

No such thing as a free lunch

By Brian Lockhart

The whole idea of a 'free lunch' goes way back to the late 1800's when some saloons in North America and to a lesser degree in the United Kingdom started advertising a 'free lunch' to any patron who sat down at the bar and ordered a drink.

Sounds like a good deal - pay for a drink and get your lunch for free. Who wouldn't want to take advantage of that?

Of course there was a well-thought-out plan behind that offer. Many people who visit saloons don't stop at a single drink. If you're the saloon owner, especially back in those days, serving up more drinks to your already inebriated customers meant more money in your pocket - especially when you've already jacked up the price of the suds and liquor.

Make sure the 'free lunch' you serve is high in salty foods and of course your patrons will need to order another beer to quench their thirst.

At end of the day, that free lunch was bought and paid for by the very patrons who came in to get something for nothing but paid more for their liquor and drank more of it. What a concept!

A major selling point of the Ontario Provincial government's recent budget is the showcase pharmacare program for children and youth providing 'free' prescription medications for youth who are not covered under a private plan.

There's that word again - FREE.

I don't begrudge anyone getting medication for 'acute and chronic' conditions, as the budget claims. In fact, I think this is a good program they way it is described. But it's not free.

Many countries around the world, Canada included, boast that citizens have free health care.

Again, I don't think it's a bad thing. A lot of people in this nation complain about the state of the health care system but my experience has been that it works well and is run by a lot of good doctors, nurses, and support staff who do a terrific job. But it's not free.

There has been some talk of transitioning Canadian colleges and universities and making them available to students with 'free' tuition.

This is already the case in several European countries where citizens or others from the EU nations either don't pay or are charged a very minimal administration fee.

Countries like Finland boast 'free' university tuition for students.

How is that possible? Do the professors volunteer their time? Do the administrative staff donate their services? Do the cleaning and maintenance staff complete their jobs out of the goodness of their hard working hearts? Are the building materials for new classes and lecture halls donated by local construction firms and constructed at no cost?

While some aspects of a 'socialist'-based program do provide needed services and probably should be funded by the population through taxes, they aren't free.

Every 'free' health care system, university, or any other government program that boasts services that don't require payment are indeed paid for - by you.

It's time to stop referring to any of these programs to be referred as having no cost. There is always a cost.

Ontario is now carrying a huge HUGE debt, that if it continues will doom the next generations to a life of servitude. Even now, it is estimated Canadians spend close to half of their income on tax, both visible and hidden.

People on the far left love to announce 'free' stuff for the masses. After all, why should anyone have to invest in or pay for something when they can get it for free?

This is especially true when you are seeking votes and power by promising the world without having a workable plan to back it up. The truth is you can't get something for nothing.

It is no secret that government spending is wildly out of wack with what most people would consider common sense.

With the current method of increase taxes to spend more, sooner or later the well will run dry and with it your bank account.

If you ever get invited to a 'free lunch' by a government agency - be wary. Most likely the lunch will be free but the lot attendant will charge you \$500 to park your car.