

## No Funds for Criminal Jurors?

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The inordinately drawn-out task of empaneling a jury for the Clay Shaw trial on conspiracy charges provides the public with another glaring reminder of a major deficiency in the Criminal Courts system here.

Fourteen days were required to select a jury of 12 and two alternates.

Ninety-six persons called for jury duty yesterday had been rejected or dismissed by noon.

Medical causes or "fixed opinions" about the case have ruled out many potential jurors. But many others have been exempted because of the financial burden serving without pay in a long trial would impose upon them.

Unlike jurors anywhere else in the state, Orleans Parish Criminal Court jurors receive no monetary compensation for their time away from work.

Last May, the Legislature authorized \$10 a day for Orleans Parish Criminal Court jurors out of city funds. But a provision for the pay was cut from the 1969 budget by the City Council.

As hard-pressed financially as city government is right now, efforts to pay jurors must compete with pressures for city employe pay increases.

Judge Bernard J. Bagert of Criminal District Court has estimated it would only take about \$25,000 annually to pay jurors for the Criminal Courts here.

In all parishes except Orleans, the state provides \$8 a day, plus seven cents per mile, for jurors. State law exempts New Orleans, apparently out of anticipation that the city would have so many criminal jury trials the state could ill afford to pay all the jurors.

In authorizing the city to pay its own jurors, the Legislature merely has reconfirmed the problem as the city's own.

As hard-pressed as city government is, it does seem that the city should be able to produce the pittance for jurors.