

full public airing of the real import of these statistics. It is just not a simplistic one to one relationship. As the minister has admitted, there is a complex of factors which affects the incidence of murder and violent crime in our society.

A government which passes laws against the wishes of the demonstrated majority of the electorate, yet fails to persuade public attitudes to change, is not a democratic government. Such a government is tyrannical. That is what this government is if it chooses to vote against this motion. They would deny Parliament access to all of the statistics and a complete historical interpretation of those statistics. We would not have the opportunity to summon witnesses, hear expert testimony from people around the world and then make a decision in the forum of Parliament in the setting of democracy. If such a decision does not reflect the wishes of the people, then the government must produce the evidence to persuade the people to change their minds.

This government is taking a dishonest approach because it is fiddling with the figures. The minister will have to admit to that sooner or later. I just hope the government will accept that this is such an important and crucial problem for Canada, that it relates to the whole question of the just society, moral decay, trauma and tragedy imposed on our people, particularly the people of my riding where the rate was six murders per 100,000 people last year.

● (1720)

Of those numbers there were two separate cases of young girls, one 15 and one 12, were left naked, raped and stabbed one of whom was found on a dike a few days before Christmas morning. I could tell many stories involving circumstances of that nature in my riding. The facts prove that 20 years ago we had only 50 murders a year and we now have 500. It is a crime against humanity and society that 450 additional people are being killed each year in this country because of the policies of this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, on a Conservative motion, as is the case today, we notice at this point in the debate that there are about 14 Tory members present out of 112 in the House. That is a remarkable show of support for—

An hon. Member: You can't even count.

Mr. Caccia: I am glad to stand corrected. It is about 14 out of 102 in the House, so 10 per cent of the Tory party members have had the time and conviction to show up this afternoon in support of what I would call this phoney cop-out, the joke of the nation.

An hon. Member: There are only 13 Liberals present.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, today is an opposition day. This is a Tory motion, and the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) had better learn what an opposition motion is all about on a day which is allocated to the opposition. Such a day is one on which the official opposition has the responsibility of show-

ing it has support for the motion it puts forward. Today we see present in the House less than 12 per cent of the Tory membership.

In a speech earlier this evening the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) implied that the last vote on this matter in the House was not a democratic vote.

An hon. Member: It was rigged.

Mr. Caccia: I will address myself for a moment to that issue because it has been picked up by other members of the official opposition who said it was not democratic; or, to quote from the fine speech by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. McMillan), he referred to the "shackles of discipline having been imposed". I can understand that hon. member making that allegation because he was not here in the House; but the Leader of the Official Opposition was in the House when we held that vote, and he must have seen, unless he is blind, that on that day we had members of the Conservative party who voted for abolition and members of the Liberal party who voted for retention. So much for the lack of democracy!

An hon. Member: Speak to the motion.

Mr. Caccia: I am on the motion. The claim of the opposition is that the vote we took in 1976 was not democratic. How does he then explain that members of the Conservative party voted for abolition and members of the Liberal party voted for retention? There was a display of something I would call democracy. Members may want to call it something different, but that, in my book at least, was a free vote. I do not have precise figures before me, but vaguely from recollection there were some 30 Liberal members or more who voted for retention that day, perhaps even as many as 40, while on the Conservative side some ten, 15 or even 18 Conservative members voted for abolition. You will see, Mr. Speaker, that the whips were not on; it was a free vote and everybody voted according to his own judgment in that very historic vote on second reading.

The Leader of the Official Opposition—and this is the second issue to which I would like to address myself this afternoon—said a couple of hours ago, and I paraphrase him since I do not have the blues, that to vote against this motion is to vote against the right of Parliament to inquire into this matter. If this is not the joke of the month, it is a cop-out, as another colleague of mine said earlier. It is perhaps the phoniest reason I have ever heard during many years in this House for moving such a motion. I will explain why. It is a phony excuse because the leader of the Tory party simply does not have the guts needed to give leadership to his own caucus. He is simply caving in to pressures from his own backbenchers in allowing this kind of motion to come forward here today. That is why the motion is before us today. He trots along a phoney reason in relation to democracy, asking for the right of Parliament to vote on something which has been voted upon. He does not have the strength or the honesty to resist the pressure from his own backbenchers, or the strength to give leadership to his own caucus. What a shame, what a disaster, when we have at this point—