

Mother Declines Comment Until She Reads Testimony

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BERKELEY HEIGHTS, N. J., April 30—Mrs. Gwen Kopechne declined to comment today on Judge James A. Boyle's opinion that the death of her daughter, Mary Jo, might have been due to negligent driving by Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

"We really don't have anything to say now," Mrs. Kopechne replied in response to questions about her reaction to the latest report on her daughter's death last July.

"We would like to read the full testimony before we say anything."

She added that she thought this would "take some time."

"We would like to digest it first," she went on, referring to the inquest testimony, "and then we will talk to our lawyer, Mr. Flanagan." The Kopechne's lawyer is Joseph Flanagan of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Unbelievable Story

The release of Judge James A. Boyle's report on the closed inquest into the death of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne may prove to be the final legal act in the prolonged summer-island tragedy involving Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts. If so, ironically, it exposes the utter inadequacy of the efforts of local law-enforcement officials to arrive at the truth.

Senator Kennedy's story, too well known to repeat here, Judge Boyle found unbelievable. So do we. In his report, Judge Boyle put his finger on a number of elements in the Senator's account which have been bothering many Americans since last summer. The judge's own conclusions would have been more solidly

grounded, however, if the investigation of the tragedy by the appropriate officers of town and state had reflected a determination to get to the bottom of this strange tale.

The case may be legally settled but it has left a very bad taste, not so much because of its nature as because of the slipshod—even mystifying—way in which so many unanswered questions have been permitted to remain unanswered.