

Kennedy Case Inquest Rules Meeting Topic

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. (AP)—Dist. Atty. Edmund A. Dinis said he would meet today with Judge James A. Boyle of Edgartown District Court to set up rules for an inquest into the fatal automobile accident involving Sen. Edward M. Kennedy.

Dinis exercised the mandatory powers of his office under the law to call yesterday for the inquest. Mary Jo Kopechne, 28, of Washington, D.C., a passenger in the car Kennedy was driving, drowned when it went off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island July 18.

Kennedy heads a list of at least 24 persons who may be called to testify.

"I HAVE MADE no determination on calling the senator yet," Dinis said. Kennedy has said he would "cooperate fully" if an inquest is held.

Dinis said he would press for exhumation of Miss Kopechne's body for an autopsy.

Joseph Kopechne, father of the victim, said in Berkeley Heights, N. J., yesterday he would "welcome an inquest," but would go to court if necessary to prevent an autopsy.

Kopechne's wife, Gwen, commented:

"We just feel that an inquest is the only way the public will be satisfied.

"WE WANT to get it over with. That is the only way to stop some of the hate mail and nasty rumors. The people want to know. They want some answers."

Earlier a neighbor had said Mrs. Kopechne was in a "collapsed state and under sedation." Kopechne said it was true she had been under a doctor's care but that she "has really come around."

He said he and Mrs. Kopechne would make a trip soon to "put things together" and "get away from it all." He would not disclose their destination.

Dinis said he wanted the autopsy "in order to . . . once and for all close that aspect of the case."

Dinis said he hoped to begin the inquest within a week or 10 days.