

Resume Bail Case Study

The Orleans Parish Grand Jury today resumed its investigation of charges by a bail bonding company officer that he sent \$15,000 in bribe money intended for former first assistant district attorney Charles R. Ward.

Ward, who has denied the accusation, called for the grand jury hearing in the matter.

The bail bonding case went before the jury about 11 a. m. Jury members recessed for lunch shortly after 1 p. m. without taking warrant action in the case.

Criminal District Court Judge Bernard J. Bagert was on standby this afternoon to receive any indictments the jury might return.

ASSISTANT DA James L. Alcock said this morning he did not know whether the jury would call in Ward to testify.

No subpoenas have been issued in the case, Alcock said.

Ward, in a letter last month to grand jury foreman Ferdinand S. Lapeyre, requested an opportunity to testify in the matter. During the jury's first session on the case last week, Ward remained in the Criminal Courts Building hall near the jury room entrance. He said he did so to show jury members he was available.

William Hardy Davis of Atlanta, former president of Century Surety Underwriters of Indiana, Inc., stated in an affidavit in March that he dispatched a total of \$15,000 to New Orleans during 1968. Davis said he believed the money would be used to influence Ward not to press hard for payment of forfeited bail bonds and to accept a settlement agreeable to the bail bonding companies.

CENTURY Surety Under-

writers was a contracting agent of Maryland National Insurance Co., which the District Attorney's office claims owes \$629,000 in bond forfeitures.

Ward charges that Ralph L. Kaskell, an attorney for Maryland National, used Davis' affidavit in threatening to reveal the bribery accusation if the District Attorney's office

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did not agree to a \$100,000 settlement of the claim.

The affidavit in which Davis made the allegation was made public by Ward. In it, Davis states that in 1968 he dispatched six monthly payments of \$2,500 each to two attorneys, Milton P. Masinter and Thomas Toranto, who in turn were to give the money to Ward.

IN HIS sworn statement, Davis said he never met Ward, and that he did not know whether Ward received any of the \$15,000.

Ward, Masinter and Toranto have all emphatically denied Davis' allegations.

Ward resigned as first assistant DA June 17, claiming he and DA Jim Garrison had violently disagreed on several recent policy decisions. He simultaneously announced he would run against Garrison in the November Democratic primary.

THE RESIGNATION came after Garrison withdrew Ward's name from recommendations to Gov. John J. McKeithen concerning appointments to two newly created Criminal District Court judgeships.

Garrison cited the bribery accusation as the reason for withdrawal of Ward's nomination. Ward said Garrison knew the accusation to be false.