

Landrieu Hits Back at Kohn; Fitzmorris Cites Backers

By GENE BOURG

Mayoral candidate Moon Landrieu has lashed back at renewed criticism by the Metropolitan Crime Commission of his association with TAC Amusement Co., a pinball machine firm.

Appearing at a Young Men's Business Club luncheon yesterday afternoon with his opponent, James E. Fitzmorris Jr., Landrieu charged that the MCC's executive director, Aaron Kohn, "seeks to de-

stroy ultimately whatever political future I may have."

Landrieu's detailed defense of his position as a councilman-at-large and a member of the law firm representing TAC came only a few hours after the crime commission's new attack of alleged conflicts of interest on Landrieu's part.

WITH FITZMORRIS sharing the platform, Landrieu also said he had been "hurt, offended and aggrieved" by his opponent's claims that Landrieu had a "definite conflict of interest" in his councilmanic and professional positions.

Fitzmorris said at the luncheon he was not attacking Landrieu personally and was not "questioning his integrity" in his charge.

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"I walked a thin line to keep the council out of suspicion," he said.

"I don't question the fact that the crime commission members are good men," said Landrieu.

However, he said, at least two members of the MCC have had business dealings with TAC Amusement.

LANDRIEU CLAIMED that Joseph C. Simon, executive vice president of the Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans Area and an MCC member, "acknowledged to me that they (the chamber) had considered to accept TAC as a member of the chamber. They are still a member." He added that Simon is a Fitzmorris supporter.

Another crime commission member, C. Alvin Bertel, said Landrieu, had business dealings with TAC through "his company, the Columbia Paper Co."

"I find those positions difficult to reconcile," said the candidate.

Landrieu said he did not "understand how the crime commission can come up three days before the election and make this charge." He said he has "never told an untruth to that commission in this campaign and I don't propose to do so."

LANDRIEU POINTED out that the MCC has known of his real estate investment with TAC since Nov. 26.

Asked if it were true that he had told Simon he would "spend the next four years getting rid of the crime commission, Landrieu said he had told Simon privately and "in anger" that "if they used the commission to allow Mr. Kohn to grind political axes, I would retaliate against the commission."

Landrieu reiterated that he made the statement "in anger and apologized to Mr. Simon for having made it."

He said he thought "for once this city would rise against its tradition of rising out of the gutter at election time."

HE AND FITZMORRIS, said Landrieu, have been close friends and "we walked arm-in-arm out of many meetings during the first primary. This behavior was totally consistent with his character and

of the friendship we have enjoyed."

"I'll accept the public's judgment on Saturday. I expect to win the election," Landrieu remarked.

When Landrieu said Fitzmorris should feel "shame for the tactic that was used," he was booed by the YMBC audience, comprised mostly of Fitzmorris supporters.

"If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," said one audience member.

Fitzmorris, who received frequent applause from the crowd, told the YMBC he would "like to get the record straight in several particular areas."

HE SAID WHEN he called for 500 additional city policemen, he did not "hope to add them overnight," and added an assertion that Landrieu had urged the addition of 700 men to the police force.

"I have not questioned Mr. Landrieu's integrity as a lawyer representing TAC Amusement and as a city councilman," said Fitzmorris. "The point I made is the fact that when he recused himself (from voting on liquor license permit revocations) he did have a conflict of interest."

Fitzmorris criticized Landrieu's proposal for a metropolitan earnings tax, which he called "regressive."

"IF YOU'RE single or if you're married and have 10 children, you pay the same tax" under Landrieu's plan, said Fitzmorris.

He also claimed Landrieu's proposal to repeal one cent of the sales tax and substitute it with a 1 per cent earnings tax would mean reduced revenues for the city.

The metropolitan tax is prohibited by state law, Fitzmorris added, and "I don't see the law being changed in the immediate future."

FITZMORRIS SAID he has never criticized Landrieu for the political support Landrieu has received. He claimed that one organization supporting Landrieu, the United Voters League, "wanted \$33,000 from me in the first primary and I couldn't afford it."

The recognition he has received from numerous civic groups, said Fitzmorris, has produced "a civic record there for anybody to read. It represents 25 years of toil and labor."

Fitzmorris said Landrieu "has made it appear today that we're all persecuting him."

LANDRIEU COUNTERED that he "did not try to make an emotional appeal. I tried to defend myself against charges made against me."

The Roosevelt Hotel's Rex and Gold Rooms were packed for the YMBC luncheon, and the crowd overflowed into the hall outside.

Landrieu

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In his answer to the crime commission's criticism of his "shared ownership of property" with TAC, Landrieu said Kohn has sought to depict him as an "attorney for the mobsters."

WHEN HE WAS charged by Kohn in September, 1967, with a conflict of interest, said Landrieu, he voluntarily went before the MCC "and responded truthfully and faithfully."

"I challenged Mr. Kohn to cite one act or one vote that represented a conflict of interest, and he could not do so," Landrieu stated.

After the crime commission, a private group, later "called and read to me their apology, I told them it was not satisfactory, that I would not sit on the City Council until Mr. Kohn had agreed completely to the apology," said Landrieu.

THE CANDIDATE asserted that Kohn ultimately included his personal apology in the commission's statement in 1967.

Kohn, said Landrieu, subsequently told newsmen "that he was not allowed to comment on the MCC retraction."

Since then, Landrieu asserted, Kohn has made comments "behind closed doors" seeking to damage Landrieu politically.

LANDRIEU STATED that the charges regarding his abstaining from voting on TAC-associated matters before the City Council are ill-founded.