

Prosper



initiate





connect

imagine





In 1998, the governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation initialled the Nisga'a Final Agreement, British Columbia's first modern treaty. The Nisga'a Final Agreement sets out Nisga'a Lands and the Nisga'a people's right to self-government. The effective date of the treaty, May 11, 2000, marked the beginning of an evolution in governance, economic development, and cultural awareness within the Nisga'a Nation.

This report summarises the activities of the parties in the implementation of the Nisga'a Final Agreement from April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.



How do you measure the worth of a people?

GDP? Productivity? Debt-equity ratio? Communities around the world are beginning to question the criteria for success imposed by outsiders. They have developed their own ways of measuring the wealth, health, and well-being of their people. Unless “success” is defined by those who seek it, it will remain an illusive goal, an objective devised and judged by someone else, far removed.

Long before European colonisation, the Nisga'a people had developed an elaborate society based on communal responsibility. The Nisga'a people succeeded or suffered as a whole. Their economy was based on natural resources and they relied upon complex trading relationships with their neighbours. Now, through the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a people are once again defining themselves by their own

standards and measuring success by their own criteria. What is prosperity? Is it wealth? Health? Knowledge? Culture? What tools are required to secure it? In order for a people to prosper, they must define who they are, where they want to go, and how they plan to get there.

A Model for Development

The Nisga'a Nation is working to support traditional culture, to cultivate new ways of economic and entrepreneurial thinking, and to establish the basis for a diversified and sustainable economy. In support of this goal, Nisga'a government is exploring partnership opportunities in fisheries, forestry, eco-tourism, hydroelectricity, and other areas. Nisga'a government is recruiting experienced business leaders to mentor and guide business development, and to help create



a ten-year strategic plan that will set direction and identify the skills and training required for success. Throughout this process, care is taken to ensure the separation of political decision-making and business operations. Together with its partners in the governments of British Columbia and Canada, the Nisga'a Nation is redefining its economic potential.

The second year of implementation of the Nisga'a Final Agreement saw the building of economic capacity and infrastructure, the growth of opportunities and partnerships, and investment in sustainability for future generations. As the Nisga'a Nation explores new ways of ensuring its economic prosperity, it will continue to enrich the lives of its people in traditional ways — ways which cannot be quantified by the exchange of capital.



Bertha Stevens, 82
Killer Whale clan

Matriarch, Laxgalt'sap.
Interviewed at New Aiyansh
Recreation Centre.

This settlement feast is a memorial to the deceased. It helps pay for expenses and gives money back to the community. It's our way of taking care of each other. It's called *yukw*, which means *feast*. We matriarchs are the cooks. Bull cooks, our young men, do all the heavy lifting. They have to do what we tell them. We're working for our brother's three sons who are hosting the feast. We are following the culture our forefathers left us. Matriarchs baby-sit the culture. This is how it is passed down to a younger generation.

This memorial is like lighting the fire in the Chief's house again. Like the old people say, "They are beginning to see the light through their sorrow." When their mother passed away, there was no light left in their home. There is no light during the time the person dies and the body lies in state. Tonight, they are beginning to see the light. People will talk to them, encourage them. They will share a meal with the community and all the people who will come.

After the meal, there will be a bowl on the table. First the widower brings forward what money he has and puts it into the bowl, the common bowl. Then the rest

of the Wolf tribe give their support for paying expenses. After the Wolf tribe, we will all walk up. Then they distribute the money. It goes to the undertakers, the hall, the cooks, churches, choirs... the community. When all the money is redistributed, they will announce that the bowl is empty.

Nobody leaves until they have eaten four bowls of Nisga'a stew. We say *Haagwil di txoock-wsim'*, which means *eat slowly*. Don't leave until the feast is over. They will tell you when the feast is over.

"This memorial is like lighting the fire in the Chief's house again. Like the old people say, 'They are beginning to see the light through their sorrow.'"