

Garrison's Foes Agree City in Need of New DA

But Differ on Selection
of Successor

District Attorney Jim Garrison's three major opponents in the upcoming Democratic primary agreed Tuesday night that New Orleans needs a new DA, although they differed on the question of who Garrison's successor should be.

Each of the three told a gathering assembled at the Congress Inn, 13001 Chef Menteur Hwy., to hear a debate among the candidates that he was the best man to take Garrison's place.

Assistant DA James L. Alcock represented Garrison, bedridden due to a back ailment, at the meeting sponsored by the New Orleans East Junior Chamber of Commerce.

BONES OF CONTENTION

The two major bones of contention were Garrison's prosecution of Clay L. Shaw for his alleged conspiracy to murder the late President John F. Kennedy and the incumbent's claim that organized crime is not a problem here.

Former assistant U.S. Attorney Harry Connick declared that two ways in which he would improve the operation of the DA's office would be the "fast, fair" prosecution of criminals and a concern with the rehabilitation of convicted criminals.

He said that criminal cases should be prosecuted swiftly instead of allowing arrestees to "sit in jail or roam the streets committing more crimes."

CONVICTS CITIZENS

He criticized Garrison for waiting seven and a half years to establish an organized crime bureau—not until a few months before he must run for reelection—and for not vigorously investigating the Louisiana Loan & Thrift Co.

Connick further charged that Garrison has failed to try to enforce the laws on bail bond jumping. He declared the DA has prosecuted "only one or two" of an estimated 1,000 bond jumpers in New Orleans.

Discussing organized crime,

describing Connick's charge that organized crime is a problem here as an "exaggeration."

Connick said that "there is organized crime in New Orleans," which he called "a center of organized crime."

"Heroin doesn't come from here," the candidate said. "It has to come from somewhere else. It takes a lot of money to put heroin on the streets of New Orleans."

WARD CONTENTS

Charles R. Ward, former first assistant DA, said that he and other members of Garrison's staff had handled most of the work load while the DA spent a large part of his time at the New Orleans Athletic Club.

Ward charged that Garrison was away from his office so much that "he rarely knew what was going on" in it.

Ward, said that as long as "50 per cent of the DA's staff" continues its probe into the alleged Shaw conspiracy "it won't be able to do the job of stopping crime in the streets."

The candidate pledged to fight the increasing flow of

pornographic matter and also said he would institute a "positive program" on juvenile crime including a curfew.

Ross T. Scaccia, a former assistant DA and onetime assistant U.S. attorney, blamed much of Garrison's failures on his "obsession" with the Shaw case.

He said that since Shaw's acquittal, Garrison has spent much of his time trying to vindicate himself.

SCACCIA DECLARES

Scaccia declared that the jury's acquittal of Shaw "in less than an hour" had "made New Orleans the laughing stock of the nation."

In place of Garrison and his "obsession," said Scaccia, "we need a competent criminal lawyer" as district attorney.

Scaccia also charged that Garrison has done little about the growing local problem of violent crime.

In defense of the DA, Alcock said that "Garrison has built up an office that the city of New Orleans can be proud of."

As instances of Garrison's efficiency, Alcock cited his prosecution of illegal lotteries, his attempt to eradicate rackets, and the fact that Garrison has never lost a murder case while in office.

ALCOCK JUSTIFIES

Ward replied that Garrison had in fact lost the Shaw case and never personally tried a murder case during his seven and a half years in office.

Justifying Garrison's decision to proceed with the prosecution of Shaw, Alcock noted that Shaw had been indicted by the Grand Jury and that two defense motions for a directed verdict in Shaw's favor were denied during the trial, allowing the case to go to the jury.

"I do not feel the case should have been terminated in mid-stream," said Alcock.

The assistant DA also denied that organized crime is a serious problem in New Orleans,