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Kennedy Urges Democratic Alternative

By R. W. APPLE Jr.
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AMHERST, Mass., June 12—Senator Edward M. Kennedy began his re-election campaign tonight by challenging his party to provide an alternative to an administration that “reacts, just to stand still.”

Mr. Kennedy, whose political fortunes suffered a drastic reversal last year when Mary Jo Kopechne drowned in a car that he drove off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island in Martha's Vineyard, was nominated by acclamation at the Massachusetts Democratic Convention.

In a speech to 1,400 somewhat restive delegates in the humid, earth-floored field house of the University of Massachusetts, he said:

“We from the state that knew Thoreau's Pond, that began the nation's public schools, we who know the beauty of a village green and who have fought for the dignity of man, we must be the voice for change and recorder.”

Mr. Kennedy promised to continue to speak against the

war in Vietnam, in favor of racial harmony and in favor of aid to the poor. He said he was “prepared to be tested on this.”

“Each day in our nation's capital,” the 37-year-old Senator said, in his harshest reference to the Nixon Administration, “is lived for the sole purpose of getting to the next. Gone is the vision we knew so well, gone is the faith of America.”

Mr. Kennedy announced his candidacy for re-election yesterday in Boston, pledging to serve a full six-year term if he wins in November. Nevertheless, some prominent Democrats consider him a prospect for the 1972 Presidential nomination.

No one in Massachusetts sees the slightest prospect that Mr. Kennedy will be beaten by his probable Republican opponent, Josiah A. Spaulding.

But his margin will be watched as an index of whether the Chappaquiddick incident has hurt him in his home state. Six years ago, he defeated a weak opponent with 74.3 per cent of the vote.

Primary in September

The main business of the convention was voting on a nominee for governor from among three contenders: Mayor Kevin H. White of Boston, Maurice A. Donahue, State Senate president, and former Lieut. Gov. Francis X. Bellotti.

But the convention's decision will not be final. A primary election on Sept. 15 is assured, with perhaps as many as four contenders.

Mr. Kennedy kept aloof from the rather bitter gubernatorial contest, as has been his prac-

tice in the past. He has never attempted to impose his will on the baroque squabbles among Massachusetts Democrats.

He has maintained his distance even though one of the candidates, Kenneth P. O'Donnell, 45, served as an aide to President Kennedy.

Mr. O'Donnell, who lost in the gubernatorial primary four years ago, made no effort to win the support of convention delegates. He described the gathering here as an “expensive, three-day bargain basement” and said he would make his case in the primary.

White Ahead in Polls

Mr. White, who is 40, has made enemies as well as friends during his term as Mayor, and his strength is greater outside Boston than in the city itself. He is a powerful speaker who is shown by polls to be the only Democrat with a chance to beat the incumbent Republican, Gov. Francis W. Sargent.

But Mr. Donahue, a 52-year-old bachelor who has devoted his life to learning the intricacies of state government, had the support of the legislators — and legislators and former legislators constituted more than half of the delegates here.

The hopes of Mr. Bellotti, who is 47, rested on the possibility that Mr. Donahue and Mr. White would deadlock. But he made it clear before the voting began that he intended to enter the primary, win or lose. He is given some chance of success if it turns into a contest among three Irish-Americans and only one Italian-American.

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