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LOUISIANA POLITICS

McKeithen, DA Break Brewing?

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—What course the latest tiff between Gov. John J. McKeithen and New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison will take is one to be followed with interest.

The two political powers have been on the verge of an open split before, but each has adroitly managed to pull back his horns to avoid a headon collision, maintaining the tenuous alliance which exists between them.

Now comes what on the surface appears a slap at McKeithen by Garrison when the district attorney issued a subpoena for the governor to appear before the grand jury investigating organized crime.

Garrison already had aimed a little sarcasm at the mansion in Baton Rouge over the chief executive's apology to Life magazine, in which he reversed his claim that a series of articles on organized crime was a deliberate smear on Louisiana.

After changing his mind and issuing the subpoena, Garrison said this was not time to rely on protocol. But was a subpoena really necessary?

Garrison at first announced that the grand jury wanted to hear from the governor, and made it expressly clear that he was issuing an "invitation" to the governor.

McKeithen, responding to the word "invitation," readily said he would appear and tell the grand jury anything it wanted to know which he could relate.

Then that afternoon, the district attorney decided to change the invitation to a subpoena. This must have perplexed the chief executive as much as it does political observers.

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IN LOUISIANA, THE governor does not have to honor a subpoena. However, McKeithen has shown no reluctance to avoid subpoenas in the past. He had already accepted Garrison's "invitation," after first ascertaining that it was that, and was not in a position to make a stubborn stand against it.

Besides, McKeithen apparently wanted to testify about

what the editors of Life told him about organized crime in the state.

The only other possible reason for issuing the subpoena, if not a gig at the governor, is that Garrison did not want McKeithen to enjoy any immunity which might attend an invitation.

On top of the subpoena for the governor, Garrison also summoned J. Marshall Brown, political crony of the governor, to testify. Brown is a member of the state Board of Education and Democratic national committeeman from Louisiana.

The significance of Garrison's decision to subpoena—if there is any—may not be made clear for some time. It could be that Garrison, nettled by the governor's apology to Life, simply wanted to needle him a little.

McKeithen disavowed any trouble between them and said publicly that he is running for reelection and does not want a fight. McKeithen regards Garrison as a powerful and brilliant individual, although he does not always agree with him.

He feels that Garrison has the ability to rip an opponent apart and has said several times that he does not want to be that opponent.

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WHILE THE INVESTIGATION of organized crime continues to dominate the news in Louisiana's political world, there also is a governor's race going on. Would you believe it?

The election is less than a month away and the lack of campaigning and interest is phenomenal for Louisiana.

U. S. Rep. John Rarick of St. Francisville continues to be the major opponent for Gov. McKeithen in his bid for a second straight term. However, Rarick is providing such light opposition that most observers are guessing that the congressman may poll anywhere from 20 per cent on the vote on down to considerably less than that.

Rarick apparently has been caught in a monetary bind and has been unable to conduct the type of publicity and advertising program necessary for a governor's race. He also has very little publicity savvy—the way publicity agents have of obtaining free advertising for their candidates. This has hurt in getting his message across to the public.

Where it once took a million dollars to conduct a first-primary campaign by one major candidate, it is doubtful if McKeithen will spend \$100,000 on his second try.



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