

OBJECTIVES OF THE HEARING

The Committee will attempt to establish in its public hearings in Kansas City that a group of criminals engaged in gambling, but many of whom had formerly engaged in the illegal liquor traffic during prohibition and the narcotics traffic, attempted to dominate law enforcement in the city of Kansas City.

The hearings will center around the group of gangsters that operated with Charles Binaggio and who, until early this year, maintained open gambling establishments, book making establishments and policy rackets.

These gangsters had possession of the Interstate Wire Service, which furnished vital information to book makers. They operated gambling houses as far west as Omaha, Nebraska and they operated book making establishments, policy rackets and dice games throughout the area.

They strongly supported the candidacy of Governor Forrest Smith for the governorship, in the hope that they would be able to dominate the police commission of Kansas City, which is appointed by the governor. Their efforts in this respect will be described by various witnesses, including certain members of the police commission. There is also evidence that they made similar efforts in St. Louis, which will be introduced at this hearing.

The Binaggio group failed to obtain control of the police commission, but they continued operating their various enterprises until April 5, 1950, when Binaggio was killed. At that point they agreed that the heat was on and they discontinued their illegal activities even as far west as Des Moines.

There will be evidence showing that most of the crime centered around the Mafia organization, with its tentacles reaching out into many cities. This organization also controlled a considerable amount of non-criminal enterprises, particularly the liquor business. In their legitimate operation the Mafia used the same violence and intimidation which characterized the illegitimate operations. There will be evidence showing that murder was a common means of enforcing their desires and the committee will look into a considerable number of unsolved but similar murders, all of which have an appearance of being Mafia crimes.

The Mafia operations in Kansas City will tie into those of other cities, and particularly Chicago.