

Gervais Details Assertion Of Justice Department Deal

Pershing Gervais, the chief cog in the government's pinball gambling and bribery case against Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, yesterday detailed his assertion that the Justice Department forced him to make a false affidavit against Garrison and then arranged fake jobs for him in Canada to keep him out of sight.

Speaking by telephone from Oregon to an interviewer in Vancouver, British Columbia, Gervais said his first job in Canada was to spy on the government for a major oil company—"to infiltrate, worm my way in and find out why this company wasn't given drilling rights like others."

But officials in the "higher echelons" of the unnamed company backed down from the scheme on the advice of legal counsel, he said, leaving the U.S. Justice Department "hopping mad." However, the department was able to land him a job as "field traffic manager" with General Motors, Gervais said.

"THEY DICTATED to GM in Detroit, and Detroit dictated to Oshawa (GM's headquarters in Canada)," he said.

The job was arranged, according to Gervais, while he and his family "sort of made our way slowly across the country like tourists heading for Vancouver."

The Justice Department,

which he said was sending him enough money "to get by on," finally ordered him to Washington, D.C., where he formally changed his name to Paul Mason. Then he was taken to Toronto by Gerald Shure, a department official, and introduced to a man Shure said was president of GM in Canada, according to Gervais.

"Why he wanted to see me I don't know," he said. "I guess he just wanted to see what this guy looked like who he had been told to hire. They took me out to the plant, introduced me to others and put me through a three-week course."

"I LEARNED NOTHING in that. I know as much about traffic management as I know about operating a linotype machine."

"But it was all part of the payoff for the affidavit. The Justice Department had to give me money, and they had to know where I was and what I was doing. So they get the Canadian government and GM to cooperate down the

line."

The Justice Department, he said, then had the Canadian government provide him with a "minister's permit" allowing him to live and work in Canada from January, 1972, until January, 1973, despite his refusal to answer some of the questions on the necessary forms because answering them "would have been an outright lie."

The Justice Department also gave him a fake birth certificate for his son, who was then under the required age of six to get into the Vancouver school system, he said.

WHILE WORKING for GM, said Gervais, he lived in Tsawwassen, a Vancouver suburb. General Motors confirmed that Gervais was an employe but refused to say how he had gotten the position.

After making the 107-page

affidavit against Garrison, various pinball operators and two New Orleans policemen, Gervais said he was advised by the Justice Department to hide out in Canada. He was introduced to a Canadian official who assured him he would be happy in Vancouver, he said.

The official, according to Gervais, told him about "living conditions in Vancouver being cheaper than in New Orleans, schools of better standards, that sort of thing. I found out later most of it was lies."

"It comes down to this," he concluded. "I've been working at a fake job in Canada since January and living there since last July all because of connivance between the Justice Department, the Canadian government and GM."

"Now I'm heading back to New Orleans and taking my time about it."