

WHICH DEAL IN '65?
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Ever since the constant irritation of Kennedy clan publicity—that attended the first three years in the New Frontier administration—has subsided under the Johnson takeover, political discussions in the lounge have been not nearly so vehement or heated. Along with the rest of the country, local medical political opinion seems to be uneasily suspended in a state of waitful tolerance and curiosity.

There is uncertainty in the air despite the whistlings in the dark of the liberal press who, unsure themselves of President Johnson and his direction, continue to align him with themselves and praise his devotion to their causes. Shortly before the death of President Kennedy, the liberal-socialist supporters of the New Frontier had already assigned Mr. Johnson to oblivion in his role of Vice President and, considering him an increasing liability, were getting ready (with the same Bobby Baker case that they now ignore so assiduously) to give him the boot as a presidential, running-mate in the coming election. With Mr. Johnson suddenly in the driver's seat, and for the last four months, the liberals have been scrambling back across their partially burned bridges to embrace the President as one of their very own. Apparently they have always loved him.

No matter how sweetly they talk of Lady Bird and Lyndon, it is almost asking too much for the dyed-in-the-wool liberal to believe that a Southerner—and of all things, a Texan, known as a sharp finagler and slick manipulator of extensive holdings of land, oil and business ventures with capitalistic buddies in his own and nearby states—could really belong in the establishment as their own liberal leader. Mr. Johnson's folksy plainness, his uninspired and regional manner of speech, his unfashionable education and his plebeian taste for messy, outdoor Texas barbecues on his spread down there among the mesquite and scrub oak do not fit the liberal ideal. It is hard enough for the liberals to overlook skinny-dipping in a man of his age and build, but then there's that hat, which might be tolerated if he just wouldn't insist on giving so many away as presents. Ugh!

The jovial Democrats are now capitalizing on the confusion and the apparent fragmentation of the Republicans, but, in their attempts at ridicule, have inadvertently helped to publicize and build up a number of very attractive and capable Republican aspirants for the presidency. However, with all of their eggs in Mr. Johnson's basket, they seem to overlook the fact that their confidence rests almost entirely on the somewhat precarious circumstance of presidential health. The President has already recovered from one coronary attack, and should he have another prior to election time, whom could the Democrats put up for nomination? Mr. Humphrey? Mr. Shriver? Adam Clayton Powell? Alabama's Wallace? Bobby Kennedy? Mr. Stevenson? Mr. Ribicoff? Franklin Jr.?

Teddy? Peter Lawford? Sinatra? If Mr. Johnson goofs, or becomes unavailable because of his health, the Democrats would find themselves asking the same question that writer Ralph McGill used to conclude a recent column in which he helpfully tried to spread a little worry and confusion among the Republicans: "What to do? What to do?"

Well, the country has survived FDR and New Dealism, HST and Fair Dealism, JFK and New Frontier fast dealism. It is learning to live with LBJ and Wheeler Dealism. In '65, No Dealism might be a welcome change.

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