



## **Self government protects First Nations from the mistakes of the past being repeated**

First Nations have long sought to govern themselves and return to self-sufficiency in a way that is reflective of their own cultures and traditions.

Long before Europeans arrived in Canada, First Nations were self governing and self sufficient with governance systems that reflected their culture, traditions and unique way of life. The imposition of the *Indian Act* in 1876 regulated and severely restricted the lives of First Nations people.

Injustices suffered under the *Indian Act*, coupled with residential schools, involuntary adoptions, bans on cultural practices and land and resource expropriation have given impetus to First Nations' attempts to regain control of governance to protect their land, people, cultures and languages.

Self government, land, resources and cash are key elements of a treaty and vital to achieving prosperity and community well-being for First Nations.

We have arrived at a critical point in our history where we are acknowledging the wrongs of the past and trying to achieve respect for the rights of the First Nations.

Treaties belong to all British Columbians and Canadians. For First Nations it recognizes their long-standing legal rights and enables self government and self-sufficiency.

For business and all levels of governments treaties bring greater certainty to land ownership and jurisdiction, and foster economic development and prosperity for all citizens.