

Kopeczne Inquest May Await Ruling By Courton Autopsy

By JOHN H. FENTON

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BOSTON, Oct. 31—A delay in the date for an inquest in the death of Mary Jo Kopeczne appeared likely today pending a decision in Pennsylvania on an autopsy.

Judge James A. Boyle of the Dukes County District Court, who has the authority to set a date, had no comment last night on new inquest ground rules laid down by the State Supreme Judicial Court yesterday.

Judge Boyle said: "I will have no comment at all until next week, if then." He added, "I want to take plenty of time to read and think about this before I say or do anything."

District Attorney Edmund Dinis of Southeastern Massachusetts, who required the inquest last August, is awaiting a ruling by a Pennsylvania court on a petition for the exhumation of Miss Kopeczne's body.

Judge Bernard C. Brominski of Luzerne County, Pa., who has the petition under advisement, is unopposed for re-election. But he has indicated he will not make his ruling until after Tuesday's election. Miss Kopeczne is buried in Larksville, Pa.

Miss Kopeczne, 28-year-old Washington secretary, was riding with Senator Edward M. Kennedy when his car plunged from a narrow bridge into a tidal pond on Chappaquiddick Island, near Martha's Vineyard Island, July 18.

Dr. Donald R. Mills, associate medical examiner of Dukes County, made a finding of accidental death by drowning. Mr. Dinis called for an inquest on Aug. 20.

The inquest, originally set for Sept. 3, was stayed on an appeal by Mr. Kennedy for a change in the ground rules established by Judge Boyle. He contended that his constitutional right of due process would be endangered by opening the inquest to the press without the right of cross-examination.