

T.P. 9/26/67

Study of O'Hara Testimony, Aim

Crime Commission Asks for Transcript

New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission Managing Director Aaron Kohn Friday requested a transcript of testimony given in Chicago earlier this week concerning Criminal District Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara.

The testimony wanted by the MCC was given during the hearing on an appeal for a new trial for imprisoned Teamster Union President James R. Hoffa.

Kohn said Friday that he wants the transcript so that the MCC can "study it and evaluate the New Orleans implications."

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

At the Chicago hearing, Judge O'Hara stated that he had had his expenses paid to travel with Zachary A. "Red" Strate, the New Orleans builder who was convicted in 1964 along with Hoffa on charges of fraud and conspiracy.

MESSENGER ROLE

Judge O'Hara further testified

that he had served as a messenger in an attempt to get Baton Rouge Teamster official Edward Grady Partin to sign an affidavit of "confessed wiretapping." Partin's testimony was instrumental in convicting Hoffa in an earlier jury-tampering trial in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Kohn said that the MCC is "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."

Charles J. McCabe, president of the New Orleans Bar Association, was asked if the NOBA is planning any action in the matter of Judge O'Hara's testimony. He replied:

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

During the hearing, Hoffa's legal counsel sought to obtain a new trial, claiming that the evidence which convicted Hoffa

was obtained through illegal wiretapping.

Judge O'Hara testified at the hearing that he had taken an affidavit to Partin and asked him to sign it. However, O'Hara would not say whose "messenger" he was.

Hearing Judge Richard B. Austin sustained objections to questions on whether Judge O'Hara owed Strate \$30,000 and if he had ever received any money from the Teamsters.

Strate told the court that O'Hara had arranged a meeting between Strate and Walter Sheridan, then an aide to former Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy and now an investigative reporter for the National Broadcasting Co. Strate said Sheridan offered to aid him in Chicago if Strate would help him to discredit the Kennedy assassination probe of District Attorney Jim Garrison. Sheridan said Strate's testimony was an absolute falsehood.

The hearing resulted in the court's denial of a new trial for Hoffa.

Judge O'Hara would not comment Friday on the Chicago hearing. He is presently in the process of impaneling a New Orleans Parish Grand Jury.