

Laberge, Louis

Louis Laberge, aircraft mechanic, labour leader (b at Ste-Martine, Qué 18 Feb 1924). At age 22, after working 2 years for Canadair, Laberge became shop steward of his union. Three years later (1948), he became the union's business officer and was president 1956-63 of the Conseil des métiers et du travail de Montréal. His election as president of the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec in 1964 came when it was losing ground to the Confédération des syndicats nationaux. Under his leadership, the FTQ, while defending the advantages of international ties and allegiance to Canada, also incorporated Québec neo-nationalist objectives.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the FTQ sought greater independence from the CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS, supporting the PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS and moving ideologically to the left. Laberge was re-elected easily at every congress from 1964 to when he resigned in April 1991 to be succeeded by his long-time deputy Fernand Daoust. Laberge continued as chair of the Solidarity Fund, the multi-million dollar investment arm of the federation.