

Self Government — The Nisga'a Experience

Speaking Notes for Edmond Wright
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Speaking Truth to Power III

March 14 – 15, 2002

Self Government: Options and Opportunities



**BC Treaty
Commission**

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Before the Arrival of the Europeans

The Nisga'a Nation exclusively possessed and occupied the Nisga'a Traditional Territory in the Nass Valley in northwestern British Columbia. We share a common language and culture. Nisga'a individuals and families belong to a tribe (Pdeek) - Eagle, Killerwhale, Raven and Wolf. As a member of a particular tribe, every Nisga'a belongs to a tribal house (Wilp). The Nisga'a Traditional Territory is divided into forty traditional domains (Ango'oskw) owned by sixty houses (Huuwilp). The traditional authority and ability to govern ourselves originates from the attachment to our land and natural resources, and the connection of families and communities to our traditional lands.

The Colony of British Columbia / The Establishment of the Indian Act

Although the Nisga'a Nation had first contact with European explorers at the mouth of the Nass River in the late 1700's, the effect of the newcomers was not felt by the Nisga'a until the establishment of the Colony of British Columbia, the Indian Act was enacted, and government surveyors started the formation of Indian Reserves. It was very alarming for the Nisga'a to be informed that the government was going to give them small parcels of land that had always belonged to them.

Nisga'a Land Question

The first Nisga'a delegation to protest the new arrangements travelled to Victoria in 1881. In 1886, Nisga'a Chiefs from Gitlakdamix removed surveyors from the upper Nass River area, and started the discussion on how to resolve the Nisga'a Land Question. Nisga'a and Tsimshian Chiefs travelled to Victoria to discuss the outstanding Land Question with Premier William Smithe in 1887.

The Nisga'a Nation established the Nisga'a Land Committee in 1890. In the discussions of the Chiefs, it was decided that in order to gain strength in their positions to resolve the land question, Chiefs would pool their traditional domains (Ango'oskw) into tribal ownership of the traditional territory. Nisga'a Chiefs were aware of the contents of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, had accepted the sovereignty of the Crown, and were prepared to take a moderate and reasonable position in the aboriginal rights they claimed. The Nisga'a position and description of the Nisga'a Traditional Territory formed the 1913 Nisga'a Petition to His Majesty's Privy Council.

Nisga'a Tribal Council

In 1949, Frank Calder was elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly in British Columbia. Mr. Calder was the first aboriginal elected in the provincial legislature. Through discussions with other Nisga'a leaders, Mr. Calder initiated in 1955, the establishment of the Nisga'a Tribal Council to play the role of the former Nisga'a Land Committee in resolving the Nisga'a Land Question.

At the conventions of the Nisga'a Tribal Council, authorization was given by the Nisga'a Nation to seek a declaration in the Supreme Court of British Columbia that the Nisga'a Nation had aboriginal title to the land and that their title had never been extinguished. The Nisga'a failed in the courts in British Columbia, therefore appealed in the Supreme Court of Canada. In 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Nisga'a held aboriginal title before the coming of the settlers, but the judges split 3-3 on the question of whether aboriginal title continued to exist. The seventh judge ruled against based on a technicality that the Nisga'a had not obtained a fiat.

After the federal government recognized that land claims had to be negotiated, they adopted a comprehensive land claims policy, and on January 12, 1976, Canada and British Columbia joined the Nisga'a Tribal Council in New Aiyansh to start the process of negotiating a resolution to the Nisga'a Land Question.

Soon after the initial session, British Columbia declared that they were observers at the Nisga'a table.

Finally in 1990, British Columbia rejoined the Nisga'a negotiations. When the Nisga'a entered into a tripartite negotiation framework agreement with B.C. and Canada, we already had negotiation instructions that were 77 years old, that is the statement in our 1913 Petition.



Tripartite Negotiations

Shortly before the 39th Annual Assembly of the Nisga'a Nation, on March 22, 1996 Canada, British Columbia and the Nisga'a Tribal Council signed the Nisga'a Agreement in Principle.

As we were in the process of completing details of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, on December 11, 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its decision on *Delgamuukw*. The Court expressed its view on aboriginal title, its protection by section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, what is required for its proof, and how it may be extinguished. Within its ruling, the court set out the test for converting aboriginal lands into use for economic development purposes. The *Delgamuukw* decision caused some delays in negotiations as everyone reviewed implications of ruling on existing treaty negotiations.

On August 4, 1998, the Nisga'a Final Agreement was initialled by Canada, British Columbia and the Nisga'a Nation in New Aiyansh.

The Nisga'a Final Agreement — Certainty

Up until the initialling of the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Tribal Council had held forty one (41) Annual Assemblies of the Nisga'a Nation. Each annual gathering reaffirmed the acceptable terms for the resolution of the Nisga'a Land Question. The mandate of the negotiators was that the agreement had to be just and honourable, sustainable economically, that it respect our Common Bowl Philosophy, and that it include the inherent right to self government. The Nisga'a mandate also was clear that we would not extinguish or surrender our aboriginal title and aboriginal rights.

The model that Canada had used in the past was that the aboriginal nation had to surrender and extinguish their title and rights, and in return they would be granted crown title and rights.

To the negotiators, the mandate meant that we had to negotiate to have outright ownership of lands and resources, access to resources in the whole of the Nisga'a Traditional Territory, economic opportunities in all parts of our territory, cash, and the right to self government.

In the agreement, the Nisga'a Nation agreed that their aboriginal rights, including aboriginal title, as they existed anywhere in Canada before the effective date, including their attributes and geographic extent, are modified, and continue as modified, as set out in the agreement.

Lands and Resources

The Nisga'a Nation now own three categories of land.

- Nisga'a Lands - 1996.4 sq. km
 - Original fee simple title
 - Nisga'a ownership of all mineral resources

- Category "A" Lands - 25 sq. km.
 - 18 parcels of land
 - Nisga'a ownership of all mineral resources
 - Provincial crown fee simple title

- Category "B" Lands - 2.5 sq. km.
 - 15 parcels of land
 - Provincial crown ownership of all mineral resources
 - Provincial crown fee simple title

Other parcels of provincial crown land were purchased by the Nisga'a Nation and various village corporations before the Nisga'a Final Agreement was signed.



As directed by our membership, the Nisga'a Nation owns:

- Nisga'a Lands and Category "A" & "B" Lands
- All mineral resources on or under Nisga'a Lands; and
- All forest resources on Nisga'a Lands.

The legislative house of Nisga'a Government has developed land acts that will accommodate progressive land holdings that start with a Nisga'a Village Entitlement, then to a Nisga'a Nation Entitlement, and then may raise title in the provincial land registry system. Our land registry system allows for dispositions such as leases, easements, licences of occupation, rights of way, etc.

The Nisga'a Nation was able to acquire two water reservations. The Nisga'a Water Reservation of 300,000 decametres of water per year for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. We also have a Nisga'a Hydro Power Reservation, for 20 years after the effective date, of all the unrecorded waters of all streams, other than the Nass River, that are wholly or partially within Nisga'a Lands.

Nisga'a fishing rights can be exercised in the whole of the Nisga'a Traditional Territory and the marine waters of Portland Canal and Observatory Inlet. The fishing area is known as the Nass Area that encompasses 26,838 sq. km.

The Nisga'a fish entitlements are held by the Nisga'a Nation, and the nation has the right to sell Nass salmon harvested in accordance with the Agreement.

The Nisga'a Fisheries Management Program was in place well before our Agreement in Principle was reached. Nisga'a data is used by Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Co-management with DFO of the fisheries is well established.

Canada and the Nisga'a Nation have joined to create the Lisims Fisheries Conservation Trust. Canada contributed \$10 million and the Nisga'a Nation contributed \$3 million to the Trust. Three Trustees are overseeing the Trust. One selected by Canada, one selected by the Nisga'a, and a third jointly selected by Canada and Nisga'a.

British Columbia and Canada each provided funding for Nisga'a participation in the general commercial fishery. Each government contributed \$5.75 million, for a total of \$11.50 million to enable the Nisga'a Nation to increase its capacity in the commercial fishery.

Hunting rights can be exercised in the Nass Wildlife Area that encompasses 16,101 sq. km. Designated species presently include harvesting of moose, mountain goat, and grizzly bear. Holders of traplines both outside and on Nisga'a Lands will continue to exercise their trapping rights in accordance with federal and provincial laws of general application. The Nisga'a Nation also have been given access to a Commercial Recreation Tenure in various areas of the Nisga'a Traditional Territory. We also presently own a fishing lodge known as Wilp Sy'oon Wilderness Lodge.

Existing forest licences have been allowed a five year transition period to phase themselves out of Nisga'a lands. During the transition period, the aggregate volume of timber to be harvested is 725,000 m³, of which 476,580 m³ must be contracted with Nisga'a Logging Contractors.

Also, for a five year transition period, former Indian Reserves can be harvested under Indian Timber Regulations.

Pine mushroom harvesting each fall continues to be a large contributor to the Nisga'a economy.

Capital Transfer

The cash component of the Nisga'a Final Agreement is called the Capital Transfer. The amount agreed to is \$190 million, to be paid to the Nisga'a Nation over a fifteen year period. We have also borrowed \$50 million and agreed to repay the loan over a fifteen year period. The amounts are as follows:

Capital Transfer	\$190, 0000	\$280, 585, 307.40
Loan Repayment	\$50, 0000	\$84, 378, 757.08
Net Amount		\$196, 206, 550.32



The Nisga'a Nation has established the Nisga'a Settlement Trust and have committed that 50% of net amount of the Capital Transfer will remain in Settlement Trust for future Nisga'a generations.

Nisga'a Government

The Nisga'a Nation has the right to self-government, and the authority to make laws, as set out in the Nisga'a Final Agreement.

The Nisga'a Nation and each Nisga'a Village are separate and distinct legal entities. They act through Nisga'a Lisims Government and the Nisga'a Village Governments, respectively.

Nisga'a Constitution

The Nisga'a Nation must have a Nisga'a Constitution, consistent with the Agreement, which, among other things:

- provides that the Agreement sets out the authority of Nisga'a Government to make laws;
- provides for the role of the Nisga'a elders, Simgigat and Sigidimhaanak, in providing guidance and interpretation of the Ayuuk to Nisga'a Government;
- provides that in the event of an inconsistency or conflict between the Nisga'a Constitution and the provisions of any Nisga'a law, the Nisga'a law is, to the extent of the inconsistency or conflict, of no force or effect;
- requires that Nisga'a Government be democratically accountable to Nisga'a citizens, and, in particular, that elections be held at least every five years, and that all Nisga'a citizens are eligible to vote and to hold office;
- requires a system of financial administration and financial accountability comparable to standards generally accepted for governments in Canada;
- provides that every Nisga'a participant who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada is entitled to be a Nisga'a citizen.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the Nisga'a Nation, subject only to:

- the Constitution of Canada, and
- the Nisga'a Treaty, which sets out the authority of Nisga'a Government to make laws

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to Nisga'a Government in respect of all matters within its authority, bearing in mind the free and democratic nature of Nisga'a Government.

Nisga'a Government Jurisdiction and Relationship of Laws

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, Nisga'a Government has no exclusive jurisdiction. Nisga'a jurisdiction is always concurrent with federal or provincial jurisdiction. This means that for every Nisga'a law there is the possibility, if not the likelihood, that there is a federal or provincial law that deals with the same subject matter. Therefore it is necessary to include a rule that determines which law prevails if there is an inconsistency or conflict.

Generally, Nisga'a laws prevail when those laws deal with matters that are internal to the Nisga'a Nation, integral to their distinct culture or essential to the operation of their government or the exercise of their other treaty rights.

In some cases, Nisga'a laws must comply with provincial standards in order to be valid. If those standards are met or exceeded, then Nisga'a laws prevail.

In other cases, Canada, British Columbia and the Nisga'a Nation agreed that, while Nisga'a Government should have the authority to make laws, if there is a conflict, federal or provincial laws should prevail.

Finally, there are many subject matters over which Nisga'a Government has no jurisdiction.



Subject matters listed in the Nisga'a Government Chapter — Nisga'a laws prevail

Administration, management and operation of Nisga'a Government

Creation, continuation, amalgamation, dissolution, naming or renaming of Nisga'a Villages on Nisga'a Lands, and Nisga'a Urban Locals

Nisga'a citizenship

Preservation, promotion and development of Nisga'a language and Nisga'a culture

Use, management, possession, disposition of Nisga'a Lands owned by the Nisga'a Nation, a Nisga'a Village or a Nisga'a Corporation and similar matters relating to the property interests of the Nisga'a Nation, Nisga'a Villages and Nisga'a Corporations in Nisga'a Lands

Use, management, planning, zoning, development and similar matters related to the regulation and administration of Nisga'a Lands, including establishment of a land title or land registry system, designation of Nisga'a Lands

Use, possession, management and similar matters relating to the property interests of the Nisga'a Nation, Nisga'a Villages and Nisga'a Corporations in their assets other than real property on Nisga'a Lands

Organization and structure for the delivery of health services on Nisga'a Lands

Authorization or licensing of aboriginal healers on Nisga'a Lands, including measures in respect of competence, ethics and quality of practice that are reasonably required to protect the public

Child and family services on Nisga'a Lands, if Nisga'a laws include standards comparable to provincial standards intended to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families

Adoption of Nisga'a children, if Nisga'a laws expressly provide that the best interests of the child is the paramount consideration and that British Columbia and Canada are provided with records of all adoptions occurring under Nisga'a laws

Pre-school to grade 12 education on Nisga'a Lands of Nisga'a children, if Nisga'a laws include provisions for curriculum, examination and other standards that permit transfers between school systems, and for appropriate certification of teachers

Post-secondary education within Nisga'a Lands, if Nisga'a laws include standards comparable to provincial standards in respect of matters such as institutional structure and accountability, admission and curriculum standards

Devolution of cultural property (ceremonial regalia and similar property associated with a Nisga'a clan and other personal property having cultural significance to the Nisga'a Nation) of a Nisga'a citizen who dies intestate

Subject matters listed in Nisga'a Government Chapter — federal or provincial laws prevail

Use, possession and management of assets located off of Nisga'a Lands, of the Nisga'a Nation, Nisga'a Villages or Nisga'a Corporations

Public order, peace and safety on Nisga'a Lands

Regulation of traffic and transportation on Nisga'a Roads

Solemnization of marriages

Provision of social services by Nisga'a Government to Nisga'a citizens

Health services on Nisga'a Lands

Prohibition of, and the terms and conditions for, the sale, exchange, possession or consumption of intoxicants on Nisga'a Lands

Emergency preparedness



Subject matters listed in other chapters — Nisga'a law prevails

Timber resources and non-timber forest resources on Nisga'a Lands, if Nisga'a laws meet or exceed provincial standards (subject to transitional provisions)

Nisga'a Nation's rights and obligations in respect of fish and aquatic plants under the Final Agreement, if Nisga'a laws are consistent with this Agreement and the harvest Agreement and are not inconsistent with Nisga'a annual fishing plans approved by the Minister

Nisga'a Nation's rights and obligations in respect of wildlife and migratory birds under the Final Agreement, if Nisga'a laws are consistent with this Agreement and are not inconsistent with the annual management plans approved by the Minister

Establishment of a Nisga'a Police Board and Nisga'a Police Service, if Nisga'a laws include provisions in substantial conformity or compatible with provincial standards set out in the Final Agreement, and with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council

Establishment of a Nisga'a Court, if Nisga'a laws include laws to ensure fairness, independence and accountability, and with the approval of the Lieutenant governor in Council

Direct taxation of Nisga'a citizens on Nisga'a Lands to raise revenue for Nisga'a Nation or Nisga'a Village purposes

Implementation of taxation agreements with Canada or British Columbia

Subject matters listed in other chapters — federal or provincial laws prevail

Sale, in accordance with the Final Agreement, of fish or aquatic plants harvested under the Final Agreement or the Harvest Agreement

Sale of wildlife or migratory birds harvested under the Final Agreement

Environmental assessment of projects on Nisga'a Lands

Environmental protection on Nisga'a Lands

Own source revenue administration

Composition of Nisga'a Government

Nisga'a Government is composed of:

Nisga'a Lisims Government;

Nisga'a Village Governments in the Nisga'a Villages of New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap, and Gingolx;
and

Representatives elected by the Nisga'a Urban Locals of Vancouver, Terrace and Prince Rupert/Port Edward to Nisga'a Lisims Government

Within Nisga'a Lisims Government there is a legislative house known as Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a and the Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive.

The President, Chairperson, Secretary-Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Council of Elders are elected at large by the Nisga'a Nation, and serve as officers of Nisga'a Lisims Government.

The Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive consists of all the Officers, the Chief Councillor of each Nisga'a Village Government, and one representative from each Nisga'a Urban Local.

Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a is composed of every individual who is an Officer of Nisga'a Lisims Government, the Chief Councillor and Councillors of each Nisga'a Village Government, and the representatives from each Nisga'a Urban Local. Today, the total membership of our legislative house is thirty-nine members.



Nisga'a Government Law Making

Since the Effective Date of the Nisga'a Treaty, May 11, 2000, Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a has had nine (9) meetings and has enacted thirty-two (32) Nisga'a Laws and passed a number of resolutions. Included in the thirty-two (32) Nisga'a Laws are seven (7) Nisga'a Statute Amendment Acts that have amended or repealed seventy-one (71) sections of various Nisga'a Laws, and added a schedule to the Nisga'a Lisims Government Act.

During Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a meetings, all members are able to make statements, participate in question periods, introduce petitions, raise urgent matters, and debate Nisga'a bills introduced.

Legislation is enacted by Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a when there is:

- Introduction of the Bill;
- Consideration of the Bill;
- Final Vote of the Bill; and
- Signing of the Bill by the President

A resolution to enact legislation may not be adopted until at least twenty-four (24) hours after the legislation has been given Consideration of Bill, except when the legislation is requested to proceed in a shorter time period.

After the enactment of Nisga'a Laws, Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive work with the Chief Executive Officer, four Directors and the Law Clerk in developing Regulations for the laws.

Listed below are Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a meeting dates, procedures, resolutions passed and Nisga'a Laws enacted since May 11, 2000;

May 11, 2000

- Swearing-In of Members of Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a*
- Resolution passed - Rules of Conduct for May 11, 2000 meeting*
- Election and installation of Speaker and Deputy Speaker*
- Nisga'a Effective Day Procedures Act*
- Nisga'a Lisims Government Act*
- Nisga'a Interpretation Act*
- Nisga'a Citizenship Act*
- Nisga'a Elections Act*
- Nisga'a Financial Administration Act*
- Nisga'a Capital Finance Commission Act*
- Nisga'a Administrative Decisions Review Act*
- Nisga'a Personnel Administration Act*
- Nisga'a Land Act*
- Nisga'a Land Designation Act*
- Nisga'a Village Entitlement Act*
- Nisga'a Nation Entitlement Act*
- Nisga'a Land Title Act*
- Nisga'a Fisheries and Wildlife Act*
- Nisga'a Forest Act*
- Nisga'a Programs and Services Delivery Act*
- Nisga'a Offence Act*

Resolution passed: Convene a Special Assembly of the Nisga'a Nation

Resolution passed: Establishment of a Rules Committee



September 13, 2000

Swearing-In of Chief Electoral Officer
Resolution passed: Standing Rules of Procedure of Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a
Resolution passed: Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive membership
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #1
Nisga'a Temporary Housing Security Act

November 14 & 15, 2000

Swearing-In of Members of Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a
Passing of the gavel from outgoing Chairperson, Nelson Leeson, to incoming Chairperson, Herbert Morven
Election and installation of Speaker and Deputy Speaker
Resolution passed - Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a to meet on a quarterly basis during the 2001 annual session
Motion to adjourn to Committee of the Whole to hear a briefing and orientation session
Committee of the Whole - Briefing and orientation session
Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a meeting reconvenes
Report of Executive Subcommittee established to select a Nisga'a Nation Flag
Resolution passed: Adoption of the concept for the Nisga'a Nation Flag

December 5, 2000

Resolution passed - Members and alternate members of the Council of Elders
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #2
Resolution passed - Appointment of Juanita Parnell as a member of the Nisga'a Valley Health Board for a term of four years
Resolution passed - Appointment of Harry Nyce Sr. to be the representative of the Nisga'a Nation to the Northern Native Fishing Corporation
Resolution passed - to examine the use of Pages in Wilp Si'Ayuukhl Nisga'a Chamber

April 24 & 25, 2001

Resolution passed — Adoption of design of the flag of the Nisga'a Nation, and that Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive take appropriate steps to provide for and regulate the proper use of the Nisga'a Nation Flag
Election of Code of Conduct Committee
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #3
Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive Alternate Representation Act
Nisga'a Highway Construction Act

July 25 & 26, 2001

Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #4
Temporary Laxgalts'ap Forestry Loan and Guarantee Act
Prince Rupert Real Property Loan Act
Urgent Matter Debate — Drug and alcohol abuse, and violence in the Nisga'a communities
Motion passed: Development of a plan of action to combat drug and alcohol abuse, and violence in the Nisga'a communities



October 25 & 26, 2001

Resolution passed: Proposed Changes to WSN Rules of Procedure
Resolution passed: To receive Code of Conduct Drafting — Committee's preliminary draft and direct Committee to prepare final draft as per discussion during the Committee's report
Report from NLG Executive Standing Committee on Nisga'a Law & Order
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #5
Nisga'a Offence Amendment Act
Resolution passed: NLG Executive Meeting with Royal Bank of Canada
Resolution passed: NLG Executive to review Members' honorarium for special occasions
Resolution passed: NLG Executive to develop a system of honouring Nisga'a citizens, and erect a Memorial Monument for past Nisga'a leaders and veterans
Resolution tabled until next WSN session regarding the removal of a WSN Member

January 24 & 25, 2002

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer concerning tabled resolution regarding the removal of a WSN member
Report of the Code of Conduct Drafting Committee
Resolution passed to adopt portions of Code of Conduct, further review and amendment process, and date for code to take effect
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #6
Nisga'a Capital (New Asset) Finance Commission Act
Resolution passed: Final 2001/2002 Budget
Resolution passed: Removal of WSN Member
Notice of motion re: Capital Transfer distribution

March 12 & 13, 2002

Resolutions withdrawn: Audit review
Oral report on Code of Conduct
Resolution withdrawn: Allocation from Capital Transfer
Resolution passed: Training for members
Resolution passed: 2002/2003 Provisional Budget
Resolution tabled until next WSN session regarding the removal of a WSN Member
Nisga'a Statute Amendment Act #7
Urgent Matter Debate: Child and Family Poverty

Register of Laws

Nisga'a Lisims Government will:

Maintain a public registry of Nisga'a Laws in the English language and, at the discretion of Nisga'a Lisims Government, in the Nisga'a language;
Provide Canada and British Columbia with a copy of a Nisga'a law as soon as practicable after that law is enacted; and
Establish procedures for the coming into force and publication of Nisga'a laws



Relations with Individuals who are not Nisga'a Citizens

Nisga'a Government will consult with individuals who are ordinarily resident within Nisga'a Lands and who are not Nisga'a citizens about Nisga'a Government decisions that directly and significantly affect them. Non-Nisga'a will be provided the opportunity to participate in a Nisga'a Public Institution, if the activities of that institution directly and significantly affect them. Appeal and review procedures will also be available to non-Nisga'a who are resident within Nisga'a Lands.

Nisga'a Government may appoint individuals who are not Nisga'a citizens as members of Nisga'a Public Institutions.

Implementation of Nisga'a Laws

Nisga'a Lisims Government employs five senior administrators that have statutory responsibilities for the implementation of Nisga'a Laws. The administrators are:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director of Finance
- Director of Fish and Wildlife
- Director of Lands and Resources
- Director of Programs and Services

The Chief Executive Officer, Directors and their staff are responsible for the day to day functions of Nisga'a Lisims Government. In joint areas of responsibilities, Nisga'a staff work closely with federal or provincial officials.

Conclusion

The ratification of the Nisga'a Final Agreement by the Nisga'a Nation was an indication by the Nisga'a citizens that the model of the Nisga'a Treaty and its contents was a proper reconciliation of aboriginal rights and economic development. We believe that the modification of our aboriginal rights and the continuation as modified as set out in our Treaty was the proper approach to accomplish certainty.

Our tasks in economic development have just started under our new Treaty assets and authorities. We are insuring that our governments must be arms length from economic development and corporations formed to initiate development. We are also approving economic development funds to be available internally, and for partnering arrangements with neighbouring financial and training institutions.

As you can gather from this paper, self government requires a lot of time, effort and dedication, but it is very fulfilling to be able to develop and implement laws for the betterment of the Nisga'a Nation.

The Nisga'a Nation looks forward to a brighter future.

Edmond Wright
Secretary Treasurer
Nisga'a Lisims Government