

## What I foresee as the role of organized labour in the future.

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Organized labour was traditionally found in skilled trades and labour industries uniting, representing, and protecting large groups of workers. However, due to technology, the advent of world telecommunications, and a new globalized economy, the traditional image of unions has changed in Canada. Many of the manufacturing jobs, and labour intensive jobs have moved overseas to other countries, and robots have replaced many assembly and manufacturing jobs. Several of my friends think that unions are no longer important or are not relevant to them as they seek a future in a white-collar profession. I know the difference in this falsehood and believe that unions have become more important now than ever before in history. Both my mom and dad are union members, and I have learned so much about the importance of union support and solidarity. Regardless of the type of work being done, whether its blue collar or white-collar work, unions play a vital role in the workplace, the economy, and overall democracy in Canada.

Unions raise overall wages for both unionized and non-unionized workers, and they close the pay gaps that exist between genders and different races of people. Organized labour has a positive impact on ensuring fairness, equality, transparency, and dignity are instilled and promoted in the workplace. These are qualities that all Canadians advocate for and demand to see in our governments and our society. Unions help balance power in our economy and democracy and that is needed in our country right now. By getting people involved in the process, and helping advocate for positions that working class people support, unions are helping to make democracy work.

Unionization has a positive impact on the economy since unionized workers have higher incomes and pay more taxes. As the largest portion of our population, (the Boomers) leave the workplace, there are less working-class people contributing tax dollars to the government. Higher salaries will help offset this burden, providing more revenue for the government to provide the services and benefits Canadians are known for. I think organized labour needs to take a stronger approach to educating the public on the importance of unions. Its not just a matter of advertising the work that unions are doing on specific campaigns for social justice, but the importance of ensuring fair wages and benefits for everyone. The public need to understand how unions benefit not only those who are members of a union, but all members of society. Organized labour should be pooling their resources so that advertising on social media, television, and on electronic billboards is actively done in a timely manner, especially in response to government announcements on policy changes.

There was a campaign started just before the pandemic aimed at the “one percenters” in the country that hold billions of dollars and who pay very little tax. However, the stress and fear that emerged when the pandemic occurred, overpowered the discussion, and no one has really returned to it when the pandemic ended. Organized labour needs to educate the public on the unfair distribution of wealth, and how government tax policies and programs allow the super rich to shelter their wealth from government tax.

According to a Concordia University article referencing Human Resources

Management, there has been the steady decline in Canada of union membership since the 1950s. In Linda McQuaig's book *The Trouble with Billionaires*, she writes that the best economic times for the working middle class was the 1950s. This is certainly not a coincidence and further supports that organized labour needs to educate the public on the circumstances that is creating the wealth gap in Canada. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, it appears that the disparity between the very rich and others has quickened its pace. Middle class workers that enjoyed a good livelihood and lifestyle are now struggling to make ends meet, as the cost of living has skyrocketed during and after the pandemic.

In addition to taking a stronger approach to educating the public in general, organized labour need to focus on Canada's youth. We are the future of the workforce in Canada, and many youths really do not understand the importance of unions. Statistics have shown that when there is an accident in the workplace, there is a higher percentage that a young person will be injured rather than a more senior worker. Organized labour has been able to fight back against unsafe working conditions by joining people together to unite against corporations who often care more about their bottom line than their employees who make their business. The generation that is coming into the workforce needs to become more educated on not only the benefits of unions, but also on how much they impact the safety and wellbeing of millions of workers around the world. Without unions, workers are losing their rights, and sometimes their very life. Going on strike to fight for better and safer working conditions would work effectively when supported by a union. Non-union workers trying the same thing would find that they have no security, and no power.

In addition to physical health and safety, today it has become more apparent that declining mental health is affecting people on a much larger scale now when compared to decades in the past. It is especially important for workers to be able to have the security to take the necessary time needed to recover and not fear the security of their job when they are off work. A study published by Manulife stated that almost fifty percent of the workforce struggles with some form of mental health issue related to the workplace. This is an incredibly significant statistic. Unions help mitigate these struggles by supporting workers with strong collective agreements, and support when employees are dealing with uncompassionate employers.

No matter where I go in my career, I will always support organized labour. My parents taught me the importance of being a good citizen which includes paying my fair share and supporting those who need help. As I progressed through the ranks of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets program, being a good leader also included being a good citizen. I try to share this with my friends and colleagues, but with the bombardment of social media, it seems that everyone is focused on themselves and their individualistic needs. I believe organized labour needs to play a vital role in creating solidarity between the working class to demand changes from government policy makers.