

Rackets Unit Names New Chief

By BILL LYNCH
(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE —Edward J. Roussel has been named chief counsel of the State Labor-Management Commission in another major shake-up that represents a victory for state police officials in a long standing inter-department feud with investigators.

Roussel, supposedly on the staff of the commission for the past 14 months, actually has been on the payroll of the state police and reportedly was snubbed by the investigative staff.

THE LABOR management investigators, who were probing the activities of some state policemen in their labor racketeering investigation, are reported to have felt that Roussel was an agent for the state police and turned a cold shoulder to him.

Roussel, formerly chief of the intelligence section for the Internal Revenue Service in New Orleans, was brought to the Labor-Management Commission staff last year by Gen. Thomas Burbank, director of public safety and superintendent of state police.

However, his activities with the staff were so restricted that eventually he was shifted to the state police.

Roussel will replace Thomas McFerrin, a former assistant attorney general, who was named chief counsel during the middle of the year.

McFERRIN WAS dismissed at a secret meeting of the commission yesterday in the culmination of differences between key commission members and him.

One of the principal factors leading to the firing of McFerrin

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rin was the commission's plans to reorganize in line with a civil service commission ruling setting up a new investigative section at a much lower pay rate than the original staff was receiving.

Roussel was recommended as the new chief counsel by the governor's office.

W. W. McDougall, special assistant to the governor, participated in the session yesterday as an ad hoc member when only four of the regular members showed up. Two were ill and there are three vacancies.

McDOUGALL has long been at odds with the labor-management staff over the civil service matter.

He also has been one of the leading figures in an investigation of staff members by the Code of Ethics Commission, for which he served as secretary.

The commission and McFerrin fell at odds over the filling of three positions of investigators, created by the Civil Service Commission. McFerrin had taken the position that adequate investigators to do the job that needed doing could not be hired at the rate of pay set up under civil service.

An attempt to hire one of the original investigators as an assistant counsel was blocked at an earlier meeting of the Labor - Management Commission about two weeks ago.

The die actually was cast at that earlier meeting insofar as McFerrin was concerned. He was barred from the session, the first time such a step had been taken since the commission was created last year.

McFERRIN, by chance, was in Shreveport yesterday defending the state in a federal court law suit involving Grambling College students, when he was informed of the commission decision.

He was called by Dr. F. Jay Taylor, chairman of the commission, shortly after noon. Taylor offered McFerrin time to wind up his present activities with the commission but the chief counsel decided to call it quits at that moment.

The commission then decided to move immediately to replace him with Roussel, who is scheduled to take over Jan. 1.

In a statement issued after the decision, Taylor said only that the commission had decided to reorganize its staff.

The statement said the commission "has placed the responsibility upon Mr. Roussel to review the current status of the work of the commission and its staffing needs and to make a report and recommendations for further changes at the next meeting of the commission."

THERE HAVE BEEN numerous attempts to attack the Labor Management Commission staff over the period of its organization, including action by the Civil Service Commission, the Ethics Commission and personal attacks on individual investigators.

When McFerrin took over as chief counsel, he was the fourth man to hold the position and just had completed drafting the charges against Sheriff Jessel Ourso of Iberville Parish which led to Ourso's ouster.

Ourso was cited as a principal in the labor-management probe of racketeering in the Baton Rouge industrial area.

Since McFerrin took over, the staff's attention has been focused on prosecution. However, it was learned that some commission members have been dissatisfied with the progress or lack of progress of the commission's work and this was a contributing reason for the split with McFerrin.

THE STAFF has been without investigators this month

with the resignation of all of the original employees.

Taking part in the proceedings yesterday were regular members Dr. Taylor, Ralph Howe and Bert Turner, both of Baton Rouge, and A. R. Johnson III of Lake Charles. Floyd Boswell of Shreveport and Rev. Louis J. Twomey of New Orleans were too ill to attend.

Two representatives of labor have resigned from the commission in a boycott and Dean Paul Hebert of LSU resigned for health reasons. The labor representatives are expected to return to the commission.