

Mr. Yurko: He leaves his hoofprints all over the nation, and indeed throughout the world.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: That is not all.

Mr. Yurko: This was one tough cowboy, unique in his time. He lassoed the strays, kept the nation whole, and prevented the herd from stampeding all over the place. He burned his bilingual brand upon the hide of the nation—an E/F brand with a multicultural bar.

On one of his most famous rides to the old country, he brought back in his saddlebags our individual and collective conscience. In his time he rode many horses—some ornery, some wild, some nags, some thoroughbreds, and only once did he get bucked off. But he did not quit for long. He dusted himself off and rode again. Now he rides slowly into the sunset. As a westerner I say: “Adios,” “Drum Bun”—I know he does not know that “Drum Bun” means—good journey—and “Bon chance”. Mr. Prime Minister, we respect you for what you have done. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1440)

[Translation]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I suppose it must be the grace of my new status, but so many kind words and cordial reminiscences seem to have brought on one of my rare moments of humility.

I would like to thank all those who spoke on their own behalf, and on behalf of their party, for their kind and gracious words. Above all, I want to thank the Members of my Caucus for their support, and I would like to thank especially my constituents in the riding of Mount Royal for their infinite patience and trust. I am always moved when I realize that it is thanks to our democratic system that we represent the Canadian people in Parliament, following a secret and written ballot, and when I realize that all the Members of this House are here thanks to this process. I think we all feel very honoured, as I do myself, at having been elected, in confidence, by a large section of the Canadian people.

[English]

Looking at the clock, I think that it will become apparent to you, Mr. Speaker, and to many of us who have been sitting through these statements, that I meant well by retiring on a day when Parliament was not sitting. I think that that in itself is one of the reasons why it took me so long to retire, because it did mean sitting with as much humility as I could muster—and that I can only do once in a while—listening to the very generous and friendly statements that have been made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney), the former Prime

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Minister, the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), the longest sitting Member in this House, who was good enough to show that his memory was still as keen as his mind, the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), who spoke on behalf of his Party and offered some help as to my future career, and the independent Member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko) who seemed to have stated all the images that, as a younger man, I fancied myself living out, riding into the West. It happened in a different sense, but I was happy to be reminded of all these metaphors.

Of course, my deep thanks go to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen), who has been exemplary in his loyalty, his support, his hard work, and the devotion with which he filled his task.

It is a rare occasion when one can be judged by one's peers, and perhaps a few of my peers also, and be judged as generously as I was today. I can only express my deep gratitude for the thoughts expressed. Some may serve some day in my obituary, but I can undertake that they will not serve in any resurrection.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Is it the disposition of the House to proceed to Question Period?

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, if it is the disposition of the House to proceed to Question Period, may I suggest that Question Period continue until 3.30?

Mr. Pinard: We agree to that, Mr. Speaker.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT POLICY INQUIRY

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance I would normally ask this question of the Prime Minister, but I do not want to shatter any illusions today. I just say to him: “Git along little doggie”. My question is directed to the Minister of State for Finance. I will come back to the Prime Minister later in this last roundup. Oh, he is gone. He is spared being lassoed.

The Budget was brought down on February 15. Since then we have had several pieces of bad news about our economic prospects. Final domestic demand declined in the last three months of 1983, for the first time since the middle of 1982 when the recession was at its deepest. Business investment plunged 12.2 per cent in 1983, worse even than in 1982. StatsCan says that weak business investment will or may continue this year. Real personal disposal income declined in