

Gurney Scheduled to Plead Soon on Extortion Charge

By MARTIN WALDRON

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla., July 11 — A prosecution spokesman said today that a hearing would be held "in about a couple of weeks" to allow Senator Edward J. Gurney of Florida and six other men to plead to a charge that they ran an extortion racket to sell the Senator's influence with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The spokesman said that the defendants would be asked to appear voluntarily without being arrested.

The timing of the indictment by a Federal grand jury yesterday makes it virtually certain that the charges against Senator Gurney—the first sitting Senator to be indicted on serious criminal charges since Burton K. Wheeler in 1924—cannot be tried before this fall's election. Mr. Wheeler was never tried.

Senator Gurney, a Republican and a member of the Senate Watergate committee, qualified on Tuesday to run for re-election.

Meanwhile, there appeared to be growing sentiment among Florida Republicans for r.

Gurney not to seek re-election. A State Public Service Commissioner, Paula Hawkins, one of several Republicans contemplating running against him in the primary in September, said he should not seek re-election.

Sees 'Mortal Blow'

The Florida Republican chairman, L. E. Thompson, called the indictment "a mortal blow" to Mr. Gurney's chances for re-election. However, most Florida political experts had already written the 60-year-old Senator off as having no chance of winning.

The grand jury that indicted Senator Gurney said \$223,000 in off-season "campaign contributions" had been raised by peddling his influence, but the man who collected most of the money, Larry E. Williams of Orlando, said it was \$400,000.

For two years, Mr. Gurney denied knowing anything about the situation and said that Mr. Williams, the money-raiser, had no connection with him.

The grand jury said that Senator Gurney and some of his closest political friends, including the former state Republican chairman, Earl Crittenden, hired Mr. Williams in January, 1971, specifically to collect money from developers and contractors.

One builder, John J. Priestes of Miami, testified that beginning in 1971 he had paid \$170,000 for Federal Housing Administration favors, with the money going to Mr. Williams and the then Miami F.H.A. director, William Pelski.

Named Co-Conspirators

Mr. Pelski was one of 42 men named by the grand jury yesterday as an unindicted co-conspirator in the scheme. Mr. Williams also was named an unindicted co-conspirator.

The grand jury said that four employees of H.U.D. — Wayne Swiger, Ralph M. Koontz, Mr. Pelski and Forrest Howell — would provide the names of applicants for department assistance, and that the four would give preferential treatment to those applicants who agreed to give money to Senator Gurney's fund-raiser.

Mr. Swiger and Mr. Koontz were indicted along with Senator Gurney, and Mr. Howell was named among the unindicted co-conspirators.

Others indicted were James L. Groot, 30 years old, a former administrative assistant to Senator Gurney, Joseph Bastien, executive assistant to the Senator, and George Anderson of Orlando, a banker who was Mr. Gurney's campaign treasurer in

1968 and former treasurer of the Florida Republicans.

The other unindicted co-conspirators in the case were the following:

Alfred Austin, a Tampa contractor who was the 1972 chairman of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President in the Tampa Bay area.

Lee Bass of Orlando, H.U.D. contractor.

Theodore Baumgardner of Perry, H.U.D. contractor.

Chet Burchette of Winter Park, nationwide developer for H.U.D.

Leland Burpee of Jacksonville, mortgage broker, Gene Burris of Indianapolis, attorney and real estate developer.

Thomas Carney of Miami, physician and real estate developer.

Max Coan of Miami, H.U.D. contractor.

Walter Cowart of Jacksonville, real estate developer and contractor.

Walter K. Dean of Panama City, now dead.

John Dye, of Vero Beach, builder, also dead.

Richard Duckett of Atlanta, real estate developer.

Hugh Edwards of Gainesville, contractor and real estate developer.

William Friedlander of Miami, attorney.

Daniel Gilman of Orlando, real estate man.

Michael Glantz of Tampa, real estate developer and H.U.D. contractor.

Theodore Hanes of Miami, executive assistant to Senator Gurney.

Melvin Kaplan of Hollywood, real estate developer.

Others Names

Sumner Kramer of Orlando, real estate developer.

Herbert Kravitz of Miami, real estate developer.

Edgar McCurry Jr. of Jacksonville, attorney and chairman of the Duval County Republicans.

Eugene Mooney, State representative of Orlando.

Barry D. Nelson of Hollywood, contractor.

Stanley Poole of Tampa, developer, contractor and architect.

William Poole of Tampa, engineer and contractor.

Joseph Porten of West Palm Beach, contractor and real estate developer.

Roy Prock of Indianapolis.

Isaac Reeves of Orlando, real estate developer and architect.

Charles Ware of Pensacola, H.U.D. contractor.

Norman Possman of Orlando, contractor and developer.

Irving Rubin of Miami, contractor and developer.

Ronald Stewart of Tampa, developer.

John Stuckey of Atlanta, lawyer and former administrative assistant to Senator William E. Brock 3d of Tennessee.

William Walton of Jacksonville, developer.

Robert Webb of Eatontown, N. J., developer.

Curtis Kendall of West Palm Beach, developer.

dead.