

HOUSE OKAYS MAFIA PROBE

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — The House today voted, 69 to 27, approval of a compromise Mafia investigating committee resolution after amending it to add two newspaper editors to an advisory committee working with legislators.

The compromise resolution cleared the Senate yesterday, 36 to 0, after being worked out over the weekend.

The resolution calls for establishment of a 16-member committee under its present status, including seven lawmakers, to investigate allegations of organized crime influence on state government made by Life magazine.

IT RAN into some stiff opposition both from House members who opposed any investigation and from those who wanted a stronger effort made.

Rep. Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette, who has prepared a legislative act creating a like committee, charged the resolution would not give the advisory group of citizens full participating in the work of the committee.

Under the proposed set up,

Probe

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the first week of the 60-day legislative session.

ORDINARILY the resolution, product of an agreement hammered out by Sen. Jamar Adcock of Monroe, president pro tem of the Senate, would be sent to a House committee.

However, the House can suspend the rules and take up the matter today.

Gov. John J. McKeithen, who agreed to the compromise after a shouting match with Adcock in his fourth-floor executive suite yesterday, has declared he is anxious to get the investigation under way immediately.

The compromise calls for a committee of seven legislators and seven advisors who will have authority to participate in the probe.

It calls for a preliminary report to be made at least 20 days before the end of the regular session and comple-

the legislative members, three from the Senate and four from the House, would have the subpoena powers and right to vote. The citizen members would only have authority to recommend.

The House also approved amendments by Rep. Edward H. Booker of New Orleans spelling out the committee's right to have public hearings and to confine the probe to corrupt and criminal influences on state government.

HOUSE MEMBERS suspended the rules to take up the resolution today as the first major order of business. It will have to go back to the Senate for concurrence in the House amendments before it will have been finally adopted by the legislature.

The newspaper editors would include one from North Louisiana and one from South Louisiana to be selected by the speaker of the House.

Several lawmakers supporting the LeBlanc bill for a statutory committee charged that the resolution committee would not be able to do the job.

Rep. LeBlanc told the House that under the resolution four members of the Legislature could control the committee because they would have the majority vote on decisions of the group.

E. L. HENRY, representative from Jonesboro, declared that the Legislature could not do the job in 60 days. He supported the LeBlanc bill.

He said he understood the

tion of its work 30 days prior to the 1971 fiscal session. Of the seven lawmakers, three would be named from the Senate by the lieutenant governor who is president and four from the House by the speaker.

THE SEVEN non-elected officials would be the deans of the law schools of Louisiana State University, Tulane, Loyola and Southern University, the president of the state chamber of commerce, the president of the state AFL-CIO and the chairman of the Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice.

The format of the committee and the extent of time it would investigate have been the basis of dispute over the probe by the legislature.

members of the committee already have been picked.

Rep. Parey Branton of Shongaloo, whose amendment on newspaper editors was passed, said he recalled that the governor in 1967 said that Life magazine had been good to Louisiana by not printing then all it could have on organized crime and the state.

He charged that the governor has silenced Life by filing an unusual libel suit on behalf of the state against the magazine. He said the suit will prevent the author of the article from testifying before the committee.

Rep. Edward F. LeBeton Jr. of New Orleans said he fa-

vored the resolution because the people of the state are demanding the investigation with nonlawmakers.

Sen. William J. Guste Jr. of New Orleans said he would seek a \$100,000 appropriation to finance the legislative probe.

"As soon as the House passes the Senate measure, I am going to start trying to get some money," said Guste, who authored the measure. "We need to hire our own staff so we won't be beholden to the executive department for anything."

The issue has dominated Turn to Page 13, Column 1

Gov. McKeithen favored a quick probe ending before the legislature ends its session, along with a joint session appearance by David Chandler, author of the Life article.

In addition the governor wanted an all-legislative committee and had a resolution introduced calling for a five-man group to conduct the probe.

MANY LAWMAKERS charged, however, that such an investigation by elected officials only would alienate the confidence of the public in the committee's findings.

"In a press conference held in the Senate chamber, following passage of the Senate resolution, Gov. McKeithen said he was pleased by the Senate's action. "I think every decent citizen of the state is entitled to a full and fair investigation of the Life charges which is what I said from the beginning."

"However, as I've also been saying, I think we first have to ask the Life people to come in under oath with proof and documentation of what they have charged.

"If they have something, then I, and every decent citizen, say go ahead and investigate as long as it takes." But, the governor continued, "If they don't have anything, then for goodness sakes, let's say so."

THE GOVERNOR reiterated his desire to have Archbishop Philip M. Hannan as a member of the non-legislative group in the probe.

The governor also continued his attack on the States-Item, twice referring to the newspaper as the "New York States-Item," and charging

that the paper is "anti-Louisiana."

"It seems that every time I go down to New Orleans to do something for the city, they really let me have it," the governor said.

"I was down there a few days ago and saw an editorial where they said I ought to be subpoenaed and Carlos Marcello ought to be subpoenaed

and at the end of it, they said some decent people also ought to be called in.

"Well, that really hurts."

THE SENATE had before it the administration's resolution and two others offered by Guste and Sen. Jules G. Mollere of Metairie.

Both the Guste and Mollere resolutions called for non-lawmakers on the panel and for a more extensive investigation than desired by the administration.

Adcock took the three resolutions and with the help of Senator Adrian Duplantier of New Orleans, a coauthor of the administration proposal, and Guste and Mollere devised the committee that came about.

The entire Senate was anxious for the compromise and nearly all had agreed to go along with it when Adcock took it to McKeithen.

M'KEITHEN, who had turned his efforts toward a House-passed resolution to subpoena Chandler, objected vociferously at first but Adcock remained adamant.

The House last week had approved a resolution 95 to 4 authorizing the legislature to sit in joint session as a com-

mittee of the whole and subpoena Chandler and "others" and testify on the Life allegations.

Both Chandler and Life were prepared to accept the challenge.

When the resolution came up in the Senate yesterday for consideration, Adcock had it assigned to Judiciary C Committee, which he heads and where it is expected to die.

HE SAID he has no plans to bring it up and the resolution's author, Rep. Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette was not anxious to push for it any longer.

McKeithen spent considerable time on the phone last Saturday trying to line up support in the Senate for the House-passed resolution but found that many lawmakers are saying their constituents wanted the charges investigated thoroughly.

The governor came to the Senate chamber to watch the final action there and said afterwards that if the committee finds anything substantial it should be investigated, but if it finds the Life charges a smear it should say so.

The advisory committee of citizens would have authority to attend all meetings public and private, consult, advise, assist and recommend.