

State Reacts To Magazine's Crime Charges

By JACK OWENS

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—Gov. John McKeithen meets today with two groups of crime probers on the heels of his denial that rackets figure Carlos Marcello holds any sinister power over state government.

McKeithen took issue yesterday with a Life magazine report that Marcello, of Jefferson Parish, is able to control or influence the makers and enforcers of the law at every level of state government.

"ABSOLUTELY ridiculous and absurd," McKeithen told a news conference. Marcello is the antonym of power in Louisiana. He is the complete opposite of power."

The governor was to meet with the Metropolitan New Orleans Crime Commission and his new Labor-Management Commission of Inquiry, created to probe claims of racketeering influences.

He said he had asked earlier that the crime commission meet with him and share information of racketeering in Louisiana with the Labor-Management commission staff.

The latter group expects to hold public hearings within 60 days.

M'KEITHEN said Life, in the article about Marcello, "struck us a pretty bad blow." He said the only influence Marcello may have on government was over some local official.

He disclaimed Marcello had any such influence over state officials, State Police or any dis-

trict attorneys.

"I know there isn't any," he said, "because in 3½ years I certainly would have felt it somewhere."

"I'VE attempted to run this state as its chief executive, and at no time have we ever felt, in any department to my knowledge, that there was any sinister underworld influence being brought on us in any way, or attempting to steer us in any particular direction, or to get us to do something that would work to their benefit. Never, since I've been governor."

McKeithen said Louisiana has not had some of the gangland type activities of the North and Northeast, such as the protection rackets in which businessmen must pay to keep from being sabotaged, the gang feuds and mobster slayings.

"I've never heard of anything like that here," he said.

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