

JFK Book Sifted Line by Line in Deletion Chore

NEW YORK, Dec. 24 (UPI).—Tedious line-by-line negotiations on the full 300,000-word text of "The Death of a President" dragged on Saturday. Chances of halting overseas publications of passages repugnant to Mrs. John F. Kennedy in the book appeared slim.

A spokesman for Harper & Row, publishers of the William Manchester account of the assassination of President Kennedy, said negotiations on the deletion of certain parts of the book Mrs. Kennedy deems too personal would continue over the holidays. Both parties were optimistic an out-of-court settlement could be reached.

"I really didn't expect any settlement to be announced today," the spokesman said, however.

GERMANS ADAMANT

In Hamburg, Germany, meanwhile, a spokesman for the West German magazine Stern, which purchased the West German serialization rights from Look magazine, reiterated its intention to publish with no changes.

"We have bought a historical document and no changes," Norbert Sakowski, news editor of Stern said. "It is our opinion that we, therefore, print the book unchanged. German press law says that only a statement which has been proven false can be held up from print."

LOOK BACKS DOWN

Cowles Communications, Inc.,

publishers of Look, which owns the American serialization rights and received \$72,500 for the West German rights from Stern, agreed to delete certain sections of the text after the threat of a court fight by Mrs. Kennedy and the late President's brother, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Look representatives were attempting to get Stern to go along with the same agreement.

The problem with Harper & Row was more extensive because it involved the full 300,000-word Manchester text. Look was dealing only with an 80,000-word condensation.

As in the negotiations with Look, Kennedy representatives were reported trying to have deleted from the entire book only personal passages offensive to Mrs. Kennedy and not matters of historical interpretation with which she disagreed.

HEARING SCHEDULED

A hearing on Mrs. Kennedy's suit against Harper & Row and Manchester is scheduled in State Supreme Court next Tuesday if no settlement is reached. She has asked for a temporary injunction prohibiting publication of the book on grounds that her original agreement with Manchester gave the Kennedy family the right to have the final word on what went in the book and what stayed out.

In Formosa, the Taipei Government banned the publication or sale of the manuscript in its present form.

Despite the official ban, however, there seemed little chance distribution of the manuscript could be prevented since literary "pirates" on the Nationalist Chinese island were believed to already have copies.

The literary pirates acknowledge no international copyright agreements because the Formosan Government is not a signatory of the international copyright convention of 1955.