

We Are Under Attack

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When I say we are under attack, I can assure you that I am not being over-dramatic. Everywhere we look there are countless examples of how public service workers are being targeted. We are continually bombarded with messages that health care costs are out of control. We are being led to believe that public services and health care specifically are costing us more and more every year.

While it is likely true that it does cost more each year just to maintain the services we have, we need to look at the picture from a larger view.

Of course health care is a major part of government spending. Consider government tax revenue as a pie. Health care is provided one piece of that funding pie. If we are to believe what is being written, health care is taking more and more of that pie each and every year. However, if you consider that through corporate tax cuts, off-shore tax havens for the very wealthy among other things, it becomes clear to me that it is actually the entire pie that is shrinking.

As long as the pie keeps getting smaller, obviously the health care slice takes a larger percentage of that pie. The convenient explanation is that health care spending is out of control and something has to be done. As Canadians, I fear that we are falling for it.

Union members are taking a large part of the blame for that with our bloated salaries, gold plated pensions and retirement benefits. Do you have a bloated salary? How about that gold-plated pension? What we need to remember is that everything we have, we have because we have banded together in the form of a union, and fought for what we have.

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By the relentless and continuous attacks, we are vilified as greedy, lazy and the eventual cause of the decline of society. How do we change that? It may be a cliché, but we really need to come together and start pulling the rope in the same direction. We absolutely must realize that unions are the members and that is our strength.

Our federal government and many provincial governments are taking direct aim at unions and unionism. Legislation is being introduced across the country that strips the rights of workers and their unions. Bargaining across the country is bitter and

more and more difficult every year. There just aren't enough resources. The result is that union members are becoming more and more alienated.

In that way, the strategy is working. I am under no illusions that any union is perfect in the eyes of every member.

However, consider for a moment if there was no union. How long would it take for Employers to impose their will without any coordinated counter-balance? Every worker would be on their own. What do you suppose would happen in your workplace? What is stopping them from imposing whatever salary they see fit? What hours would you be working tomorrow? How long is your shift? The questions are endless and incredibly disturbing. Job security would be a thing of the past. If we allow the divide and conquer tactics to work, we have a long road ahead of us. Think about the workers coming behind us, our children and grandchildren. What kind of work life would they be inheriting?

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In the United States there are many governments that have already enacted what is known as "right to work" legislation. In just a few short years, salaries for public service workers have plummeted in many sectors. I have a feeling that a large number of those workers would be more than willing to begin paying union dues again in exchange for simply getting their salaries back to where they once were.

Waiting until that happens here makes no sense and will cause an unimaginable amount of pain and hardship for workers, never mind the major blow to the economy as a whole. We have the ability now to fight this before it happens. We need to come together before it is too late.

I have written this to try to show you that all of this is a coordinated double assault on workers. By causing discontent among workers within unions they are opening the doors for the real attack. If enough people are distrustful and unhappy, getting rid of the unions will be a lot easier.

Then what?



Bob Moroz, President