

Remarks by Her Honour
The Honourable Mayann E. Francis
Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia

Treaty Day Ceremony

Marriott Hotel

Halifax

October 1, 2007

Grand Chief Sylliboy and Grand Council members; chiefs, councilors and elders, Mr. Premier, Minister MacIsaac, members of the Legislative Assembly, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

As the Queen's representative in Nova Scotia I am honoured to join with you today in celebrating the signing of the Treaty of 1752. It was a treaty of peace and friendship that ended a long war. Since it was first signed in Halifax, the treaty has come to mean much more.

Today, for the Mi'kmaw people, the continuing power of this treaty - which has been affirmed by the highest court in Canada - represents the return of dignity and self-determination.

The treaty that we remember today was done in the name of the Crown, King George the Second. Two hundred and fifty-five years later, I am pleased to be a link in the chain of historic continuity which has marked the relationship between the Crown and the aboriginal people of our province.

Aboriginal people have suffered a great deal since the first contact with Europeans in 1492.

But as befits a people who have survived on these twin continents for more than 10,000 years, they endure still. As does this treaty signed more than two centuries ago.

The treaty committed both sides to the rule of law. In 1985, the Mi'kmaw made good on that promise when the Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling on the validity of the treaty.

Today, many descendants of those who signed this treaty live in communities that are experiencing a re-birth - economically, culturally and spiritually. The reaffirmation of the treaty was the catalyst for this change. It unlocked the potential of the Mi'kmaw people and set them on a new course.

For others, the changes have been slower in coming. It is my great hope that these communities too will soon share in this re-birth.

I would urge all Nova Scotians to learn more about this treaty. Understand its significance, understand why it was signed and the historic context in which it was negotiated. And understand its continued relevance.

We can start this understanding by participating in Mi'kmaq History Month which runs through October. A fuller telling of the history of the Mi'kmaw people enriches Nova Scotia's own story and adds to our shared heritage. Let us continue to make Treaty Day a celebration for all of us.

Thank you

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