

Governor Calls For Probe of Crime Charge

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By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—Gov. John J. McKeithen said today he has ordered an investigation into charges that criminal influences exist at all levels of state government.

The governor said if allegations that crime exists in state government prove true, "the people of this state will have my resignation so fast it will make their heads swim.

He said he would quit because if the allegations are correct, "either I'm a crook or I'm too stupid to be governor."

McKeithen said at his regular news conference that he, special state police investigators and an FBI agent will meet with the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission next week to study its evidence.

THE GOVERNOR again angrily commented on a Life magazine article on criminal influences in Louisiana state and local government. He called it a "deliberate smear" on the state.

Whoever is responsible for the article "should leave the state," he said.

Asked if he referred to Aaron Kohn, head of the MCC, McKeithen replied: "If the shoe fits, let him wear it."

THE CRIME commission said last week it supplied the basic information. The governor said that he and members of a special state police investigating team would meet with the MCC soon to collect whatever information

the private group has.

"Whoever gave that information to Life Magazine about state government did this state a great disservice," he said.

The governor also commented on other issues:

He said that efforts are being made to get the federal court to alter its judgment in the grant-in-aid case to

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permit the state to provide funds for mentally retarded children.

Law enforcement, he said, is the number one issue in the country today. He criticized the national leadership on this score and said he did not know if he could support President Johnson for reelection.

McKeithen said he has no plans to sign a civil service pay raise schedule recommended by the State Civil Service Commission earlier this year until he is certain adequate funds will be available to support one.

Asked if he planned to be a favorite son candidate at the Democratic National Convention next year, McKeithen said he did not think the con-

vention would accept him as a candidate. He said although it might help him politically to support former Gov. George Wallace of Alabama now for president, he did not plan to make a decision on that yet.

M'KEITHEN said that he "accepts" the Warren Commission report on the assassination of President Kennedy, but this does not necessarily mean he "thinks" it is correct. He said he accepts it on the basis of those doing the investigating but declined to explain his definition of the word "accept." He added that District Attorney Jim Garrison should be allowed to complete his investigation. Otherwise, the nation or the world will believe that political pressure was brought to bear to end it prematurely, he explained.

On the Life magazine articles on crime in Louisiana, Gov. McKeithen said, "There is no question this state has been terribly smeared."

He said, "I hope we can recuperate and cure the terrible image that has been projected about us throughout the nation."

The governor said that the only reason for the alleged smear that he could figure out is the indictment of Walter Sheridan, an investigator for the National Broadcasting Co., by Garrison in the Kennedy assassination probe.

HE DECLARED that there is crime in other states surrounding Louisiana, but the magazine picked on Louisiana apparently because rackets figure Carlos Marcello lives in the New Orleans area.

"They know they can take Marcello and smear anybody," the governor said.

The governor said again that the state will investigate itself first and then "we shall" investigate other allegations on the local level. He said that if the magazine allegations on the state level were true, then the state level would have to be probed first—"You can't have crooks investigating crooks."

HE SAID THAT if a panel of three ministers found that there was criminal influences on the state government level, then he would resign as gov-

error.

McKeithen said he has ordered Col. Thomas Burbank, director of the Department of Public Safety, to notify all of the sheriffs whose parishes were mentioned in the magazine articles as places where gambling flourished to clean up if any of the charges are true.

Crime Panel 5-1 9/14/67 Seeks Recusal Of DA, O'Hara

The Metropolitan Crime Commission today called for the recusal of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and Criminal Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara as legal and judicial advisers to the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Sixteen members of the crime commission have been subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury today in connection with a probe into allegations of organized crime in New Orleans.

Before showing up for the grand jury session, officials of the crime commission called a press conference and rec-

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ommended that the grand jury "act to secure an impartial, objective judicial adviser and legal adviser."

MCC managing director Aaron Kohn contended that there is a conflict of interest involving City Councilman Moon Landrieu. He said that Landrieu's membership on the Council and his position as a lawyer for the TAC Amusement Co. poses a conflict of interest.

Kohn said that City Council has taken little action with regard to revoking liquor licenses where pinball gambling violations have occurred.

"We are saying that City

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Council has failed to close up establishments which have licenses and which are using these licenses to break the law," Kohn said. He added that pinball and jukebox operators "have a big interest in seeing that establishments which use their machines are kept open."

Commission President E. C. Upton Jr. and Kohn said, "We believe there is need for an official examination of conflicts of interests as exist in Landrieu's case."

Upton said that the members of the crime commission, when they appear before the grand jury, would present "detailed investigative leads pertaining to the following major problems of organized crime here:

"The pinball gambling racket, rackets influence on sports and the liquor license racket."

UPTON CHARGED that the liquor license racket involves "the complex, corrupt influence of pinball-jukebox operators and others to maintain the many hundreds of bars and other locations in which they operate their machines."

"Relative immunity from the law," he said, "has encouraged many of these locations to contribute to the alarming rate of murders, assaults and other crimes in this city."

Both Upton and Kohn commended the last grand jury for spotlighting the lack of action taken against liquor license holders who have violated the law.

ASKED SPECIFICALLY if the MCC was calling for the recusal of Garrison and Judge O'Hara for this particular grand jury, Kohn said:

"Basically, yes. And also members of District Attorney Garrison's staff over whom he may exercise control."

Upton said the MCC will suggest to the grand jury that it appeal "to the attorney general and the governor of this state for help in securing, as

their judicial advisor, someone who does not share Judge O'Hara's loyalties to racketeers and convicted felons, and a legal advisor who does not share District Attorney Garrison's violent refusals to objectively deal with organized crime."

THE MCC PRESIDENT said he also intends to recommend that the grand jury "formally request Mayor (Victor H.) Schiro and Police Supt. (Joseph I.) Giarrusso to assign for their assistance several members of the Police Intelligence Unit under command of Capt. Thomas Drake, with the understanding that these officers will work directly for the grand jury, and not under the supervision of the district attorney."

The crime commission called for the removal of O'Hara after the judge testified that he had acted as a "messenger" for convicted felons—Teamster Union president James Hoffa and New Orleans builder Zachary "Red" Strate.

Garrison asked the jury to conduct its investigation into organized crime, he said, after he became incensed at a Life Magazine article which alleged that racketeering and syndicated crime are flourishing in the city.

Garrison said he does not believe the Life charges are true and swore he would resign if the Grand Jury turns up any evidence to support the claims.

OTHER GRAND juries during Garrison's tenure have investigated the existence of mobsterism in New Orleans, each time returning a negative verdict.

MCC managing director Kohn, however, insists that racketeering is going full blast in the Crescent City, supported mainly by the forces of Carlos Marcello.

Shortly after the Life article hit the stands, Kohn, who was subpoenaed for today's session, announced that most of the magazine's information about New Orleans had come from crime com-

mission files.

KOHN AND GARRISON have been the principals in a running feud over the past several years over the question of whether New Orleans is one of gangland's capital cities.

The DA said that if this grand jury fails to turn up any proof of mob activity, then Kohn should resign from the MCC.

The other MCC officials called before the jury today either are or have been members of the commission's board of directors.