

Ethics Unit Gremillion Probe Eyed

By BILL LYNCH

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—The State Board of Ethics for elected officials today began examining the relationship between Attorney General Jack Gremillion and the Louisiana Loan and Thrift Co. of New Orleans but was not expected to reach a decision immediately.

A voluminous report was submitted to the three-man body, which is conducting the first major investigation since it was created in 1964.

THE INVESTIGATION by the Civil Service Department, which handles administrative functions for the board, has not yet been completed.

The board, which includes a new member, retired Judge Henry F. Turner of Shreveport, will have to decide whether to call for a public hearing into a charge by the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission that Gremillion violated the ethics law.

The attorney general has admitted receiving a \$10,000 fee from Louisiana Loan and Thrift, for which he rendered an important opinion placing the firm under jurisdiction of the state banking commissioner in 1966.

Gremillion is a principal in companies which received loans totaling \$150,000 from LL&T in 1968. He denied there was any conflict of interest between the fee and the opinion he rendered.

THE ETHICS board re-named Judge Vinson M. Mouser of Columbia as chairman. The other board member is Charles Duchain of Baton Rouge.

The Senate and House are supposed to elect two of the three members of the board, but no one was named during the regular session of the Legislature. Under the law, when a vacancy occurs the

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governor may appoint members.

Lt. Gov. C. C. Aycock, acting on behalf on Gov. John J. McKeithen, who was out of the state, appointed all three members of the board.

The terms of the board members are concurrent with that of the governor, and all had expired.

The board was expected to study the Gremillion case today and take the matter under advisement before coming to a decision on a public hearing.

BEFORE THE MCC filed its complaint, the attorney general, following newspaper disclosures of his dealings with LL&T, asked the board for an advisory opinion.

The board first rejected the request on the grounds that insufficient information had been submitted, and Gremillion agreed to elaborate on his petition.

The Ethics Board differs from the Commission on Governmental Ethics. The former is for elected officials while the latter oversees the conduct of employes and members of boards and commissions.