

Speech before the Algonquin First Nations Rally, December 13, 2010

Algonquin's of Barrier Lake – Tanishay,

Firstly – I would like to thank the elders and the Algonquin People for allowing the event and for giving me permission to speak on unceded Algonquin territory.

My name is Don Moran – I have roots to Muscowpetung band in Saskatchewan. I am here representing the close to 700,000 workers of the Canadian Union of Public Employees – the largest public union in Canada. I am a senior officer in CUPE.

We do an aboriginal awareness educational within CUPE and find the importance in stressing treaties and agreements between Aboriginal and the federal and provincial governments. When we do an agreement between the employers and us – we have the ability to take them to court and police these agreements.

Our members get mobilized when agreements are not followed or where we get frustrated with an employer - we are prepared to back our words and go on a full out right strike.

Our members understand when Barrier Lake Algonquin's rejected a Comprehensive land claims approach, and chose instead to sign a conservation plan called the Trilateral Agreement that this indeed is similar to our agreements and commits both parties to follow these rules.

So we support and commend you for rallying and protesting against the arbitrary decisions of the federal government.

As other speakers have mentioned with the federal government utilizing section 74 of the Indian Act and forcing a government on barrier Lake, and not following the trilateral agreement - it is CUPE's position that the Harper government is violating the Canadian Constitution, which protects the Aboriginal right to self-government.

We also believe they are violating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, even though they have now endorsed it.

We believe the current government has no commitment to First Peoples – oh – they can show us lots of examples of band aid solutions – but what about the other failures – what about the missing aboriginal women – the housing conditions –the water – the wellness - the justice issues - what about the Kelowna accord – I can go on and on – when it comes to first peoples - this government fails – and we must do something about it.

We assert - we will make efforts in making barrier lake Algonquin issues - our priority, and will utilize CUPE resources to support initiatives -to make a better future a reality for barrier Lake Algonquin's.

I have to say that this fight is not over – so there may be more rallies and protest so I encourage everyone to be vigilant – so in my mother's tongue (which is the Métis michif language) I say to you:

Marse ma seur and mon frayr ekipay etoty ekk (thank you my sisters and brothers).

Don Moran