

Chrysler, Keller and the Union

1937 – 1951

Doug Fraser retired President, United Auto Workers, Oral History Interview:

By the time I came to work at Chrysler, Walter P. Chrysler had retired. But I heard from some of the older people that there was a great respect for him. The industry was different then. Later on the accountants took over. But there was a guy who was innovative, who was a mechanic.

With K. T. Keller, I think people looked upon him as a sort of Prussian general. He was a tough guy.

Even after the union was organized at Chrysler, these guys kept a very tight rein on what we could bargain for. They didn't even want to bargain on pension benefits. They wanted to negotiate only on wages and hours of employment.

Keller was of that school. He wasn't alone. There were a lot of people like him. They were authoritarian. They were dictatorial. That doesn't mean they were bad people. That's just how they thought management should be. Managers manage without question.