

Union Leader Demands: Workers must increase wage disparity to ensure success of auto companies -- William Satire --ABS Wire Service Update-- June 8, 2010

United Auto Workers' soon to be coronated President, Bob King, said that workers each gave up \$7,000 to \$30,000 per year in concessions to General Motors Co., Ford Motor Co., and Chrysler Group LLC.

King said workers should share in the profits if the auto industry recovers. But he also wants to make sure Detroit automakers stay competitive and that means workers must increase wage disparity with nonunion autoworkers.

"We have to lead in the race to the bottom," King said. "It's the only way to share in the profits."

The union's health care trust is loaded with shares of company stock.

Union members, he said, helped all three automakers make the companies more competitive by undercutting the wages of nonunion workers.

"We really packed the cannon with new hire fodder in 2007 and we won't hesitate to fodderize the new hires again," King said. "What the hell, they can't vote."

Often after a crisis passes, management forgets about how they reached into workers' pockets to pad their own wallets, King told an auto industry conference at the Detroit branch of the Federal Reserve Bank who laughed heartily at the offhand analogy to controlling inflation by manipulating the unemployment rate.

If U.S. auto sales return to pre-recession levels, King said all three will see "astronomical" profits.

"That should mean we can afford to close more auto plants and concentrate on organizing more casinos to replace the lost membership," King told the crowd of speculators who run with the Federal Reserve.

Equality of sacrifice means equality of gain, which translates into "more skilled autoworkers learning how to repair slot machines," he told the group.

It's our responsibility to make sure that in that turnaround, our members are treated fairly, King said.

"We deserve first shot at the slots."

King would not talk about the possibility of further concessions next year, but he reiterated that he is confident the UAW will "fodderize" the new hires and "backhoe" the retirees again since neither group can vote on the contract.

"We can pretty much exercise a free hand with new hires and retirees, but all concessions will be democratically selected by those least affected," King said. Federal Reserve members nodded knowingly.

King affirmed his commitment to the corporate agenda.

"The UAW's toughest challenge," he cautioned, "is making sure the automakers' fixed costs are competitive globally."

That means undercutting the Chinese in labor costs and sabotaging Mexican unions.

"Thank God we have an ample supply of new hires and retirees," King said.

Union workers will not have job security, King said, if we can't transform more auto companies into casinos.

"Let's face it," King pontificated. "America has always been the land of opportunism. The future is a gamble and the UAW intends to have a finger in every pot and a thumb on every slot."

King insisted that "Pattern Bargaining will win the race to the bottom and thus there will be no need for a strike vote during my administration."

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and their investment partners gave King a standing ovation before showing him out the back door.