

CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS
ON THE ROAD
TO THE
QUÉBEC
ELECTION



ON THE ROAD TO THE QUÉBEC ELECTION

THE 65TH CSN CONVENTION, HELD IN JUNE 2017, established the direction of our activities for the next three years. Two major themes will be at the heart of these efforts.

FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST ALWAYS REFLECT UPON OUR LIFE AS A UNION as we take action and as we encourage member participation in our union's activities. The unionism we practise enables us to act so as to have an impact on our daily work and upon society.

THE SECOND THEME TOUCHES ON THE UPCOMING QUÉBEC ELECTION, because of its importance to workers, as well as to all of Québec. We understand the impact of the Couillard government's austerity policies because we experience them daily—as public service workers contending with increasingly difficult conditions and, as a result, heavier workloads; as factory, retail, warehouse, and construction workers confronting a rise in precarious jobs and subcontracting, increasingly unprotected in the face of layoffs, or even business closures; and as citizens hit with price hikes while experiencing reduced access to essential services.

SINCE THE 2014 ELECTION, THE CSN HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ACTIVE and has supported mobilizing its members to take a stand for a vision in which Québec plays a central role in the fight for fairer distribution of wealth.

FOR THIS REASON, THE UPCOMING QUÉBEC ELECTION IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. We are responsible for defining the future we want. We need to abandon policies that always disadvantage us. We need to tell our politicians what we want, so that things will change. The election platforms, the things they promise to do, will necessarily have an impact on our workplaces.

WE NEED TO REACH OUT TO OUR MEMBERS to hear their concerns and to share our vision for Québec society.

IN THIS BOOKLET, YOU WILL FIND VARIOUS PROPOSALS inspired by the Clear Vision, Sharp Focus manifesto, adopted by the union's representatives in convention. In whatever manner you deem appropriate, get together with your members and open a discussion about one of these proposals—or, if you feel it appropriate, come up with a new proposal. The important thing is to communicate with members about the election, to have an exchange of views, and to adopt a proposal that addresses your their concerns. Proposals can be sent to your CSN central council to be added to the regional platform, so it can be discussed and debated by members.

THE RESULTING PROPOSALS WILL BE USED to question candidates from the various political parties and thereby clarify their positions on the issues of concern to workers.

THIS IS OUR COMMITMENT, BASED ON OUR 65TH CONVENTION.

IN SOLIDARITY,

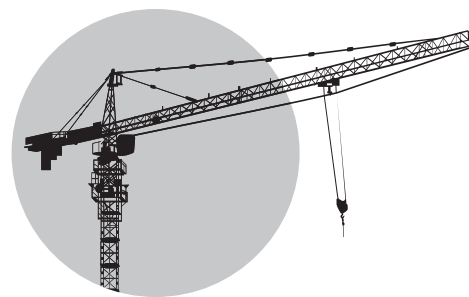
JACQUES LÉTOURNEAU
CSN PRESIDENT



GUARANTEE HIGH-QUALITY JOBS WITH DECENT WAGES

THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR has been badly shaken over the past few years, with hundreds of thousands of high-quality jobs eliminated across Québec. As if that wasn't enough, by implementing austerity measures the Couillard government has dismantled regional organizations that contributed to regional development.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST ACT, investing in and supporting manufacturing sector businesses. It must promote a vision for regional development based on involvement by stakeholders, including civil society organizations, with sufficient budgetary flexibility.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPOSALS BASED ON THE *CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS* MANIFESTO

(these may be modified by union members, or others chosen altogether):

- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO DEVELOPING** a policy to create high-quality manufacturing sector jobs across Québec.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO CREATING** cooperative public forums in various regions of Québec, where civil society organizations would be invited to participate in the development of projects to create jobs and integrate workers into the workforce.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO SUPPORTING** an industrial policy with measures allowing Québec shipyards to maximize their growth potential, particularly through implementation of an infrastructure enhancement program. And further, that they commit to lobby the federal government to guarantee that Québec shipyards are ensured a fair share both in terms of shipbuilding, as well as maintenance and repair of federal vessels.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO MANDATING** local content for major infrastructure projects supported by public monies, thereby generating sustainable economic benefit for Québec.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING** measures ensuring that seasonal workers have work schedules that entitle them to employment insurance.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO INTRODUCING** a deposit for wine and spirit bottles and to organizing separate collection measures, with a view to strengthening Québec's glass deposit system.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT NOT TO AMEND** section 50 of the Act Respecting Labour Standards to impose tip sharing.

ENSURE UNIVERSAL, ACCESSIBLE QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

DESPITE THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT'S CLAIMS about finding wiggle room in the budget, the reinvestments announced in the 2017–2018 budget do not make up for past cutbacks. The adverse effects of this lack of resources for public services, with regard to both the services provided and working conditions, must be documented and accounted for. We must demonstrate the negative consequences of cuts to services and privatization, not only on society's most vulnerable but also on rising inequality, more generally.

THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF UNDERFUNDED services lies partly in securing increases in government revenue rather than privatizing services. In this regard, the government must be proactive in the fight against tax havens. While the Canadian government bears much of this responsibility, Québec's government can also play a role. It could, for example, draw on the unanimous recommendations made by Québec parliamentarians who studied this issue and authored a report last year.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPOSALS BASED ON THE *CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS* MANIFESTO

(these may be modified by union members, or others chosen altogether):

- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO A MASSIVE REINVESTMENT** in public services (health and social services, education, and post-secondary education) to address people's needs throughout Québec.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO GUARANTEEING** real access to early childhood education services (daycare centres and regulated in-home childcare services) through substantial reinvestment and by putting an end to the practice of linking daycare rates to household income. And, further, that they commit to maintaining service quality and reject any form of commercialization aimed at making profits at the expense of children (such as commercial daycares and unregulated in-home childcare services).
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO STOP** resorting to privatization and subcontracting in public services.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO MAINTAINING** public ownership of state-owned corporations, such as the SAQ, Hydro-Québec, and Télé-Québec.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO LEADING** the fight against tax havens by implementing policies that allow for the recovery of sums that have avoided taxation (including the taxation of dividends received in Québec and subject to foreign deductions), while also recognizing professional assistance for tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance as criminal activities.

FOR A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF THE ACT RESPECTING LABOUR STANDARDS

MINIMUM WAGE, LEAVE, VACATION LEAVE, EQUAL TREATMENT, MASS LAYOFFS, ETC.

ON MAY 1, 2018, THE MINIMUM WAGE WILL BE INCREASED BY \$0.75 PER HOUR. However, this will clearly not be enough to lift people out of poverty. Through our wealth redistribution programs, we subsidize underpaid jobs indirectly. Employers have not been carrying out their responsibilities in this regard.

TOO MANY WORKERS, UNIONIZED OR NOT, are not equipped with the proper supports needed for balancing family, work, and school.

THE CSN IS A MEMBER OF THE 5-10-15 COALITION, and it will continue its efforts to raise minimum labour standards, working on the negotiation front to make improvements in this area.

DURING LAST YEAR'S RENDEZ-VOUS NATIONAL SUR LA MAIN-D'ŒUVRE (provincial meeting on labour), the government introduced a bill to amend labour standards. Premier Couillard also announced that he will regulate employment agencies, where the worst cases of exploitation take place.

THE CSN IS CALLING FOR A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF THE ACT RESPECTING LABOUR STANDARDS. There are many issues: enabling better coverage by widening the definition of what constitutes an employee; eliminating unequal treatment with regard to employment status, insurance, and pension plans; enhancing provisions that affect family-work-school balance; creating a framework for labour-sharing arrangements in seasonal industries; etc. We need to mobilize to ensure that this overhaul leads to better protection for workers.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPOSALS BASED ON THE *CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS* MANIFESTO

(these may be modified by union members, or others chosen altogether):

- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO AMENDING** the Act respecting labour standards and the Labour Code to include the following provisions: 5 days' notice for changes to an employee's work schedule; 10 days of paid leave for illness or family commitments; an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour as quickly as possible; the introduction of an indexing formula; and the elimination of discrimination, particularly with regard to employment status, abusive pay scales, and remuneration (wages, pension plans, group insurance).
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO ESTABLISHING** a legal framework for employment agencies that requires them to obtain a permit and demonstrate responsible financial practices; ensures equitable treatment, and that collective agreements are applied where applicable; requires such agencies to provide written contracts; prohibits them from imposing fees on workers; provides access to permanent positions, etc.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO ADOPTING** framework legislation that would facilitate family-work-life balance and would apply to all employers, including the Québec government and its agencies.

FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

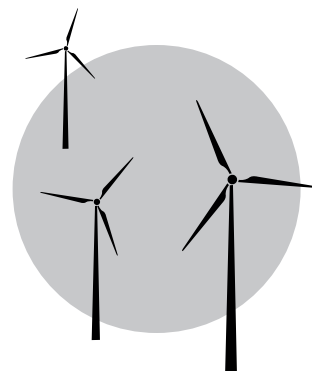
THE CSN MUST DEMONSTRATE CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

and get involved in the fight against climate change. The issues and debates on these matters are not always easy to face. Nonetheless, it is possible to develop a vision that combines job creation, support for individuals, and environmental protection.

WE NEED TO PRESSURE THE QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT to make every effort to reach its 37.5% reduction target, adopted in 2015, by 2030. We are already experiencing the effects of greenhouse-gas emissions, yet there is no indication that the target will be met. Therefore, the government needs to change course and make the necessary investments.

THERE IS NO CHOICE. We will not be able to safeguard our jobs if we do nothing.

WITH REGARD TO CLIMATE CHANGE, the government must hold businesses responsible and support them. It must encourage them to develop and use clean technologies, and to obtain proper environmental certifications.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPOSALS BASED ON THE *CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS* MANIFESTO

(these may be modified by union members, or others chosen altogether):

- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO PROMOTING** an energy transition based on the creation and maintenance of decent jobs, while ensuring the development of skills training programs (including for workers who are already employed).
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO DEVELOPING** a strategy to assist businesses in developing and using clean technologies, as well as in obtaining environmental certifications.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO AMENDING** the Réseau électrique métropolitain (REM; metropolitan electric system) project in a manner that neither encourages nor seeks privatization of the Greater Montreal public transit system. That they commit to creating an REM project that upholds sustainable development principles and that integrates efficiently with the existing system. And further, that they commit to keeping content local.

REINFORCE OUR DEMOCRACY

SUPPORTING OUR MEDIA

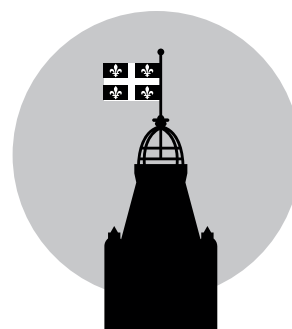
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE MEDIA IN THE 2017–2018 BUDGET is not enough to solve the crisis facing traditional media. We need to continue to pressure the government to allocate resources to ensure that high-quality information is available throughout Québec, as this is an essential pillar of democracy.

REFORMING OUR VOTING SYSTEM

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE CSN HAS BEEN ADVOCATING FOR VOTING SYSTEM REFORM IN QUÉBEC. We took part in the public consultations held prior to the États généraux sur la réforme des institutions démocratiques du Québec de 2003 (General Assembly on the Reform of Québec's Democratic Institutions, 2003). We also presented a brief to the special committee on the reform of the Election Act. Since then, whenever the opportunity has arisen, the CSN has put forward a clear position that the voting system should better represent the public's choices.

IN SPRING 2015, THE CSN TOOK PART IN MEETINGS with civil society groups and political party representatives to revive efforts to get political parties to commit to amend the voting system. So far, the opposition parties (Parti Québécois, Québec solidaire, Coalition avenir Québec) have been using the Chief Electoral Officer's report on the conditions required for a mixed compensatory voting system and are working to reach a consensus. Success in this process could lead to an extra-parliamentary committee, whereby the civil society would be invited to respond to the opposition parties' consensus.

SUCH A CONSULTATION WOULD INCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION of central councils, unions, and civil society groups, and would serve as an excellent way to reopen the debate and get the political parties to state their positions on the matter.



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROPOSALS BASED ON THE *CLEAR VISION, SHARP FOCUS* MANIFESTO

(these may be modified by union members, or others chosen altogether):

- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING** policies to ensure the survival of print media, so that high-quality information remains available across Québec.
- THAT POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT TO CARRYING** out a reform of the voting system during the first term following the Québec election.

ACTIVE UNION PARTICIPATION

DURING THE CSN'S 65TH CONVENTION, UNION REPRESENTATIVES ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL:

[Translation]

“That the unions commit to holding an assembly to identify a priority inspired by the Clear Vision, Sharp Focus manifesto, in order to mobilize their members around this priority and mandate the CSN to support it.”



PROPOSED APPROACH

UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO MEET WITH THEIR MEMBERS to select and discuss a proposal from this brochure—or to create their own proposal inspired by the CSN's manifesto. The meeting format is left to the executive committee's discretion:

- general assembly
- departmental meeting
- informal cafeteria meeting
- 5 à 7, cocktails, etc.

ONCE A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR DISCUSSION,

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY DOWNLOAD AND PRINT

the relevant document from the CSN's website (csn.qc.ca/electionQuébécoise) and distribute it at the union meeting. The information in the online documents, including all the proposals, is the same as in this brochure. You can also contact distribution@csn.qc.ca to obtain printed copies via post.

THERE ARE ALSO VIDEOS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE, ONE FOR EACH THEME, to introduce the CSN's campaign and initiate discussion. These videos may also be downloaded.

ONCE THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN VOTED ON BY THE ASSEMBLY, the union should submit it to its region's central council. The central council will then include it in its regional platform, which will be used to question regional candidates from the various political parties so that they may respond to the CSN's positions.

HAVE A GOOD MEETING!



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