

**CAW PRESIDENT
KEN LEWENZA
SPEECH
TO
CAW COUNCIL**

SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL, TORONTO, ON

DECEMBER 4-6, 2009

Welcome. Over the last couple of days, I have tried to attend as many council committee meetings as I could in order to express my appreciation for your work as Council delegates and to talk with you about the challenges you are facing. If I miss anything in my report – any of the fights we are facing in each sector of the union – hopefully I covered it at your council. On top of that, you have the entire staff reports of our union. They are put on the table for one reason: for you to read them, for you to take home, to take a look at your particular sector, to take a look at other sectors of the economy, to take a look at the successes and the challenges we have, and to connect with each other from one workplace to another. If there are any questions following my report, you can discuss the staff reports along with my report. All of the information that is in front of you today is the result of a lot of hard work and a lot of commitment, and not just to yourselves as leadership, but to our members and those in the community.

A lot of work has been done since our last Council meeting; the work of the people in this room, the work of the bargaining committees from one end of the country to the other, the work of the rank and file activists who defend the interests of our members each and everyday. We appreciate your efforts, and we thank you.

AUTO SECTOR

The auto industry, as a result of its importance to the Ontario and Canadian economy, gets a lot of attention in the media. From time to time, I wish that we could get the same attention in that small workplace where workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. We can challenge Canadians more generally about the crisis that is taking place from one workplace to the next and from one sector of the economy to another, but the auto industry because of its importance to this economy, gets a lot of ongoing attention.

What does ongoing attention mean? It means that we are not out of the woods yet. As a result of the collective work of this union, the ability for us to come together three or four times a

year, in each of the sectors where we bargain, we are able to put together an agenda to protect the interests of our members.

When that global financial crisis hit, and Chrysler, General Motors, and other companies became incredibly vulnerable, there was a need for government intervention in the economy. Every single country in the world supports the key industries in their economy, but we had to fight hard to convince Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, of the importance of the auto industry. To give him some credit and appreciation, he understood our concerns. He understood that if the Province of Ontario were to lose a corporation like General Motors, Chrysler, or even Ford, this province and country would be devastated with job loss as high as 600,000. We would immediately go from recession into depression with serious challenges moving forward.

But, the Premier met with us and said that there would be no government support unless all of the stakeholders played a role. He was talking to me directly as the National President. He was talking to Chris Buckley and Rick Laporte as the chairpersons of their bargaining committees. He was also talking to Mike Vince because although Ford Motor Company did not accept financial assistance, they did get approval, in case it was needed.

At the end of the day, we went into bargaining not once but twice this year with General Motors. Once was the result of trying to deal with the incredible challenges mounting at GM, and the collective agreement was ratified overwhelmingly by the membership. We all know the story since then. President Obama established an Automotive Task Force. That Task Force reported that the workers at General Motors in the United States did not do enough. The stakeholders have to do much more before the government would intervene. If Chrysler does not have a partner, the corporation is bankrupt, and would likely go under. At that time, there were discussions with Fiat, but no deal had been made. He sent us a tough message and it was followed by Stephen Harper. But we did not retreat. Along with the assistants and the chairpersons of the committees, we met with the government. Initially, we blasted them. We explained that the cost of labour on an automobile is seven percent of the total cost of a vehicle. No one could blame the crisis of the auto industry on the Canadian Auto Workers union, their collective agreement, their pensions, or their benefits. However, we all know how politics works: this was positioning government to support the industry by being able to state that they had forced all stakeholders to make sacrifices.

We went back into bargaining and we bargained a collective agreement. It was a painful process, but at the end of the day, we judge ourselves by our memberships' ratification votes. Going into the GM ratification meeting, our members understood the challenges, and they understood that they had to make sacrifices. They ratified the work of Chris Buckley and the General Motors Master Bargaining Committee overwhelmingly. This does not happen by accident. This happens because of our ongoing work, 365 days a year; our work in educating our members,

and our work in preparing our members for the challenges that are in front of us during good and bad times. We cannot just talk to our members every three years. We have to talk to our members each and everyday about the challenges in their sector and the challenges in industry more generally.

Steven Rattner was assigned to the Auto Task Force by President Obama to look at whether the U.S. government should provide support to General Motors and Chrysler. We have a copy of Rattner's report for any delegate who may want one. Steve Rattner and the Task Force really questioned the potential of General Motors being able to turn the corner as it was a broken company even without the global financial crisis. This company was mismanaged in a lot of ways and did not deliver products that the consumers wanted. There was a lack of confidence in General Motors, but ultimately, they came to the conclusion that it was important for the U.S. economy to do it.

Chrysler was much different. The Task Force, according to this report, clearly said Chrysler cannot and will not make it, and even initially recommended that Barack Obama not provide financial support to Chrysler. President Obama, to the appreciation of Chrysler workers, stepped up to the plate and said if a partner will come in, we must give them an opportunity. Today, we all know that Fiat has come in. Sergio Marchionne is running the company, and we all hope for a turnaround.

I want to acknowledge today the work of Chris Buckley and his bargaining committee. I also want to acknowledge two bargaining committee members from General Motors who are going to retire before our next Council meeting. They are long time Local 222 bargaining committee members, with a combined contribution to our union of over 60 years: Ron Carlyle and Kevin Gray.

We still face incredibly challenging times in the auto sector. Things changed this week at General Motors when they dismissed CEO Fritz Henderson – or he resigned, depending on how you interpret the coverage. People are predicting that General Motors has a 60 percent chance of survival.

They are predicting that Chrysler has less than 50 percent chance for survival, so our work is far from done at Chrysler. We went through multiple weeks of bargaining, with a lot of games being played, but ultimately got an agreement. I want to acknowledge the leadership of Rick Laporte, the chairperson of the Chrysler Bargaining Committee. I want to acknowledge the entire bargaining committee, and I also want to acknowledge two bargaining committee members who have decided to retire. One of them is a stalwart, not just on the Chrysler Bargaining Committee, but the former President of the Windsor and District Labour Council, an incredible activist who has been on the WSIB Council committee for as long as we can possibly remember, always fighting for the most vulnerable in society, and that's my good friend and colleague, Gary

Parent. Pat Cushing does not have the same seniority as Gary, but is just as important to the Chrysler Bargaining Committee and has been a representative for quite some time. This will be his last Council meeting as an active member of the bargaining committee.

Needless to say, our union supports pattern bargaining. It was controversial when Ford Motor Company approached our bargaining committee and said, "Folks, you either appreciate pattern bargaining or you don't". It is always amazing when you are making sacrifices, the bosses agree to pattern bargaining, but when you are making improvements, they do not agree with pattern bargaining. This particular time, they used the argument against us. They said, "You can't put Ford Motor Company at a disadvantage".

Ford today complains loudly behind closed doors that the loans which were given to Chrysler and General Motors, and the bankruptcy proceedings in the United States at General Motors and Chrysler have put Ford at a huge disadvantage. Due to the bankruptcy proceedings in the United States, General Motors and Chrysler were able to unload significant debt off their books, but Ford did not use that approach, so they have much more debt on their books, and many more challenges. The difference is there is a sense of optimism at Ford because of the products they are manufacturing and because of their gradual increases in market share.

The Ford Bargaining Committee met with their membership over, and over, and over, while preparing to go into bargaining. We had some tough issues at Ford, but we went in and ultimately bargained a collective agreement. That collective agreement shares the sacrifices established at Chrysler and at GM. The difference was that some of the gains that we bargained in 2008, like our holidays, SPA and the vacation bonus had already been used by our members. Ford said they were at a disadvantage there, and that we owed them \$3,500 because that was already in the pockets of our members. I said, "The only way you are going to get that \$3,500 back is when Chrysler and General Motors turn around, we will put the \$3,500 back in the pockets of GM and Chrysler workers, and say that a debt was repaid to Ford. You are not going to get it from the Ford workers in this set of negotiations."

We got the agreement done, but it was a painful bargaining session because Ford Motor Company is going to be a lot smaller going into the next decade. Ford has announced the closure of their St. Thomas plant, and it is extremely painful for the community, the region of London, and the membership of Local 1520. That is 1,400 value added jobs. That is another 3,000 retirees who will not have a local union for representation as a result of that closure. It was painful, but the work and determination of Mike Vince and the bargaining committee put a closure agreement together which would ultimately be ratified by our members by large numbers. However, that does not take the pain away caused by job loss. If we had a choice of good severance payments, good retirement opportunities, or better jobs and maintaining those jobs in the community, we would take

the jobs. We have to deal with the consequences of Ford eliminating the Ford Crown Victoria, the Mercury Grand Marquis and the Lincoln Town Car from their product portfolio. It was a painful day when we had to go to those ratification meetings in London and tell the members that we could not save their jobs. But we tried to minimize the pain, and tried to give them an opportunity to pick themselves up through the adjustment programs we bargained for those who were not pension eligible.

I want to recognize today the incredible work of Scott Smith, the unit chairperson, Dennis McGee, the President of 1520, who have been part of this union in excess of 30 years. It has been a good, strong, determined union in the London region, and it is an incredible loss to our union and to the communities.

At Local 200 Windsor, as a result of the work of Mike Vince and the leadership, we have great credibility with Ford. We tried to get Ford Motor Company to make Windsor, Ontario the engine capital of the world, the power train capital of the world, to invest R&D into that community, which would be followed by manufacturing of engines for vehicles which are built throughout the world. Joe Hinrichs said that as a result of Mike Vince's leadership, they were able to convince Ford Motor Company to reopen a plant that they closed. The only plant that Ford closed which was reopened was in the City of Windsor. That was the result of the work ethic and credibility of the Ford leadership team under Mike Vince. Joe Hinrichs, who is respected by our union, said "Guys, you've got the best engine in the system. If we build more cars, you have the potential, but we can't, because we don't have any more engine capacity to give". There is recognition that if work is there, Ford Windsor will be given the opportunity because of the work of the union and the cooperation and collaboration with the company in the Community of Windsor.

Then, Ford Motor Company said that they were going to remove some equipment called MODS, and move it to China. The company said, "We want to take a couple out. They've got four in there." We said "You are not taking out our potential to expand our workplace. You are not taking out the investment that we fought for and make us compete against the equipment which we earned in our workplace." We bargained full utilization. We bargained maximizing employment opportunities. The only way we can protect our members at Ford is to take ownership of the equipment in the collective agreement. We put in the collective agreement that the company cannot move equipment which is not utilized in the workplace. If there is ever an opportunity for the equipment to be utilized, they have to come to Windsor, and that gives us high hopes for the future. I want to thank Mike Vince, the leadership of Local 200 and the entire master bargaining committee for their incredible work.

The good news is in Oakville where we have investment in future products, have positioned ourselves for that plant to be a state of the art facility producing multiple vehicles for the future and

the potential for a third shift. With luck, Ford will continue to increase market share. A lot of sacrifices were made and a lot of changes were put in place. The leadership of Local 707 deserves a lot of credit for the high recommendation and support received from their membership. We are proud of the work that we do and we push ourselves as far as we can, but the greatest test in our union is when you go back to the membership. I want to thank all of the Ford leadership for taking their responsibility seriously, for recognizing the challenges, and for protecting the interest of the members.

CAMI was a joint venture between General Motors and Suzuki. The Japanese management folks were very nervous about investing in Ontario. They met with Bob White and Bob's assistant, Buzz Hargrove, and said, "Hey, we'd like to come to Ontario, but it's got to look a little bit different. The workplace has to look more like the Japanese culture. We're prepared to recognize the union". At the end of the day, that was a wise decision. Some argued that this would hurt the auto industry in the Province of Ontario. Some argued that it would pit that workplace against other auto plants in the Province of Ontario. Under the leadership of Bob, Buzz and the CAW National Union at the time, we said, "Bring the work here, and the workers themselves will democratically decide on how their workplace is going to look through collective bargaining". Over multiple rounds of bargaining, the workers have a workplace today that they can be proud of. They can recognize with great pride that some of the structures of the Japanese culture have been turned into a Canadian culture and a Canadian workforce which represents the interests of Canadians versus how the Japanese see that workforce.

We went into CAMI bargaining knowing that there is a joint venture between General Motors and Suzuki. There were CAMI workers saying, "We've got nothing to do with General Motors. CAMI is doing well. We have a couple new products going on." When things were going good with General Motors, CAMI always said, "I want what General Motors workers got". When we made the sacrifices at General Motors, there were some in the CAMI workforce of Local 88 that clearly said, "We're doing well. We don't have to make those sacrifices. We have a separate collective agreement". The bargaining committee, under Mike Van Boekel's leadership and Dan Borthwick's presidency, said, "Hey, we have to do this folks, because we're part of the business plan provided for by the government to protect this industry in the Province of Ontario". We went to bargaining and bargained a collective agreement. During the ratification vote, we took a bit of criticism, and rightfully so. Workers should stand up and defend their past gains and the interests of auto workers, not taking the blame for the crisis in the auto industry.

After the debate, the agreement was ratified, but the most significant part was that workers got up and said, "We're not General Motors, Mr. Lewenza, and quit raising it". I kept saying, "Without General Motors, you're not here". I would get the odd "boo", which surprises me with my

personality. This morning, we were notified that Suzuki has pulled out of the partnership with General Motors, and the CAMI facility is now solely owned and operated by General Motors. To the Local 88 bargaining committee, you made the right decision. You predicted the outcome, and now we have to work together as a combined GM Bargaining Committee to protect the interests of our members moving forward.

This tells you that when a union has vision and pursues its objective and understands the industry, that we can protect the interests of our members. It is our responsibility to protect the interests of our members where we can. We have vision where the companies do not have vision. Are we criticized from time-to-time in order to achieve our goals? The answer is yes, and by the way, that's okay. As long as we are building a union and building confidence in our members to be able to speak up and talk about issues important to them.

The biggest victory we had, if there is such a thing as a victory in these economic times, was protecting the pensioners. If General Motors had gone under, their pension fund was funded at 37 percent, which means that 30,000 retirees would have taken a 63 percent hit on their pension benefit immediately.

Chrysler was a little bit different because in the past they did not get the same regulatory treatment on pensions, so they had to fund it. Still, Chrysler workers would have taken between a 25 to 30 percent hit on their pension if Chrysler had gone bankrupt.

In both cases, the government assistance propped up those pension plans to make sure that if General Motors and Chrysler were to go under, their pension plan will be funded adequately enough to protect our retirees. That was the victory. When Chris Buckley stood up at his membership meeting, he said, "We have 30,000 retirees with 7,000 or 8,000 active workers, and our responsibility has got to be to those that put us in a position to defend our wages, our benefits, our time off. Everything we enjoy today was won on the backs of the retirees and those before us." That was a huge victory for our union. One day we will write a synopsis of what happened in the auto industry – it is part of our history.

Brothers and sisters, the work is not done. We are not out of the woods. The fact is that there is a serious challenge that we cannot ignore. It is important that we continue to fight for fair trade versus free trade, reciprocal trade versus free trade. We need to make sure that those countries dumping their products into our market at the expense of Canadian jobs at least open their markets. Otherwise, we close ours. That is the only way the auto industry is going to be protected moving forward.

AUTO PARTS SECTOR

The auto parts sector has been devastated. You cannot go from 18-19 million vehicle sales in North America to less than 10 million without a major restructuring. We have felt the job loss in manufacturing at GM, Ford and Chrysler, but also in the auto parts sector. The sector has been devastated as a result of constant restructuring, and as a result of the manufacturers saying to the auto parts suppliers, "You must provide that part to us for less money". The auto parts sector has been dealing with this downward pressure for four or five years now. We have lost plants. We have lost trade unionists who had committed their lives to our members. The challenges in the auto parts sector are not going to go away. We must continue to convince the manufacturers to deal with unionized auto parts manufacturers, a commitment of all three bargaining committees. We must continue to fight for fair and reciprocal trade versus free trade.

I want to extend our appreciation to those in this room today who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, but through the consolidation of the auto parts sector. To the auto parts leadership in the room today, who go to the bargaining table almost every day, under the leadership of Jerry Dias and the staff representatives, dealing with the crisis, trying to make the changes you need just to fight for another day, I want to congratulate each and every one of you.

Did we make sacrifices at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler? Yes, we did, but we never took a single dime out of the pockets of our members relative to their wages. We made some sacrifices in benefits and other areas, but the wages that people take home have not been touched. The same can apply in the auto parts sector because of the determination of the leadership in this room. I thank you for your contribution to our union.

The auto parts sector has made a long and historic contribution. I am proud today to say there are victories in between those sacrifices. It shows you that if you can fight a workplace closure, you may be able to enhance severance payments for workers. You may be able to even keep the plant open if you are determined to do it and you have a position of power. Sometimes you may have a position of power, but you have to find it.

At Aradco, under the leadership of CAW Local 195 president Gerry Farnham and chairperson, Mike Melo, the community of Windsor and CAW members came together. The employer closed the workplace, left the membership behind: no severance pay, no vacation pay, no responsibility at all. The workers took over the workplace, and ultimately, we got Chrysler to throw in \$400,000 to help in the transition of workers who lost their jobs. It was about 40 percent of what the workers were entitled to, but the members appreciated what the union did. We vacated the plant, and we handed out the \$400,000.

The equipment stayed there, but they are going to auction the equipment. Local 195, finds out that they are going to auction the equipment. What do we do? We rallied the community of

Windsor again. We go there and we do not let the auctioneers take the equipment. At one point, in one particular area, there were more police than there were demonstrators and I was a little bit nervous, thinking, "All hell is going to break loose here". At the end of the day, our members fought, and they ultimately won. How did they win? They cancelled the auction. Then, our members said, "Wait a minute. We're not done yet". The bank was Comerica in the United States. They were going to be the benefactors of selling this equipment, because they were the first creditors. So, what did our folks do? They jumped into their cars, as we could not take a bus load to the United States and say that we were protesting at a major bank. There were four or five dozen protestors at the Comerica Bank in Detroit. We received a great deal of attention from the international media. Ultimately, Comerica met with the union and said, "We will provide monies that are owed to you. How much is it?" When we told them, their eyes rolled a little bit, but they provided an offer covering about two-thirds of what the workers were entitled to. We have not yet cut a deal because the other third is going to come to the pot. This is an inspiring example of the kind of determination, effort and culture that the CAW brings to our fights. I want to congratulate Local 195, Gerry Farnham, and Mike Melo. I also want to acknowledge the people who lost their jobs, recognizing they might finally get justice in terms of the severance payments owed to them. As well, I want to recognize the local union leadership in the community who came together to support those workers.

Another victory is Guelph Products. About one year ago, we took over that plant. Chrysler Corporation wanted to move the equipment out because Guelph Products was bankrupt. They were not paying the workers. They were not providing the support to Chrysler Corporation. Chrysler Corporation had been subsidizing this plant for quite some time. We took over the plant and said, "We're not going to let you take the equipment" and we signed an extension to the existing collective agreement that allowed us a year to work out a deal.

Just two weeks ago, under the leadership of Dale Heaney, supported by our national representatives, we got Chrysler Corporation to buy the facility, to take ownership of the facility and maintain the jobs at Guelph Products. That, brothers and sisters, is a victory: from moving the equipment out and people losing their jobs to convincing the manufacturer to buy it in lieu of giving it away to the cheapest bidder. Did we have to bargain? Did we have to make some changes? Of course we did, but we did not touch wages which was important to the members who ultimately ratified. Jerry Dias tells me that the ratification meeting was a celebration, recognizing that workers who had no jobs ended up fighting and winning their jobs. What a victory for our union. I want to congratulate the local union leadership and the staff of our union for their determination.

I want to raise Daymond Aluminum in Chatham, Ontario. As of November 28, under the leadership of CAW Local 127 president Aaron Neaves, we have taken over the workplace, fighting

for severance pay, fighting for vacation pay, fighting for what is our legal right in the Province of Ontario, but that the employer is walking away. Again, it is the determination of the leadership and the culture of the union which gives us the ability to get in there to fight and to defend the interests of our members. I want to congratulate the leadership. I want to make sure that they know they have the full support of our union as they try to enhance the severance package or possibly even keep the plant open. That is work in action, brothers and sisters. That is what the Canadian Auto Workers Union is about: defending the interests of our members, even during the most significant challenges of our time. From time to time, people are fearful of fighting back, but we are fighting back. We are utilizing our power where we can and where we do not have any power, we are being pretty creative in finding it. Thank you very much for your hard work.

There are a lot of other things going on in the auto parts sector. Constant bargaining is going on. I congratulate you all. As I mentioned, I cannot touch on every workplace. I ask you to look at the staff reports.

AEROSPACE SECTOR

It seems like every second day, the potential of trouble in 2010-2011 and beyond for the aerospace industry is in the news. The orders are shrinking faster than where our production levels are. I am working with Rolly Kiehne, Merv Gray and others. We are watching the sales of our jets and are working as hard as we possibly can to ensure that our members in the aerospace industry are protected. We bargained a good collective agreement at Bombardier and got some work there, but at the end of the day, it depends on the market. There is more nervousness today than there was a year ago, but we continue to closely monitor the industry.

AIRLINE SECTOR

We represent airline workers at Air Canada in every community from one end of the country to the other. It is a tough bargaining environment. It is also a tough work environment. Air Canada threatened to go into bankruptcy, for the second time in the last decade, forcing all the unions to go into bargaining and make sacrifices to avoid bankruptcy. Our national carrier, Air Canada, continues to be a very vulnerable carrier and we continue to fight with government to this day. This industry must have the support of government for long-term survival. We cannot protect the long-term survival of Air Canada through constant negotiations. Planes have to be full. The government has a role connecting the east coast to the west coast and small communities with large communities. Without a national carrier we will be in serious trouble; not only our reputation as a nation, but Canadians rely on Air Canada for service across the country.

When Air Canada went into bankruptcy protection in 2003, they established subsidiary groups represented by Jazz. Under the leadership of the Jazz bargaining committees, we bargained an agreement which was ratified by our members. I thank those members for their work and their support in getting that collective agreement. We also have, however, Jazz workers from one end of the country who have now rejected two sets of tentative agreements. These are former Air Canada workers. Air Canada created this low cost carrier called Jazz. The transition was an extremely difficult time for our members. As usual, the CAW came to the plate and represented the best interests of our members to the best of our ability. Jazz is doing reasonably well as a result of the service agreement which was given to them by Air Canada. This is similar to the auto parts sector: Air Canada is the national carrier and they provide a contract service to Jazz. The contract says that Air Canada must provide certain levels of flying time to Jazz. They determine the flying time, but must commit to those levels. We have some division about that within our membership. Some bases have Air Canada; some bases have Jazz; and some bases have a combination of Jazz and Air Canada. This creates controversy. Jazz is doing reasonably well, and are out there advocating how well they are doing. Our members see that each and every day and they want their bargaining to be making a comeback from the days of CCAA at Air Canada.

Just this week we got our third tentative agreement with Jazz and it has significant improvements. When we talked to the Air Canada CEO last Friday, we blasted him for trying to divide our Air Canada members against our Jazz members. We said to Air Canada, "You control who provides the service and what that service agreement looks like. Yet, in every base where there is joint employment between Air Canada and Jazz you deliberately divide the workers. You have the total power but you are telling the people that we, as a union, can decide what those bases should look like and who should be employed in those particular bases." I said to the CEO, "You're sending work to Jazz, which is making a lot more money than Air Canada. If you were smart, you would take that company back into Air Canada, pay all the workers the wages and benefits of Air Canada workers and build the company moving forward." He said, "That's not my vision, Ken. My vision is that in future agreements with Jazz, we're going to reduce the hours in the contract for Jazz workers and we're going to put more pressure on them to be more competitive with the non-union carriers". That is the vision of the CEO. I said, "You've got to be kidding me. Your vision is to attack workers? As a CEO, don't you think your first responsibility is to fill the planes, market the company, and make sure the workers are protected rather than having a vision which drives down the standards of workers?" We had a lively discussion. When you see our members at Air Canada, please stop and tell them that you understand what they have been through. Tell them you feel their anxieties because you have the same anxieties. Ask them to continue to support their union which supports them every day.

It is a real challenge. I want to acknowledge Local 2002 President Leslie Dias. She is doing a great job. It really is a national organization under a local union structure. Leslie and the leadership are working very hard but we still have a lot of work to do. I challenge the leadership to step up to the plate: talk to our members, educate our members, and be part of the solution, not the problem. We will continue to work hard on behalf of our Air Canada and Jazz members.

HEALTH CARE SECTOR

In health care, we continue to defend with vigour our medicare programs, pushing all levels of government to ensure sufficient funding for the health care sector. It is vital that we remember the vision of Tommy Douglas – universal, accessible health care for all Canadians. When we represent our health care workers, we are also representing those who require our service in those health care facilities. We are getting agreements in hospitals across the country.

There is also a third party in the health care sector: the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA). The OHA is out there criticizing local unions like Tim Carrie's, who bargained a good collective agreement, saying that the workers were not entitled to that kind of agreement, and now are discouraging CEO's to follow the pattern that we established in London, Ontario. It is painful when third parties step in and start telling CEO's how to run their business; it gives the CEO's an excuse to challenge the unions.

Last week in Windsor, the CEO of the Windsor Regional Hospital went public: the headlines read "Wages and Benefits - A Worker is No Longer Sustainable". This is a CEO who makes in excess of \$300,000 a year. Since taking over, he has added 75 administrators who are paid over \$100,000 a year to his payroll. He is going after the wages and benefits of our members who actually care for the patients. He does not care for the patients. The 75 administrators do not care for the patients. Our RPN's and service workers are the ones who care for the patients. He attacks those people in the hospitals who are hands-on. We challenged him publicly and with vigour. I am going to ask him for a public debate. Any place, any time. I will talk about the wages and benefits of our members versus the greed of the executives and the lack of support from government. We shall see if he takes on the challenge. I hope he does.

The same applies in Nova Scotia. Bargaining has broken down with both CUPE and the CAW. We brought the leadership together in Halifax and I want to thank the leadership who participated in this wonderful event which provided the opportunity to put a vision in place protecting the interests of our members. At the same time, I had an opportunity to meet with the Premier of Nova Scotia Darrell Dexter. I said, "Darrell, you're a New Democrat. You gave credit to us for your election victory both at our Constitutional Convention and through letters. At the end of the day, you've got to be different than the Liberals and the Tories. You have to stand up for labour

legislation. You have to stand up in defence of public services. You cannot put the debt of Nova Scotia on the backs of workers". He recognized that he wants to be different, but if we do not keep the pressure on him, he will not deliver. Every politician, every political party, needs the pressure of its constituency. Don't let Darrell Dexter off the hook. Keep pushing, keep screaming, keep making sure that he sticks to the different agenda that he got elected on. That's the objective of our union.

RETAIL, HOSPITALITY & GAMING SECTORS

We have multiple bargaining sessions going on across the country in major grocery stores, in major hotels, and in our gaming facilities. Casino Windsor is devastated today because of the lack of cross-border traffic. Fallsview Casino in Niagara Falls, which is unorganized, is not in the position they were three or four years ago because of the lack of tourists coming over from the United States. It is the passport and the Canadian dollar. These are issues that the workers have no control over. In each and every workplace in retail, hospitality and gaming, it is a battle to get a collective agreement. Tourism is significantly down in the Province of Ontario and throughout the country. It is a key sector of the economy and government must play a role to expand tourism in Canada and get visitors into our great country, our great communities, and our great workplaces to provide the job security and income security for our members.

We have to continue to fight. In this sector, in many circumstances, we are compared to minimum wage. As a labour movement, joined by many coalitions, we are fighting hard to convince every province to increase the minimum wage. In the last number of years, in provinces where the CAW has a presence, they have increased their minimum wage. This is a result of our work on the street and a result of our lobbying efforts. It is a victory when you can bring low paid workers up – not only in our union but in the overall economy. We have to keep fighting to increase the minimum wage. Government has a role in terms of providing good paying jobs for those low paid workers and fighting the greed of the employers.

Today, I am troubled because they are closing down a Dominion store in Marystown, Nfld. which has been in the community forever. Under the leadership of Bill King and Brother Mike Stanford, they bargained an excellent closure agreement, likely the best closure agreement that could be achieved in that province. It was overwhelmingly ratified with the support of Bob Orr and the staff representative. However, at the end of the day, we lost the jobs. We lost a grocery store that had been in the community forever because of the intensive competition from Sobey's and others. We must figure a way to get organized workers to consciously shop in organized workplaces because Marystown would be open today if all unionized workers shopped in that store. When we shop in unionized environments we enhance our members' working conditions.

The same applies in British Columbia where the majority of the hotels are up for bargaining. You would think with the Olympics that it would be easy to get a collective agreement but the employers are being even more difficult in this set of bargaining. I congratulate all of the bargaining committees for their work ethic and their ability to get a collective agreement. We bargained a good collective agreement at the Sheraton in B.C. under the leadership of Jean Van Vliet. Hopefully this will establish a pattern in the other hotels.

We must continue to do work in these sectors of the economy, making sure that the workers' interests are protected. We will be having a gaming sector conference next year. We will come up with a plan on how to deal with the challenges in this unique industry where workers are under attack on hours of work and other issues that are important to our members.

RAIL SECTOR

We opened negotiations with VIA Rail on October 20th in Ottawa. VIA offers an important service to Canadians connecting us from coast-to-coast. It would not be the quality line that it is without the work performed by CAW members. A fair agreement is our objective and it is imperative that we work hard. VIA has multiple demands on the table and our bargaining committee is working very hard to get a collective agreement by the end of the year. There is going to be a significant management change at VIA and we are trying to get the collective agreement done under the existing management because when new management comes in, they normally have a vision of attacking workers for the bottom line. I encourage our bargaining committee to continue to work hard to get a collective agreement.

INTERNATIONAL TRUCK-NAVISTAR

This truck manufacturing company is very important to the economic survival of the community of Chatham. Everybody remembers the day that we took this corporation on when Buzz Hargrove called the CAW to arms to protect the interests of Navistar workers. We ultimately won our fight there: keeping the plant in Chatham and ensuring the company had to produce 35 vehicles per day. We won the fight to secure jobs for members in that community at great cost to our union and at great cost to Brother Don Milner. The collective agreement expired in July and we are in bargaining. The employer actually shut the place down and said, "When the union is prepared to provide major sacrifices and reduce the employment levels from 400 or 500 to 35 or 40 as we turn this into a kit operation, give us a call." Bob Chernecki has been working constantly at getting Navistar off their position and protecting the interests of our members. The bargaining committee is doing what they have to do, but to date, we have not been successful. We will continue to work for our members.

Joe McCabe, the national representative responsible for Navistar was rushed to the hospital last night. I understand that he is now in stable condition. From time-to-time, I think that his health is related to the pressure of trying to get a deal in this particular workplace. We wish Joe the very best.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The university and education sector across the country is important to our union. It is important to the potential growth of our union. We were proud when McMaster workers joined our union in 2005 and became Local 555. Now, under the leadership of CAW Local 555 president Matt Root and chairperson, Barry Diacon, we bargained a collective agreement at McMaster, but it was tough. The university is in good financial shape. Their pension plan is in good financial shape when compared to any pension plan in Canada, yet the university came with vigour and attacked our pension plan. They attacked defined benefit pension plans, saying they were a thing of the past. Unfortunately, we were unable to bargain a settlement at McMaster on that particular issue and are going to arbitration arguing that McMaster has no right to take out our pension plan. They have no right to change our pension plan. They cannot argue that they are in financial difficulty because they are not. In this case, it is simply a decision made by the employer. We will continue to defend Local 555 and protect our pension plans. National representative Cara MacDonald has provided a great deal of expertise on the question of pensions and in educating our members on the importance of fighting and defending our pensions. The bargaining committee is working hard to get the message out to our members that these issues are worth fighting for.

ALLSTREAM

We have 600 members at Allstream Canada. Their base is in Winnipeg but they have expanded across the country. Our contract expires at the end of the year and we are currently in bargaining. The employer has laid out multiple demands to our members. Along with Bob Chernecki, national representative Joel Fournier, and unit chairperson Dylan Gadwa, I met with the CEO who was most complimentary about the workers and their vision of having a company that would not only be sustainable moving forward, but very profitable. I cautioned him on his aggressive approach at bargaining and the demands that are on the bargaining table. We shall see how it plays out, but all CAW members should understand that all bargaining agendas, including the ones not reported here but that are in the staff reports require the total support of our members.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

I want to spend a minute on the Afghanistan war. I recall when George W. Bush sent the troops into that country and I recall the CAW debates about war and violence leading to more violence. I recall the passion resulting from the September 11th attacks. Every country in the world had casualties as a result of that terrorist attack. It was tough for all of us because it was emotional. It was difficult and we said, "How are we going to deal with this?" Our union opposed war. We said that this war cannot be won in the traditional way. This war had to be won by providing development opportunities to those countries acting as terrorists towards the Americans. We should put the money into those countries that are attacking us, attacking civil rights and liberties, and attacking the kind of standards we have today. If we put the money into building communities versus the war, think what we could build. Just last week, President Obama announced that they were sending another 30,000 troops and he is asking the UN to send more.

The problem with this debate going on is there does not seem to be an end – an end to the violence; an end to the war. There does not seem to be any stability. The only answer is to continue to advocate for peace. We must continue to advocate for all nations to come together in support of developing countries. We continue to watch with the expectation that our troops will come home, that Canadian troops will continue to do what they have done best prior to this war, and that is peacekeeping and support for those who need support internationally.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

There is total disarray on the domestic politics front. Last December, Jack Layton and Stephane Dion spoke to this Council. Dion, Layton and Gilles Duceppe built a coalition and said, "We've got to dump Harper". We brought the leaders of the political parties in here and said, "Use your majority in the interest of the majority to get rid of Stephen Harper and the minority. Get rid of this guy for good". These folks were determined for about three days to live up to that commitment. Dion then lost his job. Jack got a little nervous about the polls and the coalition broke up. Since then, the Liberal Party has gotten weaker under the leadership of Michael Ignatieff. This is not good news for us. It is not good news that the Tories are gaining in the polls.

The Prime Minister you see today is not the real Stephen Harper. The statesman raising human rights in China when we know he does not care about human rights is not the real Stephen Harper. The real Stephen Harper was the President of the National Citizens Coalition. He despises unions, despises public services and believes in individualism versus the collective good. Under a minority government we have so far been able to limit his power. The fact is that this will not go on forever. We must all be committed to make sure that a Stephen Harper government does not get elected to a majority – no matter what it takes for our union to do it.

Remember Brian Mulroney's famous words about free trade the night he won the election? "You will not recognize this country in 10 years". That is the only accurate statement that Mulroney made the entire time he was Prime Minister.

It is in the interest of our members to fight very hard to make sure that, when Stephen Harper calls an election, our progressive and community allies use good common sense. If anyone thinks that it is a victory to put two extra seats in the House of Commons for the New Democratic Party and give the Tories 15 more seats for a majority, they are mistaken. That is not a victory for workers and progressives in this country. A victory is keeping this Prime Minister out of a majority government.

PENSIONS

I am a humbled president today, not nearly as cocky as I was a year ago or 20 years ago. After the fight we went through with General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, and the fights we are fighting in auto parts and with all the other employers we deal with from Air Canada to McMaster University, to preserve our pension plans for our retirees and future retirees, I came to the conclusion that if we do not bring every Canadian with us on this fight for income security for pensioners, all of us will struggle, increasingly, on the pensions and retirement savings we have today. In the private sector today, 80 percent of employees do not have a pension plan. The majority of workers in the private sector who have pensions are unionized. Those plans are a supplement to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) as the union tries to provide the income support necessary for retirees.

In the last year, I have received thousands of e-mails saying, "Mr. Lewenza, I don't have a pension plan, so why should I care about the workers that you represent that have a pension plan? Who is speaking for me? Who is going to help me get out of poverty, because I'm living on just the CPP?" I also received letters from the 35 percent of Canadians who have the ability to put money away into an RRSP or some kind of pension annuity. They said, "Mr. Lewenza, we lost 30 percent of our income. Nobody's speaking for us. Nobody's helping us. The government is not helping us. So, why should we help you? Why should we support you?" I have come to the conclusion that unless we strengthen our Canada Pension Plan, unless we provide double the support and double the effort for those seniors who built our country, who rely solely on CPP and OAS, we will not have another victory in pensions in collective bargaining. We have to bring all Canadians with us. We will not give up our fight for pensions or our fight to enhance the lives of our retirees, but we can also be the voice of all Canadians. In every set of negotiations where the employer says

you've either got to take a reduction, a freeze or change the plan completely, and every set of negotiations we have a bargained plan, we are fighting for our pension rights and we are fighting for our pension security.

The Canada Pension Plan took about a 20 percent hit as a result of the global financial crisis. Did the government or the CPP Board of Directors come out and say we have to slash benefits for seniors or that we have to cut existing Canada Pension recipients? No way. They understood that if they took that kind of approach, the Tories would be defeated. This shows that our universal pension program works. It shows you that if we can enhance our universal pension program for all Canadians, we can bring up our standards and bring other Canadians with us.

The only real retirement security Canadians are going to have moving forward will be through the doubling of CPP. If we get people out of poverty when they retire, that is another victory. If we can double our CPP and give people the reliability and stability they need going into retirement, then they will not be afraid to retire. This government is going backwards. They are trying to get people to work until they are 70 or 75 years old. They made regulatory changes making early retirement less attractive. If you stay longer, you will get more. Of course, if you stay until you die you are going to get more at the end of the day, but you are going to heaven immediately. I have heard that you do not need money up there, but I am not certain.

I have a recommendation that we join with the Canadian Labour Congress and do what we can to enhance benefits for all pensioners in Canada. At the same time, I recommend that we recommit ourselves to bargaining strong pension plans and making sure the pension plans we have bargained are not for sale by over-zealous employers who believe those days are behind us.

The most insulting thing came last week – to the Nortel workers. This is the giant company with the CEO that won CEO of the world not once but a couple of times. This is the company that people invested in and lost a lot of money over the last few years. This is now a company in bankruptcy and leaving retirees out in the cold and leaving those who had disability benefits out in the cold. They are going to reduce their pensions, going to eliminate their disability benefits, and our union, under the leadership of former National Secretary-Treasurer Bob Nickerson, demonstrated at Queen's Park and we demonstrated in Ottawa. As a result of our combined demonstrations on pension protection there is an article on pensions in major newspapers every single day.

People are talking about it and do you know why they're talking about it? Because we hit the streets, brothers and sisters, because we protested, we demonstrated, we made calls, we weren't silent, and people today are saying what can we do to enhance income benefits for retirees?

Then last week the court ruled that Nortel is no longer responsible for their retirees. They're not part of the collective agreement, so you don't have to worry about them. Throw them aside like they're a piece of meat, like they're not valuable to the nation, like they didn't add any value to the company. It angers me. It should be unlawful. Then the next day, when that court ruling came in, the Nortel executives paid themselves millions of dollars in bonuses before the company went under. This should be unlawful in this country - when executives can steal money on the backs of pensioners, on the backs of those disabled, and get away with it.

We must continue to fight for pensions until our last breath, because that's our responsibility as a union. It's our responsibility to our nation. I ask you to fight for pension protection.

PRECARIOUS WORK

It is a big issue moving forward. It is not an easy solution. But, when you take a look at the unemployment rates that came out yesterday, yes, there were about 80,000 jobs created as industry gradually started picking up, but 40,000 of those 80,000 were part-time jobs, precarious work, jobs that provide the employer with flexibility.

Ask the folks in retail, ask the folks in hospitals, ask the folks in gaming, ask the folks in manufacturing, ask the folks in aerospace. In every bargaining session the employers want to increase part-time work. They want to increase their flexibility. They want to give less security to those that don't have the guaranteed hours of work that they require to have a standard of living.

Look at our adjustment centres. We're going to have a few speakers from our adjustment centres to emphasize precarious work. Today, as workers lose their jobs, they're relying on the union to provide support through our adjustment centres. The only jobs we've been able to provide our members have been through a contract service. We have to have the contract service give our members an opportunity to walk into a workplace where they are not given any guaranteed hours, where they are not given any guaranteed security, where their income, quite frankly, is less than what it should be because the agency is making money off the back of that worker.

So, at the end of the day, brothers and sisters, we have to fight hard through collective bargaining not to extend precarious work. We have to work hard legislatively to say to the governments of this land that nobody could live, nobody could buy a home, nobody could have a reasonable standard of living if they're not sure of their hours of work and are not provided the security in their workplace.

We have a precarious work leaflet on the tables that explains the challenges we have and explains the growth in precarious work. I ask you to go back to your communities and talk to your neighbours about the growth in precarious work and defend the right of a worker to have a full-time

value-added job that provides a good standard of living for our families and our communities. I would ask you to read the leaflet and to support my recommendation.

DECEMBER 6 – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Twenty years ago this Sunday, Canada witnessed the worst massacre of our time when a man walked into the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, told the men to leave the room and proceeded to shoot 14 women engineering students, because they were women. And, our union did not sit silent. Our union, 20 years ago, publicly supported the families and we recommitted ourselves to fight violence against women.

The women in our union and the activists in our union took that horrible day and made it a mission to stop violence against women. For the last 20 years each and every December, this Council unanimously endorsed our position to stop violence against women. But, it is not just stopping violence against women. It is about providing social support, housing for those that have to leave their home versus being killed or beaten up. Income support, so they are not threatened that "if you leave my home, you will be broke", and all of the challenges that happen in domestic violence disputes that occur that makes women feel trapped.

I am incredibly proud of our union. I said the other day at the staff meeting, I believe the first person to stand up at Council and defend women's rights to have a non-violent society, was my former president, Larry Bauer. He was big tough guy with more tattoos than fingers and he stood up and defended women. Then Tim Carrie, a leader in our union for over 20 years, stood up, told his story and said, "Men have a responsibility to stop violence against women". Gary Parent has stood up for the past 20 years but especially in the last three years saying, "My daughter was in the same position Lori Dupont was in. My daughter is a nurse. When my daughter goes to work I expect her to come home. I do not expect my daughter to go to work and get murdered like Lori Dupont did and I expect our union to stand up against violence against women".

The women in our union have moved that agenda by bargaining women advocates and bargaining equity programs. We've provided as much support as we can at the bargaining table for those that require our support, and today, we've got to recommit to stopping violence against women. We have a guest speaker who will re-emphasize that we did make progress, but we still have a long way to go. The best way I can conclude this part of my report is by reading you an essay that was written by two of those engineering students who were in the facility that day, and who were able to escape death that day. This is what they wrote just recently;

“Twenty Years After the Montreal Massacre

By Nathalie Provost (B.Eng.), Heidi Rathjen (B. Eng., Dr.h.c., LL.D. M.S.C.) and Alain Perreault (B. Eng. MBA)

All three authors graduated from l'Ecole Polytechnique in 1990. On December 6, 1989, Nathalie Provost was injured and from her hospital bed encouraged girls to become engineers. Alain Perreault was president of the Polytechnique Student Association and later presented the student's 560,000-signature gun control petition to Justice Minister Kim Campbell. Heidi Rathjen devoted the next six years of her life to fighting for gun control until the law's adoption in December of 1995

"It is nearly 20 years to the day that a man with a legally acquired rifle entered our school and shot 23 people, including me, Nathalie Provost. Several of our close friends were among the 14 young women who died on December 6th, 1989 at Ecole Polytechnique. Our crime? We were women and we wanted to become engineers. And an angry man was able to easily get access to a legal weapon.

Twenty years after that fateful day, we the survivors and former students would ask that you reflect on how far we have come and how far we have yet to go. The murders sparked renewed interest and commitment to promoting women in engineering and technology, to ending violence against women and to strengthening gun laws. In each case, we have made progress but there is much left to do.

First, following the Montreal massacre the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers issued its groundbreaking report, "More Than Just Numbers" which documented the barriers to young women entering the engineering profession and the chilly climate facing women in engineering in many universities. This sparked a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging women and through the 1990's, the numbers steadily climbed.

However, since 2001, the trend has now reversed and the percentage of women enrolling in engineering programs has declined and while considerable progress has been made with many women breaking through the glass ceiling and many engineering associations addressing harassment and discrimination head on recent research has suggested that women in technology continue to face barriers and in some companies the chilly climate persists.

We would ask you to recommit to addressing these barriers and ensuring all girls have equal opportunities to pursue this great profession.

Second, the tragedy focused national attention on the problems of violence against women and the range of crimes where women are victimized because they are women. December 6th is a National Day of Mourning for Women killed by gender violence. Again, while progress has been made in awareness of this problem and in support of women who are victims of violence, the problem persists. It remains true that 85 percent of female homicide victims are killed by their intimate partners, the people they should be able to most trust and depend on.

We would ask that you renew your commitment to ending violence against women and to addressing the root causes of this global scourge.

Finally, the terrible events of December 6th awakened Canadians to the gaps in our gun laws. The students of Polytechnique, the families of the victims, police, health care professionals, labour organizations, teachers and others banded together in the Coalition for Gun Control. Suzanne Laplante Edward, whose daughter is Anne Marie died that day called the 1995 legislation "A Monument to the Memory of the Victims of the Polytechnique Tragedy". The legislation has proven its effectiveness. It is used thousands of times every day by police across the country. Firearm deaths have declined substantially, and murders of women with guns have plummeted.

Yet, just weeks before the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, the Conservative government, with the help of a number of Liberals and NDP Members of Parliament passed,

legislation to eliminate the requirement to register rifles and shotguns including the Ruger Mini 14, the gun used on that terrible day in 1989. How could this happen? Because the gun lobbyists are highly motivated and active in every electoral riding where the supporters of gun control do little or nothing.

We would, therefore ask that you to take action, that you call your Member of Parliament and demand they stand up for gun control. Lives depend on it.

Indeed, we must all work together to make Canada a safe and more open society."

That is an article, brothers and sisters, from a victim who managed to get out of that school alive and continues to fight for the objectives of gun control.

I remind the delegates and I just had a discussion with Buzz about this that during his tenure there was not a more controversial issue that he had to deal with as the National President when he recommended, in May of 1991, that we support the gun registry which was endorsed by Council and reinforced in April of 1995.

In talking to delegates throughout the hotel, to Council committee meetings, to NEB members, people honestly believe that gun control isn't the answer to the violence because we have good, responsible gun owners. Quebec Director Jean-Pierre Fortin, stood up at the National Executive Board, as Council delegates have in the past and said, "I am a hunter. I'm a gun owner. I have no problem with registering my guns". During this heavy debate on gun control, Allan Rock, as federal minister, was a disaster. He's the guy who introduced the legislation. He's the guy who wasted millions and millions of dollars on the gun registry. But, today, a decade later, everybody, including the Tory party, says the administration is in good hands and everything is running smoothly.

I don't have a recommendation on gun control because we've debated in the past for hours, and hours. In Local 444, when I was the president, I took it to our membership, debated it and our members overwhelmingly supported it.

I am asking delegates here today to recommit ourselves to gun control and the gun registry. It is easier today than it was 10 years ago. All we have to do is convince the New Democratic Party, who on NDP public policy through conventions, support gun control. But, Jack Layton doesn't stand up and say to his party members, the members that you elected in your ridings, to stand up and be counted. This is a confidence vote and the NDP must vote for the gun registry. We have to go after these fights with vigour. Once again this isn't a gun registry that has fear for those that honestly have guns and hunt. This is about having the opportunity to at least enhance and improve the conditions in which we live and especially those of women.

I get incredibly emotional about this but we don't need another Lori Dupont. We don't need another sister of our union to be experiencing domestic violence. What the men have to do is

stand up and be counted. I believe the men in our union can stand up with great pride, with great respect and great determination for their efforts to support the women in our union, and women more generally, and I thank you for that.

PUBLIC SERVICES

I want to deal with public services for a few moments because all governments, provincial and federal, have announced that they are all in debt, that the stimulus money is going to run out and now we have to figure out how to pay the debt. How do governments do that? The governments say that public sector workers were not part of the global recession. They didn't face the same consequences we did in the private sector. They do not face the same insecurities. They have ongoing wage and benefit improvements while others are standing still and rolling back. I have heard that a lot in the last couple of months.

Governments are going to go after health care workers. They are going to go after education workers. They are going to go after not-for-profit organizations. They are going to go after policing. They are going to go after fire prevention. They are going to go after the basic infrastructure. They are going to go after our environmental protection - needs that provide a civil society.

In my recommendation I am reaching out to all of you to talk to our community about governments needing to respect free collective bargaining. Any government that legislates and rolls back wages and conditions of public sector workers is not representing the interests of workers and is not giving the respect and dignity that labour unions deserve in the public sector which includes many members in the CAW today.

We have to educate our community that the debt that we have in each province and in each city cannot be paid back through attacking public services. In fact, it is just the opposite. You've got to provide more security for public sector workers. You've got to enhance their conditions of work. You've got to provide better services as we try to get out of this global recession moving forward because without public sector unionized workers today, we would be in serious trouble.

HARMONIZED SALES TAX (HST)

I want to raise the harmonized sales tax debate. I find it fascinating that in the province of Ontario, PC leader Tim Hudak, a Mike Harris clone, stands up and argues about the harmonized sales tax, takes the Legislature captive, and says he's Mr. Tax Fighter. He is an anti-union, anti-social, anti-collective bargaining guy, and unpredictable. The fact of the matter is he's not doing this because he's going to eliminate the harmonized sales tax when he is in government he's doing

it for political opportunism. He's doing it because it will enhance his position in the polls. We can't buy into this. Neither can my friends in the New Democratic Party. I said to the Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath, "Andrea, the harmonized sales tax, as unpopular as it may be, cannot be an issue from the progressive side. It can't be an issue that makes Ontarians more cynical about taxes. We want to pay taxes. We want a civil society. We want health care. We want education. We want infrastructure. We do not want every Ontarian to think that taxes are bad."

That does not mean the CAW supports the harmonized sales tax in its entirety. Obviously, they've got to give tax credits to seniors, tax credits to lower paid people and should exclude certain things. I have already said to Dalton McGuinty, on the advice of Jim Stanford, that he better not exclude the financial sector which is being contemplated today, because they make a helluva lot of money and should pay taxes for a civil society.

We are arguing about elements of the harmonized sales tax, but brothers and sisters, don't buy into this tax rage because if you do, as progressives, we will be destroyed because you need taxes for a just society, as a society that cares for one another. This union has always taken the position of fair taxation. Fair taxation doesn't mean harmonized sales tax. It doesn't mean PST, it doesn't mean GST. It means a fairer taxation policy.

At the end of the day this is not an issue that the labour movement should take on. We cannot join the Tories. We cannot join those that believe that we're over taxed, because if we believe we're over taxed, the next time you go to hospital, take your credit card. The next time a sewer in your neighbourhood has to be fixed, take your credit card. The next time you want garbage collection, take your credit card. The next time you jump on transit and see the increases that the private sector will develop vs. the public sector, take your credit card.

We've got to continue to fight for good jobs, good wages, pay fair taxes and fight for a civil society through that tax base.

I know there's a lot of controversy on this but the only ones who will have anything to gain will not be Ontarians. Do you know who is going to gain? The Conservative Party. The NDP is never going to get elected on a revolt on taxes. Never. The only ones who are going to benefit as a result of this fightback will be the Tories.

We have to concentrate our energies on jobs, on pensions, on precarious work, on the environment, and on good public services, because if we retreat from this our country and our provinces will be much different.

TRADE DEALS

I want to emphasize the trade deals. People should know there are ongoing negotiations today with Colombia and Korea. All of you should know that we have been able to side track the

Korean Free Trade Deal through this minority government by using the power of the majority. But, the fight continues as Harper continues to talk. Can you imagine he's negotiating with Colombia today. Colombia is a country that has more trade unionists killed each and everyday than any other country in the world. If we were having this Council meeting in Colombia there would be a very good possibility we wouldn't leave the country alive. There's a very good possibility that this Council would possibly not even be taking place in Colombia. We have to fight against trade deals, level the playing field and talk about reciprocal trade.

There's expansion of trade going on with the European Union and I hope people read the paper this morning. You shouldn't be fooled. Stockwell Day says we're going to bargain with the Americans. We're going to get the Americans to change their procurement policy to allow Canadians to bid for that type of work in the United States. So, we're going to negotiate with the Americans and I'm told they've almost concluded their negotiations. How do they conclude negotiations? By opening up procurement for municipalities and provinces where each level of government will lose the power to make decisions on public purchases that preserve jobs for people in our communities, people in our provinces, and people in our country.

We can't buy into this stuff. If anybody in this room believes that the U.S. state governments are going to allow us to bid for their stimulus packages in each state, you're dreaming, because they have already told President Obama that's not in the cards. The stimulus money that's provided to us to generate jobs in our economy is going to be spent in our economy, and that's the position that the Canadian government should take. We have to continue to fight against free trade in every fashion and deal with reciprocal trade, then deal with trade with an element of human rights to make sure that countries like Colombia don't have access to our jobs and access to the values that we find important here in Canada. The question of human rights should be front and centre in terms of international policies with countries that don't have any respect for human rights.

FFAW/CAW

I had a great couple days earlier this week when I joined my colleagues at the FFAW/CAW Convention, under the leadership of president Earle McCurdy and secretary-treasurer Dave Decker, who were both acclaimed to their positions

At the convention this week it was like sitting in Ontario. The fishing industry is experiencing the same crisis we have in the auto industry. This sector is so important to the economy and the workers in that province. In fact, from one coastal community to another, generations of workers have worked in that sector providing a decent standard of living, providing a

decent income for their families. But, the fishing industry is in crisis and the workers have been in crisis because of lack of government support.

I said to the FFAW leadership and rank and file members that if Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams and Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave as much attention to the fishery as has been provided to the auto industry by Ontario and Canada, it could be an industry for the future. When we talk about key industries in the economy, key industries in each province, government has to play a role.

I would like to congratulate Earle, Dave and their whole executive board. I want to congratulate their membership for their discussion and debate on issues important not just to their communities but their country. I look forward to working with the FFAW in the future.

SHIPBUILDING

I visited the shipbuilding yards in Nova Scotia. I walked through the workplace. For the last five or six years we have put on shipbuilding campaigns. We have said that if ships are required by the Canadian government they should be manufactured here in Canada. We put a lot of resources, a lot of time, a lot of energy, and since our last Council, the Canadian government announced that they're going to manufacture ships in Nova Scotia and other provinces, providing more jobs.

Now, how did that happen? We took a real controversial position. Ask Les Holloway. Ask the leadership of Nova Scotia. We supported Green Party leader Elizabeth May in Peter McKay's riding and in a nationally televised debate with him she questioned shipbuilding and forced him to say, on national TV, that the Canadian government will support shipbuilders in this country. As a result of that, we have won some contracts. As I walked through the workplace last week, this is the discussion I remember the most. A young man with 14 years of service walked up to me. He had not been working for a couple of years prior to getting those contracts and said to me, "Ken, I never appreciated the CAW that much. I took the union for granted, but I've seen the fightback and as a result of the work of the national union, as a result of the work of my local union leadership, I am a fourth generation shipbuilding manufacturer that's going to have a job for the next few years because of your work".

This is a victory for our union. This victory could go right across Canada if we establish a procurement policy that talks about Canadian content when it comes to government services. Every time we have a battle we have victories and do we have sacrifices? Yes, but you've got to fight to win and we are winning our share.

CAW FAMILY EDUCATION CENTRE

I want to raise our Family Education Centre in Port Elgin. We have to be honest with each other in this room. We have the largest deficit at our centre in the history of our union. We must maximize our collective efforts. There is no greater power in our union than union education. It provides camaraderie, educational programs such PEL, human rights programs, women's programs. All of the educational opportunities we run are at the heart of our Centre and there has been no delegate who left Port Elgin not feeling good about their union and not feeling encouraged to take on the fight.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, I would ask all local unions to participate fully in the PEL program, load up your student ratio, load up our conferences, educate your members for the future, provide the support that the Centre needs for us to sustain it long term. The Family Education Centre is an incredibly important social institution within our union and we must work incredibly hard and even harder, to maintain that facility. By doing that, we also support the members of CAW Local 2458 who see their hours reduced when we're not utilizing the facility and see the uncertainty that I'm talking about in the hospitality and service industry. I would ask people to participate and support my recommendation.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Last week we saw the retirement of Wayne Samuelson and Irene Harris from the Ontario Federation of Labour. We saw the election of Sid Ryan, Marie Kelly and Terry Downey as the three executive officers. Since passed, at our last CAW Council meeting, the desire of the CAW to go back into the Ontario Federation of Labour, I've talked to most of the leadership in the Province of Ontario who are prepared to reaffiliate to the OFL. We are going to continue that collaboration and we are going to continue that discussion with the objective of reaffiliating.

But, like I said before, we are not reaffiliating just to reaffiliate. We are reaffiliating because we believe the labour movement needs us and we need the labour movement. We need a united front against the attacks on workers in the Province of Ontario. I will continue to work with Sid on common objectives with the expectations of joining the Ontario central labour body to inspire them, to work on behalf of their members and inspire each other to defend the labour movement throughout the province.

ONTARIO HEALTH COALITION

I want to mention the Ontario Health Coalition and the Dan Benedict Award. It is worth raising because Dan Benedict was such an historic man in the CAW and such a wonderful

humanitarian. I am incredibly proud that two of our CAW members were given the Dan Benedict Award. They are Barb Maki from Thunder Bay Local 229, and Anne-Marie MacInnis, from the Sudbury Health Coalition, Local 598. They also recognized several volunteers, including CAW Local 1285 Jim McDowell, for exceptional volunteer contribution.

STAFF RETIREMENTS

It is my honour, as the National President, to thank the following staff members that have retired since our last Council meeting for their contribution to our union. Each and every one of them has spent considerable time representing our members in the workplace and at the National Union. On behalf of the CAW Council, I want to thank them and offer them the very best retirement one could have.

Jim O'Neil, National Secretary-Treasurer.

George Botic, health and safety representative for many years. George has provided so much health and safety support to many of our workplaces throughout the country.

Alex Keeney, who is not only the Windsor Area Director and Ford lead bargainer as staff representative, but in many ways, my personal mentor, my personal friend, and somebody who continues to inspire me each and every day.

John Brady, national representative out of our London office came with a proud history in the rail industry and brought his members to our union and integrated into the culture of our union as good as any staff representative could.

Dan MacPherson, former Chrysler chairperson of the 1090 trim plant, who I had an opportunity to work with, was given an incredible privilege to work for the National Union but did he ever respond with great respect and great pride for our institution.

Munir Khalid has been around for a very long time. Prior to coming on staff he was the longest serving chairperson of McDonnell Douglas. He is a wonderful caring human being.

Richard Fournier, national representative from Quebec.

We recognize you all for your contribution.

STAFF CHANGES

Mike Byrne from CAW Local 1941-Arvin Meritor was appointed to service staff in British Columbia.

Bob Fitzgerald, the President of Council 4000 appointed to service representing rail.

Susan Spratt appointed BC Area Director.

Bill Gibson appointed Kitchener Area Director replacing Steve Farkas. An incredible replacement replacing an incredible man.

Steve Watson has taken on the additional responsibility of the Employee Family Assistance Program. I thank him for taking on the additional responsibilities.

Mike Reuter has taken on the additional responsibilities of Strike Insurance and Recreation, replacing George Botic. I thank Mike for taking on additional work, additional responsibility, in terms of building our union.

Articling students Jennifer MacIlef and Clarissa Waldman in our Legal Department. I want to welcome them to the CAW and hope their experience at the CAW provides a social conscience in their hearts and minds for a lifetime.

GUESTS & NEW MEMBERS

I want recognize some guests from Allied Systems Canada. With a lot of courage and determination, these members who thought that their union was not representing their interests asked if they could join the Canadian Auto Workers Union. When they talked to John Aman, they said, "If the CAW doesn't take us, we are going to decertify, because we'd rather have no union than the one that we have". We said, "You do the leg work and if you want to join our union through the democratic process, we'll take you in because, regardless of the controversy it may create in the labour movement, we would rather have an organized worker than an unorganized worker any day". I want to welcome six courageous young men who put on the campaign and overwhelmingly won the vote. These car haulers and mechanics from Allied Systems Canada and are now joining our union: Brian Chapman, Mark Bordeau, Dan Coatsworth, Rick Reberge, Frank Bernardi and Jack Boudrous. Welcome to CAW Council.

We also have, under the same union again, a group of workers who made the same plea and said "no union or CAW", so I said "if you do the work, same theory. If we do not have to put a lot of resources into this and you guys are determined to do it versus being non-union, then, we will take you in". They are general auto car loaders (GenAuto), and they overwhelmingly voted to join our union. I want to welcome them to their first Council meeting of, I hope, many more Councils, David MacPherson and Brent Seguin. Congratulations on your courageous democratic approach to bringing your members to the Canadian Auto Workers union.

A group of Brinks workers came to us and said the same thing, "We'd like to join your union, a union which represents the interests of its members". Again, the option was to decertify. We said, "That's not an option for progressive trade union values. It's not an option for workers". So, a bunch of courageous workers at Brinks got together from one end of the country to the other and forced a vote. The Canadian Auto Workers democratically won that vote overwhelmingly and this strengthens our union. I would like to welcome here today the Brinks leadership from across the country: Francine Holotuk, Connie Doe Burgess, Joe Meney, Bryan Holst, Sean Murphy, Don

Grills, Craig Hallikainen, Pete Sipidias, Morgan Quinton, Ed Gomez, Justine English, Mike Day, Steve Hartfield, Louis Kovacevich, Joe Schill, Salvatore Cosoleto, and Len Depaolis. This is a large delegation, but the first thing we did as the CAW was to bring in the leadership, and say, "We work for you. You tell us what you need done." We gave them an educational. We inspired them. We talked to them. We gave them our experience; they gave us their experience, and we are going to build a great union together. They represent about 3,000 new members to our union. We hope that their experience in the Canadian Auto Workers Union builds confidence and pride in their membership as our members have in us today. You are going to strengthen our union through your participation and activity in our union. Together, we will build the best collective force for all workers in every sector of the economy.

We have a brave guest from Casino Niagara where we have been battling away. We are inching closer and closer but the anti-union tactics of the employer are significant. Still, we are doing well. I would like to welcome to the CAW Council a representative of Casino Niagara, Romel Argueta.

ORDER OF CANADA – BUZZ HARGROVE

The CAW had a proud moment on November 5th: Buzz Hargrove, our former National President was awarded the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour which was created in Canada's centennial year 1967. It recognizes lifetime achievements and dedication of outstanding Canadians. Over the past 40 years there have been more than 5,000 inductees.

The announcement was made in July by Governor-General Michaëlle Jean, and I immediately called Buzz to congratulate him. He was one of 35 recipients. I actually thought I was going to take the entire CAW leadership to the award ceremony, but he was limited to who he could invite. I watched Buzz being interviewed and he paid credit to his union for the ability to act as a national leader in the interest of national issues, a leader that was given the latitude by his union to work on behalf of all Canadians. He was awarded for that. I would like to show the video of the ceremony: we couldn't go there, so I brought it here.

CAW CONNECTED

I want to announce an important initiative which we can now do because of improved technology. It can bring together local unions and households. A lot of people credit the election of Barack Obama to his ability to attract Americans because of his enthusiasm and because he inspires people but also because he used the technology that was available to him like no other presidential candidate had. Before him, it was the Howard Dean campaign during the Democratic primaries which used that technology. I asked the staff why is it that when a provincial, municipal

or federal election is called that we cannot get out to our members in those particular ridings, in each riding in the country, through technology? How do we get people campaigning immediately through technology?

Under the leadership of Communications Director Shannon Devine, our technical group and others, staff members have been working hard to bring you CAW Connected. It is a database that includes e-mail and postal codes of CAW members right across the country. We can send out messages according to federal electoral ridings and some provincial ridings. If we do this right, we could actually talk to our members in each constituency where we can make a difference. We all have to participate. I encourage you to sign up to this initiative. It is one more opportunity for us to reach out to our members and our leadership and to reach out to the democratic processes. We have to. We have to use our political influence to get people elected who will have an influence on the values that we hold dear. I thank everybody for their support.

CAW: A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

A number of our CAW support staff members, Michele Savage, Deborah Bissett, Sally Gilbert, are dealing with medical issues. They would prefer to be at work providing services to our union, being inspired by our union and providing a good standard of living for their families rather than dealing with medical challenges. I would ask all of us to think about these support staff. We have national representative Ken Taylor, in Nova Scotia who just went through major surgery. I would ask us all to think about him. Eric John, from the retired workers advisory, who has contributed over 50-60 years of trade union leadership in Local 200, with the retirees' chapter is very ill in hospital. Len Harrison is recovering very well from surgery.

Brothers and sisters, as we enter the Christmas festive season, we should think about the homelessness that continues in this city. Please continue to think about the unemployed, the under employed, those with disabilities, those who are most vulnerable and those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. We are the social conscience of Canada. We are committed to those who require a voice and require our support.

I would ask you, as you go into the Christmas festive season, to love your family, love those that you may have ignored during the last year, fight for this union, defend the interests of your members, and provide for a better nation and a better world. There will always be people who need the voice of the CAW. I thank all of you for your attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO CAW COUNCIL DECEMBER 4-6, 2009

1. I recommend that CAW activists work hard to oppose the new free trade agreements being proposed by the Harper government, including stopping the trade deals with Colombia and Korea, and the proposed free trade deal with the European Union which would further undermine Canada's potential for producing high-value products.
2. I recommend that provincial and municipal politicians speak out in defense of their right to continue imposing minimum strong Canadian content restrictions in their procurement purchases. In particular, we must not allow the Harper government to water down our procurement rights, through their proposed new deal with the U.S. which will not exempt Canada from Buy America provisions, but which will tie the hands of our own provincial and municipal governments for decades to come.
3. I recommend that the CAW fully support the CLC campaign to double the CPP benefit levels over a seven-year period.
4. I recommend that we increase our efforts to fight against precarious work. The expansion of bad jobs threatens the security of our families, the fabric of our communities, our hopes for a better economic future. A real recovery depends on our success in fighting for good jobs. I urge delegates to support the resolution on precarious work.
5. I recommend that on the 20th Anniversary of the tragic Ecole Polytechnique massacre where our nation saw 14 women separated from the men and killed because they were women, we reinforce our commitment to end violence against women. We must continue to press for decent work, affordable housing and strong social programs so that no one is forced to stay in an abusive relationship for financial reasons.

6. I recommend that the CAW council delegates, leadership and activists continue to support good public service jobs enhancing the very important public services they provide in every region of the country. I further recommend that we reinforce the CAW position of free collective bargaining vs. government utilizing the power of government to impose changes to collective agreements.

7. I recommend that CAW Council support ongoing efforts of labour unions, environmental and Indigenous organizations and civil society groups who are calling on world leaders, and specifically the Harper government, to negotiate an aggressive and legally binding international climate treaty at this year's UN climate conference in Copenhagen that is fair, just and equitable, includes hard emissions reduction targets as well as language that supports just transition programs for impacted workers.

I also recommend that all CAW local unions continue to work in coalition with other progressive organizations who aim to protect the natural environment, fight global climate change and promote healthy, sustainable and good green jobs in our communities.

I further recommend that we continue to advocate for sector-based strategies that enable workers to play an active role in greening their workplaces, industries and strengthening their communities, through bargaining and political activism.

8. I recommend and encourage CAW local unions utilize the educational opportunities provided through the programs delivered at the CAW Port Elgin Education Centre to their highest potential.