

# Grand Jury Hears Lawyer For Embattled Bail Firm



—States-Item Photo.  
RALPH KASKELL

The attorney for the Maryland National Insurance Company, which owes \$720,775 in bail bond forfeitures, today spent more than two hours before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Ralph Kaskell appeared at 9:15 a. m. when the jury convened for the day.

First Asst. Dist. Atty. James Alcock said Kaskell was appearing voluntarily.

ON JULY 4, the grand jury indicted two lawyers, Milton P. Masinter and Thomas Toranto Jr., on charges of corrupt influencing in alleged at-

tempts to bribe former Asst. Dist. Atty. Charles Ray Ward not to press for collection of Maryland National bail bond forfeitures.

Masinter and Toranto have said they are not guilty.

On June 19, Ward accused Kaskell of attempting to "blackmail" the DA's office into settling the Maryland National claim for \$100,000.

Kaskell denied Ward's charges.

Assistant Dist. Atty. Shirley Wimberly Jr., who now is responsible for collection of bail bond forfeitures, was to be the grand jury's next witness this afternoon.

ATTEMPTS BY the com-

pany to restrain the DA's office from attempting to collect Maryland National's forfeitures currently are in federal court. A restraining order has been issued preventing the DA's office from collections or moving to stop Maryland National from operating in Louisiana.

Maryland National officials say many of the bonds that were forfeited were based on stolen bonding powers.

On Tuesday the Orleans Parish Criminal Court judges said they will not accept any more bonds written on Maryland National. The company has filed a motion asking the judges to rescind their order and an open hearing is expected in four or five days.