

# Grand Jury Is Expected to Study Kopechne Case

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, March 26—A grand jury was ordered today to convene April 6 at Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard for the apparent purpose of investigating Senator Edward M. Kennedy's automobile accident last July 18.

There was no mention in the order, issued by Chief Justice G. Joseph Tauro of the Massachusetts Superior Court, of Senator Kennedy's accident. A 28-year-old Washington secretary, Miss Mary Jo Kopechne, drowned after a car driven by the Senator went off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island and overturned in a salt pond.

However, the jury sitting was requested by District Attorney Edmund S. Dinis of Dukes County after the jury foreman, Leslie H. Leland, disclosed last Tuesday that the panel wanted to meet to conduct its own investigation of the accident.

In his brief announcement, Justice Tauro said he would assign a Superior Court justice to "instruct the grand jury and receive its return of true bills or no bills."

### Not Scheduled to Meet

The Dukes County grand jury, which serves for one year and normally convenes in the spring and fall, was not scheduled to meet until May.

Justice Tauro did not make public District Attorney Dinis's written request for a jury sitting. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has forbidden officials and others connected with the case to discuss it in public.

All documents in the case were impounded last January following a four-day closed inquest into the death of Miss Kopechne. They will not be made public until the possibility of criminal prosecution is ended.

Mr. Leland, a druggist in

Vineyard Haven, said Tuesday that he wanted the jury "to go over the findings" of Judge James A. Boyle, who conducted the inquest.

"We want to see what is there and what is not there," Mr. Leland said. "We feel it is one of our responsibilities to come up with an answer to the public."

Judge Boyle, who presides over Dukes County District Court in Edgartown, filed his report on the inquest last Feb. 19. That report is also impounded at Suffolk Superior Court in Boston.

### Not Announced

It has not been announced whether the grand jury will be entitled to examine Judge Boyle's report. It has been examined by District Attorney Dinis, attorneys for Senator Kennedy, and Massachusetts Attorney General Robert H. Quinn.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court has limited inspection of the report to "counsel for any person who has been stated in the report as having actual or possible responsibility for the decedent's death."

The accident occurred after Senator Kennedy and Miss

Kopechne left a cookout attended by five other men and five young women. The Senator did not report the accident to police for nine hours.

The following week Senator Kennedy pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of an accident, was given a two-month suspended jail sentence and placed on probation for one year. His driver's license was suspended for one year.

District Attorney Dinis subsequently requested an inquest and an autopsy on the body of Miss Kopechne. Both requests resulted in long and complex litigation.

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Mr. Dinis filed an autopsy request with the Court of Common Pleas of Luzerne County in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. After a two-day hearing in October, Judge Bernard C. Brominski denied the autopsy request, ruling that no testimony had been produced to indicate that Miss Kopechne's death might have been caused by anything other than drowning.

The inquest began Jan. 5 and lasted four days. Approximately 27 witnesses testified, including Senator Kennedy.