

Governor Implies MCC Should Leave Louisiana

McKeithen Reacts to Magazine's Allegations

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(Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)

BATON ROUGE, La. — Still reacting to a national magazine's allegations of criminal influences on government in Louisiana, Gov. John J. McKeithen Thursday implied the Metropolitan Crime Commission "leave the state."

At a press conference, the governor declared the story was a "smear" possibly resulting from "the indictment of this fellow (Walter) Sheridan in New Orleans." (Sheridan, a National Broadcasting Co. employe, was indicted for alleged interference in the Kennedy death probe.)

"They know they can take (Carlos) Marcello and smear anybody," McKeithen asserted. The Sheridan indictment, he said, gave "a lot of enthusiasm to the people who came here from Life."

TERRIBLE SMEAR

The governor continued, "There's no question this state has been terribly smeared . . . whoever gave that story to Life did this state a great disservice." Asked whether he referred to the MCC when he said the ones who gave the information "should leave the state," McKeithen insisted he did not say anything about leaving the state.

When the question was repeated whether he referred to the MCC, McKeithen replied "If the shoe fits, they should wear it." Again he repeated that the giver of the story "should be ashamed and leave the state . . . they're not fit to live in the state of Louisiana."

Aaron Kohn, at a meeting Sept. 6 at the executive mansion here, told newsmen it was the MCC which had provided the leads expanded by the magazine story.

TO MEET IN N.O.

McKeithen said Thursday he planned to meet in New Orleans next week with the MCC and his new chief of intelligence for state police. He said he would at that time accept any allegations they had of underworld activity "at all levels," and would also accept allega-

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tions from anyone else. He still insisted his investigation would be at the state, not the local level.

Still insisting on the purity of government, McKeithen said he would resign his office if church leaders could prove any criminal activity alleged in the magazine is shown at the state level. He agreed "a minute" portion of local government might be involved. But he added "I know they're not going to find any organized crime in state government."

Speaking of the investigation he has promised, McKeithen said "We don't know where to start . . . we don't know what to investigate."

NOT LOOKING

Asked why it was that newsmen could find gambling in the state and police could not, McKeithen answered "We're not out looking for it." He continued "It's the prime responsibility of local law enforcement officials."

On other matters, the governor:

—Hinted no state civil service pay raise (and consequently no raise for certain elected officials) would be forthcom-

ing until at least Jan. 1 or after. He said he wanted to be "absolutely sure" state revenues were adequate for the raise which the Civil Service Commission recommended last March.

—Said if the division of administration has completed a report on implementation of a "one policy" hospitalization insurance program for all state employes "I haven't seen it." The plan was given him by the legislative economy committee last June at which time he said he would act in 30 days.

—Denied he had said he believed the Warren Commission report on the death of President Kennedy. McKeithen sematicized what he had said was that he "accepted" the commission's report. He would not amplify his meaning of "accepted."

—Said he had not discussed a "favorite son" role at the National Democratic Convention with Sen. E. W. "Kelly" Gravolet, Pointe a la Hache, did not think he would be acceptable to the Democratic Party as a nominee, was not bound to support any party or nominee, and had no aspirations for national office.