

Judge Sets Inquest Date in Kennedy Case

EDGARTOWN, Mass. (AP) — A court inquest is to open Sept. 3 into the death of Mary Jo Kopechne, drowned July 18 when Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's car ran off a bridge into a tidal pool.

The date was set by Judge James A. Boyle yesterday after a meeting with Dist. Atty. Edmund Dinis, who invoked the law that allows district attorneys to "require" courts to conduct inquests in accidental deaths.

Dinis said he called for the inquest to determine positively the cause of the death and the circumstances surrounding the accident.

JUDGE BOYLE met with Dinis in his chambers, then announced the date in open court.

He said the law allows him to hold the inquiry behind closed doors but said he had decided to open it to accredited newsmen.

Dinis had said earlier he planned to call Kennedy as a witness along with others who attended the cookout party the night of July 18 on Chappaquiddick Island.

But he said yesterday that Kennedy was not among the 15 witnesses he plans to call.

He said he would not rule out the possibility of calling the senator, however.

KENNEDY HAS said he will cooperate with an inquest in every way possible. He canceled a planned trip to Europe to be on hand if needed.

Dinis has spoken with Pennsylvania authorities about exhuming the body of Miss Kopechne for an autopsy. She was buried in her home town, Plymouth, Pa.

When Miss Kopechne's body was recovered from the sunken Kennedy car the morning after the crash, she was pronounced dead of drowning and an aide in Dinis' office released the body without an autopsy.

Kennedy Inquest

Many questions remain unanswered concerning the role of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy in the tragedy on Chappaquiddick Island which claimed the life of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne.

The senator's effort on national television to explain his part in the tragedy answered some questions, but left many more unanswered.

Now a Massachusetts district attorney, Edmund Dinis, says he will conduct an inquest into the Kennedy-Kopechne tragedy under provisions of Massachusetts law, even though a court has yet to approve his petition for an inquest.

Sen. Kennedy has said that he would cooperate to the fullest in an

inquest.

An inquest should establish once and for all the degree of Sen. Kennedy's responsibility in the death of Miss Kopechne. It should also establish the responsibility of others close to the tragic event.

So far the nation has only heard Sen. Kennedy's incomplete account of the tragedy. Others should be heard in full under law.

Because a human life has been lost under inadequately explained circumstances and because of Sen. Kennedy's importance in the nation's political life, the American people are entitled to a thorough accounting of Miss Kopechne's death.

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