

New Attorney

Sirhan Trial Delay Until January

Los Angeles

Sirhan B. Sirhan, described by his chief defense attorney as "an average chap," will go to trial for the murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy on January 7, in a steelplated courtroom with closed-circuit television for news reporters.

Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker yesterday overruled a prosecution argument that the trial should start as scheduled next Monday and granted a continuance past the holidays so new defense lawyer Grant B. Cooper could prepare his case.

In a 15-minute court session in the Hall of Justice and at a news conference afterwards, it developed:

MRS. KENNEDY

- Mrs. Ethel Kennedy, who was only a few feet from her husband when he was fatally wounded in the Ambassador Hotel June 5, will not be called as a witness.

- Emile Zola Berman, a New York attorney who gained prominence for his 1956 defense of a Marine sergeant accused of causing the death of rookies, will join the defense team along with Cooper and Russell Parsons.

- There is "no probability" that Sirhan will change his present straight plea of not guilty to one of not guilty by reason of insanity, although his "mental condition" will be a prime factor in seeking to avoid the maximum penalty of death in the gas chamber.

- The trial will last at least two months and jurors will be locked up in their ho-

tel rooms nightly, although their husbands and wives will be allowed to visit them on weekends.

TV

Sirhan spoke only a few words at the hearing. He said, "I have no objection at all," when Judge Walker described the closed circuit TV which would show the courtroom proceedings on the eighth floor room to newsmen on the fourth floor.

Cooper, who twice got a hung jury for Dr. Bernard Finch is the sensational Finch-Tregoff murder trials of a decade ago, entered the case just this week after winding up another trial. He said he talked with Sirhan for an hour last Monday, the first time he had met him.

Asked his impression of the Jordanian immigrant, Cooper said:

"I found him an average chap. I didn't form any definite impression. I was just getting acquainted with him."