

*Private Members' Business*

There are several precedents for the kind of recognition I have proposed for the Canadian horse. Some years ago Parliament passed a bill which designated the beaver as Canada's national animal. Recently we recognized hockey and lacrosse as our national sports. That kind of celebration of our heritage is neither frivolous nor unimportant. We need more symbols to add to the rich tapestry which is Canada's history.

As we debate the bill today Canadians are watching with concern the debate taking place in Quebec which is so important to our future. When I introduced Bill C-329 I was well aware that the history of the Canadian horse began in New France, now the province of Quebec, and I believe if we embrace the goal of the bill it would make some small contribution to national unity.

Alex Hayward, a Canadian horse owner who lives near North Gower, Ontario, brought to my attention the idea of giving the Canadian horse national status through a private member's bill. Mr. Hayward grew up with the Canadian horse and insists "they can do everything but dance".

After researching this breed we did note in several documents that the Canadian horse was declared our national breed by Parliament on March 17, 1909. Unfortunately nowhere in the debates of Parliament could this be verified. Therefore I set out to bring some attention to a breed of horse which has worked our lands as far back as the 1600s.

The introduction of the Canadian horse to Canada dates back to King Louis XIV of France in 1665. The horses were delivered to the governor of New France at Stadacona, now known as Quebec City. King Louis felt a knight should not be without a horse, and the horses were presented as noble gifts in order to keep his colonists happy.

The exact breeding of this horse is unknown. It was not until 100 years later that accurate breeding records were kept by horse breeders. However, historians believe that the blood lines are from the Arabian, Barb and Andalusian stocks. In 1667 and 1670 further shipments of this horse were received and their numbers reached 12,000 strong by the year 1760.

It has been noted that the Canadian horse was the first to clear Canadian soil. This versatile breed cleared, ploughed and cultivated the soil. In addition they were used as carriage, riding and race horses. This small, swift, rugged and strong horse seldom reaches 1,100 pounds and is from 14.3 to 15.2 hands high. Therefore the average Canadian horse would be about five feet high.

As the years went on France was constantly at war and was unable to support its colony. For the next century and a half the horses in New France were bred and multiplied, with no outside blood lines changing the breed. However, when the British arrived in the late 1700s they brought with them other breeds of

horse. Upon arrival of the British many French settlers moved on to Manitoba and the United States and took their Canadian horses with them.

The American civil war created great demand for cavalry mounts. The Canadian horse was the right size and was well known for its tough constitution. This made it well suited to the hardship and rigours of war. Exports from Canada increased greatly and prices were very high. Many horses were killed in the war and those that survived never returned to Canada. By the late 18th century these factors threatened the continuation of the Canadian horse and so action was taken then to preserve this fine breed.

In 1885 a stud book was started to keep accurate records of the breed and in 1895 the Canadian Horse Breeders Association was formed. The federal ministry of agriculture maintained a breeding centre from 1913 until the second world war forced its closure in 1940. The Canadian horse has supplied foundation stock to many breeds, in particular the Morgan and the standardbred. It has been estimated that by 1850 half of the horses in Canada carried some trace of Canadian blood.

In *The Canadian Horse* by Gladys Mackey Beattie the strength and endurance of the breed are well described. There are recorded instances of Canadian horses trotting from Quebec city to Montreal and from Montreal to Cornwall, stopping only when their drivers needed refreshment.

Another example was noted in the *Breeders Gazette of Chicago* written in 1914: "A wood merchant, owner of Canadian horse weighing approximately 1,050 pounds, harnessed it on the same pole beside another horse, 200 pounds heavier. The Canadian horse always kept its harness traces well stretched and never showed as much fatigue as its heavier mate. After two years of common work, the heavy horse died. Questioned on the cause of this death, the driver answered 'It is the Canadian horse that made him die of overwork'. Another heavy horse teamed with the same Canadian horse died after a year and the Canadian was still in perfect condition".

• (1800)

We should also pay tribute to that small band of Canadian horse breeders past and present, without whom this important part of our heritage would have been lost. In this respect I would like to thank Alex Hayward and his friend, the late Don Prosperine, from Dunrobin, Ontario, which is in my riding of Lanark—Carleton. Those two gentlemen decided in 1978 to become partners in a project to breed the Canadian horse. They spent a year and a half searching in Quebec for suitable specimens. From their beginning with one stallion and two mares their stock increased to 28 Canadians. Don Prosperine's son, Frank, continues the family tradition on his farm in Dunrobin where he has 18 Canadians.