

Private Members' Business

what a democrat is. It is a long wagon affair with a number of seats in it, which a sizeable family can sit in. Some of these families have eight to ten kids, all behind the horse.

In the Depression years our family lived on a farm. We had a large stand of timber on the farm and we sold wood. How did we get it to town? We hauled it with a horse. This was all part of agriculture.

The Canadian horse is known for its strength and endurance. There have been a number of historical accounts of the horse's performance and ability to outperform animals of much greater size. I am talking about Belgians and Percherons, horses of that kind, which are sizeable horses when you get beside them. Never get stepped on by one. I did when I was a child.

One story tells of a butcher who hooked his Canadian horse to a buggy and travelled 250 kilometres from Quebec City to Montreal in less than 12 hours, outracing the overnight steamer that was racing against him to collect an unpaid bill.

There was another account from the *Breeder's Gazette* of Chicago in 1914. I think the hon. member touched on this, but I will say it again, because we have to show how good the Canadian horse is. It is not very often that we in this House beat our own drum on how good we are as Canadians. I think we should do it more often. The Canadian horse is a good example. A wood merchant was the owner of a Canadian horse weighing approximately 1,050 pounds. He harnessed it to the same pull against another horse about 200 pounds heavier. The Canadian horse was always kept in its harness traces, well stretched and never showed as much fatigue as his heavier mate. After two years of common work the heavier horse died. "The question on the cause of death", the driver answered, "is the Canadian horse made him die of overwork".

• (1825)

That goes to show how good this breed is that we are trying to recognize as something that is Canadian. Canada should be very proud too because as a united country we are number one in the world today. Again I have to stress the fact that my colleague from the third party seems to miss this point. I find it unfortunate that he and my Bloc colleagues they do not understand how good they have it right now.

Despite its qualities the Canadian horse almost faced extinction through inbreeding and neglect. In 1886 a few admirers banded together to establish a breed registry or a stud book listing all the purebreds.

In 1907 a second book was opened and the federal department of agriculture funded a panel of judges to survey approximately 2,500 horses, out of which only 969 were acceptable and

registered as foundation stock. That is how close we were to losing the Canadian horse.

Between 1913 and 1981 the federal and Quebec governments launched programs to maintain the breed. However, in 1976 with only 383 Canadian horses left on record, once again the horse was destined to disappear. This is what the hon. member across was talking about, this resiliency of Canadians. We bounce back. We will bounce back. We always do bounce back. The Canadian horse is a good example of this.

During the past 10 years there has been a resurgence of interest in the breed. People are rediscovering the little iron horse. Is that not a great way of describing a symbol of Canada, the little iron horse. It is a gentle hardworking breed, an intelligent, multi-purpose horse. There are breeders in my riding of Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe that have written to me to proudly describe these animals, which is one of the reasons I am here today supporting the member's bill.

This bill provides us with an opportunity to celebrate this uniquely Canadian horse. We owe much to it for its hard work in developing this country and I encourage all the members to support this bill.

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill C-329, an act to provide for the recognition of the Canadian horse as the national horse of Canada.

Since their introduction into Canada in 1665, the "little iron horses" have served Canadians well. Not only were they used for driving and riding but they were also used for clearing land, cultivating and hauling. They may have begun their lives as pampered pets in the royal stables of King Louis XIV but once they were shipped to Canada they had to earn their keep.

The early history of the Canadian horse in some ways resembles that of the colonists themselves. In her pictorial history of the Canadian horse, Gladys Mackey Beattie notes that due to natural selection, only the strongest managed to survive. The conditions under which they had to exist gave them endurance found in no other breed.

Over time the horses became smaller in size than the original imports, but they were much more hardy, could thrive on meagre rations, trot tirelessly through mud or snow by day or night, matured at an early age and were long lived as well. Many stories are told of the strength and stamina of the little horses who could eat less but do more work than other horses almost twice their weight, and they could run. The record books of the 1800s are full of references to record times of the pacers and trotters descended from Canadian horses.