

Once Minor Moneymaker

Pinballs: Gambling Focal Point

Pinball machine operations, considered a minor source of gambling revenue in the New Orleans area during the heyday of slot machines and wide-open racehorse handbooks, have become the focal point of gambling activities in recent times.

For the past two years efforts have been made in the Louisiana Legislature to outlaw gambling-type pinball machines and the Metropolitan Crime Commission has charged repeatedly that pinball machines are a major source of revenue for organized crime.

Strengthened laws and law enforcement have made other types of gambling less prominent.

ACCORDING TO the MCC, a single slot machine can bring in between \$75 and \$100 per week and if one company owns 1,000 of them the gross could be up to \$100,000 per week.

The first legislative effort to

outlaw gambling-type pinball machines came in 1970.

The Senate passed a measure which would have allowed police to destroy pinball machines containing "knock off devices."

The bill was sponsored by the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement.

THE BILL then went to the House Ways and Means Committee where it received an unfavorable vote. The measure failed in the House 42-46.

The Senate picked up the ball again and Sen. Jesse Knowles of Lake Charles tacked on an amendment giving pinball owners until Jan. 1, 1971 to get rid of their machines.

That measure died when the upper chamber voted to send it back to the calendar.

The second try came this year when another anti-pinball move was defeated in the House.

the bill amendments which also would have outlawed pari-mutuel horse race betting. After Senate rejection, the bill was tossed back to a conference committee where it died for lack of support.

A year ago today, Asst. Dist. Atty. William R. Alford announced a drive against pinball machines and subpoenaed to the Grand Jury representatives of five pinball machine companies, including two men who were arrested in yesterday's federal roundup, in which Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and others were charged with bribery in connection with pinball payoffs.

Alford, who quit the DA's office recently, said his office prosecutes in all cases where pinball machine gambling is uncovered by the police.

At that time Alford said, "Everybody knows that people pay off on pinball machines. The legislature will not come to grips with it. We're just supposed to ignore it."

OPPONENTS tacked onto