

Feared LL&T Probe

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—Gov. John McKeithen today confirmed he indirectly complained last December to the Justice Department that it appeared to be trying to harass and embarrass him with the Louisiana Loan and Thrift in-

vestigation because of the state's labor racketeering probe.

The governor told the States-Item he contacted Walter Sheridan, a former investigator for the Justice Department, about Christmas time.

He told Sheridan the Justice

Department "was trying to embarrass me and other people in Louisiana and he (Sheridan) said it wasn't true," the governor said.

THIS WAS ABOUT six weeks before a federal grand jury in New Orleans returned indictments Feb. 14 in

Smear, Governor Says

its examination of the Louisiana Loan and Thrift Corp.

Gov. McKeithen and a number of top state officials testified before the grand jury, which indicted Attorney General Jack P. F. Gremillion and several others on violation of the securities and exchange laws.

SHERIDAN, WHO ALSO has worked for a television network, was the chief investigator for the Justice Department when it convicted James Hoffa, International Teamster boss, on a federal jury-tampering charge.

One of the key witnesses for the government was Ed-

ward Grady Partin, Baton Rouge boss who has been a prime target of the state labor-management probe of racketeering in the Baton Rouge area.

"I got the impression the Justice Department was trying to embarrass me if they could," McKeithen said.

He said the same people who had investigated the Hof-fa case were going around the state digging up information on him in connection with the LL&T.

HE SAID HE CALLED Sheridan because he felt the

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former investigator still had influence with the Justice Department, particularly the element that had been looking after Partin.

"I am not asking for any mercy at all," McKeithen said, "for I don't have anything to hide. I've never asked anyone to get off me." He said, "I told him I just wonder if this is an effort to harass me because of Teamsters Local No. 5. I told him I offered in two letters to appear under oath."

M'KEITHEN SAID Sheridan replied he didn't think there was an effort to embarrass the governor.

McKeithen said he has been in contact with Sheridan several times since the labor-management investigation began. The States-Item disclosed a meeting between the two in Washington over a year ago at which Sheridan expressed concern about Partin's future.

He said he had an understanding with Sheridan that they would exchange information.

U.S. ATTORNEY Louis La-cour, McKeithen said, also informed him in the presence of other Justice Department officials that he (McKeithen) was cleared of any involvement.

McKeithen had advised several state officials and friends to do what they could to help supporters of the LL&T venture so long as it was legal.

McKeithen said of the Justice Department investigation, "I've never seen such enthusiasm in my life from Washington."

Indicted along with Gremillion were state Rep. Salvador Anzelmo of New Orleans; attorney Joseph Kavanaugh of Baton Rouge; Ernest Bartlett, Fort Smith, Ark., former chairman of the LL&T board, and Charles A. Ritchey, New Orleans, former LL&T president.