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# B.R. Rackets Probe Asked

By BILL LYNCH  
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — A group of industry and business representatives has asked Republican National Committeeman Tom Stagg Jr. of Shreveport to intercede with the new GOP-controlled Justice Department to press an anti-racketeering investigation in the Baton Rouge area.

Stagg, confirming a meeting with the group a few weeks ago, said he has written the new attorney general, John Mitchell, offering to furnish him any information on the background of the situation.

The group turned to the new Justice Department, it was learned, in the belief that the state Labor-Management Commission action would not be adequate to correct the situation that led to a shut-down of plant construction in the area more than a year ago.

STAGG ALSO was told that it appeared some members, particularly Michael Epstein, of the Justice Department under the Democratic control, appeared more anxious to protect Edward Grady Partin, boss of Teamster Local No. 5, than to crack down on labor racketeering in the area.

Partin was the Justice Department's star witness in the conviction of International Teamster President James Hoffa on a jury tampering charge.

Stagg declined to identify the group but it was learned that among them were Ford Lacey, executive vice president of the Louisiana Manufacturers, executive vice president of the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, and Vic Ehr, head of the local chamber.

"I AM DOING what I was asked to do," Stagg said, "And what ought to be done. Then I'm leaving it up to the Justice Department to do what it wants."

He said, "A group of concerned citizens of the area (Baton Rouge) came to me and asked that the information be forwarded by most direct channels to the Justice Department."

"These are people I have

known for years and I have no reason to believe they do not represent who they say they do."

STAGG SAID the group felt it was of a serious enough nature to seek assistance from Washington and offered to make themselves available for

further information.

"They were very concerned," he said.

He said that information had been furnished to him at his request about the Labor-Management Commission's findings and of newspaper accounts of the labor strife in Baton Rouge.

"THE PURPOSE is to get federal action in this field," he said.

Epstein's name was brought up because the Justice Department Attorney has spent considerable time trying to convince two federal grand juries

of efforts to free Hoffa by getting Partin to change his testimony. Thus far there have been no indictments from either grand jury, in New Orleans or Tennessee.

A parallel grand jury in New Orleans has been investigating anti-trust facets of the labor situation but there have been reports of disagreements between Justice Department officials handling that part and those handling the Hoffa conspiracy angle.

THE GROUP went to Stagg, who just returned from the Inauguration ceremonies in Washington, because of his connections with the new administration.

Charlton Lyons, Shreveport oilman who is generally regarded as the chief Republican in the state, also reportedly attended the meeting.

Stagg said he had not had time to receive an answer from Mitchell who just assumed office yesterday morning.