

CRIME PANEL DEMANDS JUDGE O'HARA RESIGN

The Metropolitan Crime Commission called publicly today for the resignation of Criminal District Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara.

Judge O'Hara gave controversial testimony during a Chicago hearing last month on an appeal for a new trial of Teamster Union president James R. Hoffa, who is now in a federal prison.

During the federal court hearing, Judge O'Hara testified that he had acted as a "messenger" in an attempt to get Baton Rouge Teamster official Edward Grady Partin, whose testimony was instrumental in convicting Hoffa in an earlier jury-tampering trial at Chattanooga, to sign an affidavit of "confessed wiretapping."

THE MCC SAID today that it sent a private letter to Judge O'Hara Aug. 29 urging that he "immediately resign from any further performance of judicial functions in the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court."

MCC managing director Aaron M. Kohn said that although receipt for the registered letter apparently was signed by Judge O'Hara, it was remailed and returned unopened to the Crime Commission office yesterday.

Judge O'Hara issued the following statement:

"I understand from various news media that a letter written by Aaron Kohn calls for my resignation. I returned this registered letter addressed to me from the Metropolitan Crime Commission unopened and I have the following comments and explanations:

"While I am positive that most members of this group are well intentioned and well respected citizens of this community, I am equally certain that its managing director,

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Aaron Kohn, is nothing more than a professional muckraker, charlatan and a genius at spewing forth a great volume of half truths and innuendos.

"THEREFORE, I WISH to inform the MCC's executive committee that I will continue not to answer mail from them, and will return its mail unopened until such time as Kohn is no longer officially affiliated with them. At this time, I will be more than happy to meet with and discuss any questions they may have.

"I would like to remind the gentlemen who comprise the executive committee of the Metropolitan Crime Commission that Kohn's lies on me began in 1954, so I know him for what he is. He may have forgotten how he helped engineer two phony, politically inspired indictments against me in 1957, which were immediately thrown out of court, but I most certainly have not forgotten.

"So, if Kohn or any group he is connected with think for a moment that I will lower myself to discuss or

correspond with anyone from Kohn's level, they are sadly mistaken. If anyone should resign, it should be Aaron Kohn."

Week before last, the commission and the New Orleans Bar Association both said they

had requested transcripts of the hearing to study the judge's testimony.

Today, Kohn said, "The executive committee of the Crime Commission believes that Judge O'Hara's conduct, revealed by his sworn testimony Aug. 21, 1967, in the Federal District Court at Chicago, renders him unfit to continue serving in the critically important duties of a judge."

KOHN SAID THE Chicago court proceeding was an unsuccessful attempt to "revoke one of the convictions of imprisoned labor racketeer Jimmy Hoffa."

During the hearing, Judge O'Hara also testified that he had been the expense-paid traveling companion of New Orleans builder Zachary A. "Red" Strate, who was convicted with Hoffa in 1964 on charges of conspiracy and fraud.

Strate testified that O'Hara had set up a meeting between Strate and Walter Sheridan, an aide to former Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy during the Hoffa investigation and now an investigative reporter for the National Broadcasting Co.

Strate said Sheridan offered to help him in Chicago if Strate would help him to discredit Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's probe of the Ken-

edy assassination. Sheridan has called the Strate testimony untrue.

Judge O'Hara was asked

if he owed Strate \$30,000 and if he had ever been paid any money by the Teamsters. There were objections to both questions and they were sustained by presiding Judge Richard B. Austin.

THE JUDGE ADMITTED

that he had taken several trips with Strate, to Washington and Las Vegas, and that the expenses were paid by Strate. He also said that he was present during Teamster meetings in Washington.

Kohn said today that during some of these travels Judge O'Hara "was absent from his court duties because of 'ear trouble', despite a large backlog of major criminal cases awaiting trial."

He said: "Judge O'Hara's testimony revealed other uses of his respected status as a judge in efforts to privately manipulate witnesses or potential witnesses. He arranged a meeting on behalf of Strate, who then unsuccessfully attempted to influence Walter Sheridan to make statements which might free Jimmy Hoffa from imprisonment."

"By his own sworn admissions, Judge O'Hara used an employe of his court to assist one of Hoffa's lawyers prepare an affidavit.

THE JUDGE THEN went to Baton Rouge and attempted to induce Edward Partin to sign the affidavit, intended to help racketeer Hoffa secure release from prison by falsely

claiming that Partin's testimony in Chattanooga was based on wire-tap information.

"The judge stated his travels with Strate were as a 'companion', and his services on behalf of convicted felons Strate and Hoffa were as a 'messenger'.

"The Metropolitan Crime Commission believes the evidence clearly disqualifies Judge O'Hara from serving the public interest in the trusted role of a judicial officer," he concluded.



JUDGE
MALCOLM V. O'HARA