

'PAYOFF' SEEN 5-15-68

Judge Refuses to Drop Charges Against Partin

BATON ROUGE (AP)—Saying he detected a "payoff" attempt stemming from the trial of Teamsters president James R. Hoffa, a U.S. District judge has refused to dismiss embezzlement charges against a controversial Baton Rouge labor leader.

The Justice Department had requested that Judge E. Gordon West dismiss 26 charges involving union funds and records against local teamsters business agent Edward Grady Partin whose testimony helped convict Hoffa of jury tampering in 1964.

"IF THAT ISN'T a payoff, I don't know what it is," West said in refusing the department yesterday.

Justice Department attorney Michael Epstein denied the judge's accusation that a "deal" had been made with Partin to drop the charges if he would testify against Hoffa.

"Are the interests of justice to be served by the granting of lifetime immunity to this defendant because of the wishes of some previous attorney general?" West demanded of Epstein.

The attorney replied that "no such immunity is in existence today."

THE REFERENCE was to then Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy. Kennedy, now a New York senator seeking a presidential nomination, vigorously pursued a conviction of Hoffa.

Epstein declined to go into details on the Justice Department's reasons for asking

for a dismissal of the indictment. The motion did say that certain key records were missing, one government witness had died, and a number of government witnesses were biased against Partin.

West said he was not convinced the reasons were true. The judge had called on the department to show cause why dropping the charges served the cause of justice.

PARTIN IS CHARGED with 13 counts of embezzlement of union funds and 13 counts of making false entries in union records.

Investigations of the nine-month old labor-management commission of inquiry, created by the state legislature to ferret out law violations, have centered on Partin and his union, local No. 5.

Only a day prior to the hearing, the Justice Department confirmed that it was investigating the commission to see if it was involved in any effort to obstruct justice in the Hoffa case.

Schiphol Airport in Holland is the only airport on which there was once fought a naval battle. Its elevation is 13 feet below sea level.