Continued from Page 1

under 17 years of age, but grant to district courts jurisdiction over those accused of murder, armed robbery, aggravated rape and aggravated kidnapping if they were over 15 years old.

By a new section to the proposal, the convention voted 92 to 13 that city judges shall have the same six year term which has previously been voted for district judges.

JUVENILE COURTS

As the convention resumed its consideration of the proposed judiciary article, it took up Sec. 18 pertaining to the jurisdiction of juvenile courts.

The convention had determined earlier to pass over this section, because of anticipated controversial amendments, until it had completed the balance of the proposed judiciary article. As submitted in the proposal, the section provided only that: "The jurisdiction of a juvenile court shall be as provided by law."

Judge James L. Dennis, chairman of the judiciary committee which had submitted the proposed article, explained that the 1921 constitutional convention had outlined the jurisdiction of juvenile courts in great detail, but that his committee proposal "takes this out of the constitution and leaves it to the Legislature."

"We, the people of Louisiana, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political, economic and religious liberties we enjoy, and desiring to protect individual rights to life, liberty, and property; afford opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; assure equality of rights; promote the health, safety, education and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; ensure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and justice to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution."

A last ditch debate over the proposed Section 18 of the judiciary proposal dealing with juvenile courts and their jurisdiction sparked an afternoon argument, finally settled by 92 to 12 acceptance of language which provided that juvenile and family court jurisdiction "shall be as provided by law."

The convention refused an amendment which would give jurisdiction to city, parish and district courts sitting as ex officio juvenile courts over all offenses committed by persons otherwise provided herein:"

(A) such courts shall have exclusive jurisdiction of cases of the state in the interest of persons under 18 years of age brought before the court as delinquent or neglected children. The courts shall also have jurisdiction of all cases of desertion or nonsupport of a wife by her husband and the adoption of children under 18 years of age. The family court shall have such additional jurisdiction as is possessed by the family courts in existence at the time this constitution is adopted, or as otherwise provided by law."

"(B) The Legislature shall have the power to establish juvenile courts or family courts for any parish or group of parishes and designate the title and domicile of said courts, upon the petition of the police jury or other governing authority of the parish to be affected. The jurisdiction of any family court shall be the same as the jurisdiction vested in family courts in existence at the time of the adoption of this constitution."

"(C) The district courts in the Parish of Orleans and the several district courts in other parts of the state, however, shall have exclusive jurisdiction of the trial of all persons over the age of 16 years who have been indicted by a grand jury for the offenses of murder, aggravated kidnapping or aggravated rape committed within their respective jurisdictions."

Judge Dennis, James G. Derbes of New Orleans, Wellborn Jack of Shreveport, I. Jackson Burson of Eunice, Arthur J. Planchard of Sulphur and James T. Burns of Covington all spoke in opposition to the amendment. The amendment was rejected 34 to 74.

AGE AMENDMENT

Gravel offered an amendment that juvenile courts, including district, parish and city courts when sitting ex officio as juvenile courts, would have exclusive jurisdiction of all offenses committed by persons under the age of 17. The amendment provided, however, that criminal district courts would have jurisdiction over all persons 15 and older who committed murder, aggravated rape and aggravated kidnapping.

The amendment failed 53 to 33 because the tie could not be broken in that Chairman E. L. "Bubba" Henry of New Iberia had already voted as a delegate. Jackson moved to reconsider and Derbes moved to table that motion. It was tabled 54 to 33.

R. Gordon Kean and John L. Avant Sr. of Baton Rouge, moved an amendment by Robert Pugh of Shreveport which declared that juvenile and family courts "shall have such jurisdiction as provided by law." Kean said the amendment made it clear the committee proposal referred to the East Baton Rouge family court as well as to juvenile courts. The amendment was adopted 92 to 12.

A technical amendment advanced by Associate Justice Albert Tate Jr. of Ville Platte was adopted without objection.

Again Gravel sought to add an amendment, this time repeating his earlier amendment, adding armed robbery as additionally being within the jurisdiction of district courts for those over the age of 15. He withdrew it when it met further objection from Wellborn Jack of Shreveport.

The amended Section 18 was adopted by 100 to 9.