

Testimony on Finances

Sirhan Trial Jury Sworn In

LOS ANGELES — (UPI) — A jury of four women and eight men was sworn in today to try the case of the People vs. Sirhan for the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Prosecution and defense counsel immediately began examining prospective alternate jurors. Six must be chosen.

The defendant, Sirhan B. Sirhan, smiled and chatted with his counsel when the examining began.

Questioning of alternates was along the same lines as that of the regular jurors, which often focused on the person's attitude toward the death penalty.

The trial reached a dramatic highlight yesterday when Mary Sirhan, the defendant's mother, testified about the sad state of the finances of her immigrant family. She said her son never made more than \$2200 in any year and gave almost none to her although he lived at home.

Mrs. Sirhan was making \$92 every two weeks as a worker in a Pasadena nursing home, out of which she paid for the mortgage on the family's \$12,000 home, plus utilities.

Defense counsel Grant Cooper asked her how she did it and she explained she

saved her money, did things like baking her own bread and walking to work and then she surprised the courtroom by standing up and saying:

"I thank God for my strength, and thank the people of the United States that I never got hungry and I got a roof over my head."

Sirhan made an eight-minute appearance on the stand just before his mother. He smiled frequently as Cooper struggled through some of the difficult names of some of his string of employers, who ranged from a drive-in restaurant to a horse owner and a dealer in diet foods.

that Negroes, Mexican-Americans, young adults, the poor and the uneducated were not widely represented on the grand jury panels.

Shortly after a morning recess, Mr. Cooper called out in a loud voice:

"Sirhan, will you please take the stand."

Escorted by two sheriff's deputies, one white and in uniform, the other a tall Negro in plain clothes, the young defendant walked briskly to the stand.

His testimony was limited to his earnings. As Mr. Cooper showed him income tax statements from 1964 to 1968 to identify, Sirhan leaned over them intently. Each time he was asked whether he recognized a tax form, he replied eagerly: "Yes, Sir, I do."

The tax forms recorded net income from a variety of minor jobs as \$1,437 in 1964, \$984.90 in 1965, \$2,212.46 in 1966, \$430.96 in 1967 and \$752.35 in 1968.

Sirhan Cross-Examined

In cross-examination, Lynn D. Compton, chief deputy district attorney, questioned whether Sirhan's low income constituted poverty.

He elicited from Sirhan that the defendant would not be 25 years old until next month, that he had lived with his mother during the years in question and that he had been a student in 1964 and 1965.

Sirhan answered his questions briefly and politely, seldom neglecting to add, "Sir." A slight smile played nervously at the corners of his mouth.

When Mrs. Sirhan took the stand, she sat stiff and solemn, agreeing as Mr. Cooper read tax records that she had earned between \$1,471 and \$1,752 in net annual income since 1958 at the Westminster Nursery in Pasadena. She had worked there since shortly after the family's arrival in this country from Jordan in 1957.

Two other sons who lived at home, Munir, now 21, and Adel, 30, had earned, respectively, a maximum net income of \$2,698 and \$5,559, she testified.

Asked by Mr. Cooper about each of her sons in turn, Mrs. Sirhan shook her head slightly and replied that they had not paid room or board. Questioned as to whether Sirhan had ever given her money, she said:

"If I needed it . . . very little."

The same, she added, had been true of the others.

As court was recessed after her testimony and her brief speech before leaving the witness stand, tears welled in her dark eyes.

"I was glad to make a home for my children," she said