

Inquest Prepared In Kennedy Case

NEW BEDFORD (Mass.) — (AP) — District Attorney Edmund A. Dinis met 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 yesterday to call 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 11.

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 will "cooperate fully" if an inquest is held.

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

Joseph Kopechne, father of the victim, said in Berkeley

Heights, N.J., he would "welcome an inquest," but will 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 is true she had been under a doctor's care but that she "has really come around."

He said he and Mrs. Kopechne will make a trip soon to "put things together," and "get away from it all."

Dinis said he wants the autopsy "in order to have a pathologist perform an examination, give his opinion, and once and for all close that aspect of the case."

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