Convention Panel Plans Property Tax Hearings

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — A Committee of the Constitutional Convention voted Saturday to make a little tour of the state for hearings on property tax equalization.

A day earlier the Committee on Revenue, Finance and Taxation had decided to spend March 30 and 31 in Baton Rouge discussing the problem. But Saturday Rep. Risley Triche of Napoleonville convinced the panel to devote two additional days to the property tax issue, and to hold some of its meetings in cities other than Baton Rouge.

Equalization Ordered
Dist. Judge Lewis S. Doherty II declared the state's assessment practices inequitable and unconstitutional last week, and ordered the state Tax Commission to implement a plan of statewide equalization by Jan. 1, 1975.

The decision fell upon the convention's Revenue Committee like a bombshell, especially since that committee includes Jefferson Parish Assessor Lawrence Chehady, the state's most vocal opponent of equalization, and state Sen. J. D. DeBli eux, who acted as plaintiff's attorney in the suit that led to Doherty's ruling.

"It's got everybody in the state in an uproar," Triche said of the ruling. "The governor had to call a special press conference on it. People are crying and roaring. Mr. Chehady is telling people they're going to lose their homes. Mr. DeBli eux is telling them something else. This is a serious problem.

"It's not only serious and technical, it's emotional. I think just two days of hearings in