



**Strategy 338: The Montreal Branch met with Louis-Philippe Sauvé, the Bloc Québécois MP for the federal riding of LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, as part of the national strategy of defending the interests of Federal Retirees.**



On 6 February 2025, Branch President Jacques Lambert, accompanied by Pierre Desmarais of the advocacy committee, had a videoconference with Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé, Member of Parliament for the riding of LaSalle-Émard-Verdun. His political attaché, Mr. Joël Painchaud, also took part in this very pleasant and informative meeting.

Following formal introductions, we began the discussion by highlighting the priorities of our National Association, which is made up of 170,000 members with 77 Branches across Canada, including six in Quebec. We emphasized our primary mission, which is to defend the interests of our members in matters of retirement income security, seniors, drug insurance, Veterans and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

We informed the MP of our Association's national priorities, such as retirement income security, and our various national strategies for seniors, which include housing, home care, long-term care, and access to prescription drugs. We also noted the importance of maintaining secure and sustainable pension plans, especially when actuarial surpluses have been identified by the Treasury Board of Canada. This last point is of great interest to Mr. Sauvé, as he has been following retirement issues for several years.

We informed him of a Treasury Board decision published at the end of November to transfer \$1.9 billion from the pension fund to a consolidated fund, without any consultation with unions or employee or retiree representatives. We also voiced our concern about a possible additional appropriation of \$7.4 billion from the pension fund, which still remains the deferred compensation of retirees and employees. Mr. Sauvé, like us, questions the shared management of these actuarial funds, considering that the federal administration has indicated that there would be a contribution holiday. We have undertaken to forward to him the relevant documentation on this subject.

We discussed a new report that our Association supports and appears on our national website. Published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, it is entitled *The Power of Pensions: The Impact of Pension Income on the Canadian Economy*. This report highlights the critical support that pensions provide to Canada's communities and economy. For example, the report's key findings state that in 2021, workplace pension plans paid \$84 billion in pension payments, which represented 5% of all income received by Canadians that year, more than the income from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), the Quebec Pension Plan and employment insurance. Mr. Sauvé was very impressed by the findings of this report.

We asked Mr. Sauvé about the Bloc Québécois' thoughts on medical assistance in dying. We learned that the party has supported the right to medical assistance in dying for several years and is even campaigning for expanding access to it. For example, in May 2024, the party tabled a bill to allow people with neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's, to make an advance request while they are still able to consent. This bill has received support from various organizations for the right to die with dignity. Mr. Sauvé told us that, historically, the Bloc Québécois has supported the legalization of medical assistance in dying.

We then discussed the National Seniors Strategy, part of our Association's advocacy strategy. We emphasized the fact that by 2030, adults over the age of 65 will represent 23% of Canada's population, or approximately 9.5 million people. This is the fastest growing segment of the population, with a life expectancy of 80 years. Mr. Sauvé informed us that his party does not have a national strategy on this subject. However, he indicated that his party has proposed resolutions in Parliament to improve tax fairness for seniors. The Bloc Québécois tabled Bill C-319, which proposes to increase the Old Age Security pension for seniors aged 65 to 74.

We asked Mr. Sauvé about caregivers. He told us that the Bloc Québécois has demonstrated a commitment to caregivers by proposing measures to support them. For example, in 2021, the Bloc Québécois suggested creating a tax credit for caregivers to recognize and alleviate their essential contribution. In addition, the party advocated for an improvement in financial support programs and respite services for caregivers. However, it is important to note that the policies and positions of political parties can evolve.

We also asked about the current status of Bill C-64. It is still under review in Parliament. It is essential to follow parliamentary deliberations to learn about recent developments and the remaining steps before possible adoption.

In conclusion, we explained that we want to establish a climate of cooperation, productive exchanges and shared information in order to maintain a productive relationship.

**Jacques Lambert, President**

**Pierre Desmarais, Administrator and member of the Advocacy Committee**