

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, I want to thank those of my colleagues who have shown an interest in this part of our heritage and who are taking part in the debate today. I also want to thank the people from across Canada who wrote their member of Parliament in support of Bill C-329. Finally, congratulations to the Canadian Horse Breeders Association as it celebrates its centennial this year.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his words on the Canadian horse. From what I have read about this horse it seems like an outstanding candidate for the title of national horse of Canada.

The hon. member has talked about the history of this animal: how it came from France; its ability to stand up in Canada's cold weather and the varied seasons; its strength and its intelligence. All of those things are wonderful. It is a lot like Canadians in that sense. For that reason I cannot say anything against the bill. I do not have a problem with the Canadian horse or even with the concept of having a national horse for Canada.

However, I am wondering, when we are six days away from a referendum on the break-up of the country, why we are talking about these types of issues. It is an issue which the hon. member could handle in a member's statement or in a letter writing campaign. There are ways of handling these types of issues.

Frankly, when we are bringing Private Members' Business to the House of Commons, it should be a little more relevant to the national agenda. For crying out loud, in six days we are going to have a referendum about the break-up of the country. That is the type of thing members should be bringing to Private Members' Business to discuss. There is no reason in the world we could not have had a bill today regarding the devolution of powers and how that might affect Canada and the possibility that Quebec would remain in the country. There is absolutely no reason we could not have had that debate.

All kinds of excellent legislation has come from private members. That is the type of thing we should see in this hour.

We have a debt of some \$560 billion and it is going up \$90 million a day. It will be going up more now that interest rates will be spiked as a result of all the uncertainty over the Quebec referendum. To me, that is the type of thing we should reserve this time for.

Last night on television I saw that a transit worker was stabbed to death in Toronto. He was the first ever transit worker to be murdered in Toronto. This Ontario member could have brought forward legislation to deal with that type of thing.

I truly do not want to denigrate what the hon. member has done. However, I believe that Private Members' Business should be set aside for things which are more germane to the public agenda in Canada. I know that Canadians are outraged at

some of the things which are going on and that nothing is being done. We cannot prod the government to do it, so let us prod private members to do it. Let us get them to bring forward the legislation.

There are 97 or 98 government MPs from Ontario in the House. The hon. member brought forward a bill to make the Canadian horse the national horse of Canada. Fine. But a lot more essential legislation could have come forward to deal with the issues I have just talked about.

• (1805)

Would it not be great if a Toronto MP, along with 19 or 20 other Toronto MPs, brought forward legislation to deal with crime. We could point to the example of what happened in Toronto the other night, where we saw that man stabbed to death on TV. It was outrageous. We have to do something about those types of things. We cannot continue like that.

In small ways almost every day we are seeing the erosion of the rule of law, not the breakdown, but the erosion in a lot of ways. Some people are becoming so disrespectful for the rule of law. Let us have legislation to deal with that sort of thing.

Another thing we could be dealing with today and it would help the hon. member and his cause, would be to see Parliament and individual parliamentarians bring forward legislation through Private Members' Business to free up MPs to vote the wishes of their constituents on certain pieces of legislation. There is no reason in the world that we could not have legislation like there is in Britain today. They can defeat their own government's bill without bringing down the government. In other words, there would be a motion of non-confidence after defeating a specific piece of legislation.

Imagine how Canadians would feel about their House if that is what happened here. It would be astounding. It would be a revolution. People would have new confidence in this place. As politicians, I think members across the way would agree that we have a vested interest in doing what we can to improve the very poor reputation of politicians. That would go a long way to doing that.

One thing we could bring forward is balanced budget legislation. The situation today is that we are going in the hole approximately \$19 million a day. Every day that goes by we go into the hole a little further. To me that is absolutely immoral when we consider the effect it will have on our children.

I have two boys back home; one is seven and one is eleven. Many members have young children. It is really immoral for us to be living today at their expense. We must move quickly if we are to be worthy of our title as parliamentarians to make sure that comes to an end. We have to quit spending them into poverty down the road.