

## Sen. Kennedy's Future

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's televised explanation of the tragic accident which claimed the life of 28-year-old Mary Jo Kopechne and of his subsequent conduct, however well-contrived, was, in the final analysis, unsatisfactory. For all its dramatic force, it left too many questions unanswered.

Sen. Kennedy and his advisers must be credited with devising an excellent stratagem — an appeal to the citizens of Massachusetts for a vote of confidence — for keeping alive his political future, at least in the United States Senate. For there could never have been any doubt but that the immediate response from Massachusetts would be overwhelmingly in his favor.

Whether the response will be the same if and when he seeks re-election to the Senate in 1970, remains to be seen.

Let us hasten to add that we do not count ourselves among the Kennedy haters, who must have jumped

with joy over this latest misfortune. Quite the contrary.

But the hard fact remains that the whole episode has raised serious questions about Mr. Kennedy's claim to higher office.

It cannot be seriously doubted that the incident removed Mr. Kennedy from consideration for his party's presidential nomination in 1972, if, indeed, as many thought, he was aiming for 1972.

Former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and Sen. Edmund S. Muskie would now appear to be the leading contenders in that race.

What the future holds beyond 1972, assuming Mr. Kennedy stays in political life, is difficult to discern.

Whether Mr. Kennedy once again is able to establish himself as a strong contender for the presidency would seem to depend on his ability to remove the cloud of doubt which today hangs over him by demonstrating he has the courage and capacity to be a great leader.