

# Crime Control Not Working

**E**XPLANATIONS that more people are reporting crimes and that better police records are being kept are not satisfactory excuses for the 15 percent increase in crime in Oklahoma City during the first half of 1983 over the same period last year.

The explanations merely show that our crime situation is even worse than we had suspected.

Other statistics showing that Oklahoma had the largest percentage increase in prison population of all 50 states and the alleged overcrowding of our prisons likewise do little to alleviate the damage and cost of crime to persons and property.

All of this information might serve to point out that whatever we're doing to reduce crime is not working well enough.

The old adage that "Crime Doesn't Pay" is no longer true. Crime does pay, not only for the lawbreakers but for defense lawyers, bail bondsmen and others involved in the criminal justice process. More criminals get away with their offenses (and their loot) than are caught and punished.

Of those who are caught, convicted and imprisoned for indeterminate periods, the programs for reform and rehabilitation are inadequate. Too many of those convicted commit more crimes as soon as they are released, often while they are out on parole or on bond pending appeal.

Criminologists disagree about

what really causes crime, but lay people could identify a number of obvious reasons why so many young people are lacking in honesty, moral principles and personal discipline.

First, millions of children are exposed to few opportunities to learn these things by education or by example in the home, in schools, in churches, or in other social contacts. Their entertainment and their heroes teach them otherwise.

As the postwar culture changed to self-expression, do-your-own-thing, and permissiveness, crime also increased. Temperance, religion and moral traditions became objects of ridicule by the "me first" generation. Special interest groups demanded "rights" but shunned responsibilities.

The public has been exposed to heavy doses of violence, illicit sex, dishonesty in business and in government, and atheism through what they see on the streets, what they read and see on television, and through every type of entertainment, including popular songs.

The idea that society rather than the individual is responsible for crime may have some validity because society has failed to inculcate moral responsibility in the younger generation. It is society's duty to foster character and uprightness in the citizenry. Unless this is done there will be no turnaround in our crime statistics.