

Drive Erases Case Backlog On Hot Checks

By SAM F. HOLMES JR.

The District Attorney's 7-month drive against hot-check writers had wiped out a heavy backlog of cases Monday.

Less than 100 triable cases were listed on the County Criminal Court dockets.

Court records showed that more than 640 defendants had paid

heavily in jail time or prison sentences.

In the County Criminal Courts 556 defendants have drawn an average of 56 days in jail, plus fines totaling \$2,025.

In the Criminal District Courts another 90 hot-check artists and forgers have been assessed a total of 208 years in prison sentences, including sentences which the judges suspended.

Asst. Dist. Atty. Clarence Bentley, in charge of Dist. Atty. Henry Wade's hot check section, announced the figures.

"We are now up to date with our hot check cases," Bentley said. "Every case in which the defendant has been apprehended has been set for trial since Jan. 1.

"There are fewer than 100 triable hot check cases now on the court dockets.

A mass setting of sixty-three hot check cases Monday in Judge Joe B. Brown's court was the last mass setting scheduled, Bentley said.

Bentley and his 3-member staff, including Asst. Dist. Atty. Wayne Hancock, Mrs. Anne Keasler and Mrs. Virginia Fults, have been quietly hammering away at a backlog of nearly 1,000 hot check cases since the first of the year.

A total of 31,644 days in jail has been meted out to the 556 misdemeanor defendants plus the fines and prison time, Bentley said. In addition, bond forfeitures have been entered in fifty-seven other hot check cases. Nearly 100 old, untriable cases have been dismissed.

Hot check writers and forgers have been busy in Dallas County this year despite the stepped-up prosecution, Bentley said.

Through July 30, hot checks and forgeries totaling \$128,853 had been reported to the District Attorney's office.

Of that amount, Bentley and his staff have succeeded in collecting \$61,204 from the offenders and returning the money to the victims.

"With no backlog to bother us now," Bentley said, "we can devote more effort to cases currently being filed."