

# EDITORIAL COMMENT

Thursday, January 2, 1964

## Johnson's Economy

President Lyndon Johnson's drive to save money in the biggest-spending agency of the government, the Defense Department, is a welcome move. The American people--the vast majority, that is--approve the President's action and approve it with enthusiasm.

We are living in an age when the federal budget is a hundred billion dollar thing. The Defense Department gets about half that. Untold billions have been wasted in defense operations for years, in unnecessary duplication, uncoordinated purchasing and the traditional reluctance of the services to give

up bases and installations that have become no longer vital or necessary.

Johnson has vast experience in defense and space work and in congressional scrutiny of these activities. And he knows Congress is in the mood for economy.

The economy effort is necessary if Congress is to vote tax reduction. Johnson is gambling that the squawks resulting from a trimming of fat will not outweigh the good to the nation, and the realization of the vast majority of Americans that he is performing a service to his countrymen.

## Religion And Politics

The latest example of churches mixing in politics is personified in the plight of the Roman Catholic archbishop of Vietnam now seeking refuge in Italy.

It is said that if he returned to Vietnam the mobs would tear him limb from limb, that he doesn't dare go back. (He is the brother of the former ruler Ngo Diem.)

He is a religious man and, under the American concept, he would have had nothing to do with politics and government operation.

As soon as he became arch-

bishop two years ago he began to exert economic and political control over a large area of the country. He reportedly had a monopoly on timber and controlled the price of mahogany. United States and Catholic welfare aid is said never to have reached the people, having been sold by archbishop reportedly on the open market.

No wonder the majority in the country -- Buddhists -- finally rose up and thrust off this religious and economic oppression. No wonder today there is violent anti-Catholic feeling all over Vietnam.

## The Market

If any further proof were needed that stock market gyrations have no valid logic or intelligence behind them, the demonstration on New York exchanges in recent days have provided it.

When President Kennedy was slain, the market went into a wild tumble downward. There was no reason for it; there is always a vice president and Lyndon Johnson was pledged to the Democratic platform, and the Kennedy policies.

Then, after Johnson assumed the Presidency, the stock mark-

et went into a wild climb upward, surpassing its highs under the Kennedy regime. There was no reason for that either, for this came only days after Johnson had been sworn in and no results of his administration or even his business policies, were fully stated at the time.

The fluctuations and wild ups and downs are disquieting. They indicate the market is both nervous and influenced to an excessive degree by speculation and rumor. This is not desirable.

## Presidential Succession

A number of prominent Americans have questioned the order of succession to the Presidency and the issue is a lively one once again. As the law now stands, the speaker of the House follows the vice president and then comes the president pro tempore of the Senate.

President Eisenhower thinks the individual who should succeed the presidency after the vice president should be the secretary of state. He says this would provide for a continuance policy, whereas the speaker of the House or the House or the president pro tempore of the Senate might be from a different party.

It is true that the congressman, and the senator, who might become President, could be of a different party. But it is not true that the secretary of state would necessarily be qualified to become President. He is not even an elected official. He could know, conceivably, almost nothing about finances and critical domestic issues.

A better or safer plan might be to have two vice presidents, as has been suggested. One could be a standby vice president. When the first vice presi-

dent is called to the office upon the death or incapability of the President, the second would become the normal vice president. This man would be on the party ticket and would be an elected official, who had campaigned before all Americans in a national election.

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