

Bonds Refused In Bail Cash Dispute Here

By ALLAN KATZ

Two Juvenile Court judges said today they won't accept any more bail bonds written by the Maryland National Insurance Co., the firm that already owes more than \$700,000 in forfeited bail bonds here.

Judges James P. O'Connor and James C. Gulotta said they're taking the action because they don't think it ever will be possible to collect the \$700,000 currently owed by the Atlanta company. They noted the company is only required to place a \$70,000 deposit with the State of Louisiana.

The action in Juvenile Court will affect only relatively small sums. Maryland National is still writing bail bonds in all 10 sections of Criminal District Court here.

THE COMPANY is reported to be rolling up forfeitures of \$9,000 a month in Criminal District Court where its bonds still are being accepted.

Maryland National ran up almost \$700,000 in bail bond forfeitures between 1966-69 which were not collected by District Attorney Jim Garrison's office.

When Garrison's staff moved to collect the bail bonds this spring, Maryland National took the matter to court.

Federal District Judge Lansing L. Mitchell enjoined the DA's office from moving to seize the company's assets. Judge Mitchell is presently on vacation and a new hearing will not be held until he returns.

JUDGES O'CONNOR and Gulotta issue only about

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\$1,000 each in bail bonds a month, chiefly in alimony cases.

Judge O'Connor said the money involved is less important than the principle at stake.

"Why should I permit a company that can't possibly pay it's debts to write bonds in my court?" asked Judge O'Connor.

Judge Gulotta backed his colleague, saying, "We're aware that Maryland National is still licensed to operate in Louisiana because its case is pending in federal court.

'HOWEVER, WE believe a judge should have the right to administer his own court with the public's interest in mind.

"If Maryland National wishes to test us in this matter, let them do it in court."

In campaign speeches, Garrison has said that the failure to collect bail bond forfeitures from Maryland National was a "mistake" for which he accepts responsibility.

He blamed former First Assistant DA Charles Ray Ward for the failure to collect the forfeited bail bonds.

WARD RESIGNED his post and is now running against Garrison. He says Garrison ordered him not to push hard against Maryland National.

Judge O'Connor said he got a telegram from Insurance Commissioner Dudley Guglielmo today informing him that Maryland National is licensed to do business in Louisiana.

But, said O'Connor, the telegram isn't enough.

"I want a letter saying that someone will take responsibility for collecting a forfeited Maryland National bail bond," he said. "What's the use of writing a bail bond that will never be collected if it's forfeited?"

CRIMINAL DISTRICT Court Judge Bernard J. Bagert, asked if Criminal Court judges might consider taking a position against Maryland National bonds, said, "We've talked about it and it's a matter to be considered.

"Our problem is that federal court injunction against the district attorney's office. We don't know what we can do until that's cleared up.

"Once the injunction is lifted, then we can talk about possible action we might take.

"You know, we aren't happy about this situation either."