

Define Terms, Panel Challenged

Marcello Blasts 'Crime' Label

By BILL LYNCH
States-Item Bureau

BATON ROUGE — Carlos Marcello, testifying yesterday before the Legislative Mafia Investigating Committee, challenged a member of the committee's advisory panel to define "organized crime."

The Jefferson Parish rackets figure was asked by state AFL-CIO president Victor Bussie whether he had any connections with organized crime.

"What is organized crime?" Marcello retorted. "If you will explain it, I will answer the question. It looks like my name is all over and if anything happens it's Carlos Marcello."

MARCELLO, recently released from a federal prison hospital where he served six months for striking an FBI agent, said "a man going into busi-

ness and trying to make a living" is termed organized crime by some people.

"I can get together with four or five business people here now and if we go ahead and buy something in a civilized way, it's organized crime, boys," Marcello told the committee. "It's not illegal but you've got people like Aaron Kohn (director of the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission) who will say anything."

He said if he put up a dance hall or an ice cream parlor, Kohn would call it organized crime. "He don't want you to go into nothing that's legitimate," Marcello said of Kohn. "He wants you to rob a bank or something so you can stay in the penitentiary the rest of your life."

"That's where you're getting a lot of your false information—from a fellow like Aaron Kohn. That's the man that ought to be investigated," he said.

IN OTHER TESTIMONY, the underworld figure told the probers that Gov. John J. McKeithen's name was placed on a half-million-dollar insurance policy application as a reference by Marcello's insurance agent.

Reader's Digest had reported use of the governor as a reference on a million-dollar policy for Marcello months ago but the committee had neglected to quiz him about it at an earlier appearance.

Marcello shared the spotlight yesterday before the Mafia committee with an Alexandria banker who took the

Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination in declining to answer questions about an alleged payoff to McKeithen to keep new banks out of Rapides Parish.

The banker, Robert Bolton, president of the Rapides Bank and Trust Co., said he was under federal investigation in connection with a Justice Department probe of political contributions.

COMMITTEE Chairman Sen. Adrian G. Duplantier of New Orleans warned both Bolton and Marcello, when the latter also declined to answer some questions, that they faced possible contempt citations.

Marcello, looking trim and neat under the glare of television cameras, turned aside questions about his relations with identified Cosa Nostra figures outside Louisiana. He acted on the advice of his attorney despite an admonition from Duplantier to answer questions.

On the life insurance policy, Marcello's attorneys produced an application for a \$500,000 policy on the Community Life Insurance Co. of Tulsa, Okla. The application signed by Marcello did not refer to references.

Marcello said the agent's report contained references listing McKeithen and what appeared to be former Mayor Victor Schiro of New Orleans. He said he had been dealing with an agent named Dexter L. Bush.

WHILE MARCELLO was in the federal hospital he was visited by a state police lieutenant unbeknown to the committee. The police officer wanted to question Marcello about the insurance policy. The committee was taken by surprise because Marcello at first identified the policeman as an investigator for the committee and there had been no communication from state police about the visit.

Marcello denied a number of allegations made by Crime Commission Director Aaron Kohn and Life Magazine writer David Chandler about him and his business enterprises and relations with various people.

He said he never had any interest in the Evangeline Hotel in Lafayette as Chandler reported he had been told by McKeithen. McKeithen, likewise, had denied making the statement and the Chandler remark touched off a new furor.

Marcello also said he never had

any interest in the Lafayette Cigarette Service Co., which Chandler suggested the Mafia committee investigate in looking for a connection with Joseph "Zip" Chimento, an investigator for the Jefferson district attorney.

HE DENIED that Chimento ever worked for him when he owned the Jefferson Music Co., a pinball machine distributor, which he said he no longer had an interest in.

Kohn had testified before the committee that a woman named Mrs. Rufus Navo gave him a statement that she had seen Marcello and Chimento slapping a person around at the Wills-

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wood Tavern in 1944. Marcello dismissed the account as untrue.

Marcello was questioned about his relations with a large number of persons, including political figures, denying knowledge of any campaign contributions to them.

He repeatedly denied making or having knowledge of any campaign contributions to candidates for governor from any of his corporations or at his directions.

HE SAID HE knew C. H. "Sammy" Downs, present Louisiana public works director, but only casually and had not tried to use Downs' influence in state government.

Chandler quoted McKeithen as having once described Downs as the liaison man between Marcello and the late Gov. Earl K. Long.

Marcello also said he knew Chandler and had been interviewed by him on several occasions.

"He use to run me down like a dog chasing a rabbit," Marcello declared.

Marcello said he knew J. Marshall Brown, Democratic National Committeeman from Louisiana, but was unaware if any insurance had been placed with him by his companies.

NOFIO PECORA, husband of Mrs. Francis Pecora of the state Insurance Rating Commission, leased ground for

a restaurant from his Town and Country Motel in Jefferson, Marcello said. McKeithen has come in for criticism because of Mrs. Pecora's position in state government.

He denied having made any political contribution to McKeithen through Mrs. Pecora, sister of the late Sen. A. D. Smith and Dalton Smith.

Rep. James Beeson, Jefferson Parish, may have had some insurance policies with his companies, Marcello said, but he denied he had used any influence with him. He said he had once talked with Beeson about giving land on Churchill Farms to the state for the domed stadium but had not retained him in any way.

He denied exerting influence over Dist. Atty. Frank Langridge, claiming he rarely saw Jefferson's chief prosecutor.

WHEN ASKED about Capt. Roland Copolla of the state police, Marcello said he could not recall the officer having asked him for a \$42,000 loan. Coppola now is under fire before the

Louisiana Ethics Commission, with one of the charges being that he sought such a loan from Marcello.

He denied Life's statement that Mario Marino was his man in Las Vegas to take care of Louisiana people when they go there. He said the only time he has contacted Marino about helping him is when his family may be going to Las Vegas.

Marcello was questioned about a report that efforts were made to link him up with a longshoreman's union in New Orleans by Bradley Oubre of Norco, brother of Sen. George Oubre. However, Marcello said he didn't recall such an event which had been cited by Kohn and that he knew Oubre as a real estate man.

Bolton, in his appearance before the committee, began taking the Fifth Amendment almost from the outset. His attorney advised the committee that he felt Bolton might be waiving his rights against self-incrimination if he answered any of the questions.

Under pressure from the chairman, Bolton did answer a few questions but turned most aside.

DUPLANTIER began cracking down after chief counsel Gordon Kean posed questions to Bolton about a tentative approval of a new bank charter in 1965 and the sudden reversal by the Louisiana Banking Commissioner two days later.

Bolton was asked if he had been advised of the tentative approval by an officer of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. And if he had then contacted Gov. McKeithen about the matter.

The banker took the Fifth Amendment but Duplantier insisted he answer it, advising him that the committee would consider bringing contempt proceedings against him.

HE WAS FINALLY asked if he had made a campaign contribution to the governor himself and he declined to answer, even though the governor previously has stated he may have gotten something like \$5,000 from Bolton.

The charge has been made that the Boltons of the Rapides Bank and the Guaranty Bank and Trust Co. of Alexandria had contributed a total of \$50,000 to McKeithen to keep out new banks.

Jack W. Beasley Sr., former chairman of the Guaranty Bank, has confirmed already that bank's contribution of \$27,000 to McKeithen. Beasley and Bolton's attorney said nothing was given McKeithen to influence bank charters.