



When we are united, we are unstoppable

CUPE newsletter: Canada's largest union must not be isolated, and needs to increase its work reaching out to other Canadians. This was the message today from Paul Moist, national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Moist addressed over 2,500 delegate and guests at the 25th CUPE National Convention, being held this week at the Vancouver Convention Centre. CUPE represents over 610,000 workers across the country, primarily in the public services such as health care, municipal workers, social services, childcare and long-term care.

"We gather this week to debate, to plan, to strengthen our unity and to speak truth to power," said Moist. "We are proud public employees and we will fight to defend quality public services, trade union rights, and build a better world for all workers."

The biggest challenge ahead for CUPE and the entire Canadian labour movement, said Moist, is the Harper Conservative government. He specifically cited the recent government intervention in the negotiations between Air Canada and its 6,800 flight attendants, who are CUPE members.

"Lisa Raitt, you are supposed to be the Minister of Labour, not the Minister of Employers," said Moist. "These actions destroy free collective bargaining rights. They are more than a signal; they are a clear message to employers that the federal government is on their side."

Moist went on to say CUPE members won't be intimidated by the Harper Conservatives, and that the union must work with other Canadians who share its goals and values.

"We cannot allow Harper to place us in a box, playing to Canadians' fears by calling us a privileged class, trying to isolate us," said Moist. "We are workers and our lot in life is tied with that of other workers, of students, of the poor, and other marginalized citizens. When we unite with other citizens, who share our vision, we are an unstoppable force for good."

CUPE's national convention continues until Friday. Key note speakers include Distinguished Visiting Professor at Ryerson University Stephen Lewis, Federal NDP interim Leader Nycole Turmel, and Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow. A complete schedule and more convention information is available at cupe.ca/convention.

October 31, 2011

