

Kohn Says State Officials Avoiding Responsibility

Claims Intervention in Probe Is Possible

The governor and the attorney general of this state are avoiding their responsibility by refusing to intervene or investigate District Attorney Jim Garrison's probe, Aaron Kohn said Monday.

Kohn, managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission, who spoke at a Newsmaker luncheon at the Press Club of New Orleans, said the state constitution does provide a system of checks and balances concerning public officials.

"We have a mechanism but it is not very workable," Kohn said. "It doesn't take into account political alliances or provide for action when others are unwilling to act."

He alleged that the state constitution and the new criminal code specifically provide the attorney general with power to intervene in all suits, civil or criminal, or to institute suits or investigations and give wide supervisory powers over state district attorneys.

"There is nothing specifically in the state constitution or statutes which allows the governor to intervene directly," he said. "But, the governor has the power to demand the attorney general to intervene."

Kohn said that, ever since

June 8, there have been a "growing number of allegations that crimes have been committed by Garrison and his staff."

He particularly referred to an article which appeared in Newsweek Magazine and programs by NBC and CBS television as well as local allegations.

ONE MAN CHARGED

"The Metropolitan Crime Commission believes the pending trial of one charge must not paralyze our criminal laws against effective action to deal with other alleged crimes," Kohn said, noting that one person has already been formerly

indicted.

Kohn said that persons who made accusations recently created an obligation to investigate and approve or disprove at least 22 different kinds of crime as defined in the Louisiana criminal code.

"These specific statutes under the criminal code bear investigation in accordance with the allegations," he said. "They are criminal conspiracy; attempts (to bribe, to incite felony, etc.); battery or conspiracy to commit battery; intimidation of officers; alleged conspiracy to commit aggravated kidnaping, criminal defamation; criminal mischief; simple

burglary; obstructing public passage; corrupt influence; public intimidation; injuring public records; and malfeasance in office."

Kohn said the commission wrote three separate letters to Attorney General Jack P. F. Gremillion asking him to intervene and investigate. He said the commission is asking, step by step, responsible people to exercise their responsibility and their duties.

He said the last resort for taking action can be accomplished through the public, which with 25 names, can petition removal action through the district courts.