

Gremillion Charged

Perjury Count Studied

By KERMIT TARLETON

Atty. Gen. Jack P. F. Gremillion still faces federal perjury charges today despite his acquittal yesterday for fraud and conspiracy in connection with the operations of the bankrupt Louisiana Loan and Thrift Corp.

Government attorneys are studying the testimony and evidence in the six-week-long LL&T trial before deciding whether to press the perjury charge.

Gremillion, State Rep. Salvador Anzelmo and former LL&T Board Chairman Ernest A. Bartlett Jr. were found not guilty of conspiracy, fraud in the sale of securities, mail fraud and sale of unregistered securities after a jury in the court of Judge Alvin B. Rubin deliberated for six days.

THE ATTORNEY general was indicted in late 1969, several months after the fraud charges were filed, for falsely testifying to a federal grand jury that he had no "economic interest" in LL&T and for claiming that a \$700 check he received from the firm was a political contribution.

During the lengthy LL&T trial testimony indicated that Gremillion owned 10,000 shares of the bankrupt firm, that he had received a \$700 check from the company as a dividend from the stock and that he had given Bartlett his proxy in 1967 to vote his shares at a stockholders' meeting.

There is no indication of when a decision will be made in the perjury charges except that one spokesman said it would be soon.

GREMILLION, Anzelmo, Bartlett, former LL&T president, Charles H. Ritchey and Baton Rouge attorney Joseph Kavanaugh were indicted for fraud and conspiracy in the LL&T case. Ritchey pleaded no contest and is awaiting sentence and Kavanaugh was granted a separate trial.

New Orleans attorney William A. Glennon Jr., one of the founders of the firm, and the late A. Clayton James, then state banking commissioner, were named as co-conspirators, but not indicted in the case.

LL&T opened for business in 1966 but went bankrupt in 1968.

Throughout the trial the government contended that it was an opinion is-

sued by the attorney general saying the company was "similar to a bank" that removed the firm from the control of the federal Securities and Exchange Commission and placed it under the supervision of James and the state banking department.

THE PROSECUTION claimed that the banking department failed to supervise the company and as a result the defendants enjoyed high profits.

The defense contended that there was no conspiracy or fraud and admitted that there may have been poor judgment that caused the firm to go bankrupt. Only one witness was called by the defense in the entire trial.

Yesterday the jury filed into Judge Rubin's court at 11:08 a.m. with the not guilty verdicts, ending 35½ hours of deliberations.

THE COURTROOM was tense when the defendants rose to hear a court clerk read the not guilty verdict. Anzelmo wept openly when the verdict was read and the other two defendants shed tears of joy moments later as they were congratulated by friends, relatives and attorneys.

"That's the first time I ever cried," Bartlett said later, "even as a boy."

Gremillion walked from the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission Building, which houses the federal courts, and shouted, "Thank God for America."

"You can't prove a man guilty when he's not guilty," Gremillion contended. He then announced that he was going to continue his efforts for re-election.

"RIGHT NOW I'm going home to relax and enjoy two tons of bricks taken off my shoulders," he said. "It's wonderful to be freed of something you didn't commit in the first place."

Mrs. Gremillion and their daughter, who remained at the attorney general's side through much of the trial, shared his tears of joy.

"I'm happy, I'm happy," Anzelmo told the crowd that waited to greet him outside the court. "I think it was

just. I'll be in the legislature tomorrow morning performing the duties for which I was elected.

"I was born in the law, nurtured in the law and practice law and I never did set out to break the law. The crime was committed by those who prosecuted us."

BARTLETT DID not fare so well in an earlier trial in Arkansas on charges growing out of another firm he operated, Arkansas Loan and Thrift Corp.

He received a five-year prison term and a \$5,000 fine resulting from his conviction on one count of fraud and conspiracy. He was sentenced to three years in prison on 25 other counts and was placed on probation for three years after his five-year term is served.

Bartlett is appealing that conviction. Asked to comment on the verdict, U. S. Attorney Gerald Gallinghouse said, "we did feel that we had presented a very strong and convincing case. We did our best. We accept the verdict."

MEMBERS OF the jury were admonished not to discuss how they voted during deliberations, but they were in complete agreement that justice had been done.

Teddy Lee Barton of Houma, the jury foreman, said the jury reached its verdict "strictly on the evidence."