

NO 3-1 FEB 10 1973

Hotel Sniper Aided In Arson--Marshal

The state fire marshal said his office is investigating arson at the Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, but he said it was impossible for one man to have set fires on six different floors during the Jan. 7 sniping incident.

Fire Marshal Raymond B. Oliver said 44 rooms of the hotel were involved in fires and "those fires had to be set by two or more people.

"There is no way for one man to touch off all those fires at one time," he said.

"I'm telling you that you couldn't go on the eighth floor, 11th, 12th, 15th, 17th and 18th floors and set fires, and be shooting and sniping out the window at the same time."

Oliver, who said yesterday the tragic Rault Center fire in which six person died, was

deliberately set by arsonists, also linked that fire with the Howard Johnson's incident.

He said his office is looking into a link between the Rault fire and the sniping incident, but he admitted that he had no evidence at this time.

Oliver said the 17-story Rault Center was the only building in the area where police could effectively combat "the enemy on top of Howard Johnson's."

"It's just my personal opinion, but if you wanted to plan something for the future, you would like to get the Rault Center out of the way. If they had been successful in destroying the Rault Center, police would never have been able to go to the top of the Rault building and protect firemen."