

Sirhan's Boyhood Described

Examiner News Services

LOS ANGELES — The defense began presenting its case at the Sirhan Sirhan murder trial today with testimony that Sirhan spent his boyhood in a section of Jerusalem constantly torn by bombing and shooting.

Sarhees Nahas, who was a United Nations representative in Palestine helping refugees from 1953 to 1956, was the first witness called in the fight to save Sirhan from the gas chamber for the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The defense case was expected to take about three weeks and call 30 witnesses. It was expected Sirhan himself might testify.

Refugees

Nahas told the jury Sirhan and his family moved into the old walled city of Jerusalem, an area of 3 to 4 square miles suitable for 100,000 residents but swollen to more than 350,000 by the influx of Arab refugees.

Nahas said the old city underwent bombings, mortar fire and shootings day and night. He testified that one person was rationed three to four dollars a month worth of flour, butter, margarine and a few other staples.

Calm Spirits

Sirhan, apparently in calm spirits, waved to his relatives in court.

His attorneys expressed apprehension earlier today over whether he will "behave himself" when he takes the witness stand.

"We just don't know how he'll react," said Russell Parsons, one of the three defense attorneys. "We don't want to take a chance on him blowing on the stand."