

VAGUE ON PLOT, SAYS GOVERNOR

Chief Executive Speaks
at Legion Convention

Gov. John J. McKeithen said Friday he did not "know much about" a plot on his life.

He also denied reports that he received a letter from a campaign aide of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy telling him he was being considered for a vice-presidential berth on the Kennedy ticket.

The governor spoke during an impromptu press conference immediately before addressing the 50th annual convention of the Louisiana Department of the American Legion at the Jung Hotel. He told newsmen he knew "nothing" about a letter from the late senator and that as far as he was concerned the entire story could be a fairy tale.

Regarding the current session of the Legislature, the governor said he thought it had accomplished many things. He cited coordination of education, urban renewal, and highway safety.

REPORT SOON

When asked about the progress of an investigation into charges that a telephone in the governor's office was used to place calls to Jefferson Parish rackets figure Carlos Marcello, McKeithen said Baton Rouge Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher Jr. will issue a full report within a few days.

"I don't know how close he is to being through," McKeithen said. "But, if he doesn't give a report on the charges, I will."

McKeithen also said he will appoint a committee of "distinguished citizens" before the Legislature adjourns early in July to study various tax proposals to be submitted to a special session in September.

In an address before the convention, McKeithen said he did not want to get into a discussion over whether we were right or wrong to be in Vietnam.

"We want out of Viet Nam but we don't want to be run out of there because the United

States has never been run out of any place."

APPLAUD M'KEITHEN

For this, and for many other statements throughout his address, the legionnaires broke into spontaneous applause.

"My heart fills with disgust when people who enjoy the luxuries of our country turn around

THE TIMES-PICAYUNE, NEW ORLEANS, LA., SATURDAY MORNING,

and run it down," the governor continued. "Some people are preaching treason to our own great nation and some are desecrating our flag.

"The first time any individual in Louisiana preaches treason to our nation or talks about desecrating our flag I will have him handcuffed, link-chained, and dragged off to jail," he declared.

"There are a minute few rabble-rousers who are trying to tear this nation down but they are not expressing the way our citizens feel," he said. "This nation will never be destroyed

from without. Our nation, if destroyed, will be destroyed from within."

NOT ALL RESPONSIBLE

Regarding the murder of Sen. Kennedy, McKeithen said he did not believe all of America could be held responsible.

Referring to suspect Sirhan Sirhan, the governor said "The poor man wasn't even a citizen."

"To blame the entire country for such a thing is the most absurd thing I've ever heard of in my life. If we are guilty of anything, we are guilty of being too

JUNE 29, 1968

good for our own good."

Resounding applause from the legionnaires followed.

He said Supreme Court efforts to look out for the welfare of criminals regardless of the effect on law enforcement were "absurd."

"They talk about the rights of the criminal, but what about our rights," he declared. "What about the rights of the people who obey the law. Ain't we got rights too?"

The group presented the governor with a plaque noting their 50th anniversary.