

Jury Chief Heard In Soledad Trial

By Harold V. Streeter

The man responsible for picking jury panels in San Francisco was called into court today during the trial of two black convicts accused of murdering a Soledad Prison guard.

Bernard J. Ward, executive officer of the San Francisco Superior Court, told how juries here are picked by a special scanner which reads names and questionnaires and makes a tape automatically.

Defense Challenge

He said the tape contains 3500 names which are sorted into 35 panels of about 100 each "somewhat in the manner that we sort a deck of cards," he said.

His testimony came as defense attorneys Floyd Silliman and Richard Silver began an attempt to throw out the entire jury panel on grounds that it is not representative. They said the system tended to eliminate blacks and the poor from juries.

Conflicting Date

The move came as Superior Judge S. Lee Vavuris prepared to begin jury selection from a panel of 125 in the closely guarded third floor courtroom with its bullet-proof barrier at the Hall of Justice.

The defense also said that

defendant Fleeta Drumgo was scheduled for another appearance this afternoon in Marin County over the Aug. 21 outbreak at San Quentin Prison.

Drumgo is among six convicts indicted on murder charges over that outbreak in which six persons died violently, including convict George Jackson.

Jackson, Drumgo and John Clutchette were charged with beating to death guard John V. Mills on Jan. 16, 1970, three days after another white Soledad guard shot and killed three black convicts in an exercise yard.

QCLU Suit

The case was transferred here from Monterey County because the defense charged that the atmosphere in the Soledad Prison area was too laden with prejudice.

Paul Halvonik, staff counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, said today he is continuing to draw up a federal suit to be filed next week charging that the security for the Soledad trial violates constitutional civil rights.

The suit will focus on such charges as disrobing of women and their intimate examination by matrons before they are allowed to enter the spectator section.