

MCC 'Concerned'

Seek Copy Of O'Hara Testimony

By ROSEMARY JAMES

The Metropolitan Crime Commission has requested a transcript of the testimony involving Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara given at a Chicago hearing this week on an appeal for a new trial of Teamster Union president James R. Hoffa, who is in prison.

During the hearing Judge O'Hara testified that he had been the expense-paid traveling companion of New Orleans builder Zachary A. "Red" Strate, who was convicted along with Hoffa in 1964 on charges of conspiracy and fraud.

Judge O'Hara also testified that he had acted as a messenger in an attempt to get Baton Rouge Teamster official Edward Grady Partin, whose testimony was instrumental in convicting Hoffa in his earlier jury-tampering trial at Chattanooga, to sign an affidavit of "confessed wiretapping."

TODAY, Aaron Kohn, managing director of the crime commission, said that he has requested the transcript so that the commission can

"study it and evaluate the New Orleans implications."

Kohn said, "We are very concerned with the real meaning behind the testimony . . . as it affects New Orleans Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara.

"We are particularly concerned with the role O'Hara apparently played on behalf of Hoffa and whether it may have been in violation of the law or of the judicial code of ethics."

ASKED WHETHER the New Orleans Bar Association is considering any action in the matter of the O'Hara testimony, President Charles J. McCabe said:

"You must understand that any action being considered by our association necessarily must remain secret until we

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are ready to take the action.

"However, I would not like to convey the impression that our association has failed to take notice of the printed reports about the Chicago hearing."

Hoffa's attorneys were seeking a new trial, charging that their client was convicted on evidence that was illegally obtained through wiretapping.

DURING the hearing last week, Judge O'Hara testified that he had taken an affidavit to Partin, asking him to sign it, but he would not say whose "messenger" he was.

He was asked if he owed Strate \$30,000 and if he had ever been paid any money by the Teamsters. There were objections to both questions and they were sustained by presiding Judge Richard B. Austin.

Strate testified that O'Hara had set up a meeting between Strate and Walter Sheridan, an aide to former Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, during the Hoffa investigations and now an investigative reporter for the National Broadcasting Co. Strate said that Sheridan offered to help him in Chicago if Strate would help him to discredit Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's probe of the Kennedy assassination. Sheridan called the Strate testimony an absolute falsehood.

The hearing ended with Federal Judge Richard B. Austin denying the motion for a new trial.

In the headlines with O'Hara were Edward M. Baldwin, a New Orleans attorney, and Pershing O. Gervais, former aide to Garrison. Both were subpoenaed, but the Chicago hearing ended without them being called to testify.

O'Hara, who today is in the process of unpaneling a new Orleans Parish Grand Jury, would not comment on the Chicago hearing.