

'Dirty 30' Tag Was Coined During '67 House Debate

TYLER, Tex. (AP) — Rep. Bill Bass, a Democratic state representative from Canton by way of Martins Mill, says Joe Tunnell, a Tyler lawyer from Grand Saline, coined the "Dirty 30" moniker for House members who opposed Speaker Gus Mutscher.

They also opposed those involved in the stock fraud scandal that comes up again Aug. 30 in a hearing in Dallas before U. S. Dist. Judge Sarah T. Hughes. The Securities & Exchange Commission seeks a court order to require the defendants to obey the law.

"Back in 1967," Bass said recently, "the original 'Dirty 30' began meeting Monday in Austin's Downtowner Motel. Ben Barnes was Speaker at the time, and the same problems existed then as now—what we considered a one-man rule of the House."

The first issue in the session, he said, was an emergency \$10 million appropriation for San Antonio's HemisFair. Describing the San Antonio Fair as the "most colossal flop since the Edsel," Bass said the Dirty 30

thought it was much more important for state employes to have an emergency pay raise at the time. It was lagging far behind that of other workers."

He said state hospital workers were earning about \$190 a month.

Bass explained that the first move of the yet-to-be-named "Dirty 30" was to vote against the HemisFair appropriation and instead substitute a state employes' pay raise, which he said, "surprisingly cost less money."

The House, however, approved the HemisFair appropriation overwhelmingly and rejected the pay raise by a 116-29 voter after what Bass called a "very emotional debate."

Bass said he introduced the pay raise bill and that "the man who spoke against my motion broke down in tears. He called me a demagogue and various other names."

One of those who spoke against the pay raise bill, Bass continued, was Mutscher. "It was one of the rare times that session that he spoke on the

floor," Bass said. "He was running for Speaker."

Before the "Barnes team" rolled up its victory, however, the House floor witnesses several shoving matches and near fist-fights, Bass recalled.

About this time, Bass said, Tunnell sent him a letter "congratulating me for standing against the Connally-Barnes forces."

"I'm told you're now being called 'the Dirty 30,'" Bass quoted the Tunnell letter as reading.

Tunnell said Sunday he had forgotten the incident and had credited Bass with the "Dirty 30" name but had had a secretary look back through his files and — sure enough — he had written such a letter on Feb. 21, 1967.

"From that time on," said Bass, "we've referred to ourselves as the Dirty 30 in our meetings."

"It wasn't even 30 back then," Tunnell recalled. "Now it's getting to be more like 130 opposed to the Mutscher bunch." He added that he feels Bass first used the phrase and "then I

along with others picked it up." Bass says that many of the original Dirty 30 still are members of the group. "We persisted from the first session on. It gets to looking pretty hopeless sometimes. But I think we've demonstrated what corruption is in the Austin political machine. It's a new feeling to be a winner."