

July 19, 2010

Take A Deep Breath

We have called this Land our Home for thousands of years. When you are out on your LaxYip you are the leader. When you come back to our Lax Galts'ap, you are the instructor for your House members and witness of your society. This is what the feast is based on: you are invited to be a witness and to ratify only at the end of the liliget. Today a small group of people have created a 26 member society (Gitxsan Treaty Society). GTS is taking it upon themselves to be the leaders of the Gitxsan Nation. Not elected in office but self-appointed, they are dividing Houses, splitting Chiefs names into two people and creating new territorial maps, thus weakening the Daxgyat of the Simgigyat, taking away a part so as to impair the whole – a Derogative Action?

GTS is now negotiating for a Treaty Agreement. We don't need to be in Treaty to do Reconciliation Agreements for Economic Development or any other important matters for the livelihood of the Gitxsans. There were never any employment on Reserves and never will be. Reserves make good Residential areas and it's been proven by many people coming back here for retirement.

The jobs are out there, we just need to upgrade on our Education to qualify for the positions that are available. In the Ancient times 10,000 years ago our people chose places to establish their Galts'ap and each Galts'ap has a history behind it and was named by the incident or occurrence, until it became a Reserve under the Indian Act.

The Indian Act is your strong voice to be able to communicate with the Federal Government. It was proven by the Delgamuukx Court Case Decision recognizing the Gitxsan people as a sovereignty Nation and their Lax̓yip through the studies and findings of the Anthropologists.

We need to go a little further in our claim to include the mighty majestic River and its tributaries, the main origin of the Gitxsans Xsiyeen.

When Federal Government transfers all the services to the Provincial Government our villages will be absorbed by the municipalities Old Hazelton and New Hazelton. That's where you will go to pay your taxes; it's the Government body of such a district.

There is a good possibility for Self Government if it's the right implementation based on a model that would work to fit the Gitxsan Standards and measuring successes by their own criteria. If there is going to be a change for the Gitxsan Nation to prosper, then they must define who they are, where they want to go, and how they plan to get there.

To date, there has been no infrastructure planning, just concept. After 20 years of negotiation, millions and millions of dollars have gone through the Treaty Office including 18 to 20 millions dollars of borrowed money that has to be paid back by all Gitxsan after the final Agreement.

Around 80 percent of the Gitxsan people are not aware of these millions of dollars, just a few who are called Gimlitxwit, those that that are called to meetings.

Gimlitxwit called to meetings receive honorarium of \$100.00 to \$200.00 per meeting e.g.: Prince George Retreat \$300.00 per day for three days, Summit Meetings \$300.00 per day for three days, Short-term Forestry Agreement \$5000.00 signing Bonus, Christmas

Bonus \$1000.00, additional \$500.00 Christmas Bonus for the Directors of the Gitksan Health Society?

We need to revitalize, we need to restore Dignity to our hereditary system, and we need to Apologize to our children, the mothers, the fathers, and especially to the ones who were Ignored and rejected by these 26 member Society. It would be wiser to get rid of the GTS now than to lose your First Nation status. You don't know how special you are to be status people; it goes with your Laxyip and Gwalxyeenis't.

If we can only live forever and have ever thing we want, but it doesn't work that way. So we have to plan for the future of our Gitksan people and stay in-tact with our culture and who we are as Aluugiyat.

Take a deep breath but don't hold it, remember, as long as the 26 member society is Governing the Gitksan Nations you will not be part of the prosperity. All the monies is in their Bank account, all the investment the companies created is within the GTS membership shareholders, Board of Director you name it, it's all GTS.

In Kispiox Reserve, where I live comfortably next to the Band Administration Building, I can see the elected Chief and councilor meeting every month working hard till 11:00 pm at night planning for the betterment of the Community (infrastructure planning) along with the staff and Band Manage negotiating with INAC to implement Band Council Decision. Over the years of negotiation just to mention a few, we now have new subdivisions, schools, health stations, stores, paved roads, new houses, and sewer system. They are doing a good job without high Honorarium and if you do not agree on how this present election of INAC system works in your community, you can plan for a change, what they call custom elections.

PS

The GTS society and its staff members who are trying to influence over our lives can move on. There is no explicit statement or sub section in the Indian Act that says they have to have a status card.

Chief Basxhalaxha

William Blackwater

William Blackwater

Definitions

- Laxyip - territory
- Lax Galts'ap – our village
- Liliget – called together to witness
- Daxgyat – authority
- Simgiyat – High Chiefs
- Xsiyeen – river of mist
- Gwalxyeens't – rules set out that doesn't change with time

**Where Did the Nisga'a Go Wrong
or
Was It A Triumph**

When the Nisga'a went into negotiation with the government for land claims they were telling government they own the land, Lock –Stock – and Barrel. Somehow they end up negotiating a Treaty, for self Government. In their final agreement the Indian Act was abolished, they received a small portion of land which was 7 % of their original claim and have no Reserve or Galst'ap.

What was negotiated and settled with, just to mention a few what they call important matters

- Health Care
- Education
- Social Service
- Land and Resource
- Economic Development

They call it reconciling the past and shaping the future.

And yet all these reconciliation Agreements are already protected under Section # 35 of the Constitution of Canada. It also recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people, Indian, commonly referred to as First Nations, Me'tis, and Inuit. Three distinct people with different histories, languages, culture, practices, and spiritual beliefs. In their final agreement, at least, they will administer their self Government's affairs, making a few jobs for them, but paying income tax and property taxes will kick in 2012. On May 2010 they have just commemorated 10 years of self government and still no jobs.

By Bill Blackwater

