

*Private Members' Business*

I do not want to talk for a long time. I want to say again that Private Members' Business should be set aside for very important issues, for issues that are important to the country as a whole.

I appreciate the argument that this horse is part of our heritage. I also know and the member has noted that this horse was recognized by cabinet I believe in 1909. I would argue that because of the fact that the horse already has the title Canadian horse, because of its proud history, we have certainly already given it a lot of profile. I would argue that there are other ways, through statements under Standing Order 31, through a letter campaign to other MPs, through recognition by provincial legislatures and that kind of thing that we could make the point.

I will conclude by thanking the hon. member for his initiative. I also encourage members across the way, in my own party and in the Bloc, to bring forward the best possible and most important legislation they can think of when they deem it appropriate to bring a bill forward through Private Members' Business.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the bill to provide for the recognition of the Canadian horse as the national horse of Canada affects many Quebecers and particularly breeders. It is therefore a pleasure for us to represent them by taking part in this debate.

In perusing Bill C-329, we learn that the horse was sent by the King of France, was invaluable to settlers in their efforts to survive and prosper. We learn that the horse has a number of fine qualities, including strength, endurance, intelligence and good temper.

We also learn that it was nearly lost at one point through interbreeding and casualties in war. Allow me to add a few points, because I believe it is important to understand the history of this exceptional animal and see how it developed.

• (1810)

The very first horse to touch the soil in New France arrived in Quebec City on June 25, 1647. At that time it was called the Canadian horse, and there were no horses in this part of North America. The region's dense and broad forests effectively prevented crossbreeding with other types of horses. There was no possibility of interbreeding with the breeds of horse brought in by the English and by the Spaniards in the south.

It was only after 1759 that export to the United States and crossbreeding with other types of horse became a possibility, and the numbers of the purebred Canadian horse began to decrease.

Sometime around 1880, faced with the real threat of the breed's disappearance, people decided to act. Quebecers like François Pilote, Édouard Barnard and, particularly, Dr. J.A.

Couture, a veterinarian, decided to ensure the species' survival by selecting and breeding the best of the remaining horses. Dr. Couture, among others, gathered in a breed book all of the subjects combining the breed's distinctive characteristics to ensure their protection.

Thus, through this brief history, we can see that the Canadian horse arrived and was bred in Quebec. Those who raised and trained them were the inhabitants of what would become Quebec. These same people took steps to ensure that this symbol of strength and pride would not disappear from our continent.

In the light of these facts, it would be a good idea perhaps for any future recognition of this horse as the national horse to contain greater reference to Quebecers' contribution to its survival and conservation.

Furthermore, since the government of Quebec is currently considering a similar request, it seems more in keeping with history that any recognition of this breed as a national emblem should come from the Quebec National Assembly rather than from the House of Commons.

[English]

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter the debate on Bill C-329 to recognize the Canadian horse.

I must admit I am not knowledgeable about horse breeding. One of my constituents brought the bill to my attention. As I read over the history of this horse in Canada, I realized it is part of our identity, part of our cultural history. The member from the Reform Party who went into great dissertation about the irrelevance of the legislation, I believe, misses the very important point that cultural identity is what makes a nation.

Looking at the history of this horse, in 1665 it originally came from the royal stables of King Louis XIV. It was situated in New France. During that time the breed strengthened and became larger until 1759 at the time of the collapse of New France.

It is interesting to study political economics. It is something I have always been fascinated with. There is always so much concern about what happened on the Plains of Abraham in revisiting our history of those days. If we were to study the history of New France prior to the Wolfe-Montcalm battles, we would discover an economy that was rampant with inflation, high debt and high unemployment. It is interesting that these are some of the very problems we have today.

After the collapse of that economy, many French speaking people of New France left the province. They went to Manitoba.

• (1815)

Do we see any similarities between some of these things and some of the debates that are happening in our House today? The Canadian horse typifies Canada itself, often struggling against tremendous forces of nature and social situations, sometimes