

3 Prospective Jurors *Post 1-23-69* Excused in Sirhan Case

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 22 (UPI) — The prosecution excused two prospective jurors on peremptory challenges today and the defense eliminated a third in the chess-game tactics of selecting 12 persons to try Sirhan B. Sirhan for the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Attorneys for both sides and Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker carefully explained to the prospective jurors the role they must play — to determine the facts and evidence and to give the 24-year-old defendant a fair and impartial trial.

Sirhan, a Palestinian Arab brought to this country when he was 14, fidgeted with his fingers as he listened to the sometimes repetitious questioning of panel members. His eyes often strayed to the back of the heavily guarded courtroom where his mother, Mary, and younger brother, Munir, were seated.

Defense attorney Russell Parsons noted in questioning prospective jurors that Sirhan was not an American citizen.

"He is a Palestinian Arab," the attorney said. "Would you have any prejudice because of this?"

The answer was always negative.

Those eliminated by the two prosecution peremptory challenges during the morning session were Rosa A. Molina, an elderly nurse, and Geraldine Scherer, a retired antique shop operator.

No reason is required for a peremptory challenge.

The defense eliminated Miss Barbara L. Collins, a telephone company supervisor, with its third peremptory chal-

lenge of the trial, which began Jan. 7.

Harold H. Baldwin, retired Bank of America assistant cashier, was seated tentatively during the morning and so was James B. Avery, a mail carrier.

Also in the morning session two prospective jurors were excused for cause — personal hardship.

Julia A. Collins said she felt she could not leave her family for the long period the trial is expected to require.

Yasuo H. Mayeda was excused on similar grounds when he reported he must baby-sit at night so his wife can attend night school. They have three young children.

Walker and the attorneys as well have pointed out that the trial is expected to take about two months — after a jury and six alternates are selected.

The defense has conceded that Sirhan fired the shot that killed Kennedy in the Ambassador Hotel after the primary election on June 5.

The State, however, must election on June 5. record and expects to call about 80 witnesses.

The state of mind or intent of the defendant — as determined by the jury — will be the major factor in setting the degree of guilt, if any.

La Scala Reopening

MILAN, Italy, Jan. 22 (UPI) — The La Scala Opera House, closed after great chunks of plaster fell from the ceiling Jan. 3, will reopen Saturday with a performance of Puccini's "La Boheme," it was announced today.