

## **DA's Backlog of Cases**

The disclosure that bills of information have not been filed in 300 cases that already have come before the committing magistrate, many as far back as January, has raised the question of whether the district attorney's office is capable of conducting on its own a presidential assassination investigation and at the same time seeing that justice is done elsewhere.

Senior Criminal District Court Judge Bernard J. Bagert raised the question himself when he declared that District Attorney Jim Garrison ought to hire additional personnel if other cases are being left to languish because of his widely publicized assassination probe.

Only last week, it was revealed that the backlog of cases in the district attorney's office was contributing significantly to overcrowded conditions at Parish Prison. So overcrowded are prison facilities, in fact, that some 300 inmates regularly go unguarded.

Interestingly enough, the log jam of cases, which indirectly prompted Criminal District Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr. to throw out seven cases two weeks ago, coincides with Mr. Garrison's investigation during the months of January, February and March into the alleged assassination conspiracy involving New Orleans businessman Clay L. Shaw.

A check of the records shows that the district attorney docketed 257 fewer cases during those months than for the same months in 1966, 436 fewer than for the same period in 1965 and 453 fewer than in 1964.

We agree with Judge Bagert that the district attorney should not let the assassination investigation interfere with the normal operations of his office to the extent that the right of justice is not preserved for all.

For certainly the cause of justice is not served when the wheels of prosecution grind to a virtual halt.

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