

Ferdie J. Deering

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We're Losing the War Against Crime

IT IS not news that we citizens are losing our war against crime. It could end like the war in Vietnam, with a negotiated truce, withdrawal, and triumph of forces of violence.

The United States did not get involved in the Vietnam war with a determined will to win, and we lost. It looks like we don't have a determined will to win the war against crime, either.

Propagandists have pumped up the civil rights theme until law-breakers have been given more rights by courts than their victims have and a lot of people aren't sure which side they are on.

The situation has been diagrammed by U.S. News & World Report to show that out of 500 serious crimes reported there are 400 unsolved cases. In the others, 20 adults and five juveniles eventually go to prison. Only two are acquitted but others evade punishment somehow.

A recently published diagram by Attorney General Mike Turpin detailed how this system of so-called justice operates in Oklahoma.

If anybody questions whether the present setup is helping to prevent crime or to accelerate activity, he need only to look at statistics to find the answer. They show clearly that "justice" is much more efficient at counting crimes than at punishing criminals.

The latest report shows that Oklahoma's statewide crime rate increased by 11.4 percent in 1982. Even inflation was held to 3.9 percent last year. Oklahoma's unemployment rate hit a 7-year high but was only 6.8 percent. The cost of groceries leveled off and gasoline prices have come down. Crime keeps on climbing.

When he announced his coming retirement after 26 years on the bench, Oklahoma County District Judge Homer Smith commented: "Even with all the judges and police and prosecutors we can't curtail crime. It appears to be a losing battle."

Many reasons have been stated as theoretical causes of crime. More working women are said to leave empty homes as crime targets. Affluence is blamed by some and pov-

erty is blamed by others. Even the weather has been accused of affecting the crime rate.

The fact is that the rise in criminal activity has occurred right along with the wave of promiscuity and permissiveness. The basic cause of most crimes is that those involved either don't know right from wrong, or don't care which is which.

It seems logical to assume then that in order to stem the tidal wave of crime that is eroding the foundations of civilization we need first to turn away from apparent causes and protagonists of crime. This may be happening to a degree.

A special report in U.S. News & World Report showed increases in membership of churches, a slight upward trend in proportion of Americans attending worship services weekly, and substantial growth in proportion of respondents who said religion is "increasing its influence on American life."

Shouldn't we get serious in our war against crime? We aren't free if we are afraid to walk our streets and our property isn't safe.