

If the only criterion for determining whether or not an institution or a system should or should not be continued is newness, this institution which has served us for 100 years would now be discarded. If, however, durability and proven worth are the determining factors, I believe we should jealously guard our parliamentary system today and for generations to come.

Appreciating the heritage established by the mother of Parliaments, and challenged by those who laid the foundations well and strong in this our own land, it is our hope that we who participate in this 27th Parliament of Canada will maintain standards of sincerity and service that will enhance its worth in the eyes of the nation and work effectively in the interests of Canada and the world.

Mr. ROBERT SIMPSON (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, like other honourable Members of this House I listened with interest to the stirring words which have been spoken on this momentous occasion, words which have emphasized that the most important matter concerning us today is national unity.

As one whose paternal grandfather was a Member of the First Parliament of Canada I should be remiss in my duty if I did not now say a few words about an important subject which has not been mentioned. Wemyss Mackenzie Simpson, who sat in the First Parliament of Canada and later became, as I recall, Commissioner for Indian Affairs, was given the task of drawing up many of the treaties with our native people throughout western Canada and particularly in Manitoba.

Much has been said about the rights and privileges of minorities in our country. I am sure you will understand that I and other honourable Members of the House are concerned that the rights and privileges of some, particularly our native people, have been not only abrogated but done away with. Though the Indian people of Canada today have received many benefits which are not theirs by right under any treaty, rights and privileges which were granted to them under treaty are being abrogated.

This historic centennial event is an opportune occasion for members in this House—and I hope honourable Members who follow us will feel this way also—to urge the government to discontinue acts by which treaties which were made earlier with these people are being abrogated. Should parliament on some future occasion feel that doing away with treaty rights might be beneficial for our native people, I hope any such action that may be taken will not be taken until there has been full consultation with and agreement of our native people in order that their rights and privileges may be preserved.

Mr. Speaker communicated to the House the following letter:

6th November, 1967.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
OTTAWA

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable J. R. Cartwright, M.C., Chief Justice of Canada, acting as Deputy to His Excellency the Govern-