

OPE-26-34

# Blanton Firm On Claim Politically Inspired Probe

FBI routinely launched a preliminary investigation "upon receiving allegations of possible violations of federal criminal law from several responsible officials of the state of Tennessee. The investigation was not initiated by the United States attorney or any member of his staff."

Although there has been speculation Blanton again might run against Baker in 1978, the governor said he has declared he doesn't plan to seek any other public office and "those plans haven't changed." The state Constitution will not allow Blanton to run for re-election in 1978.

Asked about a Brock suggestion that the results of last Tuesday's general election would amount to a referendum on the Blanton administration, the governor said if that was the case he was pleased with the results.

Questioned about the surprisingly good showing by Sasser and Carter in traditionally Republican East Tennessee, Blanton

said that part of the state had lately proved to be fertile ground.

"We have seen almost a 40 per cent change in the last two elections," Blanton said,

Meanwhile, Sasser spoke to a group of dairymen Thursday and was asked by reporters afterward whether he planned to pursue a \$5-million libel suit he had threatened earlier in the campaign to file against Brock.

"I may have an obligation to establish a precedent that no political figure will be able to use false political advertising against an opponent unless he has to recompense for it at a later date," Sasser said.

On other topics, Sasser said he would support a move to name U.S. Rep. Ed Jones (D-Tenn.) secretary of agriculture in the administration of President-elect Jimmy Carter.

## Weekend Park Traffic Considered

The Memphis Park Commission yesterday discussed allowing motorized traffic in Overton Park on weekends but took no action.

Motorized traffic in the park has been prohibited on weekends since 1974 under the "People Days" program.

However, traffic is congested around the park on weekends and revenue at Overton Park Zoo is down 17 per cent since July as compared with 1975 statistics, Nat Baxter, executive director of the park commission, said yesterday.

John Malmo, a commissioner, suggested that signs saying the park is open during People Days be placed at the street barricades. Baxter said some signs would be prepared.

Baxter asked that the commission delay action until his staff makes a study of the zoo problems to determine what is causing the decreased attendance.

He said he believes the zoo is not receiving enough publicity and there is more competition for the entertainment dollar. He said advertising may be the answer.

In other action, the commission approved a resolution from the trustees of Memphis Pink Palace Museum Foundation in which the trustees pledge to raise the remaining \$400,000 of the \$1.5-million fund drive started two years ago in return for the city's allowing the museum to use

now the \$124,000 remaining in its additional capital improvement funds.

The \$400,000 will be used for funding the construction of the "Boom Era" exhibit at the museum, he said.

## Richardson Hits Truck Weights

From The Commercial Appeal  
Columbus, Miss., Bureau

COLUMBUS, Miss. — Northern District Highway Commissioner Bobby Richardson said Thursday he will oppose any legislative efforts to increase truck weight limits on Mississippi highways from 73,280 to 80,000 pounds.

National truck lobbying groups have attempted for several years to persuade Mississippi lawmakers to raise the limit to 80,000 pounds, and legislation is expected to be introduced in the 1977 session of the Legislature which would allow the increase.

Richardson said estimates indicate it would cost the state \$535 million to upgrade primary highways and bridges to accommodate the increased weights.

The commissioner said he believes high diesel fuel prices in the state are a greater deterrent to truckers than the lower weight limit.