

Gurney Jury Is Seated in Bribery-Per.

By MARTIN WALDRON

Special to The New York Times

TAMPA, Fla., March 11—After more than two weeks, a jury was seated today to try former Senator Edward J. Gurney of Florida on charges of bribery, conspiracy and perjury.

Federal District Judge Ben Krentzman, who conducted jury selection in semisecrecy, swore in 18 trial jurors—12 regular jurors and six alternates. But he did not disclose which was which.

Testimony is scheduled to begin tomorrow. Mr. Gurney is the first former Senator ever tried on charges filed against him while serving in office. The trial is expected to last at least three months.

The 61-year-old former Senator, who served on the Senate Watergate committee last year, is accused of extorting money from Florida builders from 1971 until early last year.

In an opening argument to the jury this afternoon, the chief Government prosecutor, Assistant United States Attorney Harvey Schlesinger, said that Mr. Gurney had persuaded three officials of the Florida office of the Federal Housing Administration to issue F.H.A. mortgage insurance only to builders who had been approved by Mr. Gurney's office.

'Power Politics' Seen

To get this approval, the prosecutor said, the builders had to contribute to Mr. Gurney's campaign re-election fund. It was an example of "power politics," Mr. Schlesinger said.

Mr. Gurney needed the large campaign fund, the prosecutor said, because he had got into political trouble in Florida by promoting the rejected Supreme Court nominee G. Harold Carswell for the Senate

in 1970. The Senate rejected Mr. Carswell for the court post after reporters found that he had made racist statements.

The prosecutor said that Mr. Gurney had decided to raise large sums of money to "re-build his image," and that his fund-raisers acted on leads provided by F.H.A. officials working with the former Senator. Mr. Schlesinger said that Mr. Gurney and his staff had raised more than \$300,000 from Florida builders.

In an opening argument for the defense, Mr. Gurney's chief attorney, C. Harris Dittmar of Jacksonville, Fla., said that the fund was more than \$500,000. But, he said, "not one penny of this money went to Senator Gurney, either to his pockets or to his personal enrichment."

Much of the money, he said, was stolen by Mr. Gurney's

chief fund-raiser, Larry Williams of Orlando, who pleaded guilty to a fraud charge last year and has served a prison term. Mr. Williams is expected to be the principal witness against his former employer.

Describing Mr. Gurney as an innocent victim, Mr. Dittmar said that when Federal authorities caught up with Mr. Williams in September, 1973, Justice Department officials made a deal with Mr. Williams to "get" Mr. Gurney.

Mr. Dittmar said that Senator

jury Trial After 3 Weeks

Gurney had cooperated fully in the long investigation that led to his indictment last July 10, even to the extent of having a special Senate resolution passed to allow his employees to be questioned and his records examined by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

There is nothing illegal about a Senator accepting contributions and using the money to pay for the expenses of his office or to build a re-election apparatus, Mr. Dittmar said.

On trial with Mr. Gurney are two of his former aides, James L. Groot and Joseph Bastien, and two officials of the Florida office of the F.H.A., K. Wayne Swiger and Ralph D. Koontz.

Ex-Gov. Hall's Case

OKLAHOMA CITY, March 11 (UPI)—Lawyers presented their closing arguments today in the extortion-bribery trial of former Gov. David Hall and a Dallas financier, W. W. Taylor. The judge said that the case would go to the jury tomorrow.