



HEREDITARY CHIEFS OF THE GITXSAN

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NEWS RELEASE

I WANT TO BE YOUR PARTNER: DANIEL VENIEZ, NWBC

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, February 26, 2003

After negotiations with Daniel D. Veniez, President and Chief Financial Officer of Northwest BC Timbre & Pulp, to show good faith, Simogyet Gwagl'lo agreed to open up the access road to West Kitsuns Cut Block 175, situated on his extended family's traditional territory within the Gitsegukla Valley, to allow NWBCTP contractors to haul away timbre already cut, using Gitksan truckers, while Paul Veltmeyer, SCI operations manager, secures a location to store pulp logs at issue for Gwagl'lo. As well, the Gitksan proposed that the West Kitsuns cut block 175 be reassessed in terms of Gitksan values at SCI's cost.

After Elmer Derrick, negotiator for Gwagl'lo, argued the urgency of rehabilitating the diminishing fibre basket, the need for a sustainable forest, the need to forge a partnership, he reiterated "The Gitksan are interested in acquiring the Carnaby operation and attached licenses." Veniez' responded "...without hesitation, I'm prepared to sell Carnaby for a dollar." Veniez told the Gitksan he had spent considerable time in Victoria dealing with the fibre basket. Certain that policy reform is coming down to rehabilitate the forests, and confident that the provincial government will execute the aboriginal agenda of its throne speech, and there will be a deal on soft wood and chips, Veniez assured the Gitksan that he is making progress and is in the process of putting together a management team to execute his company's business plan.

Veniez appealed to the Gitksan, "With respect to (aboriginal) title, I want to be your partner. I've been true to that view for two years ... We need to get treaties done in BC ... (because) financial markets hate uncertainty and inertia."

Veniez will urge the Ministry of Forests to move the meeting with Bob Friesen, the lead negotiator on behalf of the province to develop a consultation and accommodation agreement with the Gitksan respecting the change of control of Skeena Cellulose Inc (SCI) arising from the *December 10, 2002 Yal et al v. MOF Supreme Court of BC Decisions by Justice Tysoe*, ahead. The Friesen meeting is currently scheduled for March 6, 2003 at which time the acquisition of the Carnaby assets, the export of raw logs out of the Hazelton area, and NWBC's purchase agreement with West Fraser will also be discussed.

As per Simogyet Gwagl'lo instructions, contacts:

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