

KENNEDY

September 27, 1960

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I watched with great interest the debate last night, and I had a number of interesting people with me. Senator Benton whom you know, thought it a simply wonderful performance. He thought you were both very good and that on the whole you did better than Mr. Nixon. I am so prejudiced against Mr. Nixon that I dare not trust my own opinion, but I am going to tell you what some people felt.

One person said to me that he felt you spoke a little too fast and had not yet mastered the habit of including your audience at every point by saying "I hope you agree with me, or don't you agree with me, or my feeling is that you, the people to whom I am speaking, will feel, etc."

Someone else said they thought you appeared a little too confident. I did not agree with this, but I thought I should tell you.

The Hon. John F. Kennedy
The Senate
Washington, D.C.

It was felt that Nixon would appeal to the pity for the underdog which is prevalent in the American people, by seeming to be "humbler". I never have this feeling about Nixon, so I am a bad judge in this particular case.

On the whole, I think it was a milestone for TV and a really good way to campaign because it reaches so many people and gives them a chance to evaluate the ideas, the knowledge, and the personalities of the candidates. Unfortunately, however, television does not give the impression one gets from really talking to the individual himself, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why campaigning in person is still important. But, on the whole, I think these debates, judging by the first one, are definitely an advantage to you.

I am looking forward to seeing you.

Very sincerely yours,

The Hon. John F. Kennedy
The Senate
Washington, D.C.