

Kohn Influence Labeled Nil

A member of the past Orleans Parish Grand Jury Friday said Metropolitan Crime Commission Managing Director

Aaron M. Kohn has outlived his usefulness,

Meanwhile, nine of the 12 grand jury members whose term recently expired said they did not make statements last week for District Attorney Jim Garrison nor were they used by Garrison during their terms.

The nine made the joint statement following statements made by Kohn and MCC presi-

dent Dr. J. D. Grey.

"Mr. Kohn's influence is nearly nil," said Robert P. Jolet, at a press conference attended by him and six other members of the former jury, which completed a six month term last week.

"He might have been useful several years ago when Chep Morrison asked him to come down to investigate the police department," Jolet added.

But the MCC's "original purpose has been served," he said.

A controversy has erupted recently between the two bodies over the jury's handling of MCC allegations of organized crime in New Orleans.

Jolet said Kohn and Dr. Grey have accused the jury of giving short shrift to the organized crime organization.

"Dr. Grey's and Mr. Kohn's statement is untrue as many other statements in the past," Jolet said.

Jolet said the jury spent an approximate total of 50 and one-half hours on organized crime allegations, only about 12 hours less than the total hours spent hearing capital cases, which is the "primary function" of the jury.

"Mr. Kohn gets paid by upright citizens, supposedly, to degrade people like us," he added. Kohn brought no facts and little information to the jury, he said.

Another former juror expressed the opinion that Dr. Grey is being used by Kohn.

"I think it is safe to say Dr. Grey is being used by Mr. Kohn," said S. B. Pendley.

Another, Joseph Misshore, said he considered it "very strange" that the MCC has never had any Negro members.

Jolet quoted a former informant of Kohn's as saying he told Kohn "anything he wanted to hear." The informant was Pershing Gervais, a former chief investigator for District Attorney Jim Garrison, Jolet later said.

Kohn "has to keep this thing

going because, I understand, he has a very handsome salary. I would try to make my job look important too," Jolet said.

In the other statement, the charges by Dr. Grey and Kohn were made subsequent to a news conference last week at which two of the six ex-jurors, Mrs. Delores V. Mason-Smith and Walter O. Eckhart Sr., made comments about the MCC and Kohn.

The statement was penned by Mrs. Mason-Smith and signed by Sylvan B. Pendley, Eckert, Albert Flair, Robert P. Jolet, Laurence Martin, Joseph O. Misshore Jr., John R. Nides and Louis Brothers.

The statement said Kohn and Dr. Grey would have the public believe the jurors were unintelligent individuals and that they sat silent with no thoughts of their own.

"Mr. Kohn knows this is not true," the statement continued. "As for Dr. Grey, he could not possibly know what goes on in the grand jury room regarding legal advice given the grand jury by the district attorney's office unless he had the room bugged, since he did not enter the room.

"As to Mr. Kohn's treatment in the grand jury room, Dr. Grey must have heard that only from Mr. Kohn and that leaves open two schools of thought. Was it true? or was the secrecy of the grand jury room violated? Mr. Kohn also knows the answer to this . . ."