

# It's Time to Wear Our Blankets

Recently the Province of British Columbia decided to walk away from treaty negotiations with the Gitksan, thereby exhibiting a colonial attitude comparable to that of the original creators of the Indian Act. In my view, with the negotiations no longer under way, it is vital that we define and hold fast to our aboriginal rights in order not to diminish our identity.

In other words, "it's time to wear our blankets" — meaning the red and black button blankets traditionally worn by our chiefs as symbols of power. This statement made by Jim Angus, one of our former negotiators, eloquently sums up the current situation. Because so far, in our history with visitors, we have been too nice. Now it is time to exert the power we have in a way that real movement toward justice will take place.

This painting shows the rightful hand that has existed on the land for centuries cut through by the current situation of the white hand taking the tree. In the background is the infrastructure of the land, something the provincial and federal governments would rather not discuss with us.

As the Gitksan nation prepares to return to court to seek justice over land claims once and for all, we know one thing: that we are not going to settle for anything less than what has already been ours for generations.

It is time to wear our blankets.

