

Federal Funds for RFK Gravesite Omitted by LBJ, Now Up to Nixon

WASHINGTON (AP)—Lyndon B. Johnson's final budget message omitted mention of a Defense Department recommendation of \$431,000 to provide public access routes to a grave in Arlington National Cemetery for Robert F. Kennedy.

A spokesman for Johnson, asked yesterday why the former president omitted the item, said Johnson "would have nothing at all to say on the subject."

SEN. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, the sole surviving Kennedy brother, said yesterday he hopes construction of a grave for Robert Kennedy can begin this spring with some public and some private financing.

A Budget Bureau source said the amount recommended by the Defense Department was taken into consideration when Johnson, submitting his budget message five days before leaving office, listed \$150 million for contingencies.

This leaves it up to the Nixon administration whether to seek from Congress specific funds for work on the Kennedy grave before the contingency authorization expires June 30.

PRESIDENT NIXON MUST request the

sum in a supplemental appropriation bill, or a congressman must include it in an amendment to such a bill, if the money is to be forthcoming.

The Kennedy family cannot begin construction of the grave with its own money until Congress provides funds for the Army Engineers to do their work.

Robert Kennedy was assassinated last June as he left a celebration of his victory in the California presidential primary. His body lies in a plain grave, marked only with a white wooden cross, a few yards from the more elaborate grave of his presidential brother.

THE COST OF JOHN Kennedy's grave was about \$2 million, with Congress paying \$1.77 million for access routes and public facilities, the Kennedy family covering the \$309,000 cost of the grave area itself.

The story of the attempt to get public money for public access to a new, family-financed grave for Robert Kennedy was pieced together yesterday from a number of informed sources, none of whom wished to be quoted by name.

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Architect I. M. Pei, designer of President Kennedy's grave, submitted to the Kennedy family a design for Robert Kennedy's. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy approved it.

THE ARMY CORPS of Engineers approved it and recommended to the Department of the Army that \$431,000 be spent

to provide walkways and other facilities around the grave and preserve the architectural integrity of Arlington. The Kennedys planned to pay the cost of the gravesite itself—about \$585,000.

The Army recommended to Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford that he ask President Johnson to include that amount in his budget proposal for fiscal 1970.