

KENNEDY ACCIDENT INQUEST TO BE HELD

BOSTON (AP) — Dist. Atty. Edmund Dinis said today he will hold an inquest into Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's July 18 auto accident despite a judge's request for additional information on Dinis' original request for the proceeding.

A spokesman for the district attorney indicated he would act under a state law which gives him the power to "require" an inquest.

The law states in part: "The attorney general or the district attorney may . . . require an inquest to be held in the case of any death supposed to have been caused by external means."

THE SAME LAW says Dinis may ask for the inquest.

Dinis sought the inquest in a letter sent to Edgartown District Court Judge James A. Boyle last week.

Boyle replied today that the letter was "unclear." He asked Dinis to declare flatly whether he was requiring an inquest or simply asking for one.

DINIS MET with newsmen here and said he will call "all witnesses" who have anything to contribute. He did not specify, however, whether this would include Kennedy.

Dinis also said he planned to meet with Boyle shortly to set a date for the inquest and establish ground rules.

Asked when he expected the

inquest to be, Dinis would say only: "Soon."

THE INQUEST will deal specifically with the death of Miss Mary Jo Kopechne, the 28-year-old secretary from Washington, D. C., who was a passenger in Kennedy's car.

The auto plunged off a narrow, rickety wooden bridge on Chappaquiddick Island the night of July 18 and landed upside down in a tidal pond.

Kennedy escaped, but Miss Kopechne was trapped inside. A medical examiner attributed her death to accidental drowning.

Dinis earlier had sought permission for the inquest from Judge G. Edward Tauro, chief justice of the state's Superior Court system, and from Judge Edward Nash, chief justice of the state's District Court system. Both turned him down, however. Tauro said the District Court had jurisdiction, rather than Superior Court. And Nash said the matter should be handled by the presiding District Court judge in the area involved.

Mrs. Kopechne Said In Very Nervous State

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, N.J. (AP) — A friend of Mrs. Joseph Kopechne, mother of the pretty secretary who died in an auto accident involving Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, said today the woman was in a very nervous state.

"We are all very upset about this whole thing, and have been trying to keep Mr. Kopechne as calm as possible," the friend said.

The friend, who would not identify herself but said she was staying with the Kopechnes, added Kennedy had "Not been in contact" with the family since he pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of the accident in which Mary Jo Kopechne, 28, was killed.

Kennedy went on national television later that day to explain the accident. Mrs. Kopechne, upon hearing his explanation on television, said she was "satisfied" with the

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statement and hoped he would remain in the Senate.

"Mr. and Mrs. Kopechne will be going away tomorrow for a few days rest," the woman said in a telephone interview. "Mr. Kopechne is a high-strung person and she has been very nervous lately. She has not been herself since the accident."

The woman would not disclose where the Kopechnes are going.