

Crime Panel Seeks Recusal Of DA, O'Hara

The Metropolitan Crime Commission today called for the recusal of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and Criminal Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara as legal and judicial advisers to the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Sixteen members of the crime commission have been subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury today in connection with a probe into allegations of organized crime in New Orleans.

Before showing up for the grand jury session, officials of the crime commission called a press conference and rec-

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ommended that the grand jury "act to secure an impartial, objective judicial adviser and legal adviser."

MCC managing director Aaron Kohn contended that there is a conflict of interest involving City Councilman Moon Landrieu. He said that Landrieu's membership on the Council and his position as a lawyer for the TAC Amusement Co. poses a conflict of interest.

Kohn said that City Council has taken little action with regard to revoking liquor licenses where pinball gambling violations have occurred.

"We are saying that City

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Council has failed to close up establishments which have licenses and which are using these licenses to break the law," Kohn said. He added that pinball and jukebox operators "have a big interest in seeing that establishments which use their machines are kept open."

Commission President E. C. Upton Jr. and Kohn said, "We believe there is need for an official examination of conflicts of interests as exist in Landrieu's case."

Upton said that the members of the crime commission, when they appear before the grand jury, would present "detailed investiga-

tive leads pertaining to the following major problems of organized crime here:

"The pinball gambling racket, rackets influence on sports and the liquor license racket."

UPTON CHARGED that the liquor license racket involves "the complex, corrupt influence of pinball-jukebox operators and others to maintain the many hundreds of bars and other locations in which they operate their machines."

"Relative immunity from the law," he said, "has encouraged many of these locations to contribute to the alarming rate of murders, assaults and other crimes in this city."

Both Upton and Kohn commended the last grand jury for spotlighting the lack of action taken against liquor license holders who have violated the law.

ASKED SPECIFICALLY if the MCC was calling for the recusal of Garrison and Judge O'Hara for this particular grand jury, Kohn said:

"Basically, yes. And also members of District Attorney Garrison's staff over whom he may exercise control."

Upton said the MCC will suggest to the grand jury that it appeal "to the attorney general and the governor of this state for help in securing, as their judicial advisor, someone who does not share Judge O'Hara's loyalties to racketeers and convicted felons, and a legal advisor who does not share District Attorney Garrison's violent refusals to objectively deal with organized crime."

THE MCC PRESIDENT said he also intends to recommend that the grand jury "formally request Mayor (Victor H.) Schiro and Police Supt. (Joseph I.) Giarrusso to assign for their assistance several members of the Police Intelligence Unit under command of Capt. Thomas Drake, with the understanding that these officers will work directly for the grand jury, and not under the supervision of the district attorney."

The crime commission called for the removal of O'Hara after the judge testified that he had acted as a "messenger" for convicted felons—Teamster Union president James Hoffa and New Orleans builder Zachary "Red" Strate.

Garrison asked the jury to conduct its investigation into organized crime, he said, after he became incensed at a Life Magazine article which alleged that racketeering and syndicated crime are flourishing in the city.

Garrison said he does not believe the Life charges are true and swore he would resign if the Grand Jury turns up any evidence to support the claims.

OTHER GRAND juries during Garrison's tenure have investigated the existence of mobsterism in New Orleans, each time returning a negative verdict.

MCC managing director

Kohn, however, insists that racketeering is going full blast in the Crescent City, supported mainly by the forces of Carlos Marcello.

Shortly after the Life article hit the stands, Kohn, who was subpoenaed for today's session, announced that most of the magazine's information about New Orleans had come from crime commission files.

KOHN AND GARRISON have been the principals in a running feud over the past several years over the question of whether New Orleans is one of gangland's capital cities.

The DA said that if this grand jury fails to turn up any proof of mob activity, then Kohn should resign from the MCC.

The other MCC officials called before the jury today either are or have been members of the commission's board of directors.