

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 score card.

Gallinghouse, who has empaneled a new grand jury to begin work on some of the 23 criminal investigations he has 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 skidded 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 in 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,



U.S. ATTY. GERALD GALLINGHOUSE, left, is the man behind the charges that were brought against Louisiana officials (top to bottom): ATTY. GEN. JACK P. F. GREMILLION; New Orleans DA JIM GARRISON and Public Works director C. H. "SAMMY" DOWNS.

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 in-

vestigated 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 have been shelved, if any.

Here's a partial list of his

activities:

—Atty. Gen. Jack Gremillion indicted and convicted of perjury in connection with a probe of the defunct Louisiana Loan & Thrift Corp.

—Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison indicted and awaiting trial on charges of bribery to protect pinball machine interests.

—Public Works Director C. H. "Sammy" Downs indicted for bribery in connection with getting state business for Shoup Voting Machine Co., a firm also indicted.

—Six Education Department employees, including Downs' wife and a former state legislator, indicted on fraud charges stemming from a probe of the federally-funded Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

—Ron Katz absolved of any wrongdoing in connection with

a probe of the State Planning Office, a probe that still continues into use of federal funds by that office.

GALLINGHOUSE'S investigations provided ammunition for reform candidates in the last Louisiana general election, with corruption one of the main campaign issues.

Indeed, Gallinghouse has been accused of launching investigations which will benefit his own campaign for elected office later.

It was Gremillion, now facing a prison sentence, who said 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 1966. He bowed 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 employe 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, 1970.

He immediately began addressing various civic groups, 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-

ics. "Mercy is hazardous," he said. "Sympathy is morbid when wasted on those who exploit them."