

WEDNESDAY

NEW ORLEANS

Garrison's Opponents Attack Ability in Office

Three candidates for the office of district attorney attacked the ability of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison last night while Garrison himself came back with a defense of his conduct.

The candidates spoke at a meeting of the Young Democrats of New Orleans at the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel.

Garrison's opponents contended he cannot run his office effectively while working on the Kennedy assassination probe. Garrison reported that he had prosecuted loan sharks, closed many Bourbon Street nightclubs and put houses of prostitution out of business.

HARRY CONNICK, a former assistant U.S. attorney, said the question of Costra Nostra activities in New Orleans had been brought up by five national publications. He added that scandal had been found in New Orleans, not by Garrison but by certain magazines.

Connick contended that Garrison regarded New Orleans as an audience whom he is entertaining; however, continued Connick, "clowns are for amusement but the time for clowns is past."

Connick, mentioning a report that Garrison once had said he felt like going back to private practice, termed it the "best idea he has had in eight years."

Ross Scaccia, a former member of Garrison's staff,

voiced the opinion that Garrison has so much power he is beginning to abuse it.

SCACCIA CALLED for a better way to deal with narcotic offenders and approved the methadone system for treating drug addicts.

Scaccia contended that the next district attorney "must be consistent." He warned that abuse of power by the district attorney's office injures the people of the city.

Charles Ray Ward, another former assistant to Garrison, labeled crime in the streets "the No. 1 problem facing the district attorney's office."

WARD TOLD the audience that the crime rate in New Orleans had increased in 1967 and in 1968 and probably will continue to go up in 1969.

Ward called for a new district attorney, willing to try "new approaches" in fighting crime. He described the present system for punishing criminals as "medieval," appealed for efforts to rehabilitate them and recommended a halfway house to supervise and assist released offenders.

Ward condemned efforts of

Garrison to continue the Kennedy assassination investigation.

ADMITTING THAT his opponents all are well qualified, Garrison countered that he offered the public "frankness and candor."

He insisted that the U.S. government is involved in the Kennedy assassination case and emphasized that the only reason he is not making public "specifics in the case is because I don't want to prejudice the case."

He pledged a continuance of the probe if reelected.

Garrison reported that his office in the past seven years had achieved an 84.3 per cent criminal conviction rate.

He listed the following things as having been accomplished by his office: charging of loan sharks with theft; clean-

ing up of Bourbon Street and use of padlock laws for the first time in Louisiana history and elimination of lottery agents.

Dr. Medina In Race for Coroner's Post

Former first Assistant Orleans Parish Coroner Dr. Ignacio Medina Jr. today announced his candidacy for the coroner's post in the Nov. 8 Democratic primary.

Dr. Medina served from 1950 to 1968 under the late Dr. Nicholas J. Chetta, who was coroner until his death in May last year.

Dr. Medina, along with three other assistant coroners, resigned his post when Gov. John J. McKeithen appointed Dr. Carl H. Rabin to serve in the interim period a year ago.

The reignitions came on charges that the appointment of Dr. Rabin, who was backed by Mayor Victor H. Schiro, was a political one.

"I am privileged," said Dr. Medina, "to have been present at the conception of many of (Dr. Chetta's) reforms and helpful toward their realization. I inherited, so to speak, Dr. Chetta's plans for further signal improvements in the coroner's office and I feel advancement toward these goals is my own personal obligation to the memory of New Orleans' most outstanding coroner."

From 1956 until last year, said Dr. Medina, "I was delegated the full responsibility and burdens of this office whenever the coroner was absent due to illness, meetings or vacations."

The three assistant coroners who resigned with Dr. Medina last year are Dr. Lloyd-F. LoCascio, Dr. Sewell J. Kepner Jr. and Dr. Gerald D. Martin.

Dr. Medina said he is seeking the office on "the encouragement and insistence of professional and civic-minded persons."