

Bad News For The Brotherhood, cont.

But why would such a powerful union leader wish to make these changes that are so against what our unions were built for? It is because Douglas McCarron and all of his representatives believe first and foremost that their obligation is to the big contractors and their profits. McCarron asks them what they want union labor to do for them, and works his hardest to provide it, despite its cost to us in working conditions and employment. In the last issue of Carpenter Magazine he says this very openly to the contractors he was addressing during the General Carpentry Leadership Conference:

“That is what we want to build with you: a sound business relationship. Our job is to make sure that our members are equipped to do the work, with the best skill and productivity in the industry.”

Throughout the issue, contractors line up to voice their approval of this approach, and why not? More productivity and harder work keeps the bottom line growing. As if we needed to have this pointed out, contractor Keith Henderson reminds us with the help of our own magazine, “The bottom line is we’ve got to make money.” Thanks Keith, we’ll all do our best.

Many years ago this selling out your union members used to have a name: BUSINESS UNIONISM. Its proponents were taken up by the labor movement as a whole and thrown to the ground. Very often they were afraid for their physical safety as workers confronted their challenge to our wages and working conditions without apology.

Today it is just business as usual in the UBC, and unfortunately, will get worse until it is opposed. But this does not make a carpenter anti-union, it makes them a valuable friend to all of us in the trade. McCarron’s campaigning for George Bush is only part of his efforts to work with big business and their counterparts in the Republican Party. He will continue in these campaigns and ideas until we take him up on his “Vision Of Change” for the Brotherhood. As we all know in the trade – the bosses do not often leave well enough alone.

But what can be done? We need to organize in the membership to make our leaders hear our voice and reflect the advances needed for a true union, one that fights tooth and nail for its membership. George Bush and the policies that he embraces need to be openly confronted. NAFTA needs to be eliminated. Labor everywhere needs employment, living wages, and a secure retirement. Health care has to be given to the people that do the work for our country, without fear of its removal for lack of hours. What we need is a counter offensive.

Here in Chicago Carpenters For A Rank And File Union is working to effect these changes and to return the union to its original strength. We need your help and ideas. It is not an easy task - that is without doubt. It is, however, the only way to turn so much bad news into something we can all be proud of. Contact us. Get to our meetings and the meetings of your local. Raise your hand and raise your voice. This is a kind of productivity that your union truly needs and one that will be reflected in wages, work and benefits, not the bottom line of the bosses.

MCCARRON ON WORK JURISDICTION:

You (THE CONTRACTORS) need the freedom to assign the work based on what makes sense, what makes all of us competitive on the job. If there’s a dispute, let the owner settle it. It’s his money and his job. Surely, we’ve learned that much... We’re serious about reorganizing the industry. We’re serious about customer service.”

- Speaking to the National Erectors Association, 2001

RALLY FOR RETIREMENT AND CARPENTERS RIGHTS!

Where: Chicago District Council of Carpenters and Joiners 12 E. Erie St. Chicago

When: May District Council Delegate Meeting - Thursday, May 6th, 6:00 P.M.

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