

LA VOIX

DU SCRC

Journal du Syndicat des communications
de Radio-Canada (FNC-CSN)
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BARGAINING: WE ARE GOING THROUGH A CRUCIAL PHASE

UNION FINANCES: WE MUST TIGHTEN OUR BELTS

MOBILIZATION: LET'S PREPARE FOR ACTION

COME AND BE HEARD AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A full bargaining report will be delivered to you at our **Annual General Assembly** on Saturday, April 29, 2017, at plaza Centre-Ville, 777 Boul. Robert-Bourassa, Montreal. Registration at 8 a.m., beginning of the AGA at 9 a.m.

La Liberté Jacques Prévert

La Liberté,

Ce n'est pas partir, c'est revenir,

Et agir,

Ce n'est pas prendre, c'est comprendre,

Et apprendre,

Ce n'est pas savoir, c'est vouloir,

Et pouvoir,

Ce n'est pas gagner, c'est payer,

Et donner,

Ce n'est pas trahir, c'est réunir,

Et accueillir.

-

La Liberté,

Ce n'est pas s'incliner, c'est refuser,

Et remercier,

Ce n'est pas un cadeau, c'est un flambeau,

Et un fardeau,

Ce n'est pas la faiblesse, c'est la sagesse,

Et la noblesse,

Ce n'est pas un avoir, c'est un devoir,

Et un espoir,

Ce n'est pas discourir, c'est obtenir,

Et maintenir.

-

Ce n'est pas facile,

C'est si fragile,

La Liberté.

A busy spring for bargaining

A year ago, on May 5, 2016, our bargaining committee and Radio-Canada met to discuss respective demands for the future unified collective agreement, following the Notice of Bargaining sent in February 2016, which officially marked the beginning of the bargaining phase.

Since then, the parties have met more than 33 times and exchanged almost 120 documents in order to reach a unified collective agreement, a colossal task for our bargaining committee.

We have agreed on about fifteen articles so far, and we are entering a crucial phase of negotiations.

The employer has filed demands on a number of issues that would directly affect our working conditions. The intention is clear: to increase the number of precarious and contractual jobs while eroding our working conditions.

For example, we are currently bargaining with Radio-Canada on clauses related to job security, the abolition of positions and the resulting displacement process. The employer wants a simple,

fast, and above all expeditious process that would target positions they want to abolish and drive our members towards the exit in a very short time.

This is an arbitrary and totally unacceptable way of doing things. Our objective is to retain the workforce, to train, to reassign, to keep our jobs and the expertise acquired over the years. We have made training a key element in keeping our jobs within an increasingly digital environment. This should not be translated into job loss.

Keeping production in-house is also an equally important issue that works along the same lines.

More than 20 days of negotiations are scheduled in May and June to further discussions on these critical issues. The bargaining committee will need your support over the coming weeks; be prepared to show your solidarity with your bargaining committee.

A full bargaining report will be presented at the General Assembly. Come and meet with your bargaining committee and, most of all, come and ask us your questions.

Bargaining timetable

MAY

2, 3, 4, 8,
9, 10, 11, 16,
17, 19, 23, 29

JUNE

1, 2, 12, 13,
14, 16, 19, 20,
21, 22, 27, 28

Questions : nego2016@scrc.qc.ca

The saga of the Maison de Radio-Canada sale in Montreal

When senior management officially announced the sale of the Maison de Radio-Canada (MRC) in June 2013, the Syndicat des communications de Radio-Canada (SCRC) spoke up and demanded that the process be carried out in a transparent manner.

At that time, the Média Cité, Partner Partenaires du développement de la Maison, and SNC-Lavalin-Prével consortiums were selected for the call for tenders. Le SCRC filed a written request directly to Hubert T. Lacroix, President and Chief Executive Officer of CBC/Radio-Canada, to obtain the more than 800 pages-long specifications submitted to bidders. Already, the public-private partnership scenario for the new building and the MRC's sales process was opaque.

Two of the three bidders withdrew from the process and Média Cité's proposal was rejected on the basis that their project was not in line with CBC/R-C demands. A new process was set in motion, always with a lack of transparency. Finally, in November 2016, Radio-Canada decided to sell the MRC to Mach Group Inc. and entrusted the building of its new facilities to the consortium led by Broccolini. On the same day, the SCRC requested that the sale be suspended.

From the very beginning, the SCRC has been concerned about significant changes in the workplace that would directly affect our internal production capacity, while opening the door to more costly external content. Senior management's decisions and orientations, which were largely influenced by the Conservative government that wanted the death of CBC/R-C, ultimately substantiated this concern. In this regard, the SCRC, supported by the FNC-CSN and the CSN, constantly denounced and confronted the government of Stephen Harper, highlighting the dismantling and privatization of CBC/Radio-Canada.

On April 17, senior management, now under the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau, finalized the transfer of the MRC to private interests. Our ultimate request for a moratorium on the sale of the MRC

was not acknowledged. The SCRC has opposed the sale throughout its process and advocated for the interests of Canadians who value Radio-Canada. The Fédération nationale des communications-CSN (FNC-CSN) even commissioned a detailed legal opinion on various legal avenues that could stop the transaction. Unfortunately, no remedy could be devised.

Since the transaction is now concluded, the SCRC believes senior management should publicly disclose all details.

At a meeting held on April 18 in Montreal with the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly, the SCRC, represented by Johanne Hémond, and FNC-CSN, represented by Pascale St-Onge, explained that despite the reinvestment and commitments made by the Liberal government in the last election, Radio-Canada is still waiting for a change of direction, which remains under the control of Conservatives who have not given up on their plans to privatize the public broadcaster. The plan to dismantle our production capacity is continuing and has just reached its peak with the MRC sale.

The challenge of in-house production

At our meeting on April 18, we discussed our concerns with Minister Joly that the new building still does not have the facilities necessary for production set out in Radio-Canada's mandate under the Broadcasting Act. Since two new policies affecting culture and the Broadcasting Act are also to be released shortly, Radio-Canada senior management cannot act as if these two major policies are not going to influence plans for the new MRC.

We also know that the minister will soon announce nominations for four vacancies on the Board of Directors as well as the new CEO. We believe these new managers should be given the opportunity to position themselves on future MRC projects. At present, this is a key issue for us at the bargaining table, and for all these reasons, a moratorium on the work of the new building is fundamental to us if we want to secure internal production at CBC/Radio-Canada.



Victory for cameramen in Quebec City Mobilizing paid off

The investigator from the ministère du Travail, Isabelle Rioux, gave her conclusions ordering employers to carry out an examination on the "psychological constraints suffered by cameramen caused by the work model, including variable working hours [editor's note: working schedules up to 10 consecutive days] and a duration of work with reduced periods of rest."

Mrs. Rioux also ordered employers to carry out another examination concerning ergonomic and psychological constraints, to be conducted by impartial experts.

The Health and Safety Agent from the ministère du Travail is giving employers until April 19 to announce the measures they have taken. The local Work Health and Safety Committee will also be informed.

Thanks to the mobilization done by cameramen, SCRC efforts and support from colleagues at the Quebec City station, we have won this first victory.

The status of our colleagues in Quebec City was subject to a motion at the Union Board on November 15 and a mobilization operation at the station on February 23. Finally, La Voix du SCRC dedicated a report on the subject.

United together, we are making progress.

Interview with Michel Désautels

“Avoiding icebergs”

Michel Désautels has been working for Radio-Canada for 45 years, but if he retired tomorrow morning, only twelve of his years of service would be recognized. Like many of his colleagues, he suffered from management practices that he describes as “flippant.”

This could explain in part why the host has been heavily involved in union activities. He is the kind of colleague we would like to clone.

Michel, what has the most changed in radio at Radio-Canada in the past decade?

The speed of production. Information is available faster; it can be processed faster and be put on the air faster. And we do it. The problem is that having the information does not mean we're ready to put it on air. But we're encouraged to do so, as though we're a chain of continuous information. We don't always have time to do the necessary checks. If someone farts in Pointe-Claire, we have to talk about it within fifteen minutes.

When I left my daily show in 2013, I'd already been clashing with management about it for a year or two. I thought it was dangerous. Many times, the only reason we didn't sink was because there were no icebergs in the ocean. Otherwise, at the speed we were headed, we would have smashed into them.

Do radio artisans suffer from this phenomenon?

Absolutely. It's tiring to try to do more, faster and with fewer people. It's like stretching elastic until it breaks. I don't have the numbers, but I am convinced that there are more work stoppages than ever before.

People go on sick leave. They are very hard to replace. Assistant directors, for example, are nearly impossible to find. I've seen executives grouping up and spending a whole day trying to find an assistant for a replacement.

Has the quality of radio information improved or deteriorated over the past 10 years?

I think it has deteriorated. One thing that is absolutely scandalous is that we closed the radio newsroom. I think there are still 4 or 5 reporters left, whereas before we had a room full of editors and reporters.

What's more, I think we have weakened our general offer by regionalizing a large part of radio news reports. In some regional rooms, there are great news reports with a mix of local, national

and international news, but elsewhere, you'll hear all about the deer accidents in the park, but nothing on Korea unless there's a nuclear war. From one region to the next, quality is very uneven and it penalizes a certain number of listeners.

It must be said, however, that regional reporters work like crazy. They feed radio, TV and the web. They use their own footage and photos for the web. It's insane. It has to impact quality.

And in terms of radio shows, did the decline in funding have an impact on the quality of information?

Seven years ago, a program like mine, *Dimanche Magazine*, lost about two-thirds of its budget in a single year. It took six years before we started reinvesting a bit. If people thought there was a lot of reporting in Saint-Jérôme and Winnipeg, they weren't imagining things. They were absolutely right. Clearly you can't do as well with one-third of resources.

Is Radio-Canada a good or bad employer?

I wouldn't say Radio-Canada is a bad employer, but quality of communication and mission statement should improve internally. It sounds like many of our executives have taken the same summer course in management at the HEC with a lot of recycled meaningless slogans from the 1980s. We are told essentially and continuously that all is well and that there's a plan. But 2020, for me, is not a plan.

What trades have suffered most in recent years?

Strangely, I would say middle management.

They were the ones who had to manage the decline with increasingly limited resources; they are the ones who have very little say in Radio-Canada's future; and they are the ones who, day after day, have to deal with an exhausted workforce.

They are asked to perform miracles on a ship whose course they don't even know. Also, they spend their days in meetings managing flowcharts that are constantly changing. It seems absolutely hellish.

What does Radio-Canada radio need the most now?

Adequate resources, of course, but above all, the room to evolve while preserving its soul. Radio-Canada radio is unique in the media landscape. It must remain so. We must resist the temptation of false good ideas and miracle solutions. Let the radio be, and it should be fine.

A glimpse of the state of radio news in Montreal

In recent years, we have witnessed serious downsizing in Montreal's radio newsroom. Three reporter positions were abolished. A writing secretary position, a presenter-reporter position and a presenter position were also cut. A retired employee's position was not posted.

Also of note: the position of a radio reporter, who had left for a public af-

fairs program, was abolished, while another reporter, who left to lend a hand on another program, was never formally replaced.

Not to mention colleagues temporarily assigned to other positions.

In the end, Montreal is left with two specialist reporters and two national reporters.



Regional news on the radio: the example of Montreal



Pierre Plante, Radio Broadcasting Technician

News on the Première Chaîne Radio has changed a lot in Montreal since the merger of radio, TV and web a few years ago. Radio news reporters had to move from the radio booth to the CDI, where they share the same space as their colleagues on TV.

The latter have been called to collaborate more and more in radio news by producing a radio version of their televised top stories, which is often a direct copy-paste of their televised text. Of course, the result has nothing to do with a real radio news report, which uses greatly differing writing and even information collecting methods.

This collaboration, which in some cases is “forced” and in others is done voluntarily, has made it so that there is a considerable decrease in the number of radio reporters dedicated to news: from ten before the merger to four, i.e. two for regional and two for national news. Two others were later added, one in the morning and one in the evening.

Beats have disappeared from radio news: education, health, science and environment as well as justice have all disappeared, leaving only the municipal beat, and only for Montreal. The South Shore and North Shore are not covered.

Specialized national reporters have been integrated into the radio news teams, midi-info, 15-18 and L'heure du monde. This situation makes it so that expertise has disappeared from the newsroom in favour of shows, which have taken over the newsroom to produce special news programs for major events.

One example was the shooting on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. After the initial shock wave in the newsroom, journalists were virtually unsolicited.

Expertise is also being lost in technical matters, such as poorly connected lines between a studio and the courthouse. Reporters can't hear the studio, but the studio can hear them. Or, a TV journalist can hear the connection with the radio station getting ready to broadcast live to RDI, while the radio reporter hears RDI. The same goes for breaking news alerts; the machine is not at all up to speed, and sometimes jams up.

A loss of expertise is a loss of meaning as well. News on the radio seems to be a copy of the news broadcast on RDI: speed is a top priority. Live coverage is constantly favoured, and with instant news, there's no time to think – only to broadcast.

Reports, where time is taken to explain things, become an exception to the rule. And there's hardly any field reporting anymore, either. And let's not forget Twitter, or even web text, which aren't very complicated and take very little time. Press releases or breaking news from the Canadian Press, even sometimes from newspapers, have very often become the essential ingredient for journalists.

In a way, the regional radio news in Montreal has disappeared. The bulletins at 6:30, 7:30 and 8:30 have been integrated into the morning program. Here, there is only chatter, sometimes about national news while they're at it, but not for too long and never precisely on time. So-called “regional” bulletins on the hour often start with national news, and regional news is limited, and is becoming even more limited with time.

Management at radio news stations have promised to have a plan soon; let's hope that they'll give us a vision rather than just a marketing plan.

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Radio News Summit

Radio-Canada discovers the importance of radio news in this busy world

On February 25, about forty employees, artisans and radio leaders met in Montreal for a first “summit” on news on the radio. Many issues were discussed, including what remains of the identity of radio news after a difficult integration of the radio/TV newsrooms nearly 10 years ago, on the place of radio news in the digital world and the means to face this challenge.

It was a useful summit that provided an update on production conditions – the difficult production conditions, it should be said – of news bulletins, radio news and integrated bulletins.

Frédéric Vanasse, Director, Continuous Reporting and ICI RDI, radio-info Programming, as well as Paule Genest, First Director of ICI RDI, Continuous Reporting and Multiplatform, initiated the summit. A committee of expertsⁱ comprised of employees from a variety of backgrounds, including one from the private sector, was formed for its preparation.

The objectives of the summit were fourfold: to measure the performance of radio news and integrated bulletins; to understand the environment in which we operate; to establish a framework for continuous improvement, which has been implemented since this meeting. Management also wanted to raise employee morale and mobilize troops toward the digital shift.

Words from management

Over the past year, management has begun to reinvest in Montreal: adding two editorial positions in the morning and a “helping hand” on Sunday night, replacing vacancies, adjusting shifts and adding a budget for special reports.

It is “the beginning of a recovery” of a reinvestment, pointed out Paule Genest, who seems optimistic about the future.

The new Vice-President of French Services, Michel Bissonnette, was also encouraging. He congratulated employees on the good performance of radio news,

which, thanks to the quality of their work, have broken audience records in recent months. He described himself with humour as a huge fan of Radio-Canada news, which he has learned to listen to religiously since his early childhood.

The importance of French radio outside Quebec

As a newcomer, Michel Bissonnette was able to measure the impact of Radio-Canada on francophone minorities: “What has impressed me is the importance of Radio-Canada in regions. Not only when I go to Quebec regions, but also outside of the province... because whether the francophone community is in Toronto, Vancouver, Regina, if there is no Radio-Canada branch that reaches out to them, then there would be no francophone life outside of Quebec. Our role in it is quite fundamental.”

“It is also important for democracy, whose balance remains fragile. Among the francophone press, there is the *La Presse* group and Quebecor. If Radio-Canada were not there to bring balance back into information, democracy would suffer. Your role in disseminating information to Francophones is crucial,” said the vice-president.

But this beautiful political discourse does not negate the reality of the French network in regions. In recent years, programming hours have been cut considerably; morning staff in different stations can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Radio has seen its newsroo

ms almost disappear in Quebec and outside of Quebec, as in Windsor, Winnipeg, Sept-Îles, Val-d’Or, Matane, and so on.

The voice of citizens

“We are in a media world that is called to change. If we do not redefine the role of the public broadcaster in this new ecosystem, we will become marginalized. The importance of the public broadcaster must be a citizen choice. People have to feel the need for a public broadcaster. It is not for the government to decide. The citizens themselves must feel the need to have a public broadcaster,” said Michel Bissonnette.

Indeed, francophone citizens have voiced their concerns in recent years. The CRTC forced Radio-Canada to maintain regional programming in Windsor, where a Citizen Committee supported by former Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser finally succeeded in forcing Radio-Canada to maintain programming and rehire some staff.

Citizens have also spoken out in favour of maintaining Radio-Canada/CBC. In November 2014, more than 25,000 people demonstrated in Montreal to safeguard the public broadcaster. Not to mention the petition of several tens of thousands of signatures tabled in Parliament in Ottawa. Finally, the great march in October 2015 from Montreal to Ottawa, which was supported by citizens, elected municipal officials and the current Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly.

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/694052/manifestation-soutien-radio-canada>

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/742697/marche-radio-canada-tous-amis-ottawa-montreal>

Accelerating the digital shift

We have to accelerate the digital shift and make efforts to reach the younger generation where they already are, on social networks: “About 65% of young people get their news from social networks. Despite all these digital changes, the traditional media of radio and television are far from dying. Last fall, Ici-Première and Ici-Musique got their largest market share ever,” explained Michel Bissonnette. “Yes, we need a digital presence! But not at the expense of who we are,” he concludes.

Beginning of reinvestment

“We’ve started reinvesting,” says Michel Cormier, the news director, without specifying any amount. He says he’s aware of the difficulties caused by past budget cuts. “In five years, we’ve reduced production costs by 25%.”

“We need to have a supply of news that is global. I didn’t want radio to be this eternally forgotten relative in some distant corner, with its own structure. That is the outlook taken by Radio-Canada,” he said.



The news director reiterated the orientation of news toward impact journalism such as investigations and ongoing news.

He said he wants to be sure that radio has a voice, “an identity in the digital world.” He added that he too was still “optimistic” about the future of radio.

Public radio faring better, which is good news

The performance of radio and radio news was the subject of a special presentation at the summit.

After years of neglect and dark prognostics, the Numéris surveys published in March proved the naysayers wrong. They showed that even more citizens are coming to get information and entertainment with us. The market share of radio news is up by 14.2%, a trend that has held for two years now. Its performance has surpassed that of programs, except on weekends.

Faced with recent political events and other ecological and environmental disasters, Radio-Canada remains a trustworthy news source for citizens. Recently, the black ice crisis in New Brunswick allowed its importance to be measured. Still, its very faithful audience

is an older one. Hence the question: where are young people getting their news? How can we help them discover our news bulletins? These questions remain unanswered.

To meet the digital challenge, add staff

There's no shortage of daily challenges, but the lack of staff to support production every hour is a real challenge. Since its integration with television, radio has been neglected and even dismissed. It has lost its identity, its special particularities, and even its freedom, as several participants have observed. It repeats televised news flashes, replays programs that are often irrelevant to the situation. Still, changes have been made to the evening line-up. Reports presented in our radio bulletins are first of all produced for TV, which is deplorable. The “top client” of correspondents and reporters is television, as decried by one participant.

The newsroom in Montreal experienced a great shock with the integration into CDI ten years ago, as one participant explained with conviction: “We've seen it since the beginning. We're losing speed, losing resources and we have tremendous difficulty in making radio news.”

“When we get less, we can only do less,” said another CDI participant.

Frédéric Vanasse, the new news chief, acknowledged that the radio newsroom has suffered more than others from changes in recent years. Journalists and employees simultaneously experience integration of radio and TV news and tighter budgets, he summarized.

Ginette Viens, the deployment and gathering manager, confirmed that the radio newsroom has lost 22 jobs.

For the future, she believes that radio and TV journalists should work more closely together, citing the example of newspapers. “It's a bit of a utopic concept. It isn't by working together that we have additional striking force. We cannot escape history, we simply don't have the time to do it,” said one journalist.

“We need to be on the field to find stories. We need to have specialties and Beats. It's impossible to be specialized in everything,” she added.

The lack of staff for regional news in Montreal is one example of this. “Forget all about exclusive content,” says one reporter from Montreal. “We simply don't have the time.”

Reporters do everything. They run press conferences, but don't have the time to dig deeper into subjects, and especially to make new contacts. “Why is it that we no longer find reports from outside of Montreal?” asked a regional program producer in Ottawa. The regions are doing fewer and fewer reports compared with national reports. Assignment editors are overwhelmed and many of them wished to return to distinct assignments.

It turns out that organizing the job with multi-platforms is very hard to manage. Most regional reporters work in multi-platforms. They have little to no time to do radio reports nationally. They are dedicated to local news and programs. Digital platforms monopolize most of their time. They have to do everything at once. “Radio isn't the ultimate goal,” as one participant put it. Integrated bulletins aren't doing well, and there are several reasons for this.

Reinvestment will continue in radio, but we still don't know yet when or how. Paule Genest and Frédéric Vanasse have promised to consider all solutions put forth at the summit and to carry out concrete actions to develop radio in this new digital world.

ⁱ The expert committee was comprised of: Karim Ait-Oumeziane, Copyeditor (national) info. – news radio/specials, French Services, Marie-Claude Beaucage, First Director – national program., French Services, Maxime Coutié, Copyeditor (regional) info. – news radio/specials, French Services, Isabelle Routhier, Regional Director – Ott. – Gatineau, French Services, Charles Benoit, former President, Quebec Television and Radio at Bell média, private sector representative

Radio technicians brushed aside

There is obviously a desire by Radio-Canada management to brush aside radio technicians.

At the request of production supervisors, the technical department recently set up a complete radio studio on the first floor that will be used by radio production teams.

The studio, named 89, is fully equipped to meet all the technical needs of the production teams. They can record, edit and even broadcast as needed.

The only thing left to do is technical training for the production teams in order to completely do away with

technicians. And now, this is a done deal. Since April 18, technical training has been dispensed to the station's production teams.

Technical supervisors have been put in an uncomfortable position by having to train producers at studio 89 so they can completely execute duties done by technicians.

The SCRC received word of a cross-unit plan for all producers at ICI Radio-Canada Première and ICI Musique.

The 15-month project indicates that the distribution of duties will be as follows: AR: 65% (minimum) and STARF: 35% (maximum).

Of course, the SCRC lodged a complaint against this project, arguing that cross-unit projects should not lead to job losses, which apparently seems to be the case here.

Furthermore, a cross-unit project should specify the people affected by the project, which is not the case, since it was meant for all the producers. According to the information we were able to get, 13 producers are supposed to take part in the training.

Finally, according to the STARF labour agreement, which is still in force, cross-unit projects must be

discussed by a joint committee. This has not been the case.

So, while we will all have to deal with enormous challenges, why is Radio-Canada management choosing the done-deal route rather than finding areas of mutual agreement with its artisans?

Would it not be preferable to find solutions jointly instead of ploughing ahead like a bulldozer?

Why is Radio-Canada imposing its choices when it could very well discuss them at the bargaining table?

What message is Radio-Canada sending to employees and their union?

Radio-Canada stress endemic

Upon his arrival, in one of those video shorts that showed his vision for the future, the new Vice-President of French Services at Radio-Canada, Michel Bissonnette, explained to us that, in terms of organizational hierarchy, he was not a follower of old-fashioned ideas, in which everything comes down from the top. Is this a new breath of fresh air that will cut through the bureaucratic structure that has been hanging over our heads for so long?

All of the restructuring due to the cutbacks in recent years has been carried out with an iron fist by traditional style management resembling Taylorism of the industrial era. The more the employer imposes changes, the more the employees fight back; the more the employees fight back, the more stress there is. We are overloaded with work, and our jobs are becoming increasingly fragile.

We are given added tasks with no respect to our job descriptions. Little does it matter if we have the skills and expertise, or how much time we have to carry out all of our tasks as a whole.

The labour union has the greatest difficulty establishing dialogue with management. In the meantime, the work machine accelerates and stress settles in among the employees endemically.

An old story

Back in December 2005, Professor Jean-Pierre Brun, a leading occupational health worker, delivered his report on a joint survey commissioned by the CBC/Radio-Canada and the unions.

This survey, which was completed by 4,630 employees with a participation rate of 51%, nearly half of which came from the French department, was very eloquent: 44% of respondents experienced a high level of psychological distress. If we compare it to the average level of Quebec's population at the time (20.1%), it is more than double. The six risk factors for psychological health reported by the majority of staff were as follows:

- Poor recognition of the environment at work
- Poor relationships with superiors
- Quantitative work overload
- Low participation in decision-making and lack of information flow
- Role conflicts
- Career or position instability



As a result of this study, Professor Brun recommended:

- The setting up of measures on recognition at work and promotion of civility at work;
- The establishment of an Implementation Committee to provide detailed action plans on the identified risk factors. Once the action plans are finalized, management can proceed with their implementation.

The Respect in the Workplace workshop gathered lessons from these recommendations and implementations. It was probably a good thing to respond to the first recommendation, but there was no follow-up and the employer did not change its traditional business culture. The employer applied a very hierarchical decision-making mode akin to “organizational waste”: when all elements meet – problems, stakeholders, solutions and situational options – a decision is aligned. Whatever the outcome, the employer can say they did something and then move on to something else.

In his “Guide pour une démarche stratégique de prévention des problèmes de santé psychologique au travail” published in 2009, Jean Pierre Brun wrote:

“If the organization is not necessarily the cause of mental health problems at work, it is always part of the solution.”

He offers employers some questions to ask in order to know the degree to which psychological health is integrated with practices of occupational management:

- Does management recognize that there is a relationship between the wellbeing of employees and the effectiveness of the organization?
- Does management have a system to manage risks and organize prevention of mental health problems?
- Are managers aware of specific management practices that constitute leverage or an obstacle to mental health?
- Do managers integrate the concerns of people's wellbeing into their day-to-day management and organizational or technological changes?
- Do managers have the right tools and are they supported in their management?
- Are managers evaluated on their performance in terms of wellbeing at work?

A work in progress

In December 2014, Natacha Laprise, union counsellor in occupational mental health, published a preliminary report on another survey of SCRC members. The report clearly showed a sharp deterioration in mental health among workers: 64% experienced high psychological distress. At the time, the index was 18.1% among Quebec workers according to the EQCOTESST study.¹

By looking at the main results of this report, we see that the importance of stressors in members is increasing and that they are always the same: lack of recognition, work overload, and high

discrepancy between responsibilities versus decision-making flexibility.

For two years, the employer has been assessing employee attachment to the SRC/CBC with its Dialogue survey. The result of this consultation must be seen within the proper context. The results look encouraging, but they bring up even more problems of work overload, lack of recognition and decision-making flexibility. Moreover, it appears as if the goal of this process is to promote employee devotion to the company to achieve higher ratings in the ranking of top employers in Canada, and not to improve their relationship with their peers.

We have the right to ask the question: What does the employer do exactly to improve its employees' working conditions after all these studies and surveys?

At the time of his first official meeting with Radio-Canada employees on February 23, we asked Michel Bissonnette whether he really planned on doing away with this traditional way of organizing work.

His response: “I am not a superhero. Therefore, I don't think that my power alone can change everything. However, the ambition that I'm coming in with is the ambition to be able to try to simplify the game plan, to be able to make sure that everyone can understand what their contribution or role is, so that we can succeed at this game plan. After that, I want to create structure that is respectful of individuals, because that has always been my trademark, and I hope to be able to ensure that this factor is protected.”

Let's hope that these intentions are transformed into measures for everyone's good.

While Hubert T. Lacroix completes his reorganization towards the digital shift, we are currently negotiating a new collective agreement that will create the long-term foundations of our working conditions, including the matter of psychological health in the workplace.

Will we manage to implement a healthy workplace that bears in mind this important matter, which concerns us all?

It is possible. We must provide the means while staying involved together in the process. Miracles do not exist. All we can rely on is action.

¹ Québec Survey on Working and Employment Conditions and Occupational Health and Safety