

STATE TROOPERS AGAIN NAMED IN LABOR PROBE

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

1-9-68

BATON ROUGE—A company official today told the state labor-management commission that he was advised to rent equipment from a rental firm operated by state policemen to avoid troubles.

The latest incident involving state policemen was disclosed as the antitrackers commission moved into the second of three days of hearings—expanding its area of coverage to Baton Rouge.

Meanwhile, Gov. John J. McKeithen issued a statement saying he would call the Legislature into session to correct any defects that might cause the state Supreme Court to uphold a district court ruling that the law setting up the commission is unconstitutional.

THE COMMISSION IS OPERATING NOW under a sus-

pensive appeal from a decision by District Judge Fred Blanche in Baton Rouge. The decision is being appealed by the state.

As the second day of testimony opened, Kenneth Valentine, a former engineer for Unitroyal, which was constructing a plant in North Baton Rouge, revealed incidents of vandalism and a physical beating and threats of violence.

Valentine, now an employe of the Shell Oil Co., said he had been informed that he had better watch his step or he would be hurt. He told the commission that he resigned from his job with Unitroyal when the company offered to transfer him. He said he didn't want to be run out of town by anyone.

THE ENGINEER, WHO WAS THE SECOND person to testify this morning, declared that the company rented an

(Turn to Page 18, Column 2)

Continued from Front Page

inferior piece of equipment from the firm operated by state police officers.

The equipment was a flatbed truck rented from the A-1 Rental Co., operated by Col. Ben Ragusa, Capt. Joe Greene and Capt. James Bryant of the state police.

Gen. Thomas Burbank, director of public safety, said he would make an investigation of the disclosures made by Valentine. He said he had previously ordered the state police officials to discontinue the rental company.

VALENTINE SAID he was informed by the construction superintendent that "we have to rent this truck for peace on the job." He said that the company paid \$275 a month for the truck and could have obtained a new model for that figure. In addition, he said the company had to pay for new parts to make it operable and then sent it back for additional repairs.

Valentine said the superintendent explained that if the A-1 truck was rented "we would have no trouble from the state police," such as having police inspectors on the job site and being given speeding tickets.

THE ONLY STATE police trooper cited by Valentine was Greene, with whom the superintendent met.

Valentine also disclosed two separate incidents when sugar was put into the fuel tanks of equipment used on the construction job.

In one case in January 10 pieces of equipment, including a \$175,000 crane, was damaged in this manner. In March three company trucks were "sugared."

Valentine said that he was advised by a superintendent to rent such equipment from the A Rental Co., although the company would rather have rented a crane from another firm, because it suited the needs better.

CLAY JONES, the superintendent, was beaten by one man believed to be a Teamster and identified as Don Smith, according to Valentine. He said the incident occurred when Jones rented a piece of equipment from another firm.

A guard named Thomas

Boyd was threatened by a Teamster foreman identified as Patrick Martone (who is under grand jury indictment for allegedly participating in a bombing), according to Valentine.

Earlier in the day, A. J. Slovack, senior superintendent for the Houston Contracting Co., testified that his firm rented a bus for \$25 a day from a union steward, James J. Morales. He said the bus was needed.

THE HEARING was snapped to attention later when one witness, Hugh Marinneaux, bolted from the session after being cut off while reading a lengthy statement.

Marrineaux, a union steward, had been cited in previous testimony in the rental of unneeded equipment to a Houston contractor doing work for

Dow Chemical Co. in Iberville Parish.

He appeared at the hearing subpoena and was reading a long document regarding his rights as a union man when commission chairman Cecil Morgan cut him off.

The commission hearings, which began in December, started off by hearing testimony of racketeering in Iberville Parish. It moved its attention to East Baton Rouge today. The commission, however, is not yet through with the Iberville episode and has agreed to hear testimony Jan. 22 from Sheriff Jesse Ourso of Iberville, to counter statements against him.

McKeithen Is Urged To Continue Efforts

LAFAYETTE (AP) — The Association for Industrial Improvement, a group of Lafayette area contractors, issued a joint resolution today with the Chamber of Commerce asking Gov. John J. McKeithen to continue efforts to curb labor troubles.

Association secretary Robert Lowe said his group is organized because law enforcement agencies are "either unwilling or unable to solve any of the 24 dynamitings in the area during the past 24 months."

Lowe said, "Nobody can stop us like they're trying to do with the labor commission. We are a private organization paying our own way and we are going to keep investigating with our own detectives.

"We are not going to stop until the law decides they can solve some of the bombings, or the bombings cease. We want to build Louisiana, not blow it up."