

CAW - Canada / General Motors

BARGAINING REPORT

Highlights of the Tentative Restructuring Agreement between CAW-Canada and General Motors

Production and Skilled Trades

HIGHLIGHTS

- Safeguards Pension Plan
- Preserves Retirees Health Care Benefits
- Production commitments in Oshawa and St. Catharines
- Preserves the Canadian investment advantage



DEFENDING OUR MEMBERS THROUGH AN INCREDIBLE CRISIS

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

In our decades of experience as trade unionists, we have never lived through an experience like our emergency 2009 bargaining with General Motors.

The pressure on our union was incredible. The company would already be bankrupt, if it weren't for government support on both sides of the border. But that support came with a price – in this case, an incredible series of demands for huge concessions from the workers.

We didn't cause this crisis. We didn't cause the global financial meltdown, the credit freeze, or the recession. We didn't sign the free trade deals that allowed imports to conquer our markets – with no ability to export back the other way.

Our labour accounts for 7% of the cost of producing vehicles. Yet we got 99% of the blame for the automakers woes. You

heard it: the call-in shows, the editorials, the conversations in donut shops.

That mean-spirited public stereotype is dead wrong. Canada's autoworkers are a great asset to this country. We are productive. We are innovative.

Bargaining with GM this time around was unlike any previous round of negotiations we have had. Government has been a key player at the table, and kept shifting the goalposts through this process. Every time we got close to a deal, we were confronted with a new demand.

After all, CAW members at GM just ratified a cost-saving deal with the company in March. U.S. President Obama then ripped up the GM restructuring plan, and our governments followed. They demanded more concessions.

And then the goalposts moved ever further. For example, on the morning

of May 16 we initialed agreements with GM on all issues except one: pensions. That same afternoon, government officials demanded much more in pension and retiree health concessions, after we had already reached the overall deal.

Faced with such offensive interference at the bargaining table, it was tempting to just walk away. But we never lost sight of our overarching goal: to do whatever we could to keep this company in business. That was our responsibility to the more than 25,000 retirees, and 9,000 active members and their families. If GM had liquidated, our pensioners would get only 39 cents on the dollar and lose their health benefits altogether. Our active members would lose their jobs. Families and communities would be destroyed.

continued on page 7