

## POSITION CUTS: SRC STILL ON COURSE



Photos: House of Commons

We almost believed it for a moment. The announcement that almost \$100 million was being added to Radio-Canada's base funding, along with the exemption for Radio-Canada from having to reduce its budget by 3.3%, gave us the impression that the cuts to 800 positions weren't happening. But we rapidly saw that this was not so, or only partly so.

Radio-Canada explained that this addition corresponded to the wage increases negotiated in collective agreements with the various unions, including STTRC. An explanation confirmed twice by Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge last Friday on the Saguenay and Québec City end-of-day programs.

Still, the exemption for Radio-Canada, which won't have to return 3.3% of its budget, should translate into a substantial decrease in

the number of cuts planned. STTRC will advocate and put on the pressure to make sure that these "savings" will only be used to reduce the planned cuts.

As well, we're still in discussions with the Minister's Office to meet with her. Pascale St-Onge has said repeatedly that she has the following priorities for Radio-Canada: 1- stabilize its funding; 2- review rules of governance; and 3- review its programming. How will the Minister's concerns play out? Our meeting with her should be an opportunity to suggest a few possibilities.

STTRC has always asked for adequate multi-year funding. CBC/Radio-Canada management needs to be less opaque and the two networks must cease being managed purely by bean-counting.

### Cuts coming in dribs and drabs

Up to now, management has declared around forty positions to be redundant. The announcements are coming one by one, and this keeps the anxiety level high. STTRC is regularly exerting pressure to end this practice.

The decision by Radio-Canada's management to add its future share of the agreement with Google, which could represent \$7 millions a year, to funding for regional stations and the news, will also reduce the number of positions that have to be cut.

Out of respect for Radio-Canada employees, management must stop treating these cuts like mere accounting attrition. Each of these announcements weakens one of our colleagues. And STTRC is making sure that management doesn't forget that.

## A NEW ASSISTANCE TOOL

The uncertainty about positions cut, workload and other factors can generate a lot of stress. Don't forget that Radio-Canada offers tools to help employees who feel the need.

Radio-Canada's new peer helper network brings together employees trained to lend a listening ear, support and comfort, confidentially, to colleagues facing work-related challenges. [pairsaidants.rc.ca](https://pairsaidants.rc.ca)

As well, the EFAP (Employee and Family Assistance Program) is accessible at this address [secure.kiihealth.ca/eap](https://secure.kiihealth.ca/eap) or at 1-866-814-0018.



### More inside:

- Unexpected sums to repay
- An unexpected motion
- Protection clause for temporary employees
- A new assistance program

# RECOVERY METHODS CAUSE CONCERN

In recent weeks, some temporary or contract employees have received a recovery notice from the employer. The employees in question didn't have access to benefits and received an allowance of 7.5% on top of their salary to make up for it. However, for these 107 persons, the employer continued to pay them the allowance, sometimes for over two years, after they became eligible for benefits. Several of these colleagues were never even told that they were eligible for benefits. Now they have to pay back amounts ranging from \$3 to over \$8,000!



Sums were recovered from certain persons without them even being notified. At least one person saw their whole pay taken, while others in the French-language network received a communication that was only in English. A few of the persons in question contacted Shared Services several times in the last year to advise them that they thought there was a problem with their pay. The answer was always that everything was fine. However, a few months later they're being asked for over a thousand dollars.

Now, we can't prevent recovery of these sums. The employer is entitled to recover overpayments going back up to three years. On the other hand, we disapprove of the cavalier fashion in which the sums are being recovered, sometime even in a way that contravenes the employer's own policy... Radio-Canada's policy stipulates that when money is due, no more than 10% of the net regular pay can be recovered at a time.

For debts of between \$50 and \$2,000, repayments can be spread over a maximum of 15 pays, while amounts between \$2,000 and \$5,000 can be recovered over a maximum of 20 pays. Amounts exceeding \$5,000 can be recovered over a maximum of 25 pays. The policy also states that in exceptional cases, an agreement may be made with the employer to spread out the payments even more.

If you're in this situation, or if you think that there is an error in the amount being claimed, don't hesitate to talk to your shop steward. We can work with you and help you to make the necessary confirmations with the employer.

## A SIGNIFICANT VOTE OF SUPPORT

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QUÉBEC NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY

At the very beginning of the year, an unexpected letter of support arrived at the union offices. A motion had been voted unanimously by the Québec National Assembly to censure the announcement of equal budget cutbacks in Radio-Canada-CBC's Francophone and Anglophone networks, despite superior performance at Radio-Canada.

The resolution recalls the importance of journalism and audiovisual production by Radio-Canada in promoting Québec culture, promoting minority Francophone cultures and providing media coverage in our regions. The National Assembly also affirmed its concerns with the budget cutbacks at Radio-Canada announced by Radio-Canada-CBC's CEO when she had paid out \$16 million in bonuses in 2022 and still expected to pay more bonuses in the current year.

In his letter of thanks to Nathalie Roy, Speaker of the National Assembly, president Pierre Tousignant said that in the current situation of cutbacks among many media outlets in Québec, we must unite our efforts to ensure the presence of a healthy press, able to effectively play its role, and that the motion by the Assembly was an important factor in this effort.

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THAT the National Assembly notes that Radio-Canada has achieved revenues higher than those of its Anglophone counterpart during the Corporation's latest financial year;

THAT it reiterates that ICI Télé's audience share is 23.2%, over five times higher than that of CBC;

THAT it also reiterates the importance of Radio-Canada's journalism and audiovisual production for promoting Québec culture, promoting minority Francophone cultures and providing media coverage in our regions;

THAT it affirms its concerns with the budget cutbacks at Radio-Canada announced by Radio-Canada-CBC's CEO when she had paid out \$16 million in bonuses in 2022 and still expected to pay more bonuses in the current year;

THAT consequently the National Assembly censures the announcement of equal budget cutbacks in Radio-Canada-CBC's Francophone and Anglophone networks, despite superior performance at Radio-Canada..

COPY OF THE MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON DECEMBER 6, 2023



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tousignant'.

# EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION CLAUSE FOR CONTRACT EMPLOYEES



This past January 10, a grievance arbitrator ruled on a grievance contesting the non-renewal of the contract of an employee whose employment ended in 2019. Although the arbitrator ruled that the reason for non-renewal stated in the notice of end of contract was proven, she enforced the obligation in section 48.13, which provides that in the case of a contract employee with three years of seniority whose contract is not renewed, “the employer shall attempt to offer the employee another employment contract instead of having recourse to a person from outside, for a period of 12 (months).”

Arbitrator Claire Brassard wrote that “section 48.13 is an employment protection provision for contract employees whose contract is ending.” She concluded that the employee should have been offered a position in another station, rejecting the employer’s assertion that this is only done in the same city, the same department and the same job title. The arbitrator went so far as to conclude that the specific position that should have been offered to the contract employee was a permanent position, considering that the employee had already held the same position at the other station.

This interpretation is favorable to maintaining the employment of contract employees whose contract is coming to an end, particularly in situations where an employer is trying to get rid of an employee whose other competences are recognized.

## SENIORITY LIST

A number of members would like to see the seniority list. This is understandable in the present situation of position cuts. Radio-Canada sends an updated version to the union once a year.

While the update is recent, the most important and overriding information is your recognized seniority date. The list can help you to get an idea of where you stand, but don’t forget that in the bumping process it’s the joint committee that assesses each case, taking into account the parameters we spoke of in previous newsletters. If you want to consult the list, see your shop steward.

## CELEBRATE MARCH 8 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY



Since 1977, March 8 has been designated as International Women’s Day.

This day is also an opportunity to remember historic battles for equality and equity, questions that still haven’t been settled.

Look out for local initiatives in each of your sections. We invite you to celebrate your colleagues’ work on this day designated by the United Nations.



## PROBLEMS WITH CANADA LIFE?

Our insurer Canada Life has been leading us a merry dance in the last few months, as you can see if you visit the STTRC Facebook discussion group. Mathieu Massé, our delegate for radio news, is collecting complaints from our members on the subject.

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