

## The Impact On Kennedy '72 Hopes

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — The political impact — if any — of Sen. Edward Kennedy's weekend auto accident was not discernible today.

But it appeared the accident, in which a young woman passenger died, cast at least a momentary pall over the Massachusetts Democrat's rising political career.

Kennedy, one of his brothers a President and the other a presidential candidate, had been talked of in terms of a presidential candidate himself in 1972. The tragedy in Massachusetts put a temporary damper on that prospect.

Whether it will be a lasting effect depends mainly on public reaction to the accident. That reaction itself may take time to assess.

### Faces Charge

The 37 year old senator faces a charge of leaving the scene of an accident because of the Friday night mishap. The outcome of the legal action and how Kennedy faces the problem could have a telling effect on the public opinion that is finally formed.

Kennedy's political future took an upturn last winter when he won the post of assistant floor leader for the Senate Democrats, but there were few political figures in Washington willing to air opinions about Kennedy's political standing in light of the accident.

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield, Kennedy's mentor in the Senate, said "I don't think so" when asked if Kennedy's political career was damaged.

"After all," the Montana Democrat said, "even a politician is human. The same thing could happen to any-

body."

### Dirksen Mum

Senate Republican leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois declined to comment on the political impact.

Sen. Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) said only:

"The family has been beset by so many tragedies that everyone is bound to share with them a great deal of sympathy for these tragic events."

It is possible that sympathy for the young senator is the reaction of many persons.