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Forget the garbage, what stinks here is the attitude

Now, now. There, there.

Oh sure, the entire country's in a financial pickle and workers in every industry imaginable are fretting about whether, come tomorrow, they'll still have jobs, but heck, let's make sure you can bank those sick days.

Sure, regular employees are in the midst of workplace crunches with fewer folks doing greater amounts of work, but forget the average Joe's woes over how he's gonna put the bacon on the table and feed hungry little mouths or pay his rent and hydro bills.

Now the average Joe must worry about the rotting garbage stench that's bound to hit over the next few days when his trash bags go uncollected due to a Toronto garbage strike.

One of the main issues leading city garbage collectors to the picket lines is sick days.

Like everyone, they have a right to take them but, unlike the rest of us slaving away in the private sector, they've been allowed to bank their unused days and cash them in at any point. Like when they retire, say, or simply feel like jetting off on a vacation using the three months of sick days they've been storing under their belt.

Thing is, these guys - the strikers currently hoisting up placards - are working for us. They are our employees, their fat salaries paid for by the hefty taxes taken from our paycheques.

So, seeing as we are the backers of their pay stubs, reasonably we should be able to fire their asses. But, this isn't how unions work, now is it?

Where the rest of us could only dream of the kind of job security in which it'd be easier to pull off a bank job in the financial district than fire a dud worker, it's nice to know that some workers are so thoroughly protected. And on our dime, too.

Whereas most private sector employees are entitled to a reasonable number of sick days a year, the reality of a civic employee is a whole lot cushier. They get a whopping 18.

If you work at a non-government job, the luxury of getting 18 sick days is unimaginable, never mind the right to save 'em up like a squirrel prepping for a long winter.

Earth to the Toronto Civic Employees Union Local 416 CUPE: Regular people don't have these privileges. We simply don't, just so you know. And, for the record, most of us can't just walk off the job without getting our asses fired.

Seriously, when regular folk are clocking overtime in hopes of snagging some sort of job security and, with many out there avoiding sick days altogether because their workloads are stocked too high, this union actually has the gull to whine about extra frills, regardless of the economical climate that's snipped off the workplace frills for everyone else far and wide.

There are layoffs, hiring freezes and holds on salary increases everywhere we look among non-governmental agencies so no, strikers, I don't believe you have it tough.

Simply put, it's greedy to gleam over the fact that some people are actually struggling - and I mean really struggling - just to find work. Yet that doesn't stop a bunch of yahoos from jumping up and having three-year-old temper tantrums, storming off the job and crying about how hard they're done by. Give me a break.

Yes, let us private employees work even harder so that our civic staffers can be pampered with the kind of cushy work life that most of us can only dream of. Oh, please, can we pay? Please, oh, please? While we're at it, what else can our taxpaying dollars cover for you?

So, for the average Joe, what does the strike mean?

Well, it means your waste could be sitting inside your home for a good long while. It means public trash bins have been closed up, as well as city-run day cares, recreation centres and public pools.

It means that the city has set up drop-off locations so that we can ditch our trash somewhere, but that those locations are swarming with angry unionized workers. It means that smelly stuff will soon be piling up high on the streets.

Yes, the garbage will stink under the smoldering summer heat that's finally arrived here in Toronto, but one thing stinks far worse - the attitude of the 24,000 city workers who've walked off the job, screwing over the generous tax-paying public who've been covering the bacon costs for city workers for far too long.