

## Financial Details Snarl Gurney's Trial

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TAMPA, Fla., April 24—One afternoon this week during the extortion trial of former Senator Edward J. Gurney, Judge Ben Krentzman sat impassively at his bench in Federal District Court here. His chin propped on his right hand, his eyes closed behind his glasses.

Two members of the jury nodded. One spectator was asleep, snoring softly.

Even the defendants—Mr. Gurney and four other men—appeared to be in a distress of boredom. They slouched deep into the leather chairs at the defense tables, their heads drooping, their eyes vacant, as Mr. Gurney's chief counsel, C. Harris Dittmar of Jacksonville, Fla., plodded through his third day of cross-examination of a minor government witness.

Mr. Dittmar was busy, as he had been with three dozen previous witnesses, eliciting more information than a jury could apparently assimilate.

No member of this jury is a financial expert, and the trial so far has dwelled extensively on the intricacies of mortgage financing.

### Housing Tied to Donations

Mr. Gurney is accused of directing Federal Housing Administration officials in Florida not to give F.H.A. mortgage insurance to home builders who had not contributed to his reelection fund.

The Government said he did this from 1971 until early last year.

While the early government witnesses have testified that one of Mr. Gurney's aides, Larry Williams, shook them down for contributions, none have been able to link these contributions to Mr. Gurney.

The Government has said that more than \$300,000 was col-

lected; the defense said more than \$500,000.

One former F.H.A. official, Forrest Howell, who headed the F.H.A. office at Jacksonville, said he warned the former Senator in June, 1971, that Mr. Williams was putting pressure on home builders for contributions. Mr. Howell said he got the impression that Mr. Gurney already knew of Mr. Williams's activities.

The defense is prepared to contend that Mr. Williams was acting on his own when he collected the money and that he kept most of it.

Mr. Williams, who has already pleaded guilty to a minor charge connected with the scandal and has served a prison term, has not yet been called to testify. He is expected to be the major government witness.

In opening statements to the jury, defense attorneys said that Mr. Gurney had stopped the extortion as soon as he heard of it and had not received any of the money collected.

The Government has charged that Mr. Gurney had control of \$233,000 of the money.

Being tried with Mr. Gurney are two of his former aides, James L. Groot and Joseph Bastien, and two former officials of the F.H.A., Wayne Swiger and Ralph N. Koontz.

Almost none of the testimony from the first 35 witnesses more than mentioned these men, although one witness testified that Mr. Groot had known about the alleged scheme to raise election funds.

The St. Petersburg Times reported this week that associates of the former Senator say that he has little money and has been able to pay his lawyers only \$6,000.

His legal fee is said to be \$30,000 a month and totaled

\$150,000 through March. His attorneys would not comment on the fee being charged the 61-year-old former Senator.

Mr. Gurney, a lawyer, has been unemployed since leaving the Senate in January. His expenses have included medical care for his wife, who is in a nursing home.

When Mr. Gurney's trial began in February, friends set up a legal defense fund in his behalf, but one of the three trustees said that only \$12,500 in contributions had been received.

Mr. Gurney, a Republican, was indicted last July while sitting as a member of the Senate Watergate committee. He did not seek a second term as Senator after he was indicted.

Government prosecutors have subpoenaed almost 300 witnesses in the trial, and indicated this week that they may call 150 more of these before resting their case.