

CAPITAL GETS BILL ON ASSASSINATION

Congress Asked to Make
Attacks a Federal Offense

WASHINGTON, March 8 (AP)—A bill sent to Congress today would give Federal officers the authority to arrest and prosecute anyone involved in an assassination, kidnapping or assault on the President of the United States.

This authority was lacking Nov. 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated. Attorney General Nicholas De B. Katzenbach said in presenting the bill. Federal officers were unable to investigate the slaying or to take charge of the assassin when he was captured.

"This inability to act," Mr. Katzenbach said, resulted in the slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby while Oswald was in the custody of the Dallas, Tex., police.

The Johnson Administration submitted the measure to Congress at the recommendation of the commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, which investigated the Kennedy assassination.

The proposed law would make it a Federal crime to assassinate, kidnap or assault the President, Vice President, or anyone else next in succession, or a President-elect or Vice President-elect.

It carries a penalty of death or life imprisonment for killing or kidnapping a President, with up to 15 years in jail for assault.

The Attorney General would be authorized to offer rewards of up to \$100,000 for the capture of an assassin.

Witnesses in the trial of a case under this proposed law would not be permitted to plead possible self-incrimination to avoid testifying. They could be forced to testify and granted immunity from any prosecution resulting from their testimony.

Similar Bills

Should there be a conflict between Federal and state authority, Federal officers would take charge.

A number of similar bills have been submitted since the Kennedy assassination.

Joining in presenting the bill was Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, who headed a committee named by President Johnson to study recommendations of the Warren Commission.

In a letter to Vice President Humphrey and House Speaker John W. McCormack, Mr. Katzenbach said the Kennedy assassination had "focused attention on an anomaly in Federal law: it is not a Federal crime to assassinate the President . . . nor do Federal investigative agencies have absolute jurisdiction to investigate the assassination of a President."