

M'KEITHEN PROVIDES PUSH FOR PARTIN EXIT

By **BILL LYNCH**

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — A controversial Teamster official has offered to leave Louisiana if he can sell his interest in an auto race track and Gov. John McKeithen has interceded to help arrange financing for a buyer, the States-Item has learned.

Edward Grady Partin, the stormy boss of Teamster Local No. 5 who has been the target of state and federal antiracketeering probes, is seeking \$250,000 for his interest in the track.

The facility, known as Baton Rouge International Speedway, is located in Ascension Parish just south of the capital near the Airline Highway.

A **BATON ROUGE** apartment house owner and operator, John McLaughlin, currently is negotiating for purchase of the track.

McKeithen, eager to see Partin leave the state, was informed by Sen. Jamar Adcock of Monroe that the Teamster official was ready to quit the area if he could find a buyer.

Adcock asked McKeithen if he was interested in helping to arrange the financing for McLaughlin and the governor's response was that he was very much interested. The Monroe senator, who first was approached about handling the financing, advised the governor that he was not interested in getting involved in the transaction in any way.

HE DID MAKE at least two phone calls checking out McLaughlin's credit standing, and negotiations were begun with the Bank of New Orleans to handle the financing. The American Bank and Trust Co. of Baton Rouge also became involved.

About a week ago, McKeithen told the States-Item that he had heard the race track was up for sale, but said then that he had not been involved in any financial discussions. The race track, located on 67 acres of ground at Prairieville, was the subject of a hearing by the Labor-Management Commission during its probe of labor racketeering in the area.

It is believed to be worth somewhere near \$1 million.

One contractor reported that he had a \$500,000 bill still outstanding against the track.

TESTIMONY AT THE Labor-Management Commission hearing revealed that a four-year lease was taken on the property in 1965 and is due to expire July 15. The lease, which contained an option to buy, was signed by Partin.

Actual ownership of the track, which includes a grandstand and concrete pits and is considered one of the finest in the country, has an air of mystery attached to it.

Because of the controversy over its construction, no

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one has stepped forward to claim it, although Partin has remained in the forefront.

THE OWNER IS listed as Baton Rouge International Speedway Inc.

Partin was the chief target of the Labor-Management Commission during the early part of the agency's investigation. However, the commission has become mostly dormant during the past few months.

The Teamster official was the chief government witness in the conviction of International Teamster President James Hoffa on a federal jury tampering charge.

HIS ROLE IN the Hoffa trial gained him protection from at least a section of the U.S. Justice Department which regards any attack on Partin as an effort to free Hoffa.

Even the Labor-Management Commission came under investigation by the Justice Department because of its probe of Teamster Local No. 5 activities in the area.

Partin came under investigation of the Justice Department's anti-trust section which has been looking into the ready-mix concrete business in Baton Rouge. A New Orleans federal grand jury recently heard testimony on the matter but did not return any indictments.

Partin has several federal indictments pending against him that were made before he became an informant against Hoffa.