

Initial Report Blames Kennedy

Associated Press

Edgartown, Mass.

A preliminary investigative report yesterday found Senator Edward M. Kennedy at "serious fault" for a car accident in which an attractive blonde died.

His license was suspended temporarily.

The Massachusetts Registry of motor Vehicles conducted the investigation into the weekend accident that killed Mary Jo Kopechne, 28, who was riding with Kennedy when his car veered off a bridge into a pond on Chap-

paquiddick Island near Martha's Vineyard.

The 37-year-old Massachusetts Democrat has been charged with leaving the

One of the girls at the Kennedy party tells a tearful story of the tragedy—Page 13.

scene of an accident. The court will decide Monday whether to issue a complaint.

Kennedy, in seclusion at

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his Squaw Island home in Hyannis Port, was advised that his license was suspended pending a hearing. Temporary and immediate suspension of license is required under Massachusetts law in such cases.

The Registry report said the license would be revoked for at least six months if the hearing results in a permanent finding of "serious fault." No date was set for the hearing.

Police Chief Dominick J. Arena of Edgartown said yesterday morning there were "no new leads" in his investigation.

He also clarified the status of State Police Lieutenant George Killen, who had said he wasn't involved in the case. Arena, a former State trooper, said Killen is assisting as a personal favor to him, Arena said.

At an afternoon press conference, Edgartown prosecutor Walter Steele said, "There is evidence in our files which we will prosecute in the next few days as to the problem."

Asked if "the problem" was Kennedy's whereabouts, Steele said, "I prefer not to comment on it. I think it is unfair to this defendant or any defendant."

He said he was putting the "finishing touches" on his investigation but "the investigation is closed as to the motor vehicle complaint."

Police Chief Arena, frequently interrupted by Steele who answered many questions directed to the Chief, said he had not heard from Killen but if any other evidence turned up he might go ahead with additional charges. The Chief made clear he doubted anything would emerge.

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"I don't, and probably will not, have any charge as to a criminal sense against the Senator, Steele said.

Arena told newsmen two more lawyers, Robert G. Clark Jr., of Brockton, a former district court judge, and his son, Robert G. Clark III, had joined Kennedy's defense. An Edgartown lawyer, Richard J. McCarron, who had never met Kennedy, has been representing him.

The chief told reporters he had lost 15 pounds since Saturday and was taking tranquilizers. "This is a very important case and I'm being watched every day. If I make a wrong statement I could ruin this case," he said.

Arena said he asked Killen to question persons who attended a party on Chappaquiddick Island — 100 yards off Martha's Vineyard — before the accident. One of the persons at the party was Miss Kopechne, a former campaign worker for Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The report, prepared by Registry agents on Martha's Vineyard, said the Registry "makes a preliminary finding of fault on the part of Senator Kennedy and, accordingly, his driver's license has been suspended.

"If the hearing results in a finding of no serious fault on Senator Kennedy's party, his driver's license will be reinstated.

"If the hearing confirms the preliminary finding of serious fault, the license suspensions will be changed to revocation which, by law, must remain in effect for at least six months," the Registry said.