

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. Oostrom:** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Hon. Member. Does he agree with me that Hon. Members in general should do a good amount of research before they actually rise in the House so that they are sure of their facts?

A couple of weeks ago when we were dealing with Bill C-84, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) and the Hon. Member for Kenora—Rainy River (Mr. Parry) raised a couple of items. They referred to the return of the *St. Louis* and indicated that many people were not allowed to come into Canada. Obviously their research was not very good. It was stated that 907 people were turned away from Canada. That boat never even came to Canada. Some 224 of those people went to France, 240 went to Belgium, 181 to Holland, and 288 to Britain. In the end, of those 907 people, 520 people survived. Those two Members had not really done their research on that particular subject, and it is very important that they do. As a matter of fact, it was the country of Cuba that actually reneged on the original statement—

**Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order—

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Obviously the Hon. Member does not know what is under debate at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn), but the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Epp) sought the floor first.

**Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on what the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Oostrom) was saying. I trust that his constituents, many of whom have a real stake in good refugee legislation, are listening to the kind of balderdash that he often serves on this issue.

The point is not Bill C-84 or anything dealing with refugees this afternoon. It is the borrowing authority. In addition, it is hardly sporting and quite against the conventions of the House to be attacking colleagues who are not in the House.

The Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) will be here shortly to speak during Private Members' Hour. However, he is not here now, and surely it is not fair nor in the traditions of the House to comment on something he supposedly said when he is not here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** I thought the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Oostrom) was straying from the subject at hand, but I was under the impression that he was coming to the point. At the moment I will ask him, if he has a question, to conclude very quickly as the time for questions and comments has actually expired.

**Mr. Oostrom:** Madam Speaker, I was coming to the question. Does the Hon. Member agree that proper research

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should be done, particularly on the borrowing Bill and the deficit? The Hon. Member stated that the deficit was increasing, and actually the deficit has been decreasing by \$10 billion annually since we came to power.

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** What, by \$10 billion a year? If that were so, we would have no deficit left.

**Mr. Oostrom:** It is very important that proper research be done, and I ask the Hon. Member whether he agrees with that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Grondin:** Madam Speaker, I cannot agree with what the Hon. Member is saying because there seems to be a definite attempt on his part to read into the figures whatever meaning he wants, although we can readily see from data which have been studied by journalists who are economists or by institutions as renowned as the Bank of Montreal, that contrary to what the Hon. Member suggests, the deficit is increasing, the national debt is increasing as well as the servicing of the debt. So it is a matter of interpretation of figures, and I cannot agree with my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The time for questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) has the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant):** Madam Speaker, in the brief five minutes I have available to me I will confine my remarks in respect of the borrowing Bill to one specific item which, unfortunately, is not included in government planned expenditures for this year, that is, money specifically targeted to unemployed older workers.

The reason I want to zero in on that specific point and wonder why the Government has not targeted that group with specific retraining programs is that I represent a constituency which, at this time and indeed for the past several years, notwithstanding the over-all economic development of southwestern Ontario has experienced widespread and long-term unemployment among workers in their forties, fifties, and early sixties.

For example, reference is often made to the fact that the so-called Golden Horseshoe has an average unemployment rate of 3 per cent to 4 per cent. That is just simply not true. My constituency of Brant, which is only a few miles off the road from the so-called Golden Horseshoe, has a present unemployment rate in excess of 12 per cent. In fact, many local employment specialists or unemployment specialists in Brant would tell us that it is probably closer to 15 per cent. That is totally unacceptable at a time when that part of the country is supposedly going through a veritable economic renaissance. No doubt there are some communities in central Canada and in southern Ontario where their economies at the present time are burgeoning, although there are indicators, day after day, that generally speaking the economy is beginning to flatten out.