

BILL LYNCH: LOUISIANA POLITICS

Crime Committee Leaves Citizen Members Unhappy

BATON ROUGE—The issue over full participation rights by citizens serving on the Mafia investigating committee will come to a head Monday in Senate Judiciary C committee when a hearing is scheduled on a bill by Rep. Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette to establish the committee on a statutory basis.

The administration is opposing the plan to give committee members a full voice — in fact, almost any voice — in the operations of the legislative investigating group.

Organized crime and the committee's functions continued to dominate the Legislature as it completed its third week of the 60-day session.

At the first hearing of the committee last Wednesday, some of the citizen advisory members seemed almost embarrassed at



**Sen. Jamar Adcock
Undecided About Change**

having to sit there mutely, passing any questions they might have to legislators to ask for them.

Some are so dissatisfied with the present arrangement, they are giving strong consideration to resigning.

This would be a bad blow to the prestige and public confidence of the committee, which is struggling to gain acceptance when cries of whitewash already are being raised.

Citizen Participation

The question of citizen participation — there are nine citizen posts and seven legislators — is a thorny one.

Only seven citizens have accepted thus far. They cannot participate in subpoena powers, they cannot vote on issues and they cannot ask questions of witnesses at hearings except through an unwieldy note procedure.

As one member of the citizens group put it, how can followup questions be asked of witnesses to develop a specific theme by writing notes.

The legislative committee has scheduled a hearing for June 10, for which a subpoena has been issued to David Chandler, author of the Life Magazine article alleging Mafia influence on government in Louisiana.

However, it is expected to get together before that time to go over some of the problems raised in its own procedural rules.

Wants Citizen Powers

Rep. LeBlanc wants the citizens on the committee to have the same powers as the legislators. The administration, utilizing the

advice of Dean Paul Hebest of the LSU law school, himself a member of the citizens group, is contesting this by saying the committee's power of subpoena would be short-circuited in court if citizens have it.

LeBlanc notes that Gov. John J. McKeithen, who is the most opposed to changing the present resolution status of the committee, had a special session of the Legislature called in 1967 to give subpoena powers to a citizens group who composed the labor-management commission.

Judiciary C Committee is considered the administration's key group in the Senate and is headed by Sen. Jamar Adcock of Monroe. Adcock has advised LeBlanc that he is undecided.

Another problem besetting the investigating committee is the selection of a counsel and staff to do the vital leg work that members of the committee have no time or ability to do. A number of attorneys approached by the committee already have turned the job down.

Sen. Adrian P. Duplantier of New Orleans, chairman of the committee, conducted most of the questioning during the first hearing at which four police officials testified. Although Duplantier is a skilled interrogator, the questions put to the police officials were hardly the probing type or designed to develop information about organized crime operations.

Carlos Marcello is considered the chief of organized crime in Louisiana and the questions asked about his operations and the extent of his influence in government circles were general at best.

One legislative member of the committee said it might be premature so early in the game to pass judgment on the committee's work and this may be a point well taken.

There is another point to consider as well as the procedure and makeup of the committee's functions — whether the probe



**Sen. Claude Duval
After Information Source**

is to be confined to proving the truth or falsity of Life magazine's article or to study organized crime.

One member of the committee, Sen. Claude B. Duval of Houma, seems intent on finding out where and from whom Life obtained its information. He at first tried to get a colleague to push legislation repealing the law protecting reporter's sources and has since moved to get the law suspended by legislative resolution.