

'GIVE US PROBE BREAK,'

M'KEITHEN URGES SOLONS

By BILL LYNCH

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—Gov. John J. McKeithen today urged the Legislature to determine the substance of Life magazine allegations about Mafia influence on state government before anyone is smeared by a legislative probe.

"Give us this one break," the governor told a joint session of the House and Senate. "Get the Life magazine people up here now under oath and say 'Look, what have you got?'"

McKeithen addressed the lawmakers on the second day of the 60-day legislative session, spending most of his time on the Life charges. He also turned to taxes, urging support of his proposed "sin" tax increases.

AT LEAST FOUR RESOLUTIONS have been introduced in the Legislature seeking creation of a special legislative committee to investigate the charges made by Life and to probe organized crime in general.

McKeithen, obviously still smarting over the allegations, urged the lawmakers to begin work immediately rather than wait until the session is over.

"I wish you would go to work now," he said. "Why don't you appoint a committee today?"

He said the Legislature should demand evidence of wrongdoing by state agencies and officials, such as handling of property taxes on property owned by underworld figure Carlos Marcello, payment for levee work to Marcello and the fixing of investigations.

McKeithen said the Life article is linked to his efforts against school busing to achieve racial balances in the public schools. He said it is an effort to make him spend all of his time defending his administration.

LIFE MAGAZINE, THE GOVERNOR SAID, wanted the legislative investigation to smear a number of people.

"I can tell you what you are doing," he said. "You are playing right into Life's plans.

"Why in the hell don't they investigate in New York," he demanded. "We got one (Mafioso) and they got a hundred."

He said, "I don't mind an investigation at all. They can start it today. But let's make sure they are not playing with us like children."

He declared he wants two bishops included on the committee and will rest his case with them.

"Don't turn me over to a bunch of New Yorkers who are out to destroy me," he said.

THE GOVERNOR ACCUSED LIFE OF failing to up-

date its facts on the assessment of property owned by Marcello, of misstating that a new pumping station drained Marcello property and that a \$500,000 payment to Churchill Farms was made for property in construction of a levee on the Marcello property. He said Churchill Farms donated the land.

McKeithen acknowledged that Emmett Batson, chief legal counsel for the Department of Revenue, had failed to file state income tax returns for two years.

He called Batson's failure inexcusable and reprehensible but said that was not cause enough to label the state under Mafia control.

Life, he said, is now continuing its investigation of C. H. "Sammy" Downs, his close political ally. He said the magazine is now counting the cows on Downs' farm near Alexandria.

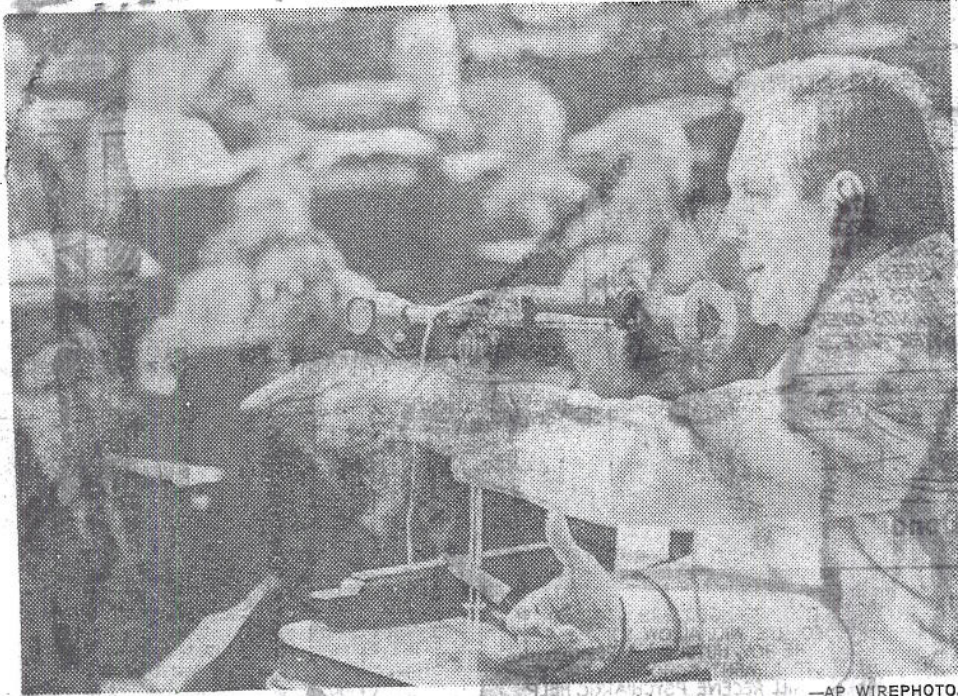
The governor also criticized a New Orleans newspaper editorial for what he said was wrongly giving credit to the Public Affairs Research Council for proposing anticrime legislation. He said the program was the work of the State Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice which he appointed. He did not name the newspaper but was referring to The Times-Picayune.

"IT ISN'T QUITE RIGHT—giving PAR credit for those bills," he said, "particularly when I am accused of being a Mafioso."

The governor said he wants legislation passed increasing the tax on pinball machines and clarifying the law governing them. PAR reported the state has failed to collect the proper tax on gambling-type pinball machines such as is collected by the federal government.

He said the state might realize about \$1 million more in revenue from the increased fee.

The governor also urged the Legislature to pass taxes on whiskey, wine and cigarettes which he is hoping will yield some \$20 million more in state revenue. A two-thirds' vote of the Legislature is required and McKeithen said he recognizes how difficult it is to get the needed votes.



GOV. JOHN J. McKEITHEN MAKES A POINT before a joint session of the Legislature at Baton Rouge shortly after the second day of the 60-day session got under way. —AP WIREPHOTO.