

Partin Witness Tells of Threat

ATLANTA, Ga. (AP) — A Baton Rouge concrete pipe producer was called by the government today as its first witness in the criminal conspiracy and extortion trial of Edward Partin, a Louisiana Teamster official.

Roland S. Stevens, president of Stevens Concrete Pipe Products Inc., testified that a businessman convicted last year as a co-conspirator with Partin threatened to "break me" if he went into the pipe business.

Stevens testified only briefly before a noon recess was called. He was scheduled to take the stand again later in the day.

The Justice department opened its case against Partin by charging that his activities have been "an affront to the very image of organized labor."

Wilford L. Whitley Jr., of the department's antitrust division, made the charge in his opening argument at Partin's second trial on criminal conspiracy and extortion charges.

Partin is accused of conspiring with a Baton Rouge business man to gain a monopoly on the concrete business in the Louisiana city.

WHITLEY said that "this case is not a union case."

"It is a case about criminal conspiracy and extortion. It is a case about unspeakable physical violence and furtherance of this conspiracy," he said.

"We will argue and continue to argue that the acts of this defendant were an affront to the very image of organized labor," he said.

James F. Neal of Nashville, Tenn., Partin's lawyer, said in his answering argument that the "government's case is based on three parts rumor and — sadly — one part falsehood."

"To say this is not a union case, not a labor case, is quite absurd," he added.

The jury of eight men and four women was seated by U.S. District Court Judge James F. Battin yesterday in less than six hours. He told the jury the trial could take

more than four weeks.

THE TRIAL will be Partin's second on the charges. His first, in Butte, Mont., last summer, ended with a deadlocked jury. The case originated in New Orleans where Partin was indicted in 1969, but, at the request of the defense, the trial was shifted to Montana and again to Georgia after the mistrial.

Battin, of Billings, Mont., was appointed for the second trial after the Justice Department asked the first judge to disqualify himself.

Partin, 46, a husky six-footer with grey hair, sat in silence at the defense table as the judge questioned prospective jurors about union involvement and whether they had been affected by publicity surrounding the case.

Only one person, a young woman, admitted hostility toward unions that would prejudice her against Partin, who is business agent of Teamsters Local No. 5 in the Louisiana capital of Baton Rouge. Battin ruled that was cause for her dismissal as a juror.

OPPOSING lawyers struck another 16 with peremptory challenges, which require no explanation, but did not exercise their option to challenge others for cause. Four alternate jurors were chosen and Battin excused the balance of 67 persons summoned for jury duty.

Tight security was observed at the fifth floor courtroom in Atlanta's old Post Office Building. Armed marshals stood outside the doors, which were kept locked. Newsmen were required to produce credentials before they were allowed entry.

The marshals declined to comment on the security arrangements. At least one government witness, Wade McClanahan, is being held in protective custody. McClanahan identified himself at the first trial as a trusted lieutenant of Partin who solved problems for him with shootings, beatings and sabotage.

Partin is under separate indictment charging him with obstructing justice by threatening McClanahan's life.

The conspiracy and extor-

tion indictments accuse him of working with Baton Rouge concrete producer Ted Dunham to gain a monopoly on the cement business in Baton Rouge through strong-arm tactics. Dunham was convicted last year for his part in the alleged scheme, sentenced to one year in jail and \$160,000 in fines.