Gallinghouse's Goal--Fill Void, Clean Up State

By The Associated Press

U.S. Atty. Gerald Gallinghouse has reached into Louisiana's state government so often it's hard to keep up with his investigations without a scorecard.

Gallinghouse, who has empaneled a new grand jury to begin work on some of the 23 criminal investigations he is pending, says he would stay out of state government if the state would clean its own house.

During the two years he has headed the Justice Department in the Eastern District of Louisiana, once a 22-parish domain, a steady stream of state officials trudged in and out of federal grand jury chambers as Gallinghouse probed their various departments.

Not all of those probes ended in indictments, but as Gallinghouse put it: "The investigations brought an awareness in the public of wrongdoing in state government." DURING AN interview in his French Quarter office, the 51-year-old New Orleans native picked up a blue-bound copy of the Louisiana Criminal Code and shuffled it across his desk to the reporter. "Look at this," he said, "It's one of the best codes around, but unfortunately hasn't been used much to stop corruption in state government."

If the state won't look after its own affairs, he says, "my office will continue to fill the void.

For two weeks, however, Gallinghouse has been working a kingdom divided, having lost jurisdiction over Baton Rouge, and thus the Capitol.

TO EASE the burden of the courts in the heavily populated district, a new attorney's office was formed at Baton Rouge. Called the Middle District, it includes nine parishes that once fell under Gallinghouse's jurisdiction.

But Gallinghouse pulled a coup, getting the federal district judges to give him jurisdiction in those nine parishes, including East Baton Rouge, as far as his pending cases go.

He won't say how many of those 23 probes involved state government but he says his objective still is "to clean up corruption in government.

Since taking office in January 1970, Gallinghouse has investigated the state Education Department, the State Planning Office, branches of the Executive Department, the state Highway Department, the Public Works Department and the Agriculture Department.

GALLINGHOUSE readily announces the start of his probes, but you must ask for progress reports, and he won't say how many of the investigations he has shelved, if any.

Here's a partial list of his activities:

- Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison indicted and awaiting trial on charges of bribery to protect pinball machine interests.
- Six Education Department employees, including Downs' wife and a former state legislator, indicted on fraud and perjury stemming from a probe of the state-funded Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

But Gallinghouse is "trying to indict everybody for his own personal benefit."

But Gallinghouse says, "I have no political ambition. I enjoy this work and would like to remain in it as long as Mr. Nixon allows me to." He says, "I am after crime."

A SELF-PROCLAIMED conservative, Gallinghouse was brought up on state politics, once serving as a Democratic city judge in New Orleans, and then running for mayor in 1968. He was out of that race to support Jimmy Fitzmorris, now the lieutenant governor-elect.

Born near New Orleans, the son of a dairy farmer, Gallinghouse worked as a farmer and a shipyard employee before entering the maritime service in World War II.

He received his law degree from Louisiana State University, entered politics and raised a few eyebrows in 1968 when he switched to the Republican party to head the New Orleans area campaign for Richard Nixon.

A YEAR later he was nominated for the Justice Department job and was sworn in Jan. 10, declaring a war on crime, especially corruption in government, and once said that he would disclose corruption that would "make the Louisiana Hayride seem like a Sunday School picnic."

"If some say I'm overzealous," Gallinghouse said, "let me say that I would rather be overzealous than do nothing."

HE SAID he expects a great deal of cooperation from William Guste, the new state attorney general, and in the future wants to press harder against gambling and narcot...