

The Fix seems to weave through Louisiana like a muddy creek. Associations and alliances that would cause scandals elsewhere are amiably tolerated there. Political and economic leverage is often a matter of friendship or social connection, and there is no neat line to separate the good guys and the baddies. Aaron Kohn, who came from Chicago in 1953 to head the Metropolitan Crime Commission in New Orleans, was astonished at this. "After about a year," he recalls, "I began to realize something about the system down here. In Chicago, people were generally on

one side of the fence or the other—honest or crooked. But in Louisiana there just isn't any fence."

McKeithen will order the state police into action against gambling, but only when it becomes "flagrant or notorious"—in effect, when someone important complains or news of the gambling gets into print or is railed against from the pulpit. He knows it doesn't pay to be overzealous. "Look at Grevemberg," he says, referring to ex-State Police Superintendent Francis Grevemberg. "He cracked down on gambling. He was tough. He went around with a flashlight and an ax, busting up little honky-tonk places. Do you know where he placed when he ran for governor? FIFTH!"

In this atmosphere the Little Man can maneuver as freely and happily as a pig in a wallow. He was convicted in 1930 of assault and robbery (he received a full pardon in 1935 from Governor O. K. Allen) and in 1938 of selling marijuana, for which he served nine months in the federal prison at Atlanta. Since then there has been sporadic court action against him—most of it initiated by the federal government—but no convictions.

In Orleans Parish, the chief law officer is the celebrated Jim Garrison. Garrison is friendly with

some Marcello henchmen, but that, says the district attorney, is a coincidence without significance. "It doesn't mean anything," Garrison told LIFE, "because I have no connection with Marcello. I don't have to worry about things like that. I've cleaned up the rackets in this town."

Garrison says he knows Marcello's bookmaking brother Sammy—"I've seen him at the New Orleans Athletic Club and Moran's Restaurant"—but denies knowing that he is a bookie. Also among his acquaintances is Mario Marino, a Marcello lieutenant who moved from New Orleans to the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas 10 years ago. When Garrison goes to Las Vegas, he is the guest of the Sands and Marino makes the arrangements.

Three times since 1963, the

Sands has paid Garrison's hotel bill. On his last visit in March the tab was signed by Marino himself. Garrison was also granted a \$5,000 credit in the cashier's cage, which meant he could gamble up to that amount without putting his own money on the table. At that time the Sands operated one of four Las Vegas gambling halls controlled by Cosa Nostra Bosses.

Garrison contends that he didn't gamble and that Marino gave him the credit so he could cash checks. He is unable, he told LIFE, to see anything wrong with a prosecutor free-loading at a Mob-controlled casino. He said he felt it was customary for casinos to pick up the hotel tabs of public officials. "I may be naive—this is my first public office—but I don't see what's wrong with it," he said. "I imagine any D.A. would have a good credit

THE MOB CONTINUED

rating [in a casino]. He also denied knowing about Marino's involvement with Marcello, though he insisted it made no difference—"I have no connection with Carlos Marcello."

Judge Andrew Bucaro, a municipal court judge in New Orleans, freely discusses his friendship with Marcello, an old pal and a



JIM GARRISON

The well-known New Orleans district attorney was the guest of Marcello mobster Mario Marino at a Las Vegas hotel. Garrison denies knowledge of Marino's connection with Marcello.



PERSHING GERVAIS

Garrison's former chief investigator, who admits frequent meetings with Marcello, Gervais now calls himself a "counselor for people who get arrested." He arranges settlements for a fee.



Marcello's interests include sports betting parlors such as the Bank Club (above), the Speakeasy restaurant-casino (below, left), and the Sho-Bar, a strip joint in New Orleans.