

Ex-cop denies taking bribes

By LEE LINDER
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Former Chief Inspector Joseph DePeri, one of seven ex-cops on trial for taking bribes, flatly denied yesterday that he had ever taken protection money from anyone.

DePeri's testimony in the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Daniel Huetzel 3rd came as a surprise as none of the defendants in the trial, now in its fourth week, was expected to take the stand.

"No sir, no way," DePeri told a federal jury of nine women and three men as his lawyer, ticking off the names of over a dozen prosecution witnesses who testified about paying cops to protect illegal gambling, asked whether he ever got money from them.

"Did you ever receive any payment from someone known as 'Black Cat'?" asked attorney Malcolm Lazin.

"Neither from 'Black Cat' nor anyone else," DePeri replied coolly.

DePeri is charged with extortion and racketeering in a conspiracy the government claims netted officers more than \$500,000 between 1980 and 1984 from operators of illegal gambling establishments.

He is also accused of obstructing justice by allegedly ordering destruction of evidence. Prosecutors say DePeri was working to block the FBI's investigation of corruption in Philadelphia's 7,300-member force.

Already, seven former policemen have been sentenced to jail terms in the probe. An eighth cop has pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing.

Besides DePeri, the other defendants in the current trial are former Deputy Commissioner James Martin, who was the city's No. 2 cop before he resigned in April; former Capt. Dennis Lindo, former Lts. Henry Petic, George Katz and Theodore Murphy and former Patrolman George Morrell.

The seven were indicted last May with eight others who are scheduled to go on trial Sept. 5.

DePeri took the stand after a parade of character witnesses for himself and some of the other defendants. Over government objections, he detailed his 24-year police career, including assignments to "investigate wrongdoings by police... to see that officers did their job to protect the people... and handled security for the President and the Pope."

DePeri yesterday focused mainly on discrediting the chief prosecution witness, a former vice lieutenant who turned FBI informer to avoid prosecution. Former Capt. Joseph Alvaro claimed DePeri got him transferred to his command strictly to handle bribe collections.

"That is absurd," DePeri said. "I never laid eyes on Alvaro, or even spoke to him, until I interviewed him after I was made inspector in the Northwest division."

"The criteria I used in selecting officers was honesty and ability," DePeri said, acknowledging that Alvaro did ask to be allowed to pick one man on the four-member vice squad.

"Alvaro said he wanted a man with experience who could report back to him and tell him what the others were doing, a man he could trust, and I bought it," said DePeri, explaining how Alvaro brought Albert Ricci along with him when he came to Northwest near the end of 1980.

Ricci, a former lieutenant who pleaded guilty when the current trial began, testified that Alvaro recruited him as "his bagman... to make the collections" and that he once gave an envelope of money to DePeri when Alvaro was absent.

"It was quite common for me to get envelopes of money," DePeri said. "There were various collections for the needy, for kids, during Thanksgiving and Christmas, for the Police Athletic League."

"There was nothing unusual for someone to hand me an envelope with money."

Labor force: White males now make up less than half

By MERRILL HARTSON
AP Labor Writer

WASHINGTON — For the first time in the two decades the government has kept such records, white men constituted less than half of the U.S. labor force last year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics says.

In 1983, according to a new analysis, white males age 16 and over comprised 49.7 percent of the labor force, the pool of Americans who either held jobs or searched for work last year.

But while males did continue to claim slightly more than half of all people who held jobs last year, analysts Deborah Klein said.

Of 100,834,000 people who worked in 1983, she said, 50,821,000 — or 50.2 percent — were white males.

But the decline of the white male as the principal breadwinner in American society has been unmistakable, the government's labor force figures show.

White men constituted 50.9 percent of the labor force in 1982, down from 50.5 percent in 1981 and 50.9 percent in 1980. In contrast, white males represented 62.5 percent of the labor force in 1964, when the

Americans either holding jobs or actively seeking work.

The proportion of America's adult male population as a whole, including blacks, Hispanics and others, fell to a record low level last year.

Of the approximately 83.3 million men age 16 and over in the U.S. population in 1983, government figures show, roughly 64.7 million — or 77.6 percent — worked at some time during the year.

This so-called employment-population ratio among adult men — the percentage of eligible males who held a job at some point during 1983 — was the lowest since the government began keeping such records.

Economists both in and out of government say several factors have held to the decline of the white male as the principal breadwinner in American society. Among them is the transition of the U.S. economy from a heavy industrial base to one that has been more oriented to information- and service-oriented work, providing jobs that have been taken in disproportionately large numbers by women.

—Deborah Klein, analyst for the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Plastics' appeal inspires wider use in market

By VICKIE BROWN
Collegian Staff Writer

Because of cost and convenience advantages, food manufacturers have begun to switch from metal cans to plastics as the predominant food container, a University professor of food science said.

Gerald Kuhn said within 10 years, the ratio of metal to plastic containers used for food packaging and storage will be greatly reduced.

As plastic manufacturers come up with more rigid forms that are stackable and more heat-resistant, plastics will replace cans at the rate of one-for-one, he said. He added that it is possible for all cans to be replaced by plastics laminated by paper or foil.

Kuhn said one reason for the switch is that new technology has been developed for food distribution.

In the past it was "almost an absolute must to preserve food for almost an eternity," Kuhn said. But now production and distribution systems exist that require food to be stored for only a couple of months, he said.

Kuhn said the change from metal to plastic will reduce costs for consumers over time. And although a noticeable decrease in the cost of food may not take place, prices will increase at a slower rate, he said.

He added that plastic containers cost one-third to one-half less than their metal counterparts.

Metal cans can often cost more than the food they contain, he said. Two-serving metal containers cost twice as much as the food inside them.

Also, he said, plastics weigh less and fit together, so they are more convenient and less expensive to ship.

Another advantage of plastics is that they can be shipped to the manufacturer in sheets and formed into containers at the producer's site, which also reduces shipping costs.

Kuhn said plastic containers are also more convenient for consumers.

Recently, he said, consumers have shown an increased demand for smaller packages of food. He said plastics are more suitable for packaging smaller quantities, and can be resealed when only a portion of the contents is used.

He said using plastic for small food containers is also more cost-efficient.

Also, Kuhn said consumers have increased their

Drought of Olympic tourists irritates L.A.'s businessmen

By RICHARD DE ATLEY
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — There are empty streets in business districts and empty tills for merchants. Apparently, Summer Olympic dream forecasts about crowds and traffic jams convinced tourists that L.A. is NOT the place.

For months before the Games, officials predicted choked freeways, overbooked events, hand-to-hand combat for \$50 parking spaces and general chaos as Olympic visitors vied with other tourists and residents for facilities.

But now, amusement parks, hotels away from venue sites, taxi and limousine services, souvenir vendors and even escort services find the warnings have scared off their usual business, or at least kept away anything additional.

"Who do you blame? I don't know, quite," said Ernest Badalian, owner of the Tropicana Hotel in Anaheim — advertised as "Just Across The Street From Disneyland" — on Harbor Boulevard.

"Most of us could see for months in advance that it wasn't going to happen, because of the bookings... But they kept right on saying how everything was going to be crowded," he said yesterday.

Badalian said he's usually 90 to 100 percent booked for his 140 rooms. On Tuesday night, he had guests in 30 percent.

"There were other signs that L.A. had proven something less than a Mecca.

California Department of Transportation officials, who forecast traffic would be up by 10 percent for the 16 days of the Games, said traffic during the first two business days actually was down 23 percent from the same time last year.

At Los Angeles International Airport, where construction crews raced to complete a new terminal before the Games started, spokeswoman Virginia Black said, "We have not experienced a surge at all."

The Greater Los Angeles Visitors and Convention Bureau reported a vacancy of more than 6,971 rooms for the week.

Major theme parks in Southern California also felt the pinch. Attendance was way down at Disneyland in Anaheim, Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, the Universal Studios, Tour in Universal City and at Magic Mountain in Valencia.

"While some locals may have left because of the horror stories, it has also kept many tourists away," said Disneyland spokesman Robert Roth.

When the stories first circulated, limousine service owners sought to cash in and raised Olympic rates to \$1,500 a day, 10-day minimum, for a "stretch" limo, said Rene Celaya, a dispatcher-chauffeur for Starline Limousine in Beverly Hills.

"That was the going rate for all the limousine companies. There were no takers," he said. "On opening day, the rates went down to \$50 a day, 12-hour minimum. Now it's back to normal rates, \$40 an hour with a three-hour minimum."

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