

Remarks by Her Honour

The Honourable Mayann E. Francis, O.N.S., DHumL

Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia

Mi'Kmaq Treaty Day Awards Ceremony

Commonwealth Room,

Westin Hotel

October 1, 2008

Grand Chief Sylliboy, Grand Keptin Denny, Grand Council Members, chiefs, councillors, elders, Premier, Minister Baker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen.

As Nova Scotia's representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, it is an honour to join you today to mark Treaty Day and the beginning of Mi'Kmaq History Month.

It is also a pleasure to see so many people being recognized today for their contributions to their community. Congratulations on your achievements.

Treaty Day is symbolic of many pieces that comprise the history of the Mi'Kmaq people in Nova Scotia.

Of course, this day commemorates the 1752 Treaty which ended a long war.

Treaty Day reminds us of the struggles of the Mi'Kmaq people in seeking fundamental human rights. At the same time, it demonstrates their determination and hard work.

Treaty Day also signifies the great bond between the Mi'Kmaq people and the Crown. In his 1986 proclamation, Grand Chief Donald Marshall Senior referred to the special relationship between the Mi'Kmaq and Her Majesty the Queen.

These ties have existed for over 200 years, and as Lieutenant Governor I assure you that your trust in the crown is respected and it will continue to be honoured.

That is why I am particularly pleased to be the first Lieutenant Governor in the history of this province to have Mi'Kmaq RCMP officers serving as Aides de Camp. Constable Walter Denny, present with me today, is from Eskasoni. Constable Stuart Knockwood is from Millbrook. Both officers serve with dignity and respect and I am honoured to have them as my Aides de Camp. Their presence completes the circle that connects the Crown and the Mi'Kmaq people.

The path of the Mi'Kmaq people has not been an easy one and there is still much work to do. Even though the path has been difficult you possess a strong vision and the perseverance to achieve that vision.

Earlier this year, I was the keynote speaker at a gala celebration of African Heritage Month. The moment was very meaningful for me: a moment I will always cherish.

As the first African Nova Scotian Lieutenant Governor, I was struck by the significance of the event. We were celebrating the accomplishments of African Nova Scotians in a facility owned and operated by the Mi'Kmaq people in Membertou.

As I was speaking to the audience, I could sense my ancestors, and those of the Mi'Kmaq, surrounding me in a joyous celebration. A celebration of how far we have come.

As we begin Mi'Kmaq History Month I look forward to the many events that are planned. I urge all Nova Scotians to take the opportunity to learn more about the rich heritage and vibrant culture of the Mi'Kmaq people. Knowing and understanding Mi'Kmaq culture can only serve to enrich and enlighten our own lives.

Thank you. Merci. O'wela'lin.