

NOBODY does it Better!

Why public services are what we need
and want and why privatization isn't



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NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

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1

National Union Research

NO SURBRE

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NO HEARTS. NO MINDS. NO SURRENDER. Not to Mulronev or Chrétien or Martin. Not to Harris or Klien or Campbell. None of them could, none of them can, convince us the privatization of public services is good for us. They can't win our hearts and minds. Not then. Not now. They can force privatization on us. They can make us learn to live with it, work in spite of it, grin and bear it. But they can't make us like it. Warm up to it. Embrace it. Call it our own. And, they sure as hell can't make us stop fighting against it. Our hearts remain strong. Our minds clear. There will be no surrender.

SURRENDER.

3

**HOCUS
POCUS**

4

Privatization is supposed to work like magic.

The privatizers say it's the perfect "fix" for government. Good government. Bad government. It doesn't matter. The privatizers claim privatization can "fix" it all.

The privatizers claim privatization will always give us government that costs less and delivers more. Their magic formula is simple: just turn government from a public enterprise into a private enterprise every chance we get. The privatizers claim the more we do this, the more we will get out of our tax dollars.

Going private is always better, say the privatizers - no matter who, no matter what, no matter where, no matter when. Highways, hospitals, prisons, liquor stores, home care, it doesn't matter. The privatizers claim that anything and everything governments do for us, can always be done better and cheaper by private contractors.

That's what they claim. What privatization actually does for us and to us is a lot different. It involves a lot of hocus pocus. But no magic.

STEP 1 THINK



6

THINK ABOUT WHAT PRIVATIZATION REALLY OFFERS



Queen' Park, Ontario / OPSEU Strike Against the Harris Cuts / 1995

7

what's
the
catch?

8

YOU JUST KNOW THERE'S A CATCH!

Anytime anyone says you can pay less and get more, you know there's gotta be a catch.

Three year olds in candy stores know this. Rocket scientists and high school dropouts know it. Finance ministers and store clerks, high rollers and hamburger flippers - we all know it. You just don't pay less and get more. Not ever.

No matter how many times we hear it. No matter who says it. No matter how slick the sales pitch. We know we're not ever likely to get more for less.

We know in our bones that more for less is just a big come-on, a colossal con, as close to a flat out impossibility as you'll ever get.

So, when the privatizers do it, when they try to dazzle us with the promise of more for less, our in-built BS detectors should go off big time. We should instantly be on our guard because we now know two important things: first, we know what to think of the privatizers; second, we know what they think of us.



insult and injury

10

THEY MUST BE UP TO SOMETHING. Anyone who promises to make it possible for us to pay less and get more has got to be up to something. If they weren't, if they had the real deal, they would offer it to us straight. But the privatizers don't.

They don't just offer us a fix. They offer us a miracle. It's an approach common to carnival barkers and TV infomercials. It's the kind of approach that marks them as hucksters and clearly hopes to play us for suckers.

To come on this way shows up the privatizers for what they really are. And it reveals what they think we really are.

They think we're stupid. Too stupid to see the catch in what they promise.

NOTHING BUT AN INSULT. To ask us to believe it is possible to pay less and get more is nothing but an insult to our intelligence. Yet that's what the privatizers want us to believe.

They want us to believe they can cut the cost of government and do no damage - not to us as users of public services, nor to the workers who provide those services. They want us to believe they can do the impossible.

The insult is bad enough. The injury is worse.

THE BIG HURT Worker at CBC Ottawa finds her name on a layoff list / 1994



1 2

PRIVATIZATION HURTS. Privatization does a lot worse than insult us. Privatization also does us positive injury. In fact, privatization can't help but hurt us. It can't help but damage us in body and in soul since it demands a wholesale change in the way we do things AND in the way we think about things.

This hurts. It hurts us directly and indirectly. Public sector workers first and then all the rest of us.

A program of militant privatization targets public sector workers. They either get put out of work or have to live with the gnawing fear of being put out of work. This is not good for them or for us. It lowers their self-esteem and it damages or destroys their desire to try harder to be of service to us.

That's bad enough - but we all lose even more, because privatized services are always reduced services. Always.

This is not what the privatizers promise. But it is what they deliver time and time again. Fewer people on the job, with lower qualifications, working with out-moded equipment and fewer supplies to deliver a premium service. It's just not possible.

But even if it was possible, even if we could somehow excuse and accept the damage privatization does to public service workers, even if privatization could deliver the goods, it would still not be worth it.

REDUCED
service
and
REJECTED
values

14

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN. Privatization in theory and privatization in practice turns our world upside down. It asks us to give up on too many things and too many values we count on to define who we are and how we live.

Our unions for a start. Once there are no public service workers, there would be no need for public service unions. And the privatizers will do everything they can to make it next-to-impossible to organize all the newly-privatized workers. Without unions, workers will again be left to fend for themselves against bosses bent on squeezing every last dollar out of their businesses.

But, the privatizers want to do a lot more than bust unions. They want to make us over into their own image. They want us all to break faith with our past. They want us all to make money the absolute and only measure of everything. They want us all to sell ourselves out to ourselves.

If this means we have to diminish or deny our most basic values and beliefs, so be it. For them the bottom line is always, and only, the bottom line. Any other consideration is just mushy sentiment. Something that never was profitable. And that never will be.

The first article in this new faith of theirs is that the absolute best way to get anything done is to make it easy for someone to make a buck out of doing it.



16

PRIVATIZATION BRINGS OUT THE WORST IN US. It is a doctrine designed to appeal to our dark side only. Compassion is for suckers. Doing the right thing is for losers. Being human won't put money in your pocket or get things done. The best way to get by in a dog-eat-dog world is to turn yourself into one.

This is a cold-hearted, mean-spirited view of the way the world should work. It turns selfishness into something to be proud of. It turns people into objects you can make a quick profit on. It turns society into one monster trade-mart, where people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

That's what's wrong with the glorification of the private over the public. That's what's wrong with privatization. It leaves no room for human values. It always puts concern for profit above a concern for people.

It is this tunnel vision that makes privatization so unwholesome. It is also what makes it so un-Canadian.

STEP 2 REMEMBER



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19

the
smart
thing
to do

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A VISION ALL OUR OWN.

The smart thing to do was to look out for one another. We could see that right from the start. All we had was ourselves. Everything else was stacked against us: we lived too far north; the distances between us were too vast; the climate harsh and unforgiving; the markets too remote. We'd have to care about, and care for, one another - or we wouldn't make it. Not individually and not as a nation. Looking out for one another was the smart thing to do.

So that's what we did and it served us well as we went from wilderness outposts, to British colony, to independent nation. We made our own way, "The Canadian Way."

We established the common good and common interest as legitimate ends in themselves. It worked well for us. It made Canada unique, different from the USA, Britain, France and all the old countries. But it didn't change the world. The plain reality was that narrow self-interest and private interest came first. The pursuit of



the
right
thing
to do

22

money still made the world go round. Until it stopped in October 1929.

THE DIRTY THIRTIES: A PRIVATE SECTOR DISASTER. The stock market crash of 1929 brought life to a standstill. There was no work, no investment, no hope. Simple survival became a fulltime worry and took a fulltime effort.

The private enterprise/free market system, had failed us - and itself. It could no longer claim to automatically deliver the greatest good to the greatest number. Yet, the praised and pampered private business sector remained unphased.

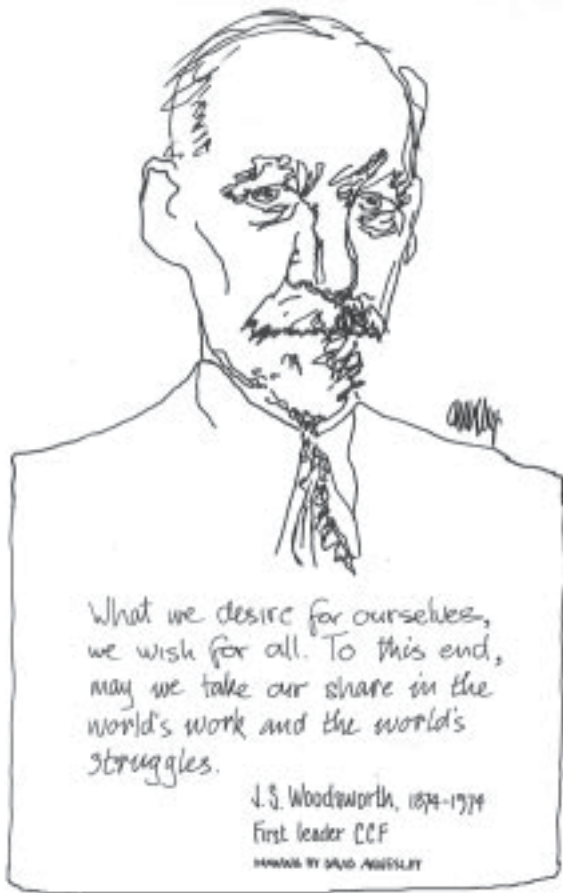
They had failed to do the smart thing. They had failed to keep us all from disaster. But they could still do the right thing. They could still reach out to rescue us all from it. They failed at that too.

At first the private business sector simply refused to do anything at all to help. When they finally did try, the plain fact was that the private sector alone could not actually do much to help.

Rescue and recovery would depend on something else.

A PUBLIC SECTOR RESCUE. That something else was a robust and effective public sector created by government.

We made our individual instinct to care about, and to care for, one another into a formal part of our Canadian system of govern-



ment. We saw that the practices used to run a company for profit, were not exactly the best to use to run a country for people.

We decided that everybody, rich or poor, old or young, man or woman had a right to expect a certain quality of life simply by living in Canada. Whether or not we could, or should, turn any of it into a money-making opportunity for private business couldn't have mattered less. We just wanted to help one another out.

Still it was not easy. Every new measure had to be fought for - from the right to form unions to win a living wage, to

social assistance for the poor, to unemployment insurance, to old age pensions, to Medicare.

But it was achieved. We extended the use of public services to make day-to-day life more predictable, easier and safer for us all. Millions of Canadians of good will, working together, used government to weave a social security safety net that would never again let any Canadian face a future without any hope.

We learned the lesson of the Great Depression and took it to heart. We learned that PRIVATE IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY BETTER.

BE PREPARED TO PROTECT YOURSELF. The privatizers mean business - all business, nothing but business. They have zero tolerance for any other idea or ideals.

They say it was a mistake to ever use public policy to reflect our personal desire to care about and for one another. They are more than certain it was a mistake to even think about it. We are in the grip of a new reality, they say. Only the strong can survive. Will survive. Deserve to survive.

They are wrong and we must prove it.

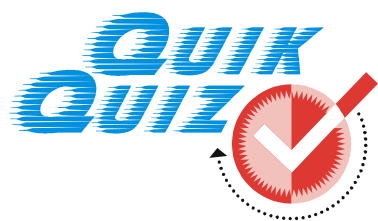
The rest of this booklet offers ideas on what to say and what to do to deny the privatizers; ideas on how to preserve and protect our vision and the Canada we know and love.

Read it carefully.

PRIVATIZATION IS BOUND TO GET YOU. If it doesn't take your job, it'll take the heart out of every good thing you believe Canada should be.

That's not a threat. It's a promise. It's really the only honest promise privatization can make or hope to keep.





WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON



TAKE THIS SIMPLE TEST AND FIND OUT.

■ Just check off the quotes you like and/or agree with the most.

All for one, one for all. United we stand, divided we fall.

What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.
J.S. WOODSWORTH

Private enterprise - approves private action which would be considered dishonest in public action.
JOHN KENNEDY

There is no way of keeping profits up but by keeping wages down.
DAVID RICARDO

Let us endeavour so to live that when we die even the undertaker is unhappy.
MARK TWAIN

If all the rich people in the world divided up their money amongst themselves, there wouldn't be enough to go around.
JULES BERTILLON

My rackets are run on strictly American lines and they're going to stay that way.
AL CAPONE

Learn to be greedy. There's one underlying motive shared by all successful business and that's greed.
BARBARA McDOUGALL, *former federal minister of state for privatization*

Prosperity of the middling and lower orders depends upon the fortunes and light taxes of the rich.
ANDREW MELLON

One of the serious obstacles to the improvement of our race is indiscriminate charity.
ANDREW CARNEGIE, *Founder of U.S. Steel Corp.*

I've realised, after 14 months in this country [Canada] the value of money, whether it is clean or dirty.
NGUYEN CAO KY, *former President of South Vietnam*

*** LEFT LIST** If you checked quotes mostly in the left list, welcome aboard.
The rest of the booklet should help you fight the good fight.

*** RIGHT LIST** If you checked quotes mostly on the right list, think again.
The rest of the booklet should help you sort out whose side you're really on.

PRIVATIZATON IS
NOT
AN ACT
OF GOD



It can strike like
lightning.
At random.
Without reason.
With great devastation.
But it is not an accident.
It is as deliberate as an
ice pick to the heart.
It is an act of man.
It can be prevented.

THIS IS MADNESS. Privatization is a lot like lightning. It can strike anywhere, anyone, any time.

That's because there is no method in the privatizers' madness. What they are up to is not based on good economic theory, practical experience or even common sense. They just make it up as they go along. They'll strike whenever they think they can help their friends in business make a buck. Here's one example from Ontario.

In 1997, the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services entered into an agreement with ***Andersen Consulting*** for the development and implementation of new processes for delivering social assistance in Ontario.

This deal, according to the government's own auditor, allows Andersen Consulting (the world's largest consulting firm) to pocket \$13.1 million that it may not have earned, bill Ontario taxpayers for wages that are almost six times the going rates and ultimately walk away with as much as \$180 million - *more than twice the amount it had originally asked for.*

The government's own Auditor General slammed the deal with Andersen Consulting. His report states: "We continue to question the achievement of value for money for taxpayers from this agreement." He added: "This project is failing to deliver the replacement

technology and functionality required for administering the Income Support and Ontario Works programs economically and efficiently within the timetable planned. We consider this failure ominous because the Ministry of Social Services and Andersen Consulting have agreed on the need to extend the contract from four to five years to complete the project.

This extension threatens to diminish the benefit to the taxpayer from this project.”

PRIVATIZATION BIG, PRIVATIZATION SMALL. Privatization can be a multi-million dollar affair: like it was when the federal government sold off Air Canada; like it will be if Premier Klein succeeds in allowing more private hospitals to open in Alberta under Bill 11; and like it will be if Premier Harris in Ontario is successful at selling off public water utilities to privatizers.

Privatization can also be like being nibbled to death by ducks. Bits and pieces of bargaining units are contracted out, job category by job category, until the unit just disappears. This is happening to Ontario Hydro workers.

The type of work makes no difference. Blue collar/white collar, support/technical/professional, skilled/unskilled - if some private enterprise figures it can make a buck at it, it'll be privatized.

Many provincial governments in Canada have already privatized public services including: home care, driver exams, maintenance of health records, government administrative and computer services, residential care for persons with disabilities, worker compensation rehabilitative services, liquor sales and control, security, the dietary, housekeeping and laundry services provided in hospitals, ambulance services, highway maintenance and even workplace health and safety inspection.

NONE OF THIS IS INEVITABLE. Despite what Harris, Klein, Campbell and Chrétien want us to believe, privatization is not an act of God or a force of nature. It is quite clearly the creation of men. That's good news. Because that means we can do more than simply submit to our fate.

We can change it.

THESE GUYS THINK THEY'RE GODS

GORDON
CAMPBELL



MIKE HARRIS



RALPH KLEIN

THEY'RE WRONG!

31

WINNING
WORDS

All the best
things to say to
people who think
privatization
makes sense

The two best arguments against privatization are:

- 1** Privatization can't possibly deliver.
- 2** Even if it could we wouldn't want it.

[1] PRIVATIZATION CAN'T DELIVER what it promises. The reason why is obvious: if something is being run for private profit the overwhelming temptation is to dilute the service to up the profit.

Doing that in the public service would be pointless. Using cheaper materials or doing slipshod work doesn't put any more money in your pocket. In fact, it could get you fired or even land you in jail.

So, public services are always high quality services.


Private services, despite the best of intentions, will always sacrifice quality to the bottom line. Privatization can't pos-

sibly give us more for less. It's as unlikely as water running up hill.

[2] PRIVATIZATION COSTS TOO MUCH. Even if privatization could deliver, it would not be worth it.

It would not be worth it because while we might save money, we would lose ourselves. We would have to abandon all the values we used to build Canada into the country we always wanted.

That's simply a price far too high to pay. Surely, we can find better ways to improve public services that don't cost us so much.

Not enough? Try these. 

33

WINNING ARGUMENT #3

*You say privatization is worth it...
BUT people are going to
get hurt no matter how
you do it.*

- There are only two ways to make money off providing public services: cut wages or cut corners. Either way hurts people.

Cutting wages hurts public service workers immediately. It hurts the general public when the quality of services runs down because skilled workers leave for better paying jobs.

Cutting corners hurts the public because the quality of service and often of safety drops. Workers are ordered to do less, so the new private owner can make more.

Cutting corners also hurts workers because they will have to push themselves to do more with less.

- Privatization is a no-win situation for us all, no matter how you look at it.

WINNING ARGUMENT #4

*You say privatization is worth it...
BUT is the promise of
privatization savings
worth the risk of losing
what is most valuable?*

- How valuable is peace of mind? That's the first question we must ask when we start talking about selling off public services to private business - because that's what we risk losing.

Ask the people of Walkerton what it's worth to know you have safe water.

What's it worth to have clean air to breathe; safe highways to drive on? What's it worth to go into a restaurant and not have to worry about food poisoning? What's it worth to know that facilities for the mentally ill are not snake pits of neglect and despair?

The list goes on and on. All services provided by public employees. All services almost beyond price be-

cause we depend on them so much. We depend on them for our personal convenience, comfort and protection. And we depend on them to give us the kind of society we want Canada to be.

How can we put a price on that?

The fact is, public services are too valuable to be bought and sold like so much toilet tissue.

No amount of money - real or imagined - is worth the risk of losing them.



WINNING ARGUMENT #5

*You say privatization is worth it...
BUT aren't most public services already as efficient as we want them to be?*

- One basic measure of efficiency is productivity; if you increase your production of widgets from 100 per hour to 200 you're twice as efficient as you were before.

But public services usually deal with people - not widgets.

So, one nurse caring for 30 patients isn't three times better at her job than one who cares for 10.

An occupational health and safety inspector who visits four job sites a day is not producing better protection for workers than one who visits one site a day.

A community college teacher in a classroom with 45 students is not providing three times the education as a

teacher in a classroom with 15 students.

Quality of service is what has to come first when you're dealing with people - not a head count of the numbers processed. We all want as much personal care as we can get - whether it's from garbage collectors, receptionists or ambulance drivers.

The public services we have now, free of the pressure to process more and more people to generate more and more profit, are about as "efficient" as we need them.



36

WINNING ARGUMENT #6

You say privatization is worth it...

BUT, won't it create a crazy quilt of services across the country so that none of us will ever know what to expect?

- Federal, provincial and municipal governments provide public services the way chains like The Bay or Sears do: there are no surprises for the customer. Quality service is assured from coast to coast.

Old age security cheques arrive like clockwork in Newfoundland and the Yukon. The education kids get from schools in Nova Scotia is just as good as what kids get in Ontario. The garbage collection in Moncton is comparable to the garbage collection in Red Deer.

Public services aren't driven to make a profit. So certain quality standards can be set and maintained - no matter how "unprofitable" they are supposed to be.

WINNING ARGUMENT #7

*You say privatization is worth it...
BUT is it the workers' fault if not every public service is perfect?*

- Public employees take orders, they don't give them. They don't get to decide how much money gets spent on a job or what jobs get done in what order. All that kind of decision-making is done by the government in power and their line managers.

If public employees were consulted, they could pass on ways to do their jobs more efficiently. But no one ever asks or listens.

Instead, the government just cuts back and back, forcing workers to stretch themselves more and more to try and maintain a level of service the government has given up on.

Blaming public employees for inefficient service is like blaming a gas station attendant when your car runs out of gas.

WINNING ARGUMENT #8

*You say privatization is worth it...
BUT how do you excuse the gross injustice it does to public sector workers?*

- Privatization is based on prejudice, the prejudice that all public sector workers are underworked and overpaid.

It is a prejudice that is unfair and indefensible. The proof of that is before our eyes every day.

It is inexcusable to fire workers who have put in years and years of faithful and faultless service because of this prejudice. It is arbitrary and closed. There is no appeal. There is no chance for workers to defend themselves.

It would be difficult to design a policy that would be more biased or more unfair to people whose only "crime" was to work for the government; whose only mistake was to do exactly what managers asked of them day in and day out.

WINNING

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All the best
things to do
to prove
public services
are best

QUALITY IS AS QUALITY DOES

The best way - and perhaps the only way - to get the public on our side is to make it worth their while.

We have to convince them they will be losing something of value if they allow the privatization of public services.

No amount of talking will do this. Action often will.

The single most successful tactic unions have used to defend their members' jobs and quality public services is to let public services speak for themselves. Unions made real efforts - often for the first time - to make sure services were popular and efficient, open and responsible to the people who use them.

This is not only the smart thing to do - it is the right thing to do. Quality public services are a legitimate end in themselves - they are also the best safeguard we could have against privatization in all its forms.

The better the service the easier it is to defend.

BE THE ONES WHO TRY HARDER

But quality services cannot be developed in the abstract. They can only be developed in direct response to the demands of the users of the service - the public-at-large.

But, so long as we see the public-at-large as THE PUBLIC we will never win friends and influence people. Rather we need to see the public as potential CUSTOMERS, millions of individual opportunities to give people the same kind of PERSONALIZED SERVICE private business is so famous for - the kind of service that keeps people coming back for more.

Deliver that kind of service - or just show that we are the ones working the hardest to deliver that kind of service - and we have taken our best shot at getting what we need most; a public that openly and visibly identifies itself as our ally.

The simple fact is: actions still speak louder than words.

ACTION IDEA #1

Your Friendly Neighbourhood Public Service Employee

Deliberately develop a day-to-day presence in the community. Begin by never missing an opportunity to remind people how many high quality services are provided by public service workers.

An easy and inexpensive way to start is by using the opportunities open to any “civic minded” group in your community. For example:

- Set up a roster of union members; ready to regularly write letters to the editors of daily, weekly or even neighbourhood papers;
- Get invitations to speak to the Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce or any of the many service

clubs in the community that have luncheon speakers;

- Put together a union information booth that can be carted around to community events, like fall fairs, or even set up in shopping centres just to remind people how good the public services they rely on are;
- Make a point to get union members to regularly monitor phone-in shows to talk up union issues. Retirees could be a big help with this;

ACTION IDEA #2

Hometown Heroes

Find ways to get local people to come forward with testimonials about the good service they personally get from their public service workers. There are plenty of these stories out there.

Then use these testimonials to build up the image of all public service workers.

A collection of such testimonials, featuring praise from individual taxpayers, could easily become the

backbone of a pamphlet presenting the union point of view. But, instead of trying to talk people into believing public services are the best, the “true stories” of taxpayers, more than happy with the public services they get and the workers providing them, would prove it.

Some unions have used ads in local papers, profiling individual workers, to do the same kind of things.

ACTION IDEA #3

Build Community Support

Never forget the value of your job to the community and never let your community forget the value of the service you provide. Go out in your community and build public support for the service you provide. This is often the best way to protect public service jobs.

Begin a campaign in your community. Work with client and advocacy groups, social justice organizations and other community leaders to inform your community on how the service you provide benefits and improves the quality of life of people in your community. Build a coalition in support of the service you provide.

Remember every opportunity to talk about the value of public services is an opportunity to raise the profile of and support for public service workers.

ACTION IDEA #4

Strut Our Stuff

Take the bull by the horns and open our own private investigation into the quality of the services we provide.

The idea is to have a free and frank discussion - among ourselves and behind closed doors - on everything we like and don't like about the work we do. To expose our strengths and weaknesses before others do it for us.

This process would include Worker Satisfaction Surveys. This approach will activate members and will give us opportunities to score big with the public by:

- (1) talking about all the good things we already do; and
- (2) showing us where we can improve on our own, without being driven to it.

ACTION IDEA #5

Take Stock In Ourselves

Issue share certificates or statement of assets listing all tangible and intangible assets citizens now own by way of public ownership that will become worthless once ownership passes into private hands.

ACTION IDEA #6

Inside Tips

Send out pamphlets explaining how to get the most out of specific services. When some unions tried this, they couldn't keep up with demand. They sent out pamphlets to the public such as:

- Utility facts: how to save on your bills...and more.
- Your green guide: how to protect the environment...and more.
- Tips on how to successfully apply for public programs and services.

ACTION IDEA #7

Words Of Praise

Sponsor essay writing or public speaking contests in the public schools on the topic of the value of public services provided by government for the common good.

ACTION IDEA #8

Go Tell The World

Once we have all the facts and figures we need to prove our point about services being quality services, we can advertise that fact.

We can talk about our commitment to quality and everyone will listen!

Don't
just
stand
there!

Your union
is already
doing
something
ABOUT
privatization.
Become
part of it!