

Ferdie J. Deering DEC. 6 1977

Erosion of People, Cities a Problem

MILLIONS of Americans have traveled to Greece and Italy to view ruins of cities in once-great civilizations.

Such trips are no longer necessary. For a lot less money and time invested, tourists may travel to once-great cities of the United States of America and view their ruins.

Metropolitan America might be likened to a badly gullied, eroded farm with dilapidated house and leaning barn. We had a lot of those in Oklahoma before soil and water conservation became common. Now we need people conservation.

Like his predecessors in the presidency, President Carter proposes to solve the problems of the cities by spending taxpayers' billions where private investors failed to show a profit.

"Make-work" jobs in abandoned midcity areas for uneducated, untrained and often amoral young peo-

ple will not solve the problem, no matter how much is given away in this manner.

Unless the young people are motivated toward better ways of living, federal funds will only provide them with more to spend on liquor, dope and licentiousness. They will still break into neighbors' homes and steal whatever they can.

Other proposals to bring business and industry back to metropolitan districts include cheap mortgages, subsidized interest, and government aid in planning. In federalese, government planning means federal control.

Private industry doesn't need incentives or subsidies to go where business may be conducted profitably and safely. Banks are anxious to make loans to honest merchants and capable industrialists to establish businesses under those conditions.

Merchants abandoned their former locations because their trade

had, in many cases, abandoned integrity and perhaps as many had become shoplifters as buyers. Many of the customers had moved to the suburbs seeking safer, happier ways of life.

Construction of new apartments and recreational facilities has proved futile where the people who use them are unregenerated. Costly federal housing projects have been torn down or abandoned because the people using them destroyed them.

Ruins of crumbling buildings in the hearts of American cities are outward evidence of decay of morality, integrity, responsibility, patriotism, and civilization in the people.

We have made great progress in the last half-century in conservation of soil, water and natural resources. We might not have that much time to stop the decay of our nation.

Erosion of people is even more serious than erosion of the land, and it reaches critical stages in a shorter time.