

AUGUST 1, 1969

Judge Denies Inquest Into Kennedy Case

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. (AP) — Chief Justice G. Joseph Tauro of the state Superior Court rejected flatly today a request for an inquest into the death of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne.

Miss Kopechne, 28, was the secretary who drowned when Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's car plunged off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island off the Massachusetts coast July 18.

Tauro's secretary said the justice based his decision on the contention that jurisdiction in the matter rests with the District Court system, rather than the Superior Court.

The District Court is one step below the Superior Court in the makeup of the Massachusetts judicial system.

The inquest had been sought by Dist. Atty. Edmind Dinis.

Justice Tauro said last night that he first heard of the request from newsmen, and he described Dinis' announcement of the request as "bad judgment at the very least."

Tauro's decision today was

announced through his office in Boston.

Earlier today in Washington, Kennedy told newsmen that he would "cooperate in any way" possible with the request.

"It's still rather unclear as to the nature of it," Kennedy said.

"It's a legal matter," the senator added. "I plan to cooperate in any way."

Dinis was not available immediately for comment on whether he planned to transfer the request to District Court.