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Commonwealth report disclosed

By Brad Kuhns

Special Assistant Attorney General David Domina and Assistant Banking Director John Miller have completed their investigation of public officials involved with Commonwealth Savings Co. of Lincoln.

The 197-page report, given to the media Thursday at a press conference, was released by Domina after he forced members of the press to agree to keep its contents confidential until 6 a.m. Friday. The reporters will be given to Gov. Bob Kerrey and state senators sometime today.

Officials examined were Gov. Kerrey, former Gov. Charles Thone, former Assistant Banking Director Barry Lake, former Banking Director Paul Amen, Sen. John DeCamp, Attorney General Paul Douglas, Deputy Banking Director Charles Mitchell and Assistant Attorney General Ruth Anne Galter.

In the report, Domina and Miller indicate that Kerrey, Thone, DeCamp and Mitchell at no time acted questionably in matters concerning Commonwealth. The report also said that no concrete evidence had been found to show that any public employee "tipped off" a Commonwealth depositor so that funds could be withdrawn prior to Nov. 1, when the bank was declared insolvent.

Although the report does not claim to have found specific criminal activities

among public officials, it does list some actions as questionable.

More than 100 pages describe the actions of Douglas. Documents show that Douglas and close friend Paul Galter, a Lincoln attorney, purchased 78 lots from Marvin Copple, a Lincoln land developer and vice president of Commonwealth, and sold them for a profit of \$118,288.67. Sixty of the lots were sold to Copple's personal secretary, Judy Driscoll, who financed her purchases through Commonwealth. The Driscoll loan is among the list of outstanding Commonwealth loans.

Douglas took out loans from Commonwealth loans.

Douglas took out loans from Commonwealth to purchase the land. He made no down payment and was allowed to extend his notes past their original maturity dates.

Miller and Domina found no intentional negligence on the part of Ruth Anne Galter, who is the estranged wife of Paul Galter. Mrs. Galter was assigned by Douglas to monitor banking department activities. She was given no specific instructions regarding the investigation of Commonwealth. The report attributes her inaction to a lack of experience and the absence of instruction or direction from Douglas. Prior to being assigned to banking in June 1983, she had no previous experience in investigation of financial institutions.

Mrs. Galter was the only member of

the attorney general's staff who was personally indebted to Commonwealth. The report also noted that Mrs. Galter's husband was a close, personal friend of Commonwealth President S.E. Copple and had served as legal counsel to Marvin Copple, S.E. Copple, and to Commonwealth Savings.

The report said former Banking Di-

rector Paul Amen withheld information concerning the shaky financial condition of Commonwealth because he believed that "the failure of one major industrial in Nebraska would precipitate the insolvency of the Nebraska Depository Insurance Guaranty Corp. and the subsequent, domino-effect failure of most of all of the state's industrials."



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Special Assistant Attorney General David Domina (left) and Special Assistant Banking Director John Miller (right) discuss their report on the public officials involved in the Commonwealth case. The report was released at a press conference Thursday afternoon.

Regents, senators disagree on amendment

By Pam Alward

The two sides of LR225CA, the constitutional amendment that if passed would place the university under the direct control of the Nebraska Legislature, met face-to-face Thursday in a Constitutional Revision and Recreation Committee hearing.

State Sen. Karen Kilgarin of Omaha, who proposed the amendment, said the Legislature has an inherent right of responsibility to oversee the money for a public institution.

Since 1977 the legislature has had no control over the one-fifth of the state budget which goes to the NU system, she said.

Board of Regents Chairman Edward Schwartzkopf of Lincoln said the regents feel the Legislature already directs expenditures of the state general funds to the NU system, and the change is not necessary.

"The board both respects and adheres to its directives" from the Legislature, he said.

The Nebraska citizens, by voting for LR225CA,

would return to a system which worked very well for 105 years Kilgarin said.

The majority of the states have a governor-appointed, legislature-approved board to operate its universities, Kilgarin said. These states include Iowa, Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri and Wyoming. In addition, Nebraska is one of any four states that have no appointees.

"But those states aren't Nebraska," Regent Margaret Robinson of Norfolk said. The relationship between the regents and the Legislature works well and need not change, she said.

There are many reasons to change the regents from an elected body to an appointed body, Kilgarin said. These include: maintaining citizen participation through the Legislature and freeing the regents to make the wisest decisions apart from the pressures of voter approval, she said.

Under the Kilgarin plan, the regents would remain in office four years instead of the present six years.

The candidate who spends the most money cam-

paing for voter approval often wins the election, Kilgarin said.

Committee member Clarence Jacobson of Hastings, speaking against the bill, said the Legislature is in session one-fourth to one-third of the year, while the regents have the opportunity to meet monthly to decide university issues.

In favor of it, Don Wesely of Lincoln said the board now lacks diversity. He cited the Legislature as an example of a diversified institution that should decide university issues.

Janet West, president of the UNO American Association of University Professors, is in favor of appointed regents.

"Members should be selected for proven qualities," she said.

State Sen. David Newell of Omaha, a co-sponsor of LR225CA with James Pappas of Hershey, said the regents often act like elected lobbyists for specific campuses or programs.

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Women share political know-how

By Mary C. Reilly

The growing importance of women in politics is the focus of "Womanpower" a conference scheduled tomorrow at the new Cornhusker Square Convention Center.

Rose Meile, assistant director of the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, said the conference was formed to give women a chance to learn the legislative process and meet women in politics. The conference is sponsored by the commission and 21 other women's organizations. Meile said this is the first "Womanpower" conference to take place in Nebraska.

Speakers at the program sessions and workshops in the conference will be mostly Nebraskans, state senators and other government leaders.

The keynote address, "Womanpower" by Nancy Perleman, will emphasize pay equity and "the power women have to make a difference," Meile said. Perleman is the founding executive of the Center for Women in Government at the State University of New York at Albany.

The luncheon scheduled with women senators will feature a discussion about projects in Nebraska such as: Women's Equality Day, which will be sponsored by the Nebraska Coalition for Women in late August; Legislative Forum, which will take place in February and March across the state; Women in Action, a political action committee; and other projects dealing with women in the legislative process.

At the workshops and sessions, Meile said, the commission tried to offer everything from elementary legislative topics to very refined subjects.

Originally, 200 people were expected to attend the conference, but more than that have registered and she expects even more.

The three major sessions in "Womanpower" are "The How-To's of the Legislative Process," "Legislative networking: Information Dissemination" and "Issue Briefing and Strategy."

"Womanpower" is the kickoff of celebrations to take place this year for the 20th anniversary of the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women. A dinner in the state capitol and a birthday celebration at the governor's mansion are planned for February and March.