



—States-Item photo.

CHATting OUTSIDE THE GRAND JURY room before this morning's session are Metropolitan Crime Commission Director AARON M. KOHN, right, and H. E. REILY, member of the MCC executive committee.

TESTIFIES ON CRIME

Kohn Spends Long Day Before Jury

Metropolitan Crime Commission director Aaron M. Kohn spent a long day before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury today in the second day of the jury's probe of organized crime charges.

Kohn was called before the jury about 9:40 a. m., and remained until a lunch break was taken shortly after noon. He was to have resumed his testimony in the afternoon session.

The appearance of Kohn followed a brief one by commission member, H. Eustis Reily, who was in the jury room for only a few minutes.

There was no indication what either witness told the jury. Grand Jury proceedings are secret.

BEFORE GOING in, Kohn told newsmen he was appear-

ing before the jury members to "give them a broad understanding of organized crime as we have understood it over a long period of time.

"Organized crime is as complicated as government, for it is an underworld framework of government.

"It can't be described in a simple sentence. We hope to give it piece by piece.

"We can't present evidence. We can only give information.

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It is up to law enforcement officers to provide the evidence."

It was the second such grand jury probe within a year. Last Sept. 29, the jury quizzed Kohn, other MCC officials, and Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso about organized crime.

The 1966 quiz came in the wake of charges by Kohn that organized crime had influenced District Attorney Jim Garrison's decision to recommend a pardon for French Quarter stripper Linda Brigette on an obscenity conviction. Garrison denied this.

No results of the 1966 probe ever were announced.

Three of 16 MCC members subpoenaed yesterday testified in a session that lasted until 7:30 p. m. Kohn was called at 9:40 a. m. today, but the other 12 members were released from their subpoenas.

THE 16 WERE subpoenaed by the jury in connection with published accusations that New Orleans is a syndicated crime center.

Before appearing to testify, MCC officials called a news conference at which they said the grand jury should remove Garrison and Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara as advisers.

They said the jury should "act to secure an impartial, objective judicial adviser and legal adviser."

COMMISSION President E. C. Upton Jr. said the MCC

would present "detailed investigative leads" to the jury involving "the pinball gambling racket, rackets' influence on sports and the liquor license racket" in New Orleans.

The MCC called for the removal of O'Hara after the judge testified before a federal court that he had acted as a messenger for two convicted felons — Teamster Union leader James Hoffa and New Orleans builder Zachary "Red" Strate.

GARRISON, who contends there is no organized crime in New Orleans, asked the grand jury to undertake the present probe after Life magazine depicted New Orleans as a crime center.

Kohn said the MCC supplied most of the data for the article. Garrison said he did not believe the Life charges, and promised to resign if the grand jury found evidence to support them. He suggested that Kohn quit if no such evidence is found.

Replying to this, Kohn said he would not be drawn into Garrison's "sly public game. Mr. Garrison always wants to bet with somebody."

AT THE CLOSE of last night's session, the grand jury foreman, James O. Sanders, was noncommittal about the possibility of recusing O'Hara and Garrison.

One MCC member summed up the day's proceedings this way:

"No hits, no runs, no errors."

Kohn charged that Moon Landrieu, city councilman-at-large, has a "conflict of interest" when voting on matters pertaining to revoking liquor licenses because he is the legal representative of TAC Amusement Co., which furnishes pinball machines and juke boxes for a large number of the city's lounges and bars.

In a statement, Landrieu denied the charge, declaring that, to his knowledge, he has never acted on "any matter which presented a conflict of interest. I have tried in eight years since I've been in public office to conduct myself in a manner that has been be-

yond reproach and I believe I have done this."

QUESTIONED AS to whether he regarded sitting on a liquor license violation case as a member of the City Council when a question of payoff on a pinball machine is involved as a conflict of interest, Landrieu declared:

"No. Not unless the party charged happened to be a client, friend or relative. I know of no such cases which have been presented to the City Council in which I have participated."

Kohn, when asked if he had specific evidence where Landrieu had used any influence, replied: "His votes on the council are the best evidence."

IN HIS STATEMENT, Landrieu said that he is one of five attorneys on the council and "all any honorable public official can do is to recuse himself when it appears that he has an interest in the matter in question."

"I have had to recuse myself very rarely," he added. "Whenever I even suspected that a conflict of interest was present involving any client, relative or friend, I have recused myself."

"I advised the managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission more than two years ago that I represented TAC Amusement Co. as an attorney and I advised him to call to my attention any act on my part which he felt was contrary to good ethics."

"DURING that period of time I have not had one question or complaint from the director. I know that he does not accuse me of any wrong doing, but only of the possibility of a conflict of interest."

"Every person who serves in the government is faced with the same possibility. It is how you conduct yourself under the circumstances that determines whether you are

a good public official or not.

"I've been a lawyer for 13 years and hope to remain one until I die. I have never done anything as either a lawyer or a public official that was not in keeping with the highest ethical standards."

"I RECALL only two instances since I have been sitting on the council in which a conflict of interest has arisen. One involved the rezoning of a piece of property close enough to a lot in which I had an interest to depreciate the value of that lot and, out of a sense of fairness, I recused myself even though there was no direct conflict of interest."

"The only other one that I can think of involved a former client of an attorney in my office. Other members of the council have had to recuse themselves when similar situations arose."

"The seven members of this city council, as well as prior councils, like any judge must, have listened to liquor law violation cases presented to us and made findings of guilt or innocence and assessed penalties which we felt were appropriate. To my knowledge, every finding and penalty decision has been unanimous."