

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# No Criticism of Garrison Plot Probe-McKeithen

## Cooperation Is Pledged, Says Governor

By C. M. HARGRODER  
(Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)  
BATON ROUGE, La. — Gov.

John J. McKeithen said Thursday he had "no criticism" of Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison for failure to turn evidence over to federal authorities, "and even if I did, I wouldn't voice it."

In his regular press conference, McKeithen said "I have learned that most of Jim Garrison's enemies are buried." He added he meant "in a political sense . . . and I don't propose to join the list of the various decedents."

The governor said he had sent word to Garrison by state Public Safety Director Thomas D. Burbank that he would cooperate in any way in the investigation of the alleged conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy," and I so reiterated that this morning when he called me about 6:30 or 7."

He said Garrison called to tell him what he later told the press . . . "not a great deal more than he told the press." He asked if Garrison said whether his was the plot, McKeithen replied his "conversation with me was more of a confidential nature."

McKeithen said no federal officials have been in touch with him about the matter, and the visit of Federal Bureau of Investigation agents to his office Thursday was "on another matter."

The governor professed to be "aghast" at the report that

certain gambling activities were conducted from the campus of Louisiana State University here, "but I'd be surprised there were a great deal of organized crime turned up in this state, because if there was organized crime . . . I would

have learned something about it since I've been governor, and there's been no evidence brought to me by our state police or local officials of organized crime in this state."

McKeithen said he has not yet found a replacement on the Louisiana Tax Commission for Mrs. Wilma Lockhart, but confirmed he has talked to her about accepting the proposed job of director of the Louisiana safety commission. "I gather that she is giving serious consideration to accepting."

McKeithen also repeated his stand on tax equalization in answer to a renewed request by the council for a better Louisiana that he push equalization. "When I ran for governor I did not consider that one of the burning issues," he said, and added he felt other problems were more pressing. He again said he would not permit the controversy to "destroy" his administration.

Equalization, he asserted, would not mean more tax revenue, but only reduce taxes paid above a median and increase those below it. "I haven't got the time or the energy or that much desire to spend my time on equalizing assessments. It's something I think that we will eventually have to do . . . but I don't propose to go into it

again, because I've been into it," and became involved in a fight with the assessors.

"There's a governor's race coming up this fall. That would be a good popular issue for someone to grab and run with—perhaps (La. Gov. C. C. "Taddy" Aycock, former Congressman Gillis Long, or former Gov. Jimmie H. Davis) will come out for equalization of assessments. They may, I will not," he declared.

### DRAWBACK NOTED

The governor hinted he may ask the Legislature to amend

the law relative to members of the tax commission, eliminating present restrictions that it is a full time job and members may have no outside business interests. He said he found these restrictions a drawback in seeking a replacement for Mrs. Lockhart. Among those he said he offered the job—and they declined—were Vertress Young, retired paper mill executive, Bogalusa; Monroe attorney George Snelling; New Orleans Councilman James Fitzmorris, and Monroe attorney Fred Fudickar Jr.

On other matters, the governor:

—Said he plans soon to name an advisory commission to decide what steps to take on the suggestion from the Louisiana Municipal Association for creation of a commission on local government. The LMA has proposed such a state commission to assist local government meet problems of rapid urbanization.

### ON SPENDING

—Said he does not expect to have to exercise his power to reduce state spending this fiscal year in view of lagging sales tax receipts, and pointed to a rise in income tax and other receipts.

—Suggested that the Louisiana Council on Governmental Reorganization may be given the

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Being Investigated

Public Affairs Research Council's proposals for reorganization of the state hospital system, and perhaps be asked to study creation of a department of corrections as proposed several years ago by the forgotten man committee on Angola problems.

—Hinted that if money can be found he favors construction of a new institution for first offenders such as that now located at DeQuincy, or improvements to the old facility in a move to isolate all first offenders from the hardened criminal population at Angola.

The governor expressed no concern, and said he was "not disturbed" by the lack of qualified applicants under civil service for the job of warden at Angola. He expressed confidence in Wingate White, director of institutions and acting warden, in fact, at Angola.

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