Lauzon's column in the *Journal de Montréal*:

Zero taxes for companies, low taxes for the wealthy, healthy fees for public services and a significant increase in the QST: these measures have been suggested by Martin Coiteux, the same person who had the nerve to tell unionized government workers to be "reasonable" (*Le Devoir*, March 6, 2015). Although a two-year salary freeze followed by a paltry 1% increase is an outrageous proposal, it seems entirely reasonable to him. (translation)

Delving further, I found an article by Dominique Forget titled "Middle class on its deathbed", dated October 10, 2012.

"Look, I can still buy books, treat myself to restaurants and travel. My friends don't seem to be getting by too badly, regardless of whether they're graphic artists, computer programmers or bank tellers. If the middle class has been in such dire straits for the past 30 years, why aren't more of them out of a job, apart from those factory workers who were downsized? It's because the idea of the decline of the middle class has been imported from the United States and it just doesn't apply to us," suggests Coiteux.

"Globalization has brought down the price of goods dramatically," he says. "Without globalization, middle class workers wouldn't be able to splurge on flat screen TVs, computers and iPads [...]" (translations)

Far be it from me to judge someone by their ideas, but I can't help but note Coiteux's view of the middle class.

Of course, some people can indulge in the latest TVs and other cheap goods from China, but others can barely feed their family or buy the basics they need to survive. Although Coiteux has friends in the middle class, I highly doubt that he's aware of the living conditions of many government workers. Workers on call for the healthcare network who can barely get 20 hours a week of work very likely live below the poverty line. But cheer up: Coiteux says they can still buy themselves a flat screen TV, despite the 0% increase offered. All they have to do is dig themselves deeper into debt!



## A word from the President

by Pierre Soucy



Fall always brings a change of colour. The unions were expecting some bright orange, but the leaves quickly turned red instead. The results of the federal election took everyone off guard: it was a victory for the underdog. To our widespread astonishment, our new leader is a Liberal, and a fresh-faced one at that. Although the CPAS is ecstatic that Stephen Harper's government was ousted, we wonder what Justin Trudeau's government has in store for us.

Here are some components of the Liberal platform that the CPAS will be monitoring closely:

### Health Accord

- Negotiation of a new Health Accord with the provinces and territories, including an agreement on long-term funding;
- \$3 billion investment over the next four years to improve home care for Canadians.

TO BE CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# A Word from the Secretary General

by Michel Jolin

## JUST A PIPE DREAM?

Today is October 20 and there's still no agreement in sight with the Québec Liberal government.

We're now preparing the first week of the strike.

By the time you read this article, I wonder where that

process will have led us. When I close my eyes, here's what I imagine...

*The first day of the strike was so effective that it resulted in an agreement in principle. Our job conditions are now set to improve and care facilitators will be recognized for all their work in the health and social services network.*

*At the Central Table, the issues of pay relativity, specialized workers, retirement and compensation have been settled to our members' advantage.*

*The Bargaining Committee is currently reviewing documents to ensure that its statements at the bargaining table have been faithfully reproduced.*

*Care facilitators are happy, employers are satisfied and the public is delighted.*

After I open my eyes, I wonder: Is it all a pipe dream? Or could it be real? Perhaps, if only the government understood that an investment in the public sector is an investment in a better society.

## ON STRIKE!

by Vincent Leclair

THE GOVERNMENT IS PUSHING ITS OWN IDEOLOGICAL AGENDA AND IMPOSING AUSTERITY BY CANNIBALIZING PUBLIC SERVICES, SLASHING THE BUDGETS THAT FUND OUR JOBS AND SENDING GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES BACK TO THE POORHOUSE. ITS UNILATERAL REFORMS ARE AIMED AT DISMANTLING PUBLIC SERVICES AS WELL AS THE UNION MOVEMENT.

In response, the vast majority of our Local Unions have voted in favour of a strike. We think this is the most effective way to get across the message that enough is enough. It's time that the voice of the people be heard and our demands be taken seriously. For the past year, we've been forecasting a "warmer climate" for the spring and fall, and now we're turning up the heat. The

conditions couldn't be better: the Common Front has 400,000 members standing at the ready, supported by their healthcare and education unions, as well as by community, public and student groups.

Each Local Union must make sure that its members rally around the strike decision and make it their own. An effective strike begins with the actions of grassroots activists who boldly support the demands of the Common Front. We must send a compelling message and maintain our momentum. We must be united and find personal meaning in our cause so we can be as effective as possible and win through to victory. Now is the time to brainstorm together on the best way to add our local touch so that members really feel invested in the strike. Let's call on the creative minds in our Locals and encourage them to think outside the box. Our members have multiple talents, and the more involved they'll feel, the greater their allegiance to the union cause. Since our union represents such a wide range of job classes, our diversity will be a force to be reckoned with when used to its full potential and channelled into a common political vision.

The student strike of 2012 is often considered the gold standard for strike action. The red square captured the public's imagination to such an extent that some people think that all we have to do is change the colour of the square and presto! The public will get on board and our members and communities will immediately back our cause. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from



the truth. We can't relive 2012, nor should we try. While we can gain inspiration from the past, we must also trust that public sector workers can marshal their energy as well as their outrage so they can seek justice effectively. We must believe that they can forge their own unique moment in union history and sufficiently rattle the government's cage to achieve major gains at the bargaining table.

No one knows whether the strike will be victorious. Our opponents have shown their greed and obstinacy, and one thing is for certain: we can't win unless we fight. A strike is a way for workers to reclaim their workplaces, their schedules and their own voice.

It's up to our activists to ensure that the strike is dynamic and powerful! We urge you to make placards, write slogans, and organize activities as you see fit. Regardless of the outcome, the time has come to "go bold or go home!!!"

## General Council of October 7 and 8, 2015

by Michel Jolin

THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSEIL PROVINCIAL DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES HELD A MEETING IN QUÉBEC CITY IN EARLY OCTOBER.

CUPE representative Karine Cabana pointed out that the Couillard government was considering resurrecting the now-defunct Bill 60 on the modernization of OHS, which was tabled by the Liberals in 2012 and subsequently shelved by the Parti Québécois. The members of the CPAS OHS Committee will be closely watching the government's decisions on this issue.

The Job Evaluation/Job Titles Committee reported on the work carried out at the Central Table. The unions and the government are conducting negotiations on 2010 and 2015 maintenance and pay relativity. The Committee has its work cut out for it.

CUPE Assistant Director Serge Morin reported on the progress of the specialized worker issue at the Central Table. Discussions are continuing and there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel.

Serge also thanked all the care facilitators who took part in the Québec-wide demonstration on October 3 in Montréal. This successful event attracted over 150,000 people, including those who came on 385 buses from all over Québec!

The Youth Committee announced the two winners of free registration at the FTQ youth camp: Lily-Pier

Robitaille-Michaud from the CHU de Québec and David St-Jean from the James Bay HSSRC.

CPAS President Pierre Soucy and Secretary General Michel Jolin reported on the campaign to highlight the work of care facilitators. Four new video clips are now available at [perisoignant.com](http://perisoignant.com) and on YouTube. Pamphlets on each job class have been distributed to members of our Local Unions, and a TV ad will be aired as of November 20, 2015.

Jean Lavoie from the CHU de Québec was elected to the CPAS Insurance Committee.

Alain Tessier, social affairs coordinator and FTQ spokesperson at the Sectoral Table, summed up the state of negotiations. Thirty-seven meetings have been held so far. The government made its fourth round of offers on September 24 and asked the unions to prepare new demands, indicating it wanted a settlement within three to four weeks. Negotiations will be pursued at a faster pace.

As usual, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact your union representative.





# Why Negotiate?

by Sylvain Lemieux

WHEN I TALK ABOUT MY ROLE AT THE QUÉBEC PUBLIC SECTOR BARGAINING TABLE, REACTIONS ARE MIXED. SOME PEOPLE ARE CYNICAL ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THINK THAT BARGAINING DOESN'T ACHIEVE ANYTHING. OTHERS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY DRAWN UP THE CONTRACT AND WON'T BUDGE.

When confronted with this disillusionment, I always think about why we bargain.

And that leads me to an even more fundamental question: what would happen if we didn't? The sensible answer is pretty obvious. Failure to show up at the bargaining table would set us back 200 years, before unions even existed.

The early 1800s were a time when workers were powerless to do anything but cross their fingers and hope for better conditions. And when they did ask for a raise, they had to grovel to get their employer to share his piece of the pie. I hope that era is firmly behind us.

Bargaining is a fundamental tenet of the union movement. It is the vehicle through which the union movement succeeds in achieving the redistribution of wealth. Bargaining allows unions around the world to narrow the gap between rich and poor, i.e. the 1% and the 99%.

## The right to bargain

Once I've answered questions about why we should negotiate, I'm often asked whether bargaining is still as legitimate as it once was. What the questioner really means is, "Don't you think you're already being treated well and you're asking for too much?"

To tell you the truth, I'm getting fed up with these inferences, although I do understand that they're tolerated in today's media universe. The lines have become blurred between demagoguery and analysis, and opinion and fact.

I often reply that asking for better working conditions for any group is always justified because it's the way to ensure the redistribution of wealth for future generations. As René Lévesque so aptly said at a conference in 1965 (available on YouTube), the union movement is the only buffer against the capitalist interests of the wealthy. Worker solidarity is the main force acting for the common good because it compels the government to vote for laws that safeguard human dignity.

To all the Éric Duhaimes of this world who claim that unions are too powerful and working conditions too cushy, I would once again echo the words of Lévesque. Accusing the union movement of being too strong is like saying we have too much education. And if that ever happens, we'll deal with it then.

I would like to remind Mr. Duhaime that legitimacy is defined as conformity to law, justice and fairness. In fact, the Supreme Court examined the right to bargain in June 2007, concluding that it was protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And that makes bargaining a fundamental right. So which source is more legitimate, the Charter or Mr. Duhaime? I don't think there's any doubt!

## Bargaining gains

Finally, I'm often asked whether we can make any gains during the current round of negotiations. My answer is to look to the past.

Indeed, if we look back we can see that we negotiated our way to a minimum wage; demanded sick days, statutory holidays and vacation days; set up group insurance plans, pension plans and maternity and paternity leave; and so much more.

Those who question whether bargaining actually accomplishes anything are usually the same people who take our past gains for granted. It's important that they realize that nothing has been handed to us on a silver platter. The scope of our gains has been consistent with the degree to which we have mobilized. Considering that 150,000 demonstrators showed up in Montréal on October 3, I would say that we are in good hands for the future.

I also often point out that CUPE, the union I belong to, has always placed a great deal of importance on the right to negotiate and has been very successful at it.

To those who try to trip me up with their questions, I quote the words of the late French comic Coluche: "Just because a lot of people are wrong doesn't mean they're right!"



# The Review

Newsletter published by the  
**Conseil provincial des affaires sociales (CPAS)**

CPAS is the amalgamation of the Unions of the Health & Social Services Sector of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (FTQ)

**President:** Pierre Soucy

**Secretary General:** Michel Jolin

**Coordinators:** Michel Jolin, Sylvain Lemieux, Vincent Leclair and José Carufel from the information Committee

**Copy Editor:** Danielle Laramée

**Graphic Artist:** Anne Brissette

**Translator:** Lorena Ermacora

**Printers:** Atelier Québécois Offset 1998 inc.

**Printing:** 9 100 copies in French,  
1 240 copies in English

Total or partial reproduction of articles is authorized and even encouraged but their origin must be specified.

Registration of copyright with the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Labour unions

- Repeal of Bills C-377 and C-525, which diminish and weaken Canada's labour movement;
- Good faith negotiations with Canada's public sector unions;
- Reinstatement of the tax credit for contributions made to labour-sponsored funds (like the FTQ's).

Rest assured that we will be carefully following the new Liberal government's actions. We'll be reminding the government of its electoral commitments, and will strongly and persuasively condemn any proposal that goes against the interests of our members and the common good.

# WHAT IS CUPE?

by José Carufel

CUPE IS YOUR UNION. WITHOUT YOU AS MEMBERS, IT WOULDN'T EXIST.

THE CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CUPE) IS THE LARGEST UNION IN CANADA. IN 2015, IT BOASTED CLOSE TO 650,000 MEMBERS CANADA-WIDE, AND 110,000 IN QUÉBEC.

Thanks to this large membership, CUPE can count on a stable financial base, which allows it to offer a variety of professional services to its members, including the all-important defense and strike funds.

CUPE is a modern, dynamic, well-organized union that operates 66 offices across Canada, employs some 800 people, and offers its services in both official languages.

Among CUPE's employees, its union representatives are assigned to assist Local Unions in dealing with routine issues, legal and worker compensation cases, and other diverse matters. They represent members at grievances and before the Commission des relations du travail, the Commission des lésions professionnelles, and other organizations.

One of CUPE's greatest assets is the fact that each Local remains independent, which allows the Locals to flourish and adapt their activities to their specific work environment. It gives them the freedom to represent their members more effectively and work on issues that are locally relevant.

CUPE not only represents care facilitators in the social affairs sector, but also works for employees in communications, education, universities, the energy sector, the municipal sector, government organizations, public agencies, air and urban transportation, and mixed sector workplaces.

For more information, please visit [scfp.qc.ca](http://scfp.qc.ca).



**OUR CARE-FACILITATORS  
DESERVE A  
NEGOCIATED  
AGREEMENT !**

