

UPAC links Charest to SNC-Lavalin, report says

MONTREAL GAZETTE

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Quebec's anti-corruption police unit (UPAC) is looking into whether former premier Jean Charest was involved in a financing operation with SNC-Lavalin before being elected in 2003, says a report published by Radio-Canada on Friday evening.

The investigation would, for the first time, directly tie Charest to a financing campaign with the Montreal-based engineering firm.

According to the report, in 2002, Charest would have approached then-SNC-Lavalin chairperson Guy Saint-Pierre in an effort to collect \$50,000 from the firm's employees. Before joining the firm, Saint-Pierre was a Liberal Party member and minister during the mid-1970s.

The UPAC investigation in question would be called Mâchurer. Documents collected by the investigation call into question several other Quebec Liberal Party politicians, businessmen with ties to the party and party employees.

According to Radio-Canada, citing documents from the report, former Charest chief of staff Ronald Poupart spoke with former Quebec Liberal Party fundraiser Marc Bibeau about Charest's attempts with the firm. Poupart says he was told by Bibeau that he and Charest were meeting with Saint-Pierre to convince him to raise the money. Bibeau wanted to make sure the donations came as \$3,000 cheques to conform with Quebec election laws.

This would have happened in 2002 in Charest's offices at Place Ville-Marie, and it remains unknown if the money was collected.