Tentative Panel Is Queried in Sirhan Case

LOS ANGELES (AP)— Prosecution and defense at the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan murder trial questioned prospective jurors today in an effort to complete a tentative panel of 12.

The defense delayed a decision on whether to waive its right to challenge the 11 jurors already seated, pending filling of the 12th seat.

Should it surrender its peremptory challenges as the prosecution did last Friday, the case would have a jury. Testimony in the case of the 24-year-old Jordanian charged with slaying Sen. Robert F. Kennedy could begin after selection of six alternate jurors.

Today's session began an hour late due to rain.

Helen Woodworth, retired legal secretary, who consulted over the weekend with her doctor, was excused for medical reasons. She said she couldn't stand a long trial.

She was replaced by Geral-

dine Scherer of Whittier, wife of a retired salesman.

Mrs. Scherer, about 62, told chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper she had been a member of a jury in a case in which a second-degree murder verdict was returned.

She was then further questioned in the judge's chambers.

There was no court session yesterday.

In a surprise move Friday, the prosecution waived further challenges and said, "We accept the jury as now constituted."

The defense remained mum on its decision.

"We don't want to tip our hand," chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper said.

Attorneys for both sides met yesterday in the judge's chamber to go over Friday's trial transcript.

Judge Herbert V. Walker, meanwhile, has disclosed that a Los Angeles hotel has been chosen to house the jury during the trial, expected to extend into spring.

HE WOULD NOT name the hotel but said each juror would have his own room and that there would be separate recreation and dining facilities.

Two color television sets and a radio will be available in the large recreation room, the judge said, but programs will be monitored. Walker also said jurors will be allowed to read newspapers "but they will be cut in pieces."