Herewith is the statement of Carmine G. DeSapio, County Leader. This statement, together with Mr. DeSapio's communication to Mr. Whitney North Seymour, President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, was forwarded to the Committee on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce of the U.S. Senate (Kefauver Committee) at Washington, D.C.

Also attached is a copy of the communication to Senator Kefauver which accompanied said statement and Mr. DeSapio's Seymour letter.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE

At Mr. DeSapio’s press conference of yesterday (reported in today's newspapers) the text of his letter to the Association of the Bar of the City of New York was not made public. As the said letter is a part of Mr. DeSapio's statement and has been offered for the public record of the Kefauver Committee proceedings, the letter is now being made public.
Statement of Carmine G. De Sapio

Carmine G. De Sapio, Leader of the Democratic Organization in the County of New York, which is officially known as the New York Democratic County Committee of New York County, and sometimes referred to as "Tammany Hall", respectfully submits the following statement to the U.S. Senate Committee on Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce (Hon. Estes Kefauver, Chairman; Rudolph Hally, Esq., Counsel).

When one realizes that in New York County the Democratic Organization known as "Tammany Hall" has not been in power for almost two decades, first while Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia was in City Hall and then during the tenure of Mayor William O'Dwyer, whose political stock-in-trade for years was not his connection with but his opposition to Tammany Hall, I am perhaps undertaking an impossible task in my purpose hereby to straighten out the confusion in the public mind. In the confused state of the public mind and the record, Tammany Hall seems charged with the sins of those who were not only in no way connected with it politically but of those who actively opposed it and sought its political destruction over the years.

First it should be remembered that I have been the Leader for just twenty months.

Let me take up the alleged and wholly unproved influence of Frank Costello while I have been County Leader. Of course, it is not amazing to me that time-serving politicians should seize on this asserted influence as a red-hot political issue.

Political history repeats itself. Republicans and the few Democrats who are at odds with the regular Democratic organization of this County shed crocodile tears over this situation. This hypocrisy has been going on for years.

In truth, they are licking their chops in the hope that a false issue will be presented to the voters this fall when large matters of public policy will be put before the electorate. They hope by innuendo, inference and plain falsehood to ride into power on the quite unfounded premise that Tammany Hall itself has been found culpable. For these die-hards, the appearance of your Committee in New York was the kick-off of the fall campaign.

Now with respect to Costello and his testimony that he knows fourteen district leaders out of forty-one; Without intending any criticism of your procedure, it is a pity that one or two questions
in cross-examination could not have been asked of him; e.g.,

1. "Which one of these leaders whom you say you know, know you?"

2. "Have you had any connection with any of these leaders in business or in politics?"

3. "Have you ever exercised any influence with any of them and in what respect?"

The validity of establishing "guilt by association" is concededly open to serious dispute, but nobody would dare say that there is any support in law or reason for "guilt by acquaintance". According to Mr. Costello's testimony he knows fourteen Leaders. There are forty-one Leaders of the Democratic County Committee in New York. By simple arithmetic he knows one-third of the Leaders. Of these fourteen Leaders several are opposed to my Leadership, thus decreasing the Costello influence—if any.

The question is, are these leaders connected with him, are they influenced by him, and does he have any business with them.

These questions were not asked and of course, being unasked remained unanswered. I assure you that the true answers to those questions would have completely absolved Tammany Hall.

Not by words, but by proper and direct action, you will be interested to know that I have moved to have those questions fully and completely answered for the public in this city. I am attaching herewith a copy of my letter of March 27, 1951 addressed to Whitney North Seymour, Esq., President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. That letter shows where I stand on all this. May I submit in passing, that Costello's acquaintance and knowledge of important people has been greatly enhanced in recent weeks, indeed, Costello can now truthfully testify under oath at any place or any time that he knows well and is acquainted with many U.S. Senators and that he knows best of all, for further example, Senator Tobey of New Hampshire. He can further, with absolute truth say that he has talked at great length to many Senators, and that he is very well acquainted with a large number of special writers, commentators, television technicians, and a host of other nice people. Indeed, he could go further and state that he could identify each one of them, that he could pick them out of a crowd and that in his opinion the said Senators and others likewise know him well and that they could pick him out of
a crowd of a million.

In view of all that has transpired the impression I regret to say seems to be quite general as a consequence of the fantastic construction or the careless construction put upon various phases of the testimony before your Committee that sinister underworld figures fraternize on intimate terms with Tammany Leaders. Moreover, there even appears to be a belief that these characters are familiar figures at Tammany Headquarters. Let me assure you there is absolutely no truth in this and it is assuredly unjust to the many men of good character who work hard in our party and who shape the course of our Organizations conduct, participating in the selection of its candidates, in the framing of the platforms on which nominees seek public support and in all the other work which men active in politics do.

Costello is not a power in Tammany Hall. He is not a power behind Tammany Hall. He does not dictate nominations. He does not select Judges, he does not control nor has he any influence over my policies or those of the Democratic Organization in this County in any way, shape or form directly or indirectly. Since my election as Leader, Costello has never suggested, counseled or requested any program or any choice of candidates. If I know how to make this more unequivocal than I have made it I would do so. Let me repeat, there is no Costello influence today or since I have been Leader in Tammany Hall.

I wish also to add that not a single one of the District Leaders serving under me on the County Executive Committee has been accused in any way in the recent disclosures of corruption and gambling. No charge was leveled against a single member of the County Executive Committee. No instance was pointed out where any such man was even suspected of complicity in graft, gambling or gangsterism.

Our organization has been the political whipping-boy for many years. Whenever an ambitious politician of any party wants to draw around himself the cloak of civic virtue, he assails Tammany Hall. The form of attack has been so standardized that it is a wonder that it has not been made commercially available in legal form in a stationery store. When over-ambitious politicians find their popular or newspaper support on the wane, a campaign is opened up against the "iniquities" of Tammany, they trot out the old newspaper
releases, change the date and send it to the editor. I challenge the sincerity of these attacks and deny their application to the present Leadership. When officials have found themselves in trouble and desire to divert attention from themselves while under scrutiny, many of them have found an easy and time tested method of doing it — twisting the Tiger's tail. But we don't intend letting anyone get away with this in the future. Our Organization refuses to continue in the role of a political scapegoat. Our record is a good one. Our candidates have been excellent. Our policies are based on the philosophy of the great Democratic Party as it has been developed by our Democratic state and national Leaders. To that philosophy we have given unstinging support and loyalty. We shall continue to do so.

I make this statement for the record of my stewardship because I believe that your Committee and the public is entitled to have it, and I make this further flat, blunt pledge — there will be no gangster control or influence in Tammany as long as I am Leader. If a leader — any leader, in any way betrays the public interest, be assured that I will join in his summary removal.

And also please remember that when they speak of Tammany, Tammany is the Democratic Party in New York County.

There is no reason in truth or fact why Democrats cannot be proud of it today and notwithstanding everything which was developed publicly before your Committee, providing of course the testimony is understood and properly analyzed. The Democratic Party gave us Al Smith, Bob Wagner and Herbert Lehman. It will continue to develop and give great men to the party and to the public service. That is what my Leadership stands for.

March 28, 1951.