

**CAW PRESIDENT  
BUZZ HARGROVE  
SPEECH  
TO  
CAW COUNCIL**

**SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL, TORONTO, ON**

**DECEMBER 2-4, 2005**

**WELCOME**

I want to welcome the delegates to this fall 2005 CAW Council meeting. Given what is taking place in our country, and especially with an election coming, this is a crucial meeting.

As we commence our Council meeting, I want to begin by reminding people that November 20<sup>th</sup>, was the International Day for Children. This day draws attention to the plight of the many children around the world who live in poverty, who live in abusive situations, or who live without shelter. It draws attention to the children in Pakistan and India who are living outside as winter begins because of the devastating earthquake. We must remind ourselves of the importance of what we do, both nationally and internationally, working with groups who help children.

Yesterday, December 1<sup>st</sup> was World AIDS Day. This world pandemic is causing many people to become disabled or die at a very early age. In some areas of Africa, entire villages are being wiped out. We must all do our share to help the world deal with this horrible pandemic.

**ECONOMY**

At home, our economy continues to be strong in many ways. A lot of new jobs are being created throughout different sectors of the economy, while in other sectors, like manufacturing and forestry, jobs continue to be lost at an alarming rate. In some regions of the country, Alberta, in particular, job growth is strong.

In some regions, we are seeing a number of workplace closures. I cannot recall seeing as many closures as we have seen since our last Council meeting. We see workplace closures, declining employment, and declining opportunities for a lot of our members and for working people across the country. The price of oil and natural gas have led to increased prosperity in

Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador, while British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces are experiencing shut downs and layoffs in the manufacturing and forestry sectors.

The continuing dispute with the U.S. over softwood lumber, the appreciation of the Canadian dollar, driven up by high oil prices, and the Bank of Canada raising interest rates, are having a devastating effect on a number of sectors, but especially manufacturing and forestry. We must continue to urge David Dodge, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, to lower – not raise – interest rates. Surely the impact of gas and oil prices on other sectors of the Canadian economy cannot be ignored by the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

Another major concern, which we continue to raise with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, is the negative impact on the economy of a possible Free Trade Agreement with South Korea and/or Japan. The imports from these countries and the severe restrictions on our ability to export vehicles or other products produced here to their countries, is having a devastating effect on automobile, shipbuilding, and other industries.

Yet, our government continues the free trade negotiations. Hon. Jim Peterson, the Minister for International Trade, continues the discussions as if there was some upside for Canada and for the Canadian people. We have asked Prime Minister Paul Martin to make a tough statement on the question of trade. To me, there is absolutely no upside in bargaining a free trade agreement with either of these Asian economies, or to the soon-to-follow negotiations with China.

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

December 6<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the massacre at the École Polytechnique in Montreal where a number of women were separated from the men and then shot by Marc Lepine simply because they were women. This anniversary holds a special significance for CAW women, and all CAW members, as one of our sisters was recently murdered by her spouse, who then shot himself. Sister Sandra Schott, a member of Local 636 in Woodstock, worked at Woodingford Lodge in Ingersoll, and leaves three young children with no parents. What a horrible tragedy.

This is difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend, especially after all the work we have done. I understand the cynicism of some of our sisters who have worked so hard to stop violence against women, but I do not agree with that cynicism for one moment. I believe in the continuing education of our leadership and our membership in demanding respectful workplaces, and in demanding respect in safe environments for our sisters at all union functions.

I believe in the work we do in our communities, our provinces, and our country. CAW

women, and the women of Ontario, recently won a victory when the government was forced to back down and change legislation to end religious arbitration. These things are positive and they do make a difference.

The problem with an issue like violence is that it is hard to quantify exactly what success is. I believe that there would be more violence against women in the home, the workplace, and the country if not for the work that the women in our union do, along with the men who support them. Violence against women has no place in our union, our communities, and our homes. Out of respect for our sister who was killed, all of us must make certain that we get this message out loud and clear – day in and day out.

Local 636 has set up a trust fund to raise money so the children of Sandra Schott will have a proper home and opportunities for a good education. For those wanting to donate, Local 636 president Ross Gerrie will have information on the tables.

I want to mention another courageous sister in our union, a member of Local 2002, and the pilot of a cargo plane. She was taking off from an airport with a load of cargo and realized the plane was in trouble. Knowing that she would not survive, she steered the plane away from the community where it was heading and crashed it on a railway track. Sister Nancy Chase-Allan was a pilot for Morningstar Air Express and was the only one who lost her life in that accident. What incredible courage. Please stand for a moment of silence in respect for these two sisters who are no longer with us.

### **BIG 3 BARGAINING**

The auto industry still makes up about 30 per cent of our union and over half of the resources brought into our union come from that sector. As we headed into bargaining this summer and fall, things looked tougher than usual, given workplace closures and shutdowns, and with both GM and Ford losing billions of dollars. Delphi, the big parts maker formerly with General Motors was in the process of filing for bankruptcy, and the UAW was in negotiations with General Motors to give them concessions on health care.

We were facing a major market share loss as imports into our country are taking a larger market share. In Canada, over 50 per cent of vehicles sold are built by other than GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler, and over 48 per cent of vehicles sold in the United States, our common market, are built by other than GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler.

We had imports combined with no ability to export. We had the Canadian dollar increasing in value against the U.S. dollar. We had gas prices going through the roof. We had a very challenging period for the workers in the auto industry. We had more consultation earlier than we normally do in bargaining because of these problems. We had many debates amongst

ourselves on what we should do, where we should do it, and on how we could get the best agreement for our members without a long, costly, difficult strike.

At the end of the day, we settled on Ford as the target, to be followed very quickly by Chrysler, if we were unable to get an early settlement with Ford. As it turned out, we got an early settlement – some five or six days before the deadline, and we ratified earlier than we normally would. There were some tough decisions. A casting plant in Windsor was closed that had over 1,100 jobs at one time. We lost our V6 engine that was going out of style and which consumers were not buying.

Still, we were able to bargain some retirement incentives and some good income support. We were able to tell our members at the ratification meetings that, in spite of the massive job loss, no one would be involuntarily laid off by the end of this collective agreement. We have a lot of senior people who are eligible, able, and willing to retire over the life of the agreement as the two operations in Windsor are phased out.

We agreed to some major productivity improvements. In order to improve the productivity of the operation and to try to get new investment, we made some changes to some workplace issues that we held very dear for many years. We got a commitment from Ford to invest in a new engine. We are confident that it will move ahead despite the announcement this morning that Ford Motor Company is going to close a number of plants in the U.S., and the *Wall Street Journal* report, this morning that they are going to close another facility in Canada. I am not sure where this information is coming from, but we are pretty confident that we should escape this latest announcement by Ford.

We ratified our contracts in overwhelming numbers. In Windsor, where we are losing 1,100 jobs, we ratified by 96 per cent. This says a great deal about the work done by the Ford Bargaining Committee, under the leadership of Whitey MacDonald and Mike Vince. We had a wonderful ratification meeting. People understood the challenges that we faced in our 2005 bargaining.

Next we moved to DaimlerChrysler and later to General Motors. The big issue at DaimlerChrysler was outsourcing of work. Unlike the situation at Ford where the castings were outdated and there was no longer a requirement for the work produced by our Windsor plants, Chrysler simply wanted to outsource a lot of the operation in Windsor and Brampton, and close the Etobicoke casting plant because they could buy the product somewhere else and make more money. We said no. We are not accepting outsourcing simply for the sake of a company making more money. It was not in the cards, and again, after a difficult set of negotiations, we were able to get an agreement 24 hours early. We ratified and moved very quickly to General Motors.

We got an agreement 20 minutes before the deadline. At one point, it looked like we were going to be on strike at GM, in terms of both the economic pattern and a number of workplace issues, especially in Oshawa. We worked our way through the issues and put together what I, and others, referred to as a modest settlement. There are wage increases in each year of the agreement and we put some major dollars into our pension, our restructuring benefits, and our health care benefits – all the things that are important to our membership. We did this without a strike, and we did this with an overwhelming ratification.

On average, at all three companies, the ratification votes were 85 per cent. We hit the ground running, we moved fast, and we did not stop until we got it done. I describe it as just missing the economic tsunami.

Delphi filed for bankruptcy just three or four days after we ratified at GM. The UAW bargained a dollar in wage cuts to help General Motors offset some of the cost of health care, and they agreed that their retirees would co-pay up to \$750.00 for their health care benefits.

Everything that came down made us feel good. Quite frankly, we were feeling pretty smug saying, “did we ever escape that!” Leaving the bargaining table, we were convinced that we had no concerns about major cutbacks in the Canadian operations. We knew that there was an announcement coming from General Motors, but we thought we had escaped this round of cuts. Then, all of a sudden, a couple of weeks ago, General Motors dropped a real bombshell.

Michael Grimaldi, President of GM Canada, notified us at 7:30 in the morning that a shift would be eliminated at Oshawa Car Plant 1, about 1,000 jobs. In 2008, there are no models scheduled for Oshawa Car Plant 2, and they are going to cease production at the end of the 2008 model year, which would be August or September. This is another 2,700 jobs. They are going to close a small operation in St. Catharines with an additional 130 jobs lost. He outlined the litany of closures in the U.S., trying to convince us that we were not alone in this and that everyone had to share the pain as General Motors tries to get its operations in shape.

We met with our leadership and started lobbying immediately. At noon that day, I received a call from Prime Minister Paul Martin, asking me why this decision was made, and wanting to know what the federal government could do. Again, he reiterated the importance of the auto industry to Canada and his government's commitment to work with us and General Motors to try to reverse the decision and get a new product for our car plant.

I talked with Federal Industry Minister David Emerson. I talked to Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, and I talked to Ontario Industry Minister Joe Cordiano. They all called within a few hours to express their concern, and to ask what could be done to turn this around.

In the new year, we will be putting a lot of work and effort into this. We will be working with Local 222 President Chris Buckley, the bargaining committee, the leadership, and the local

union activists. Part of the tragedy of this plant closure is that it is General Motors' best plant for quality in North America: best plant for productivity, for costs, and one of the most profitable plants in the auto industry around the world. We told GM and we told the government it is a tragedy that when a company is in trouble someone decides the way out is to destroy the best plant.

This does not make economic sense. There is no logic to it. It appears to be politically motivated, showing the 25,000 American workers about to lose their jobs that the Canadians are paying a penalty as well.

We are not giving up. We are going to keep working on this to try to turn it around.

There is more to come. This morning, the papers reported having a leaked document about Ford's planned closures. A couple of weeks ago, Ford announced the reduction of 4,000 white collar jobs across the United States and Canada. The CAW will lose some white collar workers, but we hope there will be no further bad news for us in the major assembly operations, or in engines or castings.

It is a tough situation in the auto industry today and bargaining was difficult. The companies and the media keep talking about the problems of high labour costs or health care costs, but they are not the problem. Labour costs as a percentage of the cost of a vehicle are less today than 25 years ago. The dealers make more profit than labour costs to build a vehicle. The cost for steel that goes into a vehicle is greater than the cost of labour. Our problem is one dimensional: it is imports. The countries that import vehicles built in their home market to sell here, will not allow us to export to their market to sell.

I have described it to the media time and time again, and although we are getting a better understanding amongst the media, it is like playing baseball when we only ever get to play defence. We are in the field constantly, and every once in a while, a home-run goes over our head. If you never get to bat, you can never even the score. You are simply playing a defensive game. If, over the long term, we do not get the ability to export, then the auto industry, as we know it today, will not survive another decade. It cannot. It is simply impossible. The other countries protect their markets, make a lot of money in their markets, and also ship into Canada and the United States – our common market that is so critical to the jobs, the plants, and the white collar workers in Canada's traditional auto manufacturers, GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler.

It was tough and challenging. Some of the headlines indicated that the CAW walked away from its social commitment in bargaining, walked away from its leadership position in bargaining, walked away from the underprivileged in our country. They suggested we didn't do what we normally do as a social union, indicating that we had somehow changed direction. I

want to say to some of the people on the left who have been criticizing us that you should first learn what we did, and understand it, before you criticize our union as if we are not the union of the past.

In addition to our campaign that got new investments and government support, we have fought for the over \$900 million that has been spent in the last two years on the auto industry by the province of Ontario under McGuinty and the federal government under Martin. This is the result of our work. In addition, we were able to get investment commitments of \$130 million from GM for St. Catharines, \$200 million from Ford for the St. Thomas plant, and almost three quarter of a billion dollars for the Chrysler operations, mostly in Windsor, but some in Brampton. This is about job security. There can be no greater social commitment than to ensure people have jobs, that new jobs paying the best wages in the industrialized world will be created in a union environment. That is part of our continuing commitment to working people.

We have a lot to say on outsourcing. We will not accept outsourcing simply because a product can be bought more cheaply outside and then put into our plants. We kept our Etobicoke plant open. We kept thousands of jobs, especially within DaimlerChrysler and General Motors. That is part of our commitment.

We bargained a retirement benefit that encourages senior people to leave the workplace, opens up opportunities for young people and, in some instances, avoids layoffs. We looked after our current retirees. There is no other union in the world that bargains for people who have been retired for 15, 20, or 25 years. We bargain for our retirees and put money into their pockets. This, too, is part of our social commitment.

Under our restructuring benefit, we encourage senior people to retire, which keeps junior people working who have families and mortgages. During bargaining three years ago, the presidents of the companies and myself, as CAW president, jointly signed a letter asking the government to strengthen and improve the national health care system and stop it from being undermined by letting the private sector creep in. It made a big difference in the campaign to keep our national health care system intact and in getting \$30 billion put back into the health care system. The role our union played was enormous.

What is the major issue facing Canadians this time around? It is their pensions. People are losing their jobs and losing their pensions. Companies are going bankrupt. Ask the General Chemical workers in Amherstburg, Ontario. Ask the mill workers in Nackawic, New Brunswick. When companies go bankrupt, and the funds are not there, people either get no pensions at all or pensions with major reductions.

Again, we got the Big Three company presidents to sign a joint letter to the government stating that they should strengthen the public pension system so everybody in Canada gets a

better pension when they retire. That should be part of the social commitment of our country. They also signed a letter saying that the government should set up a system that guarantees workers will get their pension if a company goes bankrupt, whether or not the monies are in the fund – that the federal government would make the money available. This, again, is part of our continuing commitment to the people of Canada and to social unionism as we know and practise it. There is nothing more important than protecting and building on public pensions. As well, our own defined benefit plans must be firm.

We also put in place a unique new auto insurance plan. We watched the NDP government under Bob Rae dismiss the idea of a government-owned and operated auto insurance plan, and we have been struggling with this issue ever since. No one has done more work on this than Brother Len Harrison who heads up our retirees. We decided to take a run at it and to use our collective power to put in place an auto insurance plan that will show the people of Canada, and especially the people of Ontario, that if you use your collective power, you can have decent rates for auto insurance. We put this plan in place, and got the companies to subsidize it by \$1,000 once every three years. Our collective power is going to get rates that are 15 to 20 per cent below what is available on the street. This is part of our commitment to the people of Ontario. If everyone comes under one roof in a publicly-owned auto insurance plan, you can get reasonable insurance rates like the people in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Manitoba, where the NDP did bring it in. This again, is part of our commitment to social unionism.

We included child care benefits to help our families, especially our women members, so they are able to go to work and are able to afford quality not-for-profit child care.

We negotiated tuition refunds for our members. We made improvements in our training by adding 16 paid hours off the job over the life of the agreement. This is evidence not only of our continuing commitment to training, but also of our continuing commitment to paid time off for our members. This paid time off requires new hires to replace workers who are off the line while they go for that training.

We put money in union-administered funds, especially our Social Justice Fund, where it is desperately needed. Never has there been a period in my life time when we have had so many natural disasters. There was, of course, the tsunami in Asia. But we have also had Hurricane Katrina; we have had tornados in many parts of the United States; we have had Hurricane Rita and then the deadly earthquakes in India and especially Pakistan, which were followed by earthquakes in Japan and China. We said in negotiations that if we were going to be able to continue our commitment to help people we had to find more money. We put an extra million dollars over three years into those funds to help people who are unable to help

themselves.

We have improved our substance abuse program so that we can reach out to more people. We have improved our wellness program - we took the wellness program which we had in place at Chrysler and expanded it to Ford and General Motors. When the Ontario government brought the health care tax in, it also eliminated coverage for eye exams. We forced the auto companies to pay for those eye exams.

I do not mind criticism. I think criticism is always healthy. But anybody who says our union walked away from the bargaining table in 2005 and did not continue its commitment to the people of Canada, to those who are underprivileged, or to social unionism, does not understand what we did in bargaining. I want to say as strongly as I can, brothers and sisters, that they have no right to be critical of us.

The Ford Motor Company continues its investment in Oakville. DaimlerChrysler is investing more than \$700 million in its Canadian operations. To ensure that this investment would happen, the federal and provincial governments put up \$120 million. This government involvement came about mostly because of the work of Jim Stanford and others around Queen's Park and Ottawa.

In addition, Toyota received \$100 million in government funding to open up another plant in the Woodstock/Ingersoll area. Even the Japanese corporations are benefiting from our campaign. We do not mind that. We do not mind them getting support for creating Canadian jobs as long as it is not at the expense of other workers, who work in this industry at General Motors, Ford and DaimlerChrysler.

## **AUTO PARTS**

I want all of us to understand what's happening in our parts industry. We had an emergency meeting of the auto parts sector in St. Thomas, Ontario on November 11, after looking at the auto parts industry, especially in the United States with Delphi, the largest auto parts manufacturer in the world in Chapter 11 bankruptcy hearings. Delphi was demanding a 60 per cent cut in wages. They want wages to be reduced to somewhere between \$9.00 and \$12.00 from \$27.00 an hour and they want to eliminate the defined benefit pension plan. They want to cut time off the job, get rid of health care benefits for all current and future retirees, and cut their total labour cost from \$66.00 U.S. an hour down to around \$25.00 U.S. an hour. I do not know whether they will be successful. The Delphi workers are starting to demonstrate and fight back in their workplaces against this attack.

If Steve Miller of Delphi is anywhere near successful, if he gets even a 35 or 40 per cent cut, it will have a devastating impact on our auto parts sector. Every company, not just Delphi

but Visteon, the second largest parts manufacturer, Magna, Lear, JCI, Dana, AGS, will line up and demand that we respond by cutting our wages and benefits.

We called our emergency meeting, and passed the resolution that is on the tables. I will have a recommendation on this issue this weekend. We cannot allow this to happen. If the auto parts industry faces a major setback anywhere close to what Steve Miller is trying to force upon them, then the concession demands will move within the next three or four years to the major auto assemblers.

When the strong unions are forced to take cutbacks, what do you think is going to happen with the steelworkers, hospitality workers, and health care workers? The Delphi disease will have an impact on every worker in North America - every one of us. Our auto parts workers took a firm position. We are not opening our agreements. We are not giving back any wages. We are not giving back any pensions. We are not giving up any of our health care benefits. We are going to fight with all our strength, including workplace occupations if we have to. Legal or illegal, we are going to fight to defend the standard of living of our auto parts workers and other workers in our union. I hope that you will join with us in that struggle.

### **TWU - TELUS**

I would like to talk about the Telus dispute on the west coast. The Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) was at the bargaining table for over 4½ years, and could not get a settlement. For anyone who has been around a bargaining table, 4½ years is quite a marathon session. You know that you are in a bit of trouble when you have gone that long and not have a settlement.

The company announced their intention to impose the collective agreement on the workers in early July and set the date of July 22<sup>nd</sup> as the date the collective agreement would be implemented. On July 21<sup>st</sup> the workplace was shutdown by the union. After the workers were on the picket line, the company said they were on strike, and the union said they were locked out. They never did agree, even at the end, whether it was a strike or a lockout. But it certainly was a difficult dispute.

I was asked by TWU president Brother Bruce Bell to assist in any way possible. Our first task was to lobby the federal government to pressure Telus back to the bargaining table. We spoke to Joe Fontana, the Federal Labour Minister, along with the Prime Minister. Joe Fontana called a meeting of the parties, and was able to get the CEO of Telus back to the table to enter into bargaining and I agreed to work with the union to see if I could be of any help.

When we met with the company - after negotiations had been going on for 4½ years – there were more demands on the bargaining table than the CAW had collectively with Ford,

Chrysler and GM. This is an indication of how far apart the company and the union were in their negotiations. The first couple of meetings took place during the GM negotiations. There was some movement from the company and there was an indication that we could make some progress towards an agreement. The parties wanted to move the meetings back to British Columbia, where their headquarters are located. My assistant Hemi Mitic joined the negotiations on my behalf and I caught up with them later.

A little bit of background is needed to understand the situation. When the dispute started there were about 6,000 members who worked for Telus in Alberta. It was estimated that over half of them returned to work early and during the strike, as the company was aggressively encouraging people to cross the picket line. In other words, people scabbed on their own union. They did not support the strike and they went back to work. There were another 7,000 union members in British Columbia. They stayed firm and remained on the picket lines.

To complicate matters further, the TWU had recently won a decision at the Canada Industrial Relations Board which brought a group of workers in Ontario and Quebec into the Telus bargaining unit – not because they had individually applied to join the union but because the law and the terms of the TWU collective agreement included them in the bargaining unit. These workers had no union background, no union culture and had no previous representation at the bargaining table. Of course, these workers in Ontario and Quebec had continued to work during the dispute.

Telus Corporation has been built through a series of mergers and acquisitions. As a result, there were six collective agreements – one covering the BC Tel group, four in Alberta and one in Quebec, which the TWU was trying to merge into one collective agreement.

We had different collective agreements, with different pension plans and different rates of pay in all of these agreements. There was some language on limiting outsourcing in the B.C. agreement but no language on outsourcing in the Alberta agreements. One of the company's key demands was that it wanted to close a number of units in British Columbia. If these issues were not tough enough, the situation was made even tougher by the fact that the members of the TWU were divided among themselves over how far they should go on some of these issues.

We went in knowing it was a pretty dicey situation. After three weeks of bargaining we made some progress and the overwhelming majority of the negotiating committee and the leadership voted to recommend the tentative agreement to the members. Just imagine yourself going in to membership meetings in Alberta where half the people in the room had been scabbing on the union and the other half were on the picket line. These were tense and difficult meetings, some of which lasted six or seven hours. In the end, the members rejected the

agreement by a margin of 50.3 per cent. If 27 members who voted 'no' had changed their minds, the collective agreement would have been ratified.

The company took the position that it would not bargain any further. We again got Labour Minister Joe Fontana involved. He played a critical role in getting the company back to the bargaining table and insisting that the company revise its offer. Remember, we were now into the fifth month on the picket line with all the difficulties that presents for people. The union was running out of money and the company knows all of this. The TWU put a request into our union for an interest-free loan to help pay their strike pay. Our National Executive Board initially approved a \$2 million loan, and later on we approved another \$2 million. We currently have loaned TWU \$4 million in an interest-free loan.

Despite all these obstacles, we did get the company to make some changes in its offer. The workers ratified the second collective agreement by a margin of 64 per cent and the workers have returned to work.

The Telus dispute was obviously a very tough situation. I want to say as clearly as I can that Bruce Bell, the President of the Telecommunications Workers Union is a very courageous man. I am not saying this because he can hear me; he can't. I am saying this because he took the issue on; he went to all of the ratification meetings - with thousands of members demonstrating and yelling and screaming – and he said to them: we have to find a solution; we have to get back to work; we have to rebuild our union; we have to develop a union culture among our new members in Ontario and Quebec; we have to convince our Alberta members that supporting the union is critical if we're going to have bargaining power. Bruce Bell and the bargaining committee were able to get a settlement ratified on the second go around.

It was an interesting set of negotiations to say the least. But the TWU are a wonderful group of people, and we are very pleased that we were able to help them get that settlement and get back to work.

I have outlined this struggle because there are some rumours on the west coast that somehow the CAW went in and sold out the workers. This is absolute nonsense. The local bargaining committee and leadership made the decision to recommend the first agreement, and they also made the decision to recommend the second agreement.

## **VCTA**

While we were involved in the Telus negotiations in Vancouver, the container truckers on the docks of Vancouver got fed up with high fuel prices and low remuneration from the owners, and decided they were going to shut the docks down. And they did.

This was a courageous decision. They did not have a union. Most of them are owner-

operators. Some of them worked for companies, but it was a mixed bag. About 1,000 people shutdown the docks completely, and kept them down for several weeks. According to the Vancouver Port Authority the strike was costing the Canadian economy about \$30 million a day.

Hemi Mitic, Anne Davidson and others met with the truckers to assist them in getting an agreement. As part of this agreement they won some improvements in their conditions, both financial and otherwise and put in some rules for people working on the Vancouver docks. The truckers returned to work and Joe Fontana appointed a commission headed by Vince Ready, to make recommendations on the truckers' grievances.

Our union has continued to work with these truckers. A number of them have signed union cards. Currently, we have over 30 certification applications before the Canada Industrial Relations Board and the provincial labour board - because nobody knows for sure which jurisdiction these workers are covered under. We have entered into bargaining with 10 of the largest companies to help them put together an agreement. A number of their leaders are here today - Brother Paul Johal, Brother Paul Uppal, Brother Bernard Brito, and Brother Tony Maan.

These brothers shut down the ports for six weeks and everybody was completely at a loss as to what to do to get them back to work. At the end of the day, all they had to do was resolve the issues and people were happy to go back to work.

### **MCMASTER UNIVERSITY STAFF ASSOCIATION**

MUSA, the McMaster University Staff Association was an independent union that was a directly affiliated local of the Canadian Labour Congress. After a long, difficult, and to say the least, challenging set of negotiations with the Canadian Labour Congress and its affiliates, and an equally challenging campaign, the members of MUSA last week voted by more than a 68 per cent margin to merge with the Canadian Auto Workers Union. MUSA members voted overwhelmingly for the CAW in spite of some of the CLC affiliates who decided that the way to build support for their union was by undermining the leadership that the MUSA members had elected. They tried smear tactics. They tried to delay the vote. They tried everything imaginable - everything that is so offensive to trade union solidarity - to trade union brotherhood and sisterhood.

The MUSA members didn't fall for these tactics. They stood behind their leadership, and I want to commend them for the courage and congratulate them on the campaign. A large number of these members are here with us today. Please give a good warm welcome to the president of the organization, Mina Sarajcic, and her leadership.

I want to especially compliment Mina for her leadership and for her courage. She drove a lot of people in the CLC and some of the other affiliates nuts during that period because she

did not kowtow. They tried everything to get her to back away. She is going to be a great asset to our union, and I really do look forward, Mina, to working with you and your leadership to conclude our merger document, and bring you fully into the CAW family.

I also want to compliment Peggy Nash, my assistant; Mike Shields, director of organizing for our union and Colette Hooson from the organizing department - and all the organizers and department heads who worked on this campaign. I say well done sisters, well done brothers. Well done.

Two other people played a key role in this campaign. Brother Jim Stanford worked very hard for the last three or four years with Mina and her group as they prepared for their bargaining with a very difficult employer. Brother Jim Stanford, as well, deserves a lot of credit for the success of this campaign.

I also want to recognize and thank Brother Barry Fraser for the support he has given to this group of workers. Brother Fraser is now retired as a CLC representative. He is a great friend of mine personally, a great friend of our union, and a great friend of the labour movement.

### **AIR CANADA**

Air Canada - the overall company is now called ACE - is finally back to making money. Over a quarter billion dollars in their last report. This is good news for Air Canada workers since we have a wage re-opener next year that was bargained during the bankruptcy proceedings. We are going to go to work almost immediately on preparing our arguments to get our members some of the money back, and some of the things back that they lost during the restructuring.

You have probably also read about the spin-off of 15 per cent of the Aeroplan operation. More recently, Mr. Milton decided to spin off Jazz, which is the feeder airline of Air Canada, and set it up under an income trust. This will allow him to escape a lot of taxes and to make a lot of money. They are going to sell about 15 per cent of that to the investment community as well. Next on the list, I believe, will be technical services.

The company is changing rapidly and Robert Milton is now talking about whether he will hang around. He said it's no fun anymore. I guess he found it fun trying to take money away from workers during that period, and now that that is done he is going to move on.

Last week he received the Chief Executive Officer of the year award from the Globe & Mail's Report on Business Magazine. In the article he brags about what Air Canada has been able to do during the recent period. When asked about the wage re-opener he said that people should not expect very much because Air Canada is one of only two airlines in North America that still has a defined benefit pension plan. I could not believe what I was reading. What Robert Milton does not mention is that he was the person who wanted to take it away. He and

Mr. Li told our union that if we did not agree to get rid of the defined benefit pension plan the company would go into complete bankruptcy and all its assets would be sold off.

The CAW committee, under the leadership of Sari Sairanen, held tough. We are the ones that should be claiming credit for maintaining a defined benefit pension plan, not Robert Milton. We will, no doubt, remind him a bit of that when we get into bargaining early in the new year.

## **RAILWAYS**

CN Rail is again making record profits. In spite of that, we have a horrible time getting the company to resolve issues with our leadership in Local 100 and our Council 4000. I think we have more grievances at CN Rail than we have in the rest of the union.

In spite of the fact that the company is making all of this money it has announced that it will close out the MacMillian Yard in Concord, Ontario and there are strong rumours that they may close the Strathcona yard in Winnipeg as well.

You may have read recently about a number of CN de-railings in different places in the country. Our members are saying that if they were allowed to do more preventive maintenance, if we could get working on these rail cars in our shops, a lot of these accidents could have been avoided and the damage to the environment from these de-railments could have been avoided. We have not been able to convince the management of CN Rail of our position and the shareholders, of course, support the managers because the company is making a pile of money. We have a top level meeting with CN Rail management coming up in a week or two where we hope we will be able to turn the attitudes of this management around and get back to resolving some of the differences that exist between us.

Before the election was called there was a move by the federal government to put more money into VIA Rail. This should mean better service but it should also mean better job security for our members at VIA Rail. We will continue our lobbying efforts with the different levels of government to ensure that no matter who gets elected, there will be an ongoing commitment to VIA Rail.

## **AEROSPACE**

The aerospace section of our union is always challenging. We concluded the closure of the Boeing McDonnell-Douglas operation which also closes out our CAW Local 1967, a local with a long, proud history in our union. It is an absolute tragedy that an important part of the aerospace industry, an important plant, and an important group of people are no longer able to claim that they have a CAW local union. I am sure all of you join me in wishing them all the very

best for the future.

At Bombardier, the sale of the Global Express business jet is the only bright light that we see with this company. Regional jet sales have slowed down and the company has actually discontinued building the 50-seat jet that they build in their Montreal operation. The Dash-8, which our members build at Downsview, has seen some improvement, but sales are still very slow. One of the most worrisome parts of the Bombardier story is the continuing delay in announcing whether they are going to build the C-Series jet which has received so much publicity over the years. As each month goes by, it becomes less and less certain that this jet will be built. We continue to lobby both Bombardier and the federal government to ensure that Ontario gets a fair share of the production of that plane if the C-Series jet does go into production.

We had a strike at Bristol Aerospace in Winnipeg that lasted three or four weeks. The strike is settled, our members are back to work, and hopefully, we will get some more work into that facility.

Our members at Boeing in Winnipeg settled their collective agreement in July of last year. Boeing is now selling a lot of jets. Our Winnipeg plant is starting to recall some laid off members. Hopefully, everyone will be recalled, and some new hiring will take place over the next few months.

### **FALCONBRIDGE**

We had a tough strike at Falconbridge's Kidd Creek operations in Timmins, Ontario. This is a difficult company to deal with. The big issue was that the benefit plans were not part of the collective agreement which meant that our members had no right to grieve if these plans were changed or discontinued. After about four weeks on the picket line and with the persistence of my assistant Bob Chernecki, staff representative Tom Dattilo, Local 599 President Jeff Martin, and chairperson Jean Guy-Magnan, and the committee, we were able to reach a settlement. The strikers enjoyed the solidarity of our members from Local 598 in Sudbury, and also our Ontario Northland members who at one point refused to move the trains into Falconbridge's property to pick up the material. That played a role in forcing the company to settle as well. Some of the committee members from Timmins are in the room. Congratulations on getting your settlement.

## **PLANT CLOSURES**

I mentioned earlier the closure of General Chemical. We were notified a few days ago that bankruptcy is now complete and they will be selling off the assets of the company. There was a lot of hard work done to try to turn that situation around and find a new buyer. We engaged the government. We engaged the new buyer. We engaged the receivers, but at the end of the day, we were not successful. Another long-time plant, members of Local 89, have lost their plant and lost their jobs. As I said earlier, even the retirees are going to feel the pain as the pension plan was not fully funded. In Ontario workers have some protection for their pension plans but it will not be enough to protect totally the pensions of our members.

The Kus operation in Leamington, whose members are in Local 1769, is slated for closure. We were notified just this week that the Humpty Dumpty plant in Brampton - Local 462 - is closing. Fleetwood Metal, Local 1941 in Tilbury, notified us that they are closing that facility. Metal Technologies, Local 636 in Woodstock, is closing down. I am informed that Metal Technologies was the first plant organized by our union in the Woodstock area, then by the UAW. It was part of the establishment of Local 636. It is a real tragedy that that plant is closing. Chubb Security, Local 542 in Barrie, Ontario is closing. Viking Stampings, Local 1524 in Kitchener is scheduled to close. Bazaar Novelties in St. Catharines, Local 462 is scheduled to close where over 400 people will lose their jobs. ABB in Guelph, a long-time member of our union and formerly with the United Electrical Workers, Local 541, is scheduled to close. At Nestlé in Chesterfield, Local 488, there are two or three different groups there, and about 250 workers will lose their jobs some time next year. National Grocers, which is owned by Loblaws, has a warehouse in Peterborough employing about 100 Local 414 members. It is also closing its doors. We continue to be concerned about Collins & Aikman which is currently in Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the United States. The members and leadership at Guelph Products in Guelph, Ontario are also very worried.

A lot of this bad news is directly attributable to the Canadian dollar. The fact that the dollar has gone from around \$0.65 just three short years ago to around \$0.85/\$0.86 today is having a terrible impact on a lot of manufacturing operations throughout our union.

There is some good news to report regarding our struggles against plant closures as well. In Nackawic, New Brunswick, the mill is going to re-open in January 2006. It was taken over by a company from India called Birla Industries after a lot of hard work by our union. Keeping this mill open is a major accomplishment.

Almost every day there is a new announcement of the closure of a mill in our country's forestry industry, from Newfoundland and Labrador right across to the west coast of Vancouver Island. The latest one was just the other day when Domtar announced that several mills would

close and that 1,800 people would be losing their jobs. Our local union president, Barry Elsliger out of Nackawic and Brady Moore, and some of the committee have worked so hard to make this happen. They deserve a great round of applause.

Our leadership at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay, Local 1075, were able to get a commitment for a contract to build new subway cars from the Toronto Transit Commission. I want to compliment Mayor David Miller and Councillor Howard Moscoe, responsible for the Toronto Transit Commission for their role in securing this commitment. I also want to compliment Premier Dalton McGuinty, who intervened when some City of Toronto councillors maintained that it would be a violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement to give the work to the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay.

Dalton McGuinty wrote a letter to city council which said that there was no violation of NAFTA – that the concerns of some councillors were absolute nonsense. I believe Bob Chernecki is going to distribute that letter today. This letter played a major role in swinging the council around to get that work for our plant. We are also lobbying in Ottawa, at Kitchener/Cambridge/ Waterloo, and other areas of the country, to try to get work for our plant in Thunder Bay.

### **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

I want to compliment our bargaining committees and our staff representatives. We are doing excellent in our bargaining throughout the union. There are very few setbacks. Our efforts have shown that fighting back makes a difference.

Our Alcan members in Kitimat, B.C. put together a great settlement. The Air Traffic Controllers have put together, I believe, their third collective agreement since joining our union.

Three new agreements were signed at the St. Lawrence Seaway, covering about 500 members. Local 1090 negotiated a new collective agreement with Sobey's covering several locations and 700 people. More than 1,000 drivers, employed by DHL and members of Local 4457, recently reached an agreement. At Marine Atlantic, 750 members have a new contract.

We have had great success in bargaining in hospitals and nursing homes - the latest one being at the Grand River Hospital, Local 302 in Kitchener. I also want to compliment the leadership in the health care sector for the continuing campaign against privatization that they have been conducting across the province. They are getting a lot of attention. Another settlement at North Star was reached after a short strike.

## **OTHER UNIONS**

I know you will join with me in congratulating the workers at the CBC. They reached an agreement after they were locked out for refusing to agree to CBC management's demands for more contract workers. Our union donated \$25,000.00 to the Canadian Media Guild to make sure CBC management could not starve them out. The CBC workers came out with a wonderful victory.

These workers are now conducting a campaign asking for the Parliament of Canada – no matter who is elected – to start putting money back into the CBC. Their literature has been distributed on your tables. I would encourage all of you to take a few minutes to read this material and to support the Media Guild's campaign to improve CBC service to Canadians and also to improve the job security of their members.

I also want to compliment the UFCW for their conduct of the Tyson strike in Alberta. They took on a vicious employer. A number of people were hurt and arrested on the picket line. They fought the scabs. At the end of the day they were able to get a settlement. Your National Executive Board made a donation on your behalf to that strike, as well.

What a courageous union the teachers in British Columbia have. What a courageous group of people. In spite of the fact that they had a signed collective agreement and no legal right to strike, they took on the Gordon Campbell government, they went on strike and two weeks later, they returned to work. They did not win everything, but they made some major improvements. I want to compliment Anne Davidson, our director, and our local union leadership in British Columbia for their support of the B.C. teachers. I also want to compliment Brother Jim Sinclair, the president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, who played a key role in helping find a resolve to that dispute.

## **FISHERY**

The fishery, as always, remains a challenge for our leadership on both the east coast and the west coast. Earle McCurdy and the leadership of FFAW took on the fight in the crab fishery. They continue to fight on behalf of the fishers, their families and the communities of Newfoundland & Labrador who require a proper system of being able to catch, and to sell, and market their products.

We now have a commission that is looking at the crab industry. Brother Richard Cashin, formerly the head of the FFAW should be reporting very shortly with recommendations that the government has already agreed to implement.

On the west coast we had another big fight over the salmon fishery this year. It is a continuing challenge. We still have not been able to get our arms around how to deal with the

Department of Fisheries and its assessment of what is happening in the fishery versus the fisher people, including the native fisher people. Native fisher people have been involved in this fishery for hundreds of years. A lot of money was lost and wasted in this industry again.

Our union, the UFAWU, and the native fishers in British Columbia are mobilizing against those who want to start drilling for oil off the west coast. It is feared by many that this would put the beauty of the west coast in danger as well as the fishery that so many people rely on for a living.

### **FEDERAL ELECTION 2005-2006**

I am calling it election 05/06. Usually an election campaign is within one calendar year. This time we are straddling two years with an election that starts in one year and ends in the other. A winter election that will spread over the Christmas holiday season.

Nobody knows what the impact of that will be. It is an election that was forced on the country by the three opposition parties less than 18 months after the last election in June of 2004.

The early polls indicate that there is very little, if any, change that will happen between the three major parties in English Canada. It would appear from the early polls in Quebec that the Bloc Québécois will gain seats at the expense of the Liberal Party.

People in Quebec are offended. They are offended not by the fact that the federal government was spending money in Quebec to try to convince Quebecers that they should, and could, and would be better off remaining part of Canada. They are angry because it was a secret fund that was set up, and a small number of people were stealing the money. In some cases, it was not even being spent in support of what it was set up for.

Quebecers are offended by this, and they have moved to support the Bloc Québécois in large numbers. The last poll I saw put BQ support at 62 per cent which would mean that in Quebec the Bloc Québécois would sweep every seat in that province. Why would we have an election if this is going to be the outcome? Why force an election?

I understand Stephen Harper's motive for forcing an election. He has been trying to force one since June of 2004 when we had the last one. An impending election took a lot of pressure off his leadership in the Conservative party. The knives were out to upset his leadership and it was to his advantage to keep the focus on another election as opposed to what he was doing as a leader.

Anyway, we have an election. The Tories do stand to pick up some seats. The NDP may pick up some seats in western Canada and maybe a couple in Ontario. I hope Peggy Nash, who is a candidate again in Toronto, does win another seat for the NDP in Parliament. I

am sure all of you will join with me in wishing Peggy well in her campaign. We also hope that Sid Ryan, our good friend and colleague from CUPE who is running in Oshawa, is able to get elected as well.

We are into an election and we have to do everything we can to elect as many New Democrats as we can. I know a lot of people are upset. I certainly was upset that an election was forced on us. I felt that we had an opportunity to continue the minority Parliament to produce more results working with the independents in the House and the Liberals and the NDP. A lot has been done. A lot more, in my opinion, could have been done. But the reality is that we are into an election whether we want it or not, and we have to do what we can.

What are we working for in this election? Jack Layton is saying the same thing as I am. We are working for another Liberal minority government. The difference this time is that we are hoping to get enough NDP seats so that the NDP will hold the balance of power.

I want to say, as strongly as I can, that my recommendation this weekend to the delegates is that we do whatever we can to elect as many New Democrats and to ensure that we have a Liberal minority government and that we do everything in our power to ensure that Stephen Harper forms neither a minority Conservative government, or worse yet, a majority Conservative government. We owe that to the members of our union.

I have heard a lot of people say that this government, the minority government, does not work. I want to remind delegates here today of what has happened in Parliament in less than 18 months. I believe we have had the most productive 18 months since the 1972-1974 period of minority government when David Lewis was leading the New Democratic Party.

We convinced the Liberals to put \$30 billion back into the health care system, a major accomplishment given the cutbacks that have taken place in health care over the years.

We have a cities' agenda where some of the gas tax is put back into cities to improve transit systems and to improve infrastructure. Large cities will benefit and even small rural communities will share some of it.

We have a national child care program in place right across Canada. Every province has bought into it. This is a major accomplishment for the women in our union who have worked and campaigned so hard on this issue. Is it perfect? No, but it does go a long way to getting in place a quality national child care system run by the public sector on a not-for-profit basis. Most provinces have already agreed to do this. Alberta will be one exception where they want the private sector to run it.

Last spring, we got a major commitment on social housing, especially for aboriginal people.

We were among the first countries in the world to enact same sex legislation. The equality of our people is now enshrined in legislation. That would not have happened without the minority government we have today.

We received almost \$1 billion in support for the auto industry and a major commitment of over \$700 million for the aerospace industry. As well, there was a recent commitment to the forestry industry.

Training agreements that have been signed with the provinces are going to put a lot of money back into workplace training. An additional \$600 million a year of new money is going into that program.

We had four Bills passed in the last few hours before the government fell. Bill C-55, amendments to the Bankruptcy Act, was absolutely critical. CLC President Ken Georgetti and Vice-President Hassan Yussuff deserve a lot of credit. They did an enormous amount of lobbying of the Liberal government, the New Democrats, the Bloc, and even the Tories, to get them to agree to put this in place.

We do not support Tories and they were not invited to speak to us this weekend. Their behaviour around Bill C-55, demonstrates why. They did not want this Bill passed, but they wanted even more for Parliament to end. They did not want to debate this Bill over the next few weeks, but they would not vote for it. They insisted that the Bill be passed by a simple voice vote, so that nobody could be identified as to whether they voted for or against the Bill. We know that if there was a standing vote, they were going to vote against it.

Out of the four, this Bill was the only one that was amended in the last few hours of the Parliament. It was a very important amendment. Tony Valeri, the federal government House Leader, worked with Hassan Yussuff and Ken Georgetti to push this Bill through. What does the amendment mean? The Bill amends the Bankruptcy Act. It protects workers' incomes, increases the amount of money to be paid, and moves up in the pecking order the claims of working people who lose their jobs through bankruptcy. The most important thing we have enshrined in legislation is that neither a bankruptcy judge nor a court can interfere with the collective agreement. A collective agreement can only be changed by negotiations between the parties. This was a major accomplishment, and Tony Valeri is the person who moved it through the House, and got everyone on side.

Some people may not think it's important, but look at the U.S. and Chapter 11 filings. An employer can go to court, ask the judge to throw out a collective agreement and impose a new agreement that gets rid of the pension plan, cuts wages, and eliminates health care benefits. They can do that by law.

Now, this can never happen in Canada. We may be forced to make some changes in our collective agreement, as we were when Air Canada was in bankruptcy. However, as a result of Bill C-55, no one can impose those changes on us.

All this and other things that have been done are evidence that a minority government is the best government. We must do everything we can to ensure that we continue with a coalition of Liberals and New Democrats after this election.

We invited Prime Minister Paul Martin to speak to our convention. We also invited Jack Layton, but he could not be here. Jack suggested that we invite Ed Broadbent. We have two MPs in Windsor who are in close races and they are both great friends of ours. Ed is not seeking re-election, so we decided to invite Joe Comartin and Brian Masse to speak to our Council. We look forward to hearing from the Prime Minister today, and we look forward to hearing the NDP speakers.

Over the years we have had a lot of speakers in this room and we have always been respectful. Even if we do not agree politically, we show them the same kind of respect that we show those we do agree with. We expect our delegates will do the same this weekend.

Let us look at the first few days of the election campaign. Look at Stephen Harper. On the first day he tried to raise the equality issue of the rights of gays and lesbians. Why would he do that? It is a lightning rod. It shows his deep contempt for certain people because he does not agree with their lifestyle or their sexual orientation. One more time, it shows to Canadians the kind of person he is.

On the second day of the campaign he announced that he would implement a U.S.-style prosecutor. We do not have prosecutors in Canada. We have our own justice system – the police and the courts. If somebody is stealing money, whether it is Conrad Black stealing from shareholders or a Liberal stealing from tax payers, the courts should deal with it. The police should charge them and the courts should decide, not some U.S.-style prosecutor. Even Harper's own key person, Peter McKay, disagreed with him.

Yesterday, Harper announced cuts to the GST. This morning, in an interview, I was asked if this was going to help sell a lot of cars and I said no. Cutting the GST is not going to help sell cars. We are still selling a lot of vehicles. We had a couple of tough months in October and November, but this will go down as a record year of selling vehicles in Canada. Do you know what sells vehicles? Good jobs and good wages sell vehicles.

The people who get hired by Toyota when they open their plant in the Ingersoll area late next year are going to walk into union wages of over \$30.00 an hour. Why will they be getting over \$30.00 an hour? Because the CAW bargained it at GM, Ford and Chrysler. They will pay those workers that money to keep the union out which, from their perspective, is important.

What is important to us is that we are bargaining on their behalf even though they are not members of our union. They will be able to afford to sell vehicles, and not rely on cuts to the GST.

In addition to the argument that cutting the GST is somehow going to improve things, Harper did not even have the numbers right. He assumed that everyone spends every penny they earn on something with a GST. This morning, the media all over the country are challenging him on his numbers. We must make sure that Stephen Harper does not end up with any more power than he has today.

### **VIOLENCE**

The recent riots in France were painful to watch. They took place in an area where poor people live in socialized housing. A lot of people blamed it on people of colour, immigrants, and Muslims. There was every ethnic community in the locations where the riots took place, but there were also young white people whose families have lived in France for hundreds of years and have never been able to break the cycle of poverty, who are fed up with their living conditions, with being poor, and with having no opportunity for education.

No opportunity and no hope. No jobs and a life of despair. No wonder you end up with riots. No country should take any pride in the fact that it has not happened here because it could. It could happen in this country. It could happen in this city. Look at the violence in the city in the last few months alone. We cannot be too smug.

The gun violence in Toronto is taking place mainly in black and immigrant communities, but what is really behind it? Behind it are a lot of people with low incomes, no jobs, no hope, no opportunities for education, and no training. What do they do? They turn to drugs to make money. They turn to gangs. They turn to guns. They turn to violence.

One more time, I want to highlight the importance of the Pathways 2 Education (P2E) programs, and to reiterate our union's continuing support for them. P2E is located in Regent Park, and it supports young immigrant children who are going through a difficult time in their middle school years, and as they move on to high school and then university. They have over 200 mentors and tutors who work with these young people to help them with their problems. They provide money for them to take a bus – a couple of bucks for fare to get to a school which might be 4 or 5 miles away. There are no schools within walking distance of Regent Park. The dropout rate for young people in Regent Park is now lower than it is in the rest of the province. This is an incredible accomplishment.

Perhaps more important, when you consider the gun violence of these past few months in Toronto, none of the shootings are taking place in Regent Park. Most have taken place in

communities similar to Regent Park. The only difference in Regent Park is the group of people committed to working with young people, in getting them off the streets, getting them into school, and then on to university. The P2E program is only now moving into its fifth year, and we have a large number of the graduates moving on to university. A few years ago, it was unheard of that anybody from Regent Park would go to university.

We have to continue to support these programs, and to avoid stigmatizing people by putting poor people in one area of our cities. They deserve much better than that. They are all equal to every one of us and we must treat them accordingly.

### **INTERNATIONAL**

In the United States, it appears that the war in Iraq, the government misleading the American people, and scandals involving highly placed Republicans, are taking their toll. Support for the Bush Administration is dwindling daily, as is the support for continuing the war in Iraq. Hopefully, they will be forced to make some tough decisions that will see Iraqis deciding the future of their country.

We talk about scandals but no election is being called in the U.S. over this. Tom Delay, Republican House Leader is now charged with taking bribes and a number of other things. Mr. Cunningham, a top Republican representative, who chairs the committee that hands out defence contracts was ripping off millions of dollars from the big military contractors in order to steer government work to their companies. Then, of course, there is Scooter Libby, formerly the top advisor to Vice-President Dick Cheney. He leaked the name of a CIA agent, and was indicted by a federal jury on felony charges. All of these things are coming home to roost and I believe that we will see more charges as we head towards the mid-term elections in 2006.

The Democrats fared very well in elections this year. A number of governors that it was thought could not get elected under the democratic ticket, got elected. They are doing well without an obvious leader. As of today, no leader has surfaced other than Hillary Clinton. She is growing in stature, and support for her within the party is also building. Hillary Clinton may very well be the Democratic candidate for president in 2008 and I believe that would be good for the country.

The labour movement in the United States does not have many victories, but it won a great victory in California. Governor Schwarzenegger was not up for election this year, but he, as The Terminator, decided that he could drive anything through the public, and he put propositions before the people of California. When he attacked the nurses and the health care system, he had not counted on a woman by the name of Rose Ann DeMoro, the executive director of the California Nurses' Association. She has spoken to our Council. She may be

small in physical size, but she is tall in her stature as a leader. She attacked the Governor, not only in his own state, but wherever he went in the United States. Whether he gave a speech or attended a fundraiser, she had a group of nurses follow him, picket, demand that he put the money back into the California health care system, and stop the public sector cut backs. She made his life pretty miserable.

It was interesting to watch when the propositions came up for a vote. She was the only union leader who was out front. As she carried on the campaign, and it started to pick up steam, others got on board. The fire fighters got on board. The police got on board. All the public sector unions got on board. Every proposition that the Governor put before the people, including trying to restrict union donations to political parties, was defeated, thanks to the nurses' union. What an accomplishment. We hope to have her speak to our Council in April. All I can say is, well done sister.

The death and destruction continue in Iraq. More people are being killed. Over 2,100 American soldiers are dead, with no end in sight. There are more insurgents, getting stronger, with more dangerous weapons. There is an election coming but it is not clear whether it will end the violence and get things back on track in Iraq. The trial of Saddam Hussein continues, and he still enjoys a lot of support from his Baath Party. A very difficult situation.

Politics in Israel have taken a dramatic turn. Ariel Sharon, who was facing a real challenge from his own Likud Party resigned and set up a new party. He calls it a centrist party. Historically, Sharon has been active in the extreme right, and now he is claiming the centre in Israeli politics. He has certainly convinced some people. I was shocked when Shimon Peres, the former leader of the labour party who was recently defeated as leader by a trade union leader, decided to resign from the labour party and join Ariel Sharon in this centre of the road party. He believes that Sharon is the only one who can lead to a peace agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. For the sake of the future of that part of the world, I certainly hope that he is right.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Australian labour movement launched a massive national day of protest in response to the John Howard government's continuing efforts to undermine union rights, workers' rights, minimum wages, and minimum vacation times. With their fourth majority, they are attacking and undermining everything. We have talked with our colleagues in the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and we sent letters of support to both the central labour body, and to the AMWU.

We have witnessed natural disasters: the earthquake in Pakistan and India, and more recently, in Japan and China, as well as hurricanes and tornadoes. We must continue the work

of our Social Justice Fund and ensure that the SJF has the funding it needs. I encourage you to make sure that a commitment to putting money into the SJF is a bargaining priority.

### **JACK TUBMAN**

National staff representative Jack Tubman recently passed away after a long and difficult struggle with cancer. Jack was a long-time trade unionist. He was the chairperson of his bargaining committee, and he was elected President of Local 397 in Brantford, Ontario. Jack was a great trade union activist, a great political activist, and a great supporter of the New Democratic Party. He joined the staff of the union in November of 1987, and worked on behalf of his constituency throughout his time. He leaves behind Bonnie Armstrong, his wife, who is also a trade union activist, a member of Local 397, and a CLC representative. I know that all of you will join me in offering our condolences to Bonnie and to their children. There was a celebration of Jack's life a week ago that over 200 people attended, and it was quite an event.

### **STAFF APPOINTMENTS & RETIREMENTS**

Colin Heslop, who has worked with us in the Skilled Trades Department and as a skilled trades coordinator, has been appointed Skilled Trades Department director on the retirement of John Bettes. Todd Romanow has been appointed national staff representative in Edmonton. Todd was on our National Executive Board. Pat Blackwood from Local 222, Chairperson of the Skilled Trades group in Oshawa, the largest skilled trades group in any one local in our union is now a national representative working in the Skilled Trades Department. Robert Masse has joined us in our Montreal office. He will be working with the rail division of our union. Please give them all a warm welcome to the staff of the union.

I want to recognize some people who are attending their last Council meeting, prior to their retirement: Marilynne Lesperance, Silvia Simpson, Cheryl Kryzaniwsky, John Amato, Diane Hollingshead, Gabe McNally, and Glen Myers. Please give them a warm round of applause, and thank them for the work that they have done in our union.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**To**

**CAW COUNCIL**

**DECEMBER 2-4, 2005**

1. I recommend that all CAW leadership and activists step up our support and efforts in the workplace, in our communities, and in our homes to end male violence against women.
2. The best possible outcome of this federal election is another Liberal minority government, with the NDP holding a balance of power. The worst outcome is a Conservative victory (minority or majority). I recommend that the CAW work toward ensuring a Liberal minority with an NDP balance of power, and stopping a Conservative victory.

I recommend that the CAW endorse the sitting NDP Members of Parliament, and individual NDP candidates in potentially winnable ridings (to be determined following consultation with our local leaders and activists). The list of endorsed candidates would be posted on the CAW web site and distributed to all locals.

I recommend that in other ridings, the CAW not endorse any specific candidates; rather, individual voters will need to decide what best contributes to electing a Liberal minority with NDP balance of power, and stopping the Conservatives.

I recommend that CAW leaders and activists work in all ridings to raise crucial issues of importance to CAW members, including: protecting our pensions, the need for an active auto strategy, and stopping the proposed free trade agreements with Korea, Japan, and other countries.

I recommend that the CAW press both the Liberals and the NDP to negotiate a more workable and stable relationship in the event of another Liberal minority government.

3. I recommend CAW local leaders and activists to seek endorsements of the CAW Pension Charter from federal election candidates, from every party.
4. I recommend that CAW locals, local leaders, and activists to energetically support the campaign to stop the Canada- Korea free trade agreement and to solicit letters from their employers opposing the Canada-Korea FTA (forwarding copies to my office)
5. I recommend that all CAW members support the fightback of our auto parts locals and members against wage, benefit, and pension concessions in the wake of the concession demands at Delphi.
6. I recommend that the Council endorse the \$4 million interest free loan approved by the National Executive Board and that we continue our union's support for Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU), as they go about rebuilding their union.

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