

PROBE SINCERE, KOHN BELIEVES

T.P. 7-19-69
Statement Given About
Grand Jury Action

Aaron M. Kohn says he believes the present Orleans Parish grand jury probe of organized crime is a "sincere effort" to understand the problem and "do something about it."

Kohn, managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans Inc., appeared before the grand jury Thursday. He made his statement at a press conference Friday at International House.

His grand jury appearance came only after he received assurances from the district attorney's office that it would not be insisted that he reveal the names of confidential informants.

His statement about the present grand jury probe and the assurances he received from the district attorney's office follows:

"Because during the past 2½ years we have been consistently critical of the district attorney's office for abuses of the grand jury process, and for its harassing obstruction of my efforts to assist grand jury inquiry into organized crime, I believe it to be a matter of fairness to now make the following comment:

"The assurances which were made by First Assistant District Attorney (James) Alcock were completely honored during my testimony before the Grand Jury for approximately three hours yesterday, with Mr. Alcock and Assistant DA William Alford as the legal advisors. In view of past conflicts and contradictions, I believe it would be helpful to public understanding for me to state my impression that the current Grand Jury, of which Mr. Fernand Lapeyre is foreman, is open-minded on the subject of organized crime and is sincerely attempting to be effective in the community interest.

"It is our hope that condi-

tions will continue to evolve in which government and citizen resources may work together with justified mutual trust in order to bring about more satisfactory criminal justice accomplishments. Then only may it be reasonably expected that our city will substantially reduce criminality and the conditions which contribute to public disorder."

Regarding his appearance before the grand jury, Kohn said he would "like to believe there was an opportunity to be of assistance".

Asked if he provided the Grand Jury with names, Kohn emphasized that he is not permitted to divulge what went on inside the grand jury meeting room, but he asserted that the record of the MCC indicates "it is not reluctant to identify specifics on which we base the crime problem."