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Crime Leading National Threat

CRIME, not inflation, is America's No. 1 problem, and the trend toward anarchy is worsening.

Occasional declines in the number of crimes of violence, dishonesty and disregard of the rights of other people are more than offset by subsequent sharp increases and a lop-sided victory for outlawry and disorder seems to be imminent.

Law-abiding citizens are terrorized because they realize anybody might become a victim of unchecked lawlessness any day or night. The lawful still are more numerous but the lawless are becoming less inhibited and more belligerent.

Rampant crime, promiscuous sexualism, blatant obscenity, sharp practices in business and flagrant corruption in government are symptoms of and the outgrowth of a much deeper national problem that, like a cancer, is gnawing at the moral fiber of civilization.

Opinion surveys show that people are losing confidence in the institutions of society—governmental, religious, educational, familial and commercial. Immorality is destroying our morale.

This goes back to the home, the basic unit of any society. Today's outlaw children have not been taught the difference between right and wrong, or why they should do right. Great numbers of them have never heard of the Ten Commandments.

If their parents received such teaching, apparently they did not consider it important enough to pass the lessons on to their children, or to take them to church where others could teach them character-building principles.

Schools were created to serve as extensions of the home to expand the

youngsters' knowledge of academic fundamentals, ways of life and ways of earning a living. It may be somewhat more than a coincidence that the current deterioration of the home was accelerated about the time the schools abandoned McGuffey's Readers and other textbooks that emphasized traditional American values.

Schools now may use textbooks that are anti-American, anti-business and anti-civilization. Teachers may instruct pupils in the theory of evolution but not in the story of creation. They may teach or demonstrate immorality but religious instruction is subject to protest under negative rulings of the Supreme Court.

A notable example is the row in West Virginia, where distressed parents are losing their battle to banish pornographic textbooks. They con-

tain writings of anti-social demonstrators and material so obscene that this newspaper cannot publish the worst examples. But they may be read by pupils in West Virginia schools.

Crime is our No. 1 problem, because it marks the crumbling of civilized society. We need and must have more effective law enforcement, more certain punishment for crimes, and greatly improved rehabilitation of offenders, but these things will not cure the cancer that causes crime.

The turning point in our war against outlawry and disorder will come only when—and if—homes, schools and churches resume responsibilities for teaching children what is right and what is wrong, and also teaching them that it is always better to do right.