

L'INFOLETTRE DU STTRC

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Strong support for RCI

Voices are being added to denounce the announced rampage of what remains of RCI. An open letter piloted by Wojtek Gwiazda, an RCI alumnus, was sent to Justin Trudeau and three of his ministers. This letter, signed by 32 people, including Joe Clark, Peter Menzies (a former VP of the CRTC), former Canadian Ambassador to the UN Stephen Lewis, author Naomi Klein and Richard Desjardins, calls on Ottawa to prevent Radio-Canada from weakening its international service. Remember that Radio-Canada announced on December 3 the disappearance of 16 positions at RCI and the hiring of 5 journalists. On April 1, RCI will be down to three presenter-producers and two journalists in Montreal, and three in Toronto. Despite the multiplication of public appearances, including that of the STTRC before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission during hearings for the renewal of Radio Canada's licenses last January, the management persists in its unshakeable conviction to be right.

ON THE WAY TO THE NEGOTIATION TABLES

The negotiating committee began its work with a three-day training session given by the CSN last week. Next step: prepare for the consultation of members to establish our list of demands. Étienne Gosselin took over from Sarah Désilets-Rousseau, who withdrew from the committee for personal reasons. The other members of the committee are Jacynthe Boucher, Hugo Côté, Hélène Harton, Caroline Morin, Luc Paradis, Sophie Pelletier and Pierre Tousignant.

Counter: phase 2

We are entering the second phase of the application of the single counter for the term employee call list. Radio-Canada has 20 days from the time it receives a dispute or inquiry from an employee to respond satisfactorily to requests for any corrections made. In addition, one issue emerged from our last discussions: the days eligible for calculating the counter. The employer, in its responses, excludes annual and compensatory leave and sick leave from the counter. However, in article 2, the definition of the word counter includes these days; in article 22.8 also, with the following reservation: "seniority continues to accrue for days when term or contract Employees would have been otherwise scheduled". We have agreed to discuss this issue in the week of March 8.



On page 2

- Too bad for new parents!
- Fickle and variable bonuses...
- No preventive withdrawal paid at Radio-Canada / CBC
- Avenues for suicide prevention

TOO BAD FOR NEW PARENTS!

Two years ago almost to the day, we received our retroactivity provided for in the collective agreement. Some people who were entitled to leave under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) during the period covered by the retroactivity were still waiting for the employer to produce documents so that their salary could be adjusted with the QPIP. This would have had the effect of adjusting the amount of their past benefits. In other words, these people could have received a retroactivity from the QPIP because their benefits were based on an unadjusted salary and lower than what it should have been if the employer had negotiated on the dates provided for in the old collective agreements. Late last year, the employer claimed that amended statements were produced for the period October 15, 2018 to January 6, 2019, when the new pay scales took effect. There was no amended statement for the period from 2014 to 2018. Contrary to what had been announced to the union, the employer claims that it is impossible for it to produce amended statements for the period preceding April 1 2018. Consequently, only persons who had maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave between April 1 2018 and 15 October 2018 may make the request.

NO PREVENTIVE WITHDRAWAL PAID AT RADIO-CANADA / CBC

Speaking of new parents, did you know that as federal employees, pregnant women working for Radio-Canada are not entitled to paid preventive withdrawal as is the case for workers who work in a company under provincial jurisdiction? At most, they are entitled to paid leave while the employer examines the possibility of reassigning them. If reassignment is not possible, they can take leave, but at their own expense. Be aware that if your pregnancy causes you health problems, they may be covered by our insurance plan. It is important to tell your doctor that your employer is not covered by the Quebec plan. Find out before going to see a doctor so that the correct reason is written on your medical note. Here too, you might be surprised at the treatment that they reserve for you in 2021.

FICKLE AND VARIABLE BONUSES...

Journalists were surprised to see the disappearance of a temporary assignment bonus. In recent weeks, journalists on the radio, both term and permanent, who replace colleagues whose job title is better paid no longer receive the "tug" or daily bonus provided for in article 25.2. However, unless you have a serious literacy deficiency, the text is clear: if you do more than 2 consecutive hours in the main tasks of a group higher than yours, you get a bonus. This is nothing new, but someone somewhere in management has decided not to pay this bonus anymore. So reporters, check your submitted and amended time cards and pay stubs. A grievance to denounce this state of affairs is currently in arbitration; TV and digital media apply this way of doing things that we are contesting. In the case of the radio, the union made an initial intervention. We will continue, but it is always better when there are examples to document our requests.

AVENUES FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide prevention was recently the subject of a conference by two workers from the Quebec Suicide Prevention Center offered by the Conseil central Québec Chaudière-Appalaches (CSN). Several topics were discussed: protective factors (including the ability to take care of oneself), risk factors (being a man, having mental health problems, having an addiction, having made an attempt in the past), the ways of acting towards a person for whom one is worried, etc. In Quebec, 1-866-APPELLE gives access to workers trained in suicide prevention (1-833-456-4566 in the rest of Canada). If you are thinking about suicide, they will be able to support you and get you help, and if you are worried about a loved one, guide you on how to approach the issue. Good to know: at Radio-Canada, the Employee Assistance Program (1 866 839-7897) gives us free access to professional help; if we are covered by insurance, we are entitled to psychological consultations on prescription from a doctor. Another avenue to explore to reduce the risk of psychological distress: benevolence towards oneself and towards those around us.

What does the collective agreement say?

When can you file a grievance?

It is possible to file a grievance if it is felt that the collective agreement or an employer's policy is not being respected. Very important: it must be done within 30 days of the date on which the violation occurred (or the date on which one is deemed to have become aware of it). We can try to come to an agreement with the employer before filing a grievance, but that does not extend the 30-day deadline. After the grievance is filed, the union representatives discuss with the employer to find a solution and, in the event of a deadlock, the grievance is submitted to an arbitrator. The process can take years, but if there is a settlement, it applies retroactively to the date of the incident. Grievance and arbitration procedures are detailed in Articles 19 and 20 of the collective agreement.