

Native Women's Rights Rejected

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Bid to protect native women's rights rejected

Aboriginals stonewall Ottawa's efforts to ensure fair division of property among First Nations

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A bid by Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice to protect native women's property rights by extending provincial rules to reserves has been flatly rejected by aboriginals.

"Our communities are saying no" to the interim measure, said Angus Toulouse, Ontario vice-chief for the national Assembly of First Nations.

"We need to do the work at the community level."

Most reserves are caught in a legislative gap that Prentice wants to fill. He points out aboriginal women and children are often left with nothing when couples break up because legal protections rarely cover bands. The archaic Indian Act governing most of Canada's 600 First Nations is silent on property and asset sharing.

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