

Editorial

A Plot, Mr. Partin?

It imposes upon credulity to hear labor leader Edward Grady Partin insist that Louisiana's Labor-Management Commission of Inquiry is all a hatched-up plot.

The aim, he says, is to free James Hoffa, former president of the International Teamsters Union, from prison by pressuring Mr. Partin, a Baton Rouge Teamster official, to change his key testimony about Mr. Hoffa.

Reconstruct the scene last summer out of which grew the Labor-Management Commission: Industrial construction—a quarter-billion dollars' worth of it—was at a halt in the capital city area; 15,000 workmen were thrown out of employment; Louisiana's industrial inducement program which had been advancing so handsomely was badly hurt.

There were jurisdictional troubles between unions; labor-management and labor-contractor differences flared; repeatedly in the news were accounts of violence and sabotage of equipment and facilities; law enforcement agencies did not distinguish themselves.

Here was a local problem which matured into a state problem. The prime objective was to get industrialization rolling again.

A special session of the Legislature had neither illusions nor distractions. The House voted 93-0 for creation of the Labor-Management Commission and the Senate likewise voted unanimously, 36-0.

Mr. Partin flatters himself if he believes this was the dimension of a get-Partin scheme or a free-Hoffa plot.

If we take the correct reading, most Louisianians could not care less if Mr. Hoffa moulders in the federal penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa. But they do care about more and better jobs which come with advancing industrialization.

Bad news about last summer's episode spreads across the country.

An upshot is that industrial investment in Louisiana was off 20 per cent for the first quarter of 1968 compared to the average for the same period for the last three years, according to W. T. Hackett Jr., director of commerce and industry.

If Louisiana shows concern for its industrial future, that fact is not to be confused with or distorted into some sort of a double-dyed plot which captures the headlines for Mr. Partin.