

Gambling as Usual?

Terry's Place in Laplace used to be a gambling mecca within an easy dice throw of state police patrols on busy Hwy. 61.

And Sheriff Percy D. Hebert of St. John the Baptist Parish could be counted on to profess total ignorance of conditions within Terry's parlor.

Then the national crime spotlight turned on Louisiana, and recently we noted that the state police seemed to be showing new vigor in enforcing the state's gambling laws.

There was a state police raid on an alleged bookie joint in Laplace last month and another raid in Jefferson Parish.

However, it appears that Terry's may need checking again by state police. Reporters who visited the scene Monday night left with the impression that it may be back to business as usual behind that fence beside Hwy. 61.

La. Racket Revelations

Results of two days of rackets hearings at Baton Rouge this week should prove again the validity of the idea behind formation of the Labor-Management Commission of Inquiry.

Earlier hearings were confined in scope, but the sessions which ended Tuesday were wider ranging, indicating that new guidelines prevailed.

Death threats, dozens of instances of equipment damage, a beating, many cases of intimidation, political overtones, instant peace purchased by use of favored services or rental equipment, mysterious hauling to a car racetrack in which a teamster mogul is reputedly interested—these were some of the allegations contained in two days of testimony.

Commission Chairman Cecil Morgan points out that the hearing "opened several channels for further investigation." In this respect, the hearing offers much encouragement.

Gov. John J. McKeithen was not alone when he spoke his sentiments earlier that the commission's work was on the conservative side, holding back until its investigators rounded up comprehensive evidence. In themselves, the public sessions are expected to turn up evidence.

That there was something wrong and crying out for investigation became apparent last summer when virtually all industrial construction in the Baton Rouge area came to a standstill and 15,000 workers were thrown out of work.

Of all hearings, this week's has given the most comprehensive view of what it was that paralyzed industrial construction, caused widespread unemployment, battered the state's economy and negated at least part of Louisiana's vigorous efforts to foster industrial development.

The picture is not pretty, but it is revealing. And revelation there must be before the cleanup.