

IT'S PROBLEM

Fines Paid To County Needlessly

Dallas County Thursday was faced with the problem of trying to give back \$167.50 in fines and court costs to a man who pleaded guilty to five cases of check swindling he didn't commit.

Asst. Dist. Atty. Clarence Bentley, in charge of fraud prosecutions, outlined the situation in letters to County Criminal Court Judge Joe B. Brown and Commissioners Court.

Bentley said Joe Curtis Coggin had paid the fines and court costs in Judge Brown's court after pleading guilty to the check swindles. But Coggin was in court on another charge of a different nature.

Later Coggin asked Bentley to look into the check cases. Bentley discovered that another Coggin with the same initials, Julian Chester Coggin, actually was charged with the check swindles.

"While it was never quite clear to this office why he (Joe Curtis Coggin) admitted guilt in these cases, subsequent information verifies his statement that the cases are not his..." Bentley wrote.

"Our office feels that consideration should be given to Joe Curtis Coggin in recovering the court costs and fines, if it is possible to do so."

Commissioners Court, which controls the county's finances, didn't know the solution. The commissioners sent the problem back to the District Attorney's office for a legal opinion.