

Kopeczne Inquest Fireworks

D. A. Threatens To Leave Case

EDGARTOWN (Mass.) —(AP)—District Attorney Edmund Dinis threatened to walk out of court unless Judge James Boyle gave him more latitude in questioning witnesses at the inquest into the death of Mary Jo Kopeczne, it has been learned.

Rather than abort the long-delayed inquiry, Boyle told Dinis he could ask desired questions of Sen. Edward Kennedy, driver of a car that toppled off a Chappaquiddick Island bridge last July, trapping Miss Kopeczne inside.

Climax

But the 63 year old judge did have the last word on the order in which witnesses would appear, sources close to the case said.

Dinis, they said, wanted to bring the inquest to a dramatic climax by summoning as the last witnesses Kennedy and the two men the senator said aided his fruitless efforts to dive for the 28 year old secretary — his cousin, Joseph Gargan, and a friend, attorney Paul Markham.

Limit

But Judge Boyle, it was learned, ordered otherwise. He said he would not keep a United States senator waiting and ordered that Kennedy be brought forward as the lead-off witness in the inquiry that opened Monday.

At the outset, Boyle had announced he would permit only testimony directly related to whether Kennedy or

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EDMUND S. DINIS
District Attorney

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anyone else acted criminally concerning Miss Kopeczne's death.

The sources gave this account of Monday's events:

When Kennedy took the stand in the nearly empty courtroom in the old Dukes County Courthouse, Dinis began to question him. Judge Boyle, citing his earlier announcement, cut the district attorney off several times.

Dinis protested and Boyle asked Kennedy to step outside. In the subsequent conference between the judge and the district attorney, Dinis said he would walk out of the case unless Boyle let him ask his questions. Boyle reluctantly acquiesced.

When Kennedy returned, however, Dinis relaxed his questioning and tended to stay within the judge's original limits.

As far as the order of witnesses was concerned, even Gargan and Markham were not saved for the end. They testified yesterday. They were followed by perhaps three of the five young women who, with Miss Kopeczne, attended the steak barbecue on Chappaquiddick that preceded the auto accident.

When all five have finished their testimony today, the inquest will hear Edgartown people involved in the case — police and townsmen who recovered the body and car.

After a report circulated yesterday that Dinis had again decided to walk out of the case, he told newsmen:

"I am still in the case. I am not leaving. I'm right here. I'll be here at 9:30 in the morning."

Kennedy Asks Full Disclosure

Chicago Daily News
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EDGARTOWN (Mass.) — Sen. Edward Kennedy today called for "full and quick disclosure" of testimony in the inquest into the death of Mary Jo Kopeczne.

In a statement released through an aide, Kennedy said he wants the Massachusetts Supreme Court to make the inquest transcript public as soon as possible, perhaps within days of the investigation's end.

"I expect to be vindicated and vindicated fully when the transcripts are made public and I am then allowed to answer questions," the aide reported Kennedy as saying.

Kennedy said he will be available for questions after the inquest testimony is made public, but expects that the weight of the testimony and the report by Judge James Boyle will "end the speculation" over the accident.

The aide said Kennedy, who is counting on winning re-election to the Senate in 1972, is confident he will be absolved of any wrongdoing in connection with Miss Kopeczne's death and does not expect to face criminal prosecution.

But reports were circulating in Edgartown even as Kennedy spoke that there is "a strong likelihood" the Dukes County grand jury will investigate for possible criminal liability on Kennedy's part even if he is exonerated by the inquest.

Kennedy's call for disclosure of inquest testimony was ironic in view of the hard-fought and successful legal battle waged by his attorneys to keep the proceedings secret.

The heavy curtain of secrecy drawn around the inquest on the order of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, requires all testimony and documents to be suppressed until there is no further possibility of criminal prosecution.