Mario Gendron

A brief history
of the Canadian horse

A Brief History of the Canadian Horse is the product of several months of careful historical research. In this illustrated, 38-page text, historian Mario Gendron offers a new look at the Canadian horse breed using previously unexplored source documents from the archives. He has also drawn up the first analysis of the changes and progress in breeding practices of the Canadian horse during the 20th century. A fascinating series of power struggles were the ever-present backdrop to the breed's transformation from a stocky workhorse to the equestrian sport type of its current incarnation, including a development phase as a draft horse at the Deschambault experimental farm beginning in the 1940s. Breed enthusiasts and champions of our country's contribution to equine breeding will appreciate this work, as will amateur historians.

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Contents

Auction sale of Canadian horses in Saint-Hyacinthe, in 1941.
(Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Victor Sylvestre, SHHY)

Introduction

The Canadian breed of horse, in its current incarnation, is the result of environmental influence as well as conscious and subconscious selection practices over time, dating back to the era of New France. While climate and geography contributed largely in shaping the Canadian horse, breeders were the project managers in transforming the horse's type, which evolved with the tides of historical events. By the end of the 19th century, men of good society had deemed it necessary to minimize the racing trotter qualities of the Canadian horse in order to refashion it as a small farm horse, and later, farmers in the early 20th century wanted a larger and heavier horse in order to respond to new requirements in agriculture ; more recently, breeders have attempted to adapt the horse's size and structure to the needs of equestrian sports. In spite of all this, the Canadian horse has maintained a resemblance to its ancestor from the end of the 19th century. The reason is because the magnitude of change was perpetually countered by those who preferred not to stray too far from the original model. The modern version of the Canadian horse is the result of two competing approaches to selection : adapting the horse to specific situations and markets, and maintaining breed authenticity.

"The Canadian horse, having participated in clearing the land in most of the province of Quebec, deserves a study of its history and an account statement of its value." Louis de Gonzague Fortin, La bonne terre, *September 1942.*

With the exception of the last quarter, conditions for breeding Canadian horses were not encouraging for most of the 20th century. This was partly due to an anaemic equestrian community, and partly to farmer disinterest in purebred horses, which they perceived as a luxury item. In fact, if it hadn't been for government involvement in breeding Canadian horses during this period as well as the efforts of a few breeders and agricultural specialists in perpetuating the breed, it would most likely have disappeared. From this perspective, the very existence of the Canadian horse is an homage to the determination of individuals named Couture, Chapais, Barnard, Fisher, Rutherford, Deland, Bourassa, Langelier, Ste-Marie, St-Pierre and many others who, during a dismal era, did not stop believing in the future of the Canadian breed. Survival of the breed was given further encouragement by granting special status, along with the Canadian cattle breed, in the domestic animal landscape of Quebec and Canada. Formal recognition of the breed by the Quebec government in 1999 and by Ottawa in 2002 was the final stage in a quest for official identity that was initiated in the mid-19th century. Threatened with extinction at several points along the way, the Canadian horse is now in a better position than ever to face the challenges ahead in the 21st century.

New France

The first horse to set hoof in New France landed in Quebec City on June 25, 1647. It was a gift from the Compagnie des Habitants to the governor, the Sieur of Montmagny[1]. But sources rapidly lose track of the animal, and more than 20 years went by before horses were again mentioned in the French colony.

The horses that were to form the initial core of the Canadian breed were imported from France between 1665 and 1671, at a rate of 12-14 per year. Approximately 60-70 horses –mainly powerful mares – were thus introduced to the fledgling colony and distributed among the elite members of society and *habitants* (ordinary colonists) alike. In 1671, the intendant Jean Talon put an end to expeditions, as recorded in his *Mémoire au Roi sur le Canada [Note to the King regarding Canada]* on November 2. "I believe that His Majesty has provided sufficient number of beasts to populate Canada with the species that were lacking, and besides this fact, we can also obtain horses from the English," he stated in this document. According to generally accepted opinion, the Canadian horse was born as an internal hybrid from this original group, without addition of foreign blood prior to the Conquest[2]. The historian Robert Leslie Jones surmised that the diversity of Canadian horse types that existed between the 17th and 19th centuries – including the Saint-Laurent, which can be traced to the Kamouraska region, and the Boyard – were related to the varieties present in the horses that came over from France : draughthorses, trotters, and amblers[3]. However, this statement seems hard to believe, and several hints would indicate that horses from diverse origins were imported during the entire history of New France, mixing with Canadian bloodlines and resulting in diverse types[4]. Referring to the horses in Montreal at the turn of the 18th century, the historian Louise Dechêne states : "Theses were partly the offspring from the animals imported thirty years earlier and especially from the horses that the voyageurs and militia men brought back from Illinois (Spanish stock) and the English colonies."[5] Hundreds, if not thousands of horses from the English colonies were also introduced to the St. Lawrence Valley at the end of the French regime, in the years between 1755 and 1760. According to the Sieur de Bougainville, the Iroquois from the village of Sault-Saint

Louis (Kahnawake), close to Montreal, were very active in this trade[6].

From which region in France did these horses imported by Jean Talon hail from ? At the end of the 19th century, this question was a subject of lively debate between two camps, proponents of either the Percheron or Breton origins of the Canadian breed. In presenting their facts, each camp called upon historical arguments and summoned expert witnesses. Although it was impossible to achieve unanimous opinion on this subject, everyone at least agreed to emphasize that the horses imported from the former fatherland were of excellent quality. Since the royal harras was established by Colbert the same year that the first horses were imported from New France in 1665, several authors believed that this circumstance was the basis of the legendary excellence of the Canadian horses, but there is no documentary proof[7]. However, there is proof that many of these horses were purchased in the Normandy countryside by "Sieur le Gaigneur de Roûen & and the other merchants associated with him" through the account of the West Indies company[8].

In New France, horses were central to the activities of the colony's *habitants*. They were used for agriculture, transportation — by cart or on horseback in summer or by light covered cart (cariole) in winter — and recreation. But even knowing how they were used does not provide enough information on the type and conformation of the Canadian horse of that era. Systematic breed descriptions were not widely used until 1850, but we can approximate general physical traits and temperament based on some documented information. According to Peter Kalm, who visited New France in 1749, "All the Canadian horses are strong, vigorous, well-proportioned and as large as our cavalry horses [in Sweden] and a breed imported from France." Louis Franquet, in his *Mémoires pittoresques de la Nouvelle-France* [Description of New France] published in 1752, saw a parallel between the temperament of Canadian *habitants* and their horses. In a few colourful lines, he recalls an eventful crossing of the Saint-Charles River, during which the carioles showed speed and bravery in attempting to take the lead of a small convoy, knocking against each other, and the ones who were in the greatest hurry piercing their shafts into the backrests "of the ones they wanted to overtake, at the risk of hurting the

"The Havre ship arrived on the sixteenth of July, bearing horses the King had sent to provide to the country. Our Savages, who had never seen any before, admired them, [surprised] that the Moose from France (this is what they called them) were so docile, and so submissive to human will." Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France ès années 1664 et 1665 [*Account of the events in New France between 1664 and 1665*], Relation des Jésuites, t.5, Montreal, Éditions du jour, 1972, p. 25.

Horses in New France

1665 :	12
1698 :	684
1706 :	1 872
1720 :	5 270
1760 :	12 000

people sitting there." Shaken by this misadventure, Franquet concluded that "Common *Canadiens* are unruly, stubborn and do whatever suits them or takes their fancy" ; carters, especially, always made it a point of honour to "to display their skill and the strength of their horses."

« Ils vont, les braves petits chevaux canadiens ! »
Drawing by Henri Julien. (Bernard Genest, Massicotte et son temps,
Boréal Express, 1979, Montréal, p. 84.)

The horse was a luxury animal that the colony's nobility used for many different purposes, and some noblemen would harness several whenever they travelled. Referring to the Count de la Galissonnière, Madame Bégon wrote : "He left this morning with, I think, a thousand wagons. There is nothing like it, because he needs so many carioles for all his ices and trinkets. If M. Hocquart [the intendant] were to see this, I believe the pain would kill him."[9] The Sieur de Bougainville, however, condemned the behaviour of certain members of the nobility who took advantage of their privileged position to increase their wealth by renting several horses from the King for public or military works and then overcharging public accounts, often fraudulently[10].

The Canadian horse and the Conquest

The Canadian horse played a non-negligible, albeit poorly understood role[11], during the siege of Quebec City by Wolfe's English troops during the spring of 1759, helping push back the troops who were invading the colony at Pointe-aux-Trembles and Deschambault.

Chevalier la Pause was the first to suggest the formation of a cavalry of 300 to 400 men, with the mission to travel "rapidly to places that could be attacked."[12] As saddles were rare in Quebec, even if all the saddle-makers in the city had been assigned to the task of manufacturing them, la Pause suggested that they be replaced by blankets and that the men should mount their horses "like Tartars". The cavalry was to be provided with "bearskin caps and a uniform, if possible." In his opinion, there should be no obstacle to the formation of a cavalry, since "there are good horses in the country and the habitants are good riders."[13] On June 13, 1759 in Quebec City, the cavalry of *Canadiens*, made up of 150 men and as many horses[14], went on parade for the first time. The Sieurs de la Roche Beaucourt and de Saint-Romme, clothed in their blue uniform with "red lining and collar, and a cross over the stomach", were the captains of this cavalry[15].

Of the few accounts of military feats involving the cavalry of *Canadiens*, the Sieur de Bougainville, who participated in every one, provides the best account of these historical events. On August 9, 1759, he wrote :

> I was following the English squadron up to Pointe-aux-Trembles where it was raining. This parish is seven leagues [28 km] from Quebec City. There I assembled approximately 250 men and I had a troop of 150 volunteers on horseback at three-quarters of a league from me on my right, under the orders of Sieur de la Rochebeaucour, formed at the beginning of the campaign, trained and disciplined by this officer, and who served with the greatest distinction. […] Their first landing was at low tide ; their troops numbering 1500 men were formed there and marched toward me. The cavalry advanced on my right side and I had 300 men in battle. This first attack was not successful and so they re-embarked. My horse was wounded there. They came back to charge a second time at high tide and were again pushed back with a loss of 300 men who were either killed or wounded[16].

On the French side, losses were far lighter, with one man killed and four wounded.

Eight days after the victory at Pointe-aux-Trembles, during the night of August 17, 1759, the English again attempted to land at Deschambault. De Bougainville marched to the site immediately "with two companies of grenadiers, [his] squad of troops in order, one hundred cavalry men and 60 militia men" and forced the enemy back without losing any men. A few weeks later, the French defeat on the Plains of Abraham would put and end to the regime of New France, placing the colony of 60,000 habitants under English authority, and changing the course of history for the Canadian horse.

A threatened breed

After 1820 in particular, the combination of two factors began to threaten the survival of the Canadian horse : imports of foreign breeds and exports of Canadian horses to the United States.

English military personnel were the first to introduce the Thoroughbred to the newly conquered colony. The mix of these high-performing horses with Canadian horses would produce many excellent trotters who would go on to earn distinctions on all racecourses in northeastern America. Among the most well known were St. Lawrence, Moscow and Tom Thumb[17]. Many purebred Canadian horses also won prizes on regional courses in the St. Lawrence valley and the Missisquoi bay area[18].

In the second half of the 19th century, massive numbers of Percherons, Suffolks, Clydesdales, Normands and Cleveland Bays were imported ; these breeds were freely mixed with Canadian horses. The goal of the breeders was to improve the speed, size, conformation or weight of the Canadian horses. However, while some regions fell under the charm of these foreign breeds — Clydesdales were popular around Montreal and Percherons in Chambly, for example – other regions, such as the Richelieu or the Lower Saint Lawrence, remained faithful to the native breed. In the Quebec City region, breeders stated that they preferred the Canadian horse for its efficiency in deep snow.

"The Blainville races will be held on Monday the 15th and Tuesday the 16th of August at one o'clock in the afternoon. The first race will be run by Canadian horses. The second race by horses bred in the province, and the third race will be open to all horses. The ladies' purse is scheduled on the second day; it will be open to all horses." La Minerve, *July 28, 1836.*

The first descriptions

Starting in 1850, the first true descriptions of Canadian horses emerge. In spite of contradictions on many points, they nevertheless agree on a few: the Canadian horse is small, rarely above 15 hands, or 60 inches at the withers, the weight generally varies between 800 and 1000 pounds, the hoofs are wide. The horse has a very thick mane, solid legs, small ears, and a wide chest and hindquarters. The horse's coat is most often bay, black, chestnut or grullo (mouse grey).

(Livre de généalogie du cheval canadien, *v. 1, Canadian Live Stock Records, Ottawa, 1917.*)

LE CHEVAL CANADIEN DE 1860.

Beginning in 1780, Canadian horses were mainly exported to Ontario, but after the Anglo-American war of 1812-1815, equine exports from Quebec were most often sent to the United States. Although some breeders and American authors would be loathe to admit it, Canadian horses were a singular contribution in the constitution of American horse breeds. During the American Civil War (1861-1865), when thousands of horses from Quebec left the country to fill the needs of the Northern (Union) army, vast numbers of Canadian horses were drained from the province. In the wake of the Civil War, many observers concluded that the Canadian breed was on its way to extinction. While in 1862, the *Gazette des campagnes* reported that all parishes in the areas around Montreal had "Canadian horses that are fully superior in size, strength, speed and elegance", eight years later, the *Journal d'agriculture* lamented the near disappearance of the horse from the country : "Why don't we have trotters like in the old times ?" it asked. "It is unfortunate that there are no more good horse trotters like Petit Coq, Bellepoule, [and] Kennel. Or Jodoin's mare, Rougeau, Souligny. These horses were very strong ; but virtually none of them are left. Whose fault is this ? The *habitants* of

this country. They sell their lovely, excellent horses. These horses wind up in the United States in exchange for thousands of dollars in the hands of their masters."
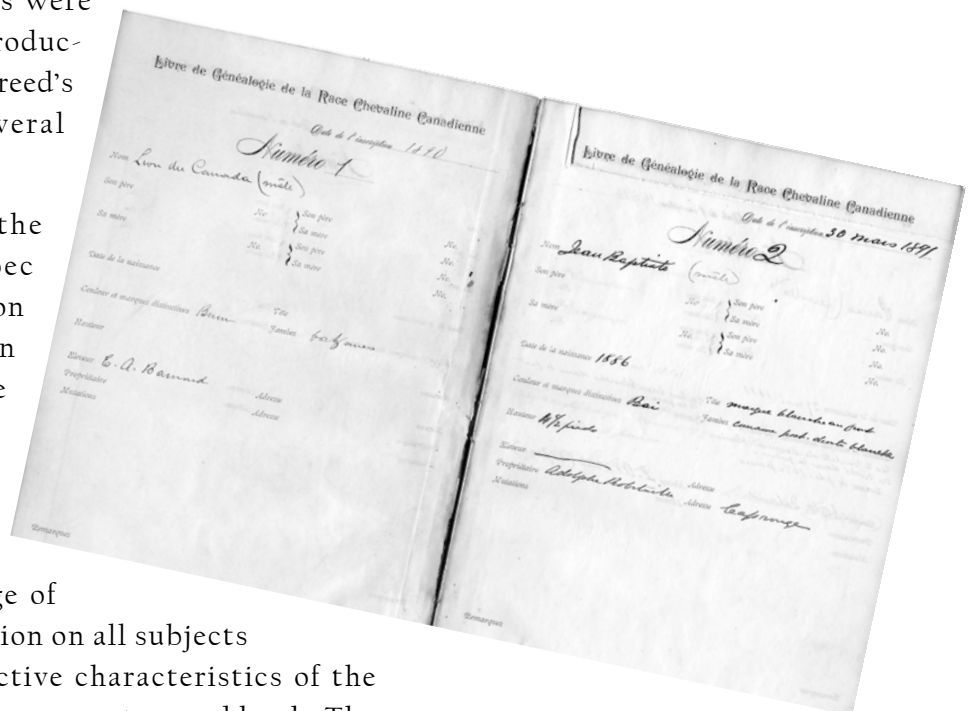
The awakening

Faced with the imminent demise of the Canadian horse, a few individuals, closely associated with the agricultural world, decided to react. Some of them, such as François Pilote, Édouard Barnard, J. C. Chapais and J. A. Couture, are well known figures. Their objective was to regenerate the Canadian horse through reproduction and selection of the best remaining subjects. While they did not deny that the Canadian horse was still the best all-purpose animal they could find, they all acknowledged that the breed would have to be improved to better fit new conditions in agriculture and transportation. Nevertheless, opponents of the Canadian horse maintained that all these efforts were useless, because in some believed the breed had already been extinguished, while others maintained that the rare remaining subjects were defective and unsuitable for reproduction. Unsurprisingly, among the breed's opponents we can find several significant animal importers.

Joseph-Alphonse Couture (Fonds Société des éleveurs de bovins canadiens, SHHY)

At any rate, in 1885 the agricultural council of Quebec decided to recommend the creation of a stud book for the Canadian horse breed. In 1889, the government finally put its intentions into action. The veterinarian J. A. Couture, who had served as head of the Levis Quarantaine since 1878, was placed in charge of collecting genealogical information on all subjects who displayed all of the distinctive characteristics of the Canadian breed and creating a permanent record book. The first years were difficult, and by 1895, only 90 horses were registered. But the same year, the Society of Canadian horse breeders (SECC) was founded and gave considerable impetus to the movement.

First pedigree record book. (Livre de généalogie de la Race Chevaline Canadienne, *1890-1898. Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)*

On September 17, 1895, approximately 125 people came

Joseph Deland
(Fonds Société des éleveurs
de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

Arsène Denis
(Fonds Société des éleveurs
de bovins canadiens, SHHY)

together at Lorne Restaurant, on the exhibition site in the Mile End district of Montreal, to found the Société générale des éleveurs de la province de Québec, with the SECC as one of the five component associations[19]. The goal of this association was to bring together the owners of purebred breeds, to develop and encourage breeding and to promote the interests of breeders in the province of Quebec. The first elected heads of the SECC were J. D. Guay, President, from Chicoutimi ; Joseph Deland from Acadie ; Édouard Barnard from Ange-Gardien ; Robert Ness from Howick ; Féréol Bernard from Beloeil ; Adelme Côté from Saint-Barthélemy, and Arsène Denis from Saint-Norbert. During the first meeting, Dr. Couture, founder of the breeders' movement, was named lifetime secretary general of the Society. The Commission of the genealogy books attributed absolute ownership of all records in its possession since 1889 to Dr. Couture, including the right to charge registration and transfer fees on the entries. This transfer of powers had already been approved by the Lieutenant governor of Quebec on July 26, 1895[20].

By making the Canadian horse known to a wider public swath, the foundation of the SECC greatly influenced registration numbers. In 1905, breed genealogy records numbered 1801 source horses (628 males and 1173 females). The majority of these horses came from the counties of Rouville, Bagot, Saint-Hyacinthe, Verchères and Laprairie.

Letter heading of the
Société des éleveurs de
chevaux canadiens.
(Fonds Société des
éleveurs des chevaux
canadiens, SHHY)

Centralization of pedigree records

The minister of Agriculture in the Laurier government, Sydney Fisher of Knowlton, was a breeder of Guernsey cattle. He therefore readily understood the importance of animal genealogies for the future of agriculture. In 1900, Ottawa voted on a law that would establish that from then on, the only valid genealogy records in Canada would be the ones held by breeders' associations formed in accordance with federal stipulations. Three years later, a vast offensive was initiated to centralize all pedigree records of animal breeds in Ottawa. With the exception of Holstein cattle and the province of Quebec, all breeders' associations in Canada consented to centralization in early 1905. At the end of April, on the strength of its success, Ottawa was able to organize "a registration system for purebred animals"[21], designated under the name Canadian Live Stock Records.

In Quebec, Fisher won hands down during the annual assembly of the General association of breeders in the province of Quebec held in June 1905, during which the minister dangled a carrot in front of all the participants by listing the advantages of association with Ottawa : funding, recognition of their registration certificates throughout Canada and the United States, publication of pedigree records books, fee reductions when transporting animals by railway. Breeders in Quebec were not compelled to accept centralization, he told them, but if they did not consent, they would end up isolated and at a disadvantage. In 1906, the General association of breeders in the province of Quebec finally came around to the minister's arguments and agreed to be subject to the dispositions of l'*Acte concernant la constitution d'associations de livres de généalogie du bétail*[22] [Incorporation of breed associations for livestock pedigree records Act]. In the years following centralization, collaboration with Ottawa provided a lot of visibility to the Quebec association, and the annual assembly became a popular event. In 1911, for example, in addition to Sydney Fisher, six of his public servants attended, along with a considerable number of conference speakers and journalists representing *La Presse*, *La Patrie*, *Canada*, le *Devoir*, *The Herald*, *The Witness*, the *Journal of Agriculture*, the *Farm Journal* of Toronto and the *Farmers' Advocate* in London, Ontario.

Honorable Sydney Fisher
Minister of Agriculture
in the Laurier Government .
(Brome County Historical Society)


New pedigree records for Canadian horses

After carrying out a scrupulous examination of the first pedigree records of Canadian horses, the commissioner for Animal industry, J. G. Rutherford, concluded that they contained too many undesirable horses. In 1906, Minister Fisher ordered a grand tour of inspection and registration, financed by his ministry, with the stated goal of creating a new stud book for the Canadian breed. From April 1907 to December 1909, five inspectors, including two SECC representatives (Arsène Denis and J. A. Couture) traveled throughout the province of Quebec in quest of the best representatives of the breed, even registering a few horses from Ontario and Manitoba.

However, prior to the inspection that would lead to the reconstitution of the Canadian breed, the desired type had to be defined. J. G. Rutherford stated his desire : "The model type according to which the Commission should be guided is the old type of Canadian horse."[23] Dr. Couture was much more explicit on the subject :

The Commission [for the inspection] received instructions by which they should only accept perfectly healthy, properly conformed, vigorous and alert subjects with no features of large draught breeds (Clyde, Shire, Percheron, Suffolk). As well, the size of stallions should not surpass 5 feet 3 inches and a weight of 1350 lbs […] ; the size of mares should not surpass 5 feet 2 inches and a weight of 1150 lbs. The mix of a bit of

A list of the horses selected on the first inspection tour for inscription in the national pedigree record of the Canadian breed. (Liste des chevaux recommandés pour l'inscription au Registre national de la race chevaline canadienne du Canada, 1907-1909, 1912. Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)
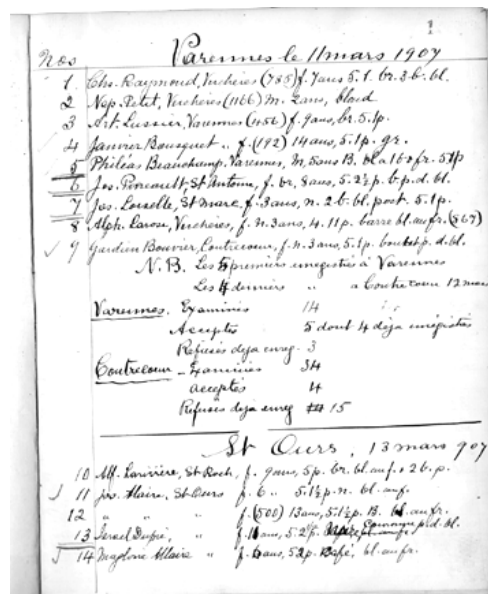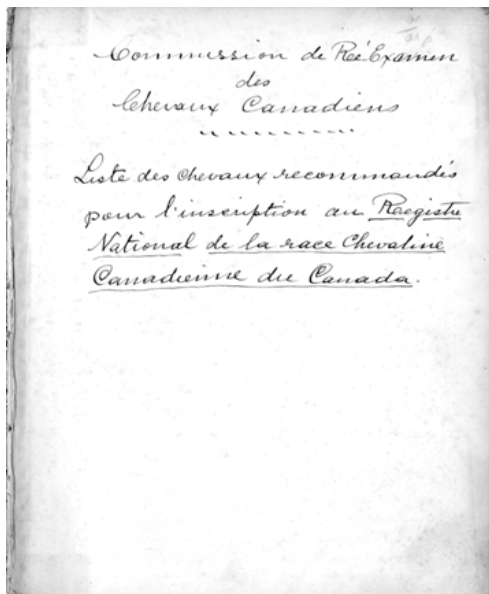
foreign blood that could improve the bearing, shape or background (English Pureblood, Hackney, American trotter, Carrossier français) can be accepted, as long as their blood does not predominate. The Department insisted that the horses accepted by the Commission for the new record books should display :

    a. Uniform size and weight
    b. Strong bone structure, large joints, solid
       hoof   structure
    c. Quick pace
    d. Agility
    e. Conformation indicating that the subject has
       more heart than belly.[24]

J. G. Rutherford
(*L.V. Kelly*, The Range Men : The story of the Ranchers and Andians of Alberta, *Toronto : William Briggs, 1913*)

Both for Rutherford as well as for everyone working carefully on this project, it was not about finding a few purebred subjects to save the breed "because too much foreign blood had [already] been added", rather, this was to be a reconstitution of the breed by selecting horses whose morphological features were closest to the old style breed of Canadian horse[25]. As for the maximum limits of size and weight that were imposed on this version of Canadian horse, they were necessary to "counter the trend among breeders to increase the weight of their horses", a practice that "resulted in horses that were completely different from the type of breed to which they were supposed to belong."[26] In summary, everyone seemed to want to recover the Canadian horse that excelled at everything in the past, that was resistant and relatively rapid on the road, and could trot at 10 or 12 miles (16 to 19 km) per hour for several hours and stay on the road in thick snow.

During 1907, the Inspection commission presided by J. A. Couture visited 72 sites in 42 counties in the province of Quebec. The commission examined 1937 horses and refused 1295, a rejection rate of two-thirds. The inspection was severely selective : in Saint-Guillaume, for example, only 12 out of 113 horses were registered. The information left by the Commission's inspectors provides a clearer understanding of the reasons for the large number of refusals. Concerning the horses examined in Terrebonne on April 6, 1907, the inspector wrote : "Mediocre quality, several skeletal defects, medium-sized hoofs, mixed blood."[27] Of the 21 horses he examined on the site, 17 were refused. Three days later in Vaudreuil, the Commission rejected 35 out of 40 horses for similar reasons.

In 1908, inspectors registered 331 new horses and 91 others in 1909. In the 1909 expedition, the Commission travelled to the Gaspé Peninsula as well as outside of Quebec, registering 11 horses in Ontario and seven in Manitoba and the western provinces. Couture lamented however that there were only 20 registrations in the Matane and Gaspé regions, where, he said, there were many small Canadians of the old type. In all, the grand inspection tour conducted over three years resulted in the registration of 1066 source horses.

In 1912, yielding to the SECC's insistence, the federal government agreed to fund a second grand inspection tour for source horses ; as soon as the news was out, 635 individuals from all corners of the province announced their intention to participate. In response to this demand, 75 inspection posts were set up throughout the 41 counties of Quebec. Of the 1218 horses examined during the spring and summer of 1912, the Commission accepted 489 (40.1 %) as Canadians.
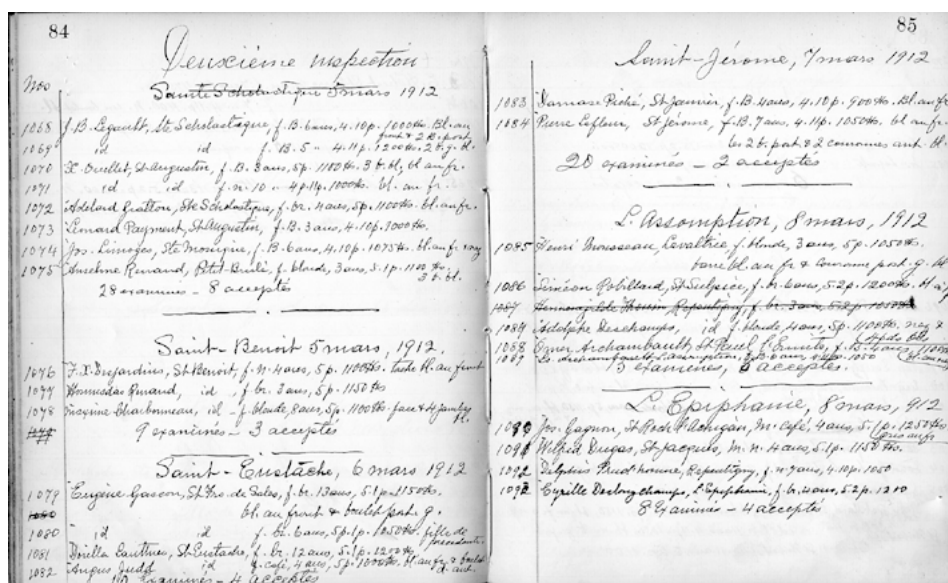
*Second inspection / registration Tour, 1912. (*Liste des chevaux recommandés pour l'inscription au Registre national de la race chevaline canadienne du Canada, 1907-1909, 1912. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)*

In total, 1555 source horses out of 10,000 horses examined were registered in the new genealogical books for the Canadian horse breed between 1907 and 1912. Of this core of horses for the contemporary breed, 242 horses were already registered in the former genealogy books.

In 1913, a third inspection tour was not granted to increase the number of stallions, so the SECC decided to acquire

some horses from foreign breeds, register them as Canadians and place them in most highly regarded stud farms. Five breeds fought for the honour of this reproductive mission : Morgan, Hackney, Standardbred, Thoroughbred and Saddlebred. Following a sixteen-day journey to visit the major breeding centres in the United States, the inspection commission established for the occasion concluded that : "the only recommendable breed is the Standardbred [the American trotter], and only if we can find subjects of the required size and weight."[28] Standardbred was not a random choice, since everyone agreed to it ; furthermore, it was disclosed in the 1881 issue of the very patriotic American *National Live Stock Journal* that the Canadian horse had greatly contributed to creating the breed. However, the commission was unable to find Standardbred stallions that fulfilled the inspection commission's criteria, and Ottawa was opposed to the initiative[29] (funded by Quebec City), therefore the crossbreeding project was abandoned. A decade later, a new attempt to improve the Canadian horse through the registration of a few Brittany stallions failed due to similar reasons[30].

In the end, the "new" Canadian horse at the beginning of the 20th century diverged somewhat from a description of the breed from fifty years previous, yet it preserved the general features that had always been characteristic of the breed. Of all the source horses registered in the first pedigree records published in 1917, 65 % of the 976 mares and 91 % of the stallions stood 15 hands (60 inches) high or more, and half of them were 15.2 hands (68 inches) or more. The weight of these horses varied between 1000 and 1300 pounds. Dominant colours were, in order : bay (32 %), brown (28 %), black (23 %) and chestnut (13 %).

On the left, a Canadian mare with ten of her offsprings, owened by Henri Deland of L'Acadie.
*In 1916, Deland competed for the Mérite agricole's Gold Medal Award. (*Rapport du Ministre de l'Agriculture de la Province de Québec 1916, *Québec, Imprimeur du roi, 1916, p. 246)*

Canadian horses, property of L. A. Bouchard et Frères of Saint-Valentin.
*They also competed for the Mérite agricole's Gold Medal Award in 1916. (*Rapport du Ministre de l'Agriculture de la Province de Québec 1916, *Québec, Imprimeur du roi, 1916, p. 284)*

Three grand exhibitions

To promote the Canadian horse to the public and accelerate the rate of registrations, Ottawa agreed to finance three grand exhibitions — Saint-Jean in 1908, Saint-Hyacinthe in 1909 and Trois Rivieres in 1910 — where several cash prizes were distributed to the most deserving breeders.

The Saint-Jean exhibition was held on September 15th, 16th and 17th of 1908. "The contest organizers wanted the public to appreciate the features of the breed at the same time as the obvious beauty and breeding value of each subject on exhibition. They also wanted the horses to be judged as roadsters or luxury possessions."[31] The exhibition was restricted to registered Canadian horses, or those who could qualify via the Inspection commission, whose inspectors were present on site. To earn the right to participate, each competitor had to pay $ 1 per horse for registration and use of the stables, straw included. There were two prize categories. In a special conservation class founded by the federal ministry of agriculture, $ 500 was awarded to be shared among the five best Canadian stallions three years and older ; and $ 250 among the 15 best Canadian mares of the same age. For the stallions, half of the prize amount was awarded, followed by the other half at the end of 1909, to prevent a winning horse from being sold and leaving the country before he could transmit his genes to the next generation. Several other classes participated as well — harnessed horses, breed mares with or without foal, fillies between one and three years, paired and harnessed teams — where the prizes, not as important as the ones awarded by Ottawa, were provided by the SECC. While many of the participants in this exhibition were from Saint-Jean or Montreal, others had travelled from Quebec City, the Lac Saint-Jean region, and the Charlevoix.

Dr. Couture's report of the Saint-Jean exhibition was very positive, stating that never before in America "had it been possible to see 48 stallions and 82 mares of the same breed." He also insisted on the excellence of the mare category, remarkable for its uniform style, "which led to comments from the crowd of spectators, who said that "here were some real Canadian horses."[32] Over the three days of the exhibition of Canadian horses in Saint-Jean, 20,000 visitors attended.

Pamphlet published for the 1909 Canadian horse exhibition, held in Saint-Hyacinthe, in which we find the officals names, the rules and regulation, lists of the differents classes of horses and prizes. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

In September of the following year, the Canadian horse exhibition was held in Saint Hyacinthe, where similar prizes were distributed. On this occasion, 28 stallions and 38 mares took part in different contests, as did colts and fillies. While the exhibition was considered a success, it was not "equal to the Saint-Jean exhibition that had the advantage of novelty."[33]

In 1910, the exhibition was held in Trois Rivieres, where 61 Canadian horses, including 14 stallions and 26 mares, shared the prize money. While public interest for these exhibitions may have been declining, all of the exhibitions were successful in immediately encouraging breeders of Canadian horses to attend provincial or county exhibitions. During the provincial exhibition held in Quebec City in 1912, the category of Canadian horses was not only the largest, but in the opinion of spectators and judges it was the most interesting "because of the uniformity of the subjects on exhibit, their strong-boned limbs [and] the quality of the hoofs […]."[34]

Experimental farms in Cap-Rouge and Saint-Joachim

Established in the mid-1880s by the federal government, experimental farms would become powerful tools in agricultural development, horticulture and breeding. The selection processes for Canadian horses at two of these farms, Cap-Rouge and especially Saint-Joachim, had undoubtedly been decisive in the future of the breed.

In 1913, the federal government purchased and transported approximately 20 Canadian horses to the experimental farm at Cap-Rouge, near Quebec City, to see whether the bloodlines would result in a horse that would be better adapted to the agricultural practices of the early 20th century. "We intend to breed horses that weigh between 1200 and 1300 pounds, horses that are rustic, with a hardy constitution, rapid yet docile, good for farm work and for carriages,"[35] stated Gustave Langelier, director of Cap-Rouge. In 1919, Némèze Garneau, president of Quebec's general association of breeders, was thrilled that not only would the farm include a superb harras of more than thirty Canadian horses of uniform size, colour, general appearance and features, but also that the work accomplished at Cap-Rouge "inspired the [SECC] to make

the Canadian breed uniform […], to establish uniformity and ensure it would be transmitted it to the offspring." With this solid objective, the directors of the SECC readily supported the establishment of a new harras in Saint-Joachim, where the principal aim would be to produce Canadian stallions, which were not as easy to find as the mares that could still be found "in large numbers […] and of very good quality in the province."[36]

Improvement of the Canadian horse went into accelerated mode beginning in 1919 with the transfer of horses from Cap-Rouge to the harras in Saint-Joachim, where between 60 and 100 Canadian subjects were kept permanently. The Saint-Joachim farm, rented from the Seminaire du Quebec, occupied a surface area of 500 acres, with a house, stables, barns and other buildings. The federal government paid all the operating fees and Quebec paid the rent, while the SECC administered the breeding program.

Canadian mares belonging to the Saint-Joachim experimental farm. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY.)

Just as in Cap-Rouge, Gustave Langelier, the most significant personality in the modern history of Canadian horses after Dr. Couture, served as director of scientific operations at Saint-Joachim[37], where the initial herd came from 38 separate genealogical lines, among which the most appropriate were chosen for the set objectives. The horses eliminated from the selection process were sold off to breeders and thus contributed to propagating the Canadian breed in the Quebec countryside.

Three years after the start of operations at the Saint-Joachim harras, the SECC — whose head offices was mainly

composed of farmers — still appeared incapable of choosing the ideal type of Canadian horse, to Dr. Langelier's intense displeasure. He did not hesitate to express his feelings to the Society's secretary, Adrien Morin, in a letter dated in September 1923 : "They say we need the big stallion Gilbert for more weight ; they also say we need stallions like the small one-year-olds so we don't lose the rapid pace that is a characteristic feature of the breed ; and everyone seems to agree that Albert and those like him have to be carefully preserved. The result is that nobody is suggesting anything to improve the breed, which leads me to believe that I am back at the starting point."[38] The impact of Dr. Couture's death the year before was beginning to be felt.
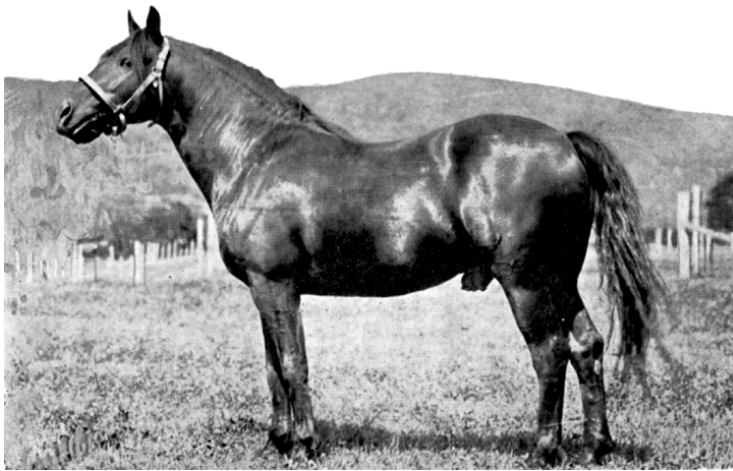
Albert de Cap-Rouge (Andéa St-Pierre, Historique de la race chevaline canadienne, *Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, 1940.)*

Two types of Canadian horse emerged from the initial improvement process carried out at Saint-Joachim. The first was rustic, stocky, strong-limbed and relatively heavy ; the second was lighter, and its pace "would be the envy of Hackney owners", according to Gustave Langelier[39]. In his view, the ideal was to preserve the desirable qualities present in both types, through consanguinity. The SECC finally selected Albert from Cap-Rouge — but it would have liked a larger and heavier type by 200 pounds — who, for a time, became the most important genitor for the breed. That stallion, wrote the agronomist Marc Leclerc, was for a time related to all except four horses in the harras ; he was father, grandfather and great-grandfather[40].

In 1928, ten years into a severely selective breeding program, the Saint-Joachim harras included only horses from five of the thirty-eight original bloodlines. Three years later, the provincial exhibition in Quebec City honoured the efforts of Dr. Langelier and his team when the horses of Saint Joachim won the Bank of Commerce Cup for the most excellent team of purebred horses. The honour was especially well-deserved as the Canadian horses from Saint-Joachim were up against Mr. Dawes' Percherons and Mr. Ness' Clydesdales.

These large-scale efforts to improve the Canadian horse came to an end in 1940, when the federal government, thrown

headfirst into the drama of the Second World War, refused to extend its agreement beyond 20 years. On November 7th of that same year, the 49 Canadian horses were put up for auction, and this finalized the diaspora of the Saint Joachim harras, an experiment that had cost close to a half a million dollars overall from the public treasury. The fifteen or so horses sold that day went to the provincial research farm in Deschambault, and a few others went to the experimental farm in Sainte-Anne de la Pocatière, where the government had decided to extend its experience with the Canadian breed of horse albeit at a smaller scale. The remaining individuals were purchased by Canadian horse breeders' unions, which were in full expansion at the time.

Alexandre Fournier and father Jean David on the experimental farm at Deschambault. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Alexandre Fournier, SHHY)

A stallion property of the Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière experimental farm. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, SHHY)

Breeders' unions

Based on the stipulations of a law dating back to 1925[41], purebred breeders' unions were organized and ended up being an outstanding rescue operation for the Canadian breed. In concrete terms, any group of breeders who wished to take advantage of this breeding format had to include at least ten owners of a registered Canadian mare, and provide the services of a registered class A Canadian stallion, through purchase, borrow or rental. To encourage these unions, Quebec provided no-interest loans for 60 % of the purchase price of the breeding

horses and the two levels of government allocated generous bonuses during annual exhibitions reserved for the members of each union.

Gustave Langelier, director of the Saint-Joachim harras, was the first to call for the creation of Canadian horse breeders' unions. As early as 1927, he suggested that the SECC attempt to organize at least one of these unions "where we can bring together a dozen good mares and where we could send a good Saint Joachim stallion."[42] The first steps were finally taken in 1930[43] and in 1932 the first Canadian horse breeders' union was formed in Montmagny. But once the union movement had been initiated, Canadian horse breeding would see its finest years since the era of the grand inspection/registration tours and the three exhibitions financed by the federal government held between 1907 and 1912. Renewed interest for Canadian horse breeding was also nourished by a sympathetic current for farm horses during the Great Depression years of the 1930s.

In 1942, an exhibition was held on Josapha Laliberté's farm, president of the Lévis Canadian horse breeders' union which numbered seventeen members. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

Renewed enthusiasm for Canadian horse breeding occurred at an opportune moment. Between the inauguration of the Saint Joachim harras in 1919 and the creation of the first breeders' union in Montmagny in 1932, only 593 horses were registered, for an average of 42 per year. The number of SECC members had followed a similar curve, the lowest threshold occurring in 1930, with 18 registrations. The apathy of Canadian horse breeders would have negative consequences when the time came to bring together enough subjects to respond to the desire of breeders to form a union, confided Andréa St-Pierre in a letter to a correspondent[44]. While the members of the Montmagny union were able to compose a select herd by purchasing 11 mares from the Saint Joachim harras at relatively low cost, many other breeders not only did not have this opportunity, and had difficulties finding a sufficient number of breeding stock. Therefore, in November 1933, the executive committee of the SECC asked the president and

Members of the SECC gathered in front of Quebec's city hall for their annual assembly on February 23, 1932. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

secretary of the Society to study a project that would allow the use of unregistered Canadian mares for breeding, as there were still many of them in the province, "to facilitate mating with registered stallions with the aim of multiplying Canadian type horses as rapidly as possible."[45] Some months later, during the annual assembly of the SECC, the pedigree record books were reopened[46] to include fillies born from unions between registered Canadian stallions and crossbred mares with breed characteristics. The agronomist Irénée Paré observed that there were more than 50 farmers who were owners of one or two Canadian mares of Canadian breed type in the south Roberval agronomical division.[47] The registration policy for crossbred mares would end in 1942[48].

The creation of breeders' unions "with part Canadian blood" was a necessary consequence to the admission of crossbred subjects in pedigree records. This was also the means suggested by Andréa St-Pierre to breeders in Dorchester, who did not have enough purebred Canadian horses in 1936[49]. The first union of crossbred horses was created in Bellechasse in September 1937, a few days before the Shefford union was formed. By 1938, there were already 11 breeders' unions, bringing together 321 purebred horses and 181 crossbred mares with ½, ¾ or 7/8 Canadian blood[50]. But demand soon exceeded breeding capacity and the creation of each new union took special skill, and the dearth of horses often encouraged breeders to obtain them from other unions, "throwing them

**Liste des Syndicats
d'Elevage de Chevaux Canadiens
et adresses des Secrétaires.**

Syndicats :   Secrétaires :

BELLECHASSE, M. J. Bruno Potvin, Agronome, St-Michel.
DORCHESTER, M. Paul Brunel, Agronome, Ste-Hénédine.
LÉVIS, M. Lionel Bégin, Agronome, Notre-Dame-de-Lévis.
KAMOURASKA, M. Napoléon Ouellet, Ste-Anne-de-la-Poca-
          tière.
L'ISLET, M. Arthur Létourneau, Agronome, L'Islet.
STE-CROIX-DE-LOTBINIÈRE, M. Henri Pouliot, Ste-Croix.
STE-AGATHE-DE-LOTBINIÈRE, M. L.-A. Dumont,
          Ste-Agathe.
MONTMAGNY, M. Paul Carignan, Agronome, Montmagny.
BÉCANCOUR, M. Jos. Hébert, Bécancour.
BAIE-DES-SABLES, M. Raymond Langlois, Agronome,
          Matane.
QUÉBEC, M. Joseph Couture, Loretteville.
ST-DONAT-DE-RIMOUSKI, M. P. C. Saindon, Ptre. St-Donat.
ISLE VERTE et RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP, M. Adrien Martin,
          Isle Verte.
ST-HYACINTHE, M. Ernest Sylvestre, St-Hyacinthe.
SHEFFORD, M. Lucien Bergeron, West-Shefford.
YAMACHICHE, M. Léon Girardin, Yamachiche.

      Vous pouvez aussi communiquer directement avec la
Ferme-Ecole Provinciale de La Gorgendière, Co. Portneuf et
la Station Expérimentale de Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière qui
ont toujours en mains d'excellents chevaux Canadiens.

**Secrétariat de la Société des Eleveurs
de Chevaux Canadiens**

Ministère de l'agriculture, Québec.

(Connaissez-vous le cheval
canadien?, *Société des éleveurs de
chevaux canadiens, Québec, 1943*)

into disarray."[51] The high point of the breeders' movement came in 1942, when there were 17 Canadian horse breeders' unions in Quebec : in Kamouraska, Bécancour, L'Islet, Montmagny, Bellechasse, Lévis, Dorchester, L'Assomption, Montréal, Joliette, Berthier, Nicolet, Yamaska, Richelieu, Saint-Hyacinthe, Bagot and Shefford.

The creation of breeders' unions and registration of crossbred mares had beneficial effects on SECC activities. Of the thirty-one registrations on the books in 1934, there were 80 the following year, 165 in 1937, and 212 in 1938, a high water mark for that period. However, the number of SECC members did not increase in proportion with the registrations, a fact lamented by the SECC secretary, Jean-Paul Lettre : "Last year our unions numbered over 225 members and of this number only 60 were SECC members. This is not sufficient, and is not fair either," he wrote in 1942 in a letter to the union head in Dorchester[52].

On July 1st, 1944, the end of the assistance program for purebred and crossbred horse breeding unions broke up a movement that was already showing signs of decline. In 1945, a dozen unions neglected to submit an annual report to the SECC. Although not quite over, the best days of the breeders' unions were already in the past : their short term downfall caused by withdrawal of government assistance, and moreover by post-war transformations in agricultural practices. Only a few years later, the situation of the Canadian horse breed was again threatened.

The 1958 annual assembly of the Rivière-du-Loup breeder's union held in l'Isle Verte. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

Louis Thouin, of Repentigny, with is mare in 1936. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Louis Thouin, SHHY)

Maud, a mare belonging to Ernest Sylvestre. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Ernest Sylvestre, SHHY)

A stallion belonging to Donat Roy, of Saint-Jérôme, 1950.(Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, dossier Donat Roy, SHHY. Photo : Office provincial de publicité, Québec)

The beginnings of the provincial harras

"On November 27, 1940, the horses purchased from St. Joachim arrived in Deschambault. There were 15, including one stallion, two 2-year-old fillies, three 1-year-old fillies, two of whom were born that year and seven mares [...] A little later, we acquired another mare from St. Joachim. The only horses purchased afterward were three who were successive genitors for our harras."
Andréa St-Pierre, *"The provincial study farm in Deschambault"*, Le Digeste de l'éleveur, 3, 10, (June 1949) p.10.

From 1940 to 1965, Andréa St-Pierre was the director of the provincial study farm at Deschambault. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens, SHHY)

The provincial study farm at Deschambault (La Gorgendière)

Just as the mission of the Saint Joachim harras was to foster the survival of the Canadian horse breed and redefine its type during the 1920s, the same task was entrusted to the study farm at Deschambault during the 1950s and 1960s. While some well known breeders such as Armand Bourassa[53] still carried the flame for the Canadian breed, they were nevertheless too few and far between to have a significant impact on its future. In 1983, the secretary of the SECC, Jacques Dupont, stated that if the study farm hadn't taken over where Saint Joachim left off, "we wonder if the Canadian breed would even exist today."[54]

Depending on the year and the number of foalings, the equine herd at Deschambault varied between 20 and 40 heads. The sworn objective of this state-of-the art breeding centre, under the direction of Andréa St-Pierre from 1940 to 1965, and later by Jean-Marc Bélanger, was to increase the size and weight of the Canadian horse, to create a draught animal that would be suitable for an agricultural lifestyle increasingly dependent on motors and mechanical equipment. In the beginning of the 1960s, the impact of breeding selection was strong, as the average weight of 14 mares in the harras was 1395 pounds, and the three stallions weighed in at 1400, 1550 and 1555 pounds. For the stallions, this was an average increase of 250 pounds compared to the weight of Canadian stallions in 1940. Changes in the Canadian horse's temperament were also noticed. "These small, nervous and often irascible horses, for some at least, used to be disobedient and hard to train, but they have become more gentle, docile and easy to handle," stated a report on the horse temperament read at the annual assembly of the SECC in 1962[55]. With the refusal of some to abandon the characteristics of the old-time Canadian horse, but mainly because these features had been solidly anchored in the genes, the breed tended to return to more modest proportions as soon as systematic efforts to increase the size and weight were ceased.

On November 21, 1981, when the experimental farm in Deschambault decided to sell its herd of 44 horses at an auction reserved exclusively for members of the SECC, the timing could not have been more strategic : a new generation of breeders who valued equestrian sports and recreation had only recently taken the reins of the association, and they were determined to set it on its feet again.

Left : The administration building at Deschambault.

Below : A horse presentation at the 1945 annual picnic. (Fonds Société des éleveurs de bovins canadiens, SHHY. Photo : Office provincial de publicité, Québec)

The new destiny of the Canadian horse

Agriculture in Quebec underwent great changes in the 1950s and 60s. For horse breeding, this was a period of decline and uncertainty. Rejected once and for all in cities and replaced by cars and trucks, horses underwent progressive depopulation in the countryside, where they were replaced by tractors. In 1951, Quebec farms numbered 232,863 horses, but there were only 45,543 left by 1971. During the same period, the value of equipment and machinery increased from 212 to 428 million dollars.

In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution ushered in a new mentality, especially with regard to more leisure time, a new indicator of achievement in modern life. The "leisure society" concept had greater popular resonance than did salaries, and living conditions had greatly improved during the post-war years. Equestrian sports, practiced exclusively by Anglophones up until that time, were gradually introduced to the recreational agenda of many Francophones, and this encouraged the breeding of lighter horses. The dynamic movement to affirm national identity accompanying the Quiet Revolution also renewed an interest for the national horse. Inspired by this idea, the government of the Parti Québécois decided to set up a special grant program for purebred Canadian colts in the late 1970s.

After the dismantlement of the Deschambault farm, Canadian horse breeding with SECC membership was reinvigorated. The number of registrations reached an average of one hundred each year, which was five times greater than during the 1950s. As for the number of members, there was a great leap in reaching nearly 350 by the beginning of the 1990s. In 2002, the overall numbers of Canadian horses had reached approximately 3000 heads, including 1000 outside of Quebec, where the number of enthusiasts was also increasing. Threatened with extinction at various moments since the beginning of the 20th century, the future of the Canadian horse now appears assured, especially since it was recognized as one of Quebec's heritage breeds by the National Assembly in 1999, and then proclaimed "national horse of Canada" by the House of Commons in the spring of 2002.

While the situation of the Canadian horse has greatly

improved over the past twenty-five years, the debates surrounding its role and morphology have still not been settled. Today, instead of pitting farm horse proponents against the defenders of roadsters or trotters, the opposing guardians of the breed are those who "promote the protection of original standards to preserve the genetic heritage"[56] of the Canadian horse and those who promote the development of a large, refined and well-built animal, designed to partake in all equestrian activities and to handle the size and strength of contemporary riders. Ultimately, breeder practices will be the decisive factor in the future of the breed.

Notes

1. Ernest Gagnon, *Le fort et le château Saint-Louis*, Québec, Léger Brousseau, 1895, p. 331.

2. Paul Bernier, « Le cheval canadien : esquisse historique », *Temps libre*, 4, 4 (December 1980), p. 116.

3. Robert Leslie Jones, "The old French-Canadian horse : Its history in Canada and the United States", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 28, 2, (June 1947), p. 127-129.

4. It may be that a specific selection from a single region could have led to certain variations in the Canadian type.

5. Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle*, Paris et Montréal, Plon, 1974, p.319. Emphasis is ours.

6. "Journal de M. de Bougainville", *RAPQ.*, 1923-1924, p. 272.

7. This unfounded statement is also found in the preamble to the *National Horse of Canada Act*, officially recognized in April 2002.

8. "Letter from Minister Colbert to Talon" April 5, 1667, *RAPQ*, 1930-1931, p. 69.

9. "Correspondence with Madame Bégon", *RAPQ*, 1934-1935, p. 43.

10. Thus he reports in 1758, in the construction of Fort Carillon : « M. de Lotbinière's clerk had orders to provide certificates for more trips than the carters actually made ». « Journal de Monsieur de Bougainville », *RAPQ*, 1923-1924, p. 353.

11. Thus reports Paul Bernier, in *Le cheval canadien* (Sillery, Septentrion, 1992, p. 47), who makes this conclusion : « The presence of a cavalry is thus not clearly established» during the Conquest.

12. « Journal du siège de Québec du 10 mai au 18 septembre 1759 », *RAPQ*, 1920-1921, p.145.

13. « Les Mémoires du Chevalier la Pause », *RAPQ*, 1932-1933, p.372.

14. « Relation du siège de Québec », *RAPQ*, 1937-1938, p. 5.

15. « Journal du siège de Québec […] », *op.cit.*, p.149.

16. "Journal de M. de Bougainville", *RAPQ*, 1923-1924, p. 388

17. For more details, consult Henry William Herbert in *Frank Forester's horse and horsemanship of the United States and British Provinces of North America*, v.2, New York, Stringer & Townsend, 1857.

18. Around 1840, the Missisquoi Bay where ice races were organized annually, was known for the quality of its trotters, and the best among them found takers among the Americans. The Anglophones of this region appeared to particularly appreciate Canadian horses. Mario Gendron et al, *Histoire du Piémont des Appalaches*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999, p.88.

19. The other breeders' associations were for Canadian breed cattle, Jersey-Canadian cattle, and sheep and pigs of various breeds.

20. Copy of the Committee report of the Honourable Executive Council, on July 24, 1895, Minutes of the annual assemblies of the general association of breeders, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de bovins de race canadienne*, B.35, P025

21. *Le Journal d'agriculture et d'horticulture*, 8, 21, (mai 1905), p. 482.

22. 63-64 Vict. Chap. 33, *Acts of parliament of the Dominion of Canada*, v.1, Ottawa, Samuel Edward Dawson, 1900.

23. Conference by Dr J. G. Rutherford, Commissioner of Animal Industry, before the commission for agriculture and colonization in the House of Commons, March 17, 1909, *Livre généalogique de la race chevaline canadienne*, v. 1, Ottawa, Canadian National Live Stock Records, 1917, p. ix.

24. J. A. Couture, « Mémoire […] », *Fonds Société des éleveurs de bovins canadiens*, SHHY.

25. In a letter dated March 18, 1916, J. A. Couture explained in more detail the conditions that determined the registration of Canadian horses in the new pedigree record books, in particular attempting to illuminate the confusion that existed between the "type" and the "blood" of the Canadian horse : "The TYPE was set at a conference by the Minister of Agriculture (M. Fisher), his commissioner of Animal Industry at the time (Dr J. G. Rutherford […]) and the Inspection commission. And the Commission adhered strictly to this type that must be as close as possible to the old-style Canadian horse, while taking into account current circumstances, which are quite different from those of a century ago : a type with a specific size, specific weight, specific bearing, aptitudes, general anatomical conformation, etc. [But] a great number of these horses display foreign blood, some from one breed, some from another breed, still others from a third breed. This is the truth and it was as inevitable as it remains inevitable [if another inspection were to be conducted]. The Canadian pureblood does not exist anymore. But mixed blood exists to varying degrees. In some regions, all traces of the Canadian horse have disappeared. In other regions the features of this horse still exist in a very pronounced fashion. […] The task of the Commission was to register the horses that still show sufficient features to earn the name CANADIAN HORSE, to assist in establishing an all-purpose breed with the aptitudes, energy, endurance and more or less the outer appearance of the old style Canadian horse : a horse, in a word, that would be ours, and which would become uniform over time." Letter from J.A. Couture to J. Dumont, March 18, 1916, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

26. Conference by Dr J. G. Rutherford […], *op. cit.*, p. x.-xi

27. Report from the Canadian horse inspection commission, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

28. Minutes of the SECC, April 24, 1914. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

29. "I am strongly in favour of using our own Canadian stallions rather than working on the introduction

of foreign blooded stallions ; […] I was among those most disappointed when, this summer and last fall, I learned that we were considering the suggestion of the introduction of foreign blood to improve the breed. I believe that our breed of Canadian horse is able to propagate […]. I repeat, I was so exceedingly disappointed […] that I had decided to get rid of our Canadian mares at Cap Rouge and replace them with Clydes or some other more visible breed. Improvement of the Canadian horse using this breeders' program would be in my opinion a very big mistake, […]." Letter from J. H. Grisdale, commissioner of Animal Industry, to J. A. Couture, on November 24, 1914. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens.* SHHY.

30. For more information, consult *Le Journal d'agriculture*, 27, 10 (April 1924).

31. J. A. Couture, *Le Journal d'agriculture et d'horticulture*, 12, 4, (octobre 1908), p. 441.

32. *Ibid.*

33. J. A. Couture, [Printed], 1909, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

34. *Le Journal d'agriculture et d'horticulture*, 16, 3, (September 1912), p.54.

35. Gustave Langelier, « Les chevaux canadiens à la station expérimentale de Québec-Centre », *Ibid.*, 20, 7 (January 1917), p. 147.

36. Letter from Némèze Garneau to J. E. Caron, Quebec minister of agriculture, on November 24, 1919. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

37. His successors were J.-A. Ste-Marie, from 1933 to 1937, then J.-R. Pelletier until 1940, when the harras was closed.

38. Letter from Gustave Langelier to Adrien Morin, September 10, 1923, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

39. Report on breeding operations in the Saint-Joachim harras in 1923, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

40. Marc Leclerc, « La race chevaline canadienne », *Le digeste de l'éleveur*, 5, 3 (November 1950), p. 21.

41. *Loi des syndicats d'élevage*, Statutes reformulated in 1925, chapter 59.

42. Gustave Langelier, Report on operations at the Saint-Joachim harras for 1926, January 22, 1927, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

43. Letter from Adrien Morin to Louis Thouin, September 30, 1930. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

44. "So in 1932, when we wanted to organize the breeding of this horse, we noted that numbers were low. We took a census and then we brought the mares together in unions […] to be able to organize the unions, we needed just about all of the good breeding mares that we could find […]." Letter from Andréa St-Pierre to the Abbott J. A. Poirier, December 16, 1936. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens.* SHHY.

45. Annual assembly of the SECC, 1934, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*,SHHY.

46. "1. That Dr J.-H. Vigneau and the Secretary be assigned to inspect unregistered mares with Canadian blood and the type of the Canadian breed in the province. 2. That the mares which, after inspection, are recognized as being suitable for breeding, be organized in groups, either with unions of breeders' associations, so that mating can be facilitated with purebred stallions. 3. That a special register be opened to keep the records of offspring of these mares and their descendants. Adopted at 12 against 6," *Ibid.*

47. Letter from Irénée Paré to Andréa St-Pierre, March 28, 1935, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

48. Annual assembly of the SECC, February 12, 1942, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY. For more details, consult the "Sections croisées" in volumes 2 and 3 of the genealogical book of Canadian horses.

49. "I do not think it will currently be possible to find the number of purebred Canadian mares in the province needed to organize a new breeding union. [But] it would be possible to purchase crossbred mares at prices varying between $ 175,00 and $ 250,00". Letter from Andréa St-Pierre to P. A. Brunel, March 14, 1936. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

50. The report on union activities in Bécancour for 1936-1940 provides a better understanding of the enthusiasm for this type of breeding. We learn that besides having sold 64 horses worth $ 18,740, during this five-year period, the breeders from the unions in Bécancour also earned $ 4513 in prizes at various exhibitions. Report on operations from the Canadian horse breeders' union in Bécancour, 1940. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

51. Letter from Adrien Morin to Florian Champagne, November 4, 1938. *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens.* SHHY.

52. Letter from Jean-Paul Lettre to Paul Brunel, September 4, 1942, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

53. "We have been raising Canadian horses for 50 years on the Bourassa farm. Mr. Armand's father was a staunch supporter of our breed of horse […]." J.-Bruno Potvin, « Un brillant éleveur de chevaux canadiens », *Le Digeste de l'éleveur*, 3, 8 (avril 1949), p.8.

54. *Livre généalogique de la race chevaline canadienne*, v. 4, SECC, 1983, p. XII

55. Report on the annual general assembly of the SECC, 1962, *Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens*, SHHY.

56. *La terre de chez nous*, March 28, 2002, p.51.

Yearling belonging to A. Tourigny of Bécancour, 1935.
(Fonds Société des éleveurs de chevaux canadiens,
dossier A. Tourigny, SHHY)