State Remap Is Coming Before Senate

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—The Senate today takes up the potentially controversial question of congressional reapportionment, and bills to tighten securities laws.

Sen. Michael O’Keefe of New Orleans said he would bring up his measure to redraw congressional districts with assurance that it will pass.

Sen. William Guste of New Orleans intends to bring up the securities legislation proposed by a legislative committee on small loan and investment companies.

The committee’s work was prompted primarily by the financial failure of Louisiana Loan & Thrift Corp. A federal grand jury indicted five persons on conspiracy charges in connection with the failure, including Atty. Gen. Jack Gremillion.
Simplified Districting Shown Possible

Elsewhere, on this and the following page, we present an illustrative plan for legislative apportionment, together with maps describing in general a plan conceived by the Public Affairs Research Council.

Each plan, to the best of our ability to ascertain, within the mathematical guidelines recently issued by a three-judge Federal court, indicates the relative ease with which a plan can be prepared both to follow these guidelines, and to adhere to the existing constitutional limitations on the memberships of the Louisiana House and Senate.

The plan we present also brings out how a regrouping can be effected for the representative districts, and for the senatorial districts, such that a certain appropriate number of the former (one or more) can be arranged within the boundaries of each senatorial district; and no representative district need be placed in two or more senatorial districts.

With all due respect for and appreciation of PAR, it must be conceded that its plan does include some overlappings or "straddlings" of this kind.

If a certain amount of unavoidable confusion does arise in the apportionment process, confusion will be minimized, it seems to us, by effecting as simple an arrangement of the various districts as possible, that conforms as nearly as possible to the "one-man, one-vote" principle, and the guidelines. It would seem also that the voters affected would appreciate a simplified indication of the representative and the senatorial tickets with which they will be concerned; one which they can keep in mind without need of periodical explanations.

The plan so designed is the work of James H. Gillis, of The Times-Picayune news staff, a political and governmental reporter of many years' experience. Some variations certainly are possible, without doing violence to the concepts involved. For example, in the case of Southeast Louisiana, an alternate grouping might be desired, such as to put Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes together in a senatorial district — instead of part of Orleans, with Plaquemines and St. Bernard.

We know that the Research Council is quite competent to prepare a plan on the model we suggest. The same certainly is true of the Governor's Commission on Reapportionment, which reconvenes Wednesday.

Each of the three-column maps on this page is accompanied by a map (an arrow showing the appropriate linkage) for Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes. The intricacies involved (ward lines, etc.) could not be handled satisfactorily in the statewide mapping.

The table which gives the detail of Mr. Gillis' suggestion is carried over on the succeeding page.

It may be seen that provision is made for 105 representatives and 39 senators, the existing constitutional limit. The three-judge court has said that only through the state constitutional amendment process can these numbers be increased.

With reference to the main guidelines laid down:

1. Ratio of the population of the most overrepresented, to that of the most underrepresented district, must not exceed 1.7 to 1. In this plan, this ratio, among representative districts, is about 1.34 to 1; among the senatorial, about 1.28 to 1.

2. Detrimental deviation from average district population must not exceed 15 per cent, with perhaps one or two exceptions. In this plan, no district is overrepresented more than 15 per cent; one district is overrepresented 17.7 per cent.

3. Percentage of population necessary to elect 53 of 105 House members or 20 of 39 Senate members should not be less than 46 per cent. In this plan, all overrepresented districts, to do this, would need aid from one underrepresented district, in each case. The populations so combined would represent 47 and 49 per cent of the total state population, respectively, for House and Senate control.