

Governor Denies Charge Son Worked at BR Track

WASHINGTON (AP)—Gov. John McKeithen has responded with a flat denial to a charge by a Teamsters Union official that the governor's son worked as a Teamster on a controversial race track construction project near Baton Rouge.

The business agent for Teamsters Local No. 5, Edward Grady Partin, had said he employed sons of McKeithen and Atty. Gen. Jack Gremillion on construction of the Baton Rouge International Speedway.

Circumstances surrounding construction of the speedway, which McKeithen has called "the great race track mystery," are the subject of a labor-management commission probe.

"Mr. Partin is mistaken about my son having worked on any race track project, as my son is prepared to testify under oath," McKeithen told

the Associated Press yesterday.

McKeithen said the allegation was aimed at his son Fox, a senior at LSU. He said his son did receive \$20 from Partin for working one day in the pit at the Kenner race track near New Orleans.

"In the summer of 1965 or 1966—my son doesn't remember which, but he believes it was 1966—he was employed approximately two to three weeks by the Bechtel Corp.,

(Turn to Page 7, Column 1) one of the contractors on the Texaco job."

BECHTEL WAS the prime contractor on a Texaco refinery job.

"The Bechtel job was a Teamsters job and his employment had to be approved by the Teamsters. Apparently this is the employment that he had in mind," McKeithen said.

The governor said Fox was employed there with several other students from LSU.

"At no time did he ever receive any money, at no time did he work on the controversial race track," McKeithen said.

He said the practice of industry and state government hiring college students in the summer has been traditional.

"On the last weekend that he (Fox) worked, he went to the Kenner race track, with

LSU football player Billy Masters and several other football players and their wives. When they got there, they met Mr. Partin, whom, my son advised me, invited him and Billy Masters to come to the pit with me. I think you'll enjoy the race better there."

"THEY ACCEPTED. Mr. Partin gave my son and Billy Masters \$20 each for their work in the pit that day. He was very nice and kind to them.

"He (Fox) came back and reported it to me and the fact that he had worked for Bechtel and that the Teamsters had gotten him the job. Because of the peculiar relationship, the fact that he was the governor's son, he and I agreed that it was best for him not to take anything that looked like favors and perhaps it would be best for him to disassociate himself with the work at the Bechtel plant at the Texaco job site and the Teamsters immediately.

"He did so immediately. My son is prepared to testify to this under oath. One can draw his own conclusion whether this is work on the controversial race track in Baton Rouge."

The governor said all Fox received was \$20 in cash that day.

Partin had alleged the governor's son received \$150 a week as Teamster on the race track project at Prairieville. He said neither Gremillion's son nor McKeithen's son wanted pay in checks but in cash.

Gremillion, who was also in Washington, had this to say: "My son worked on a construction project Partin got for him. He didn't work for the Teamsters, and all it was was a boy getting a summer job."

M'KEITHEN said at the time the incident came up, "I did not know Partin. The first time I met Partin was when we had the first long shutdown in industrial construction in Baton Rouge, which, my recollection is, was sometime after" his son's employment.

The governor said industry and labor unions in this area "have been very cooperative and nice to youth in the summertime.

"I'm very hopeful this matter involving my son and his work for Bechtel will not adversely affect help from labor unions and industry in employing college students," he said.