

*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson . . . 1965.* Book I, *January 1 to May 31, 1965.* Book II, *June 1 to December 31, 1965.* (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966. Pp. xviii, 1206. Illustrations, appendices, indices. Each, \$6.25.)

In these two volumes are most of the public messages and statements—663 in all—of President Lyndon B. Johnson for the year 1965. The books are part of a series begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation by the National Historical Publications Commission. To date volumes have appeared covering the administrations of Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, and one on Johnson from November 22, 1963, through the year 1964.

The documents for 1965 have a large range: the President's toast to President Yameogo of Upper Volta; transcripts of presidential news conferences; messages to Congress; remarks to Italian artists, Boy Scouts, and the Antarctic Policy Group; radio and television addresses; birthday greetings to former-President Truman, commencement addresses; statements on the deaths of such individuals as Winston Churchill and Bernard M. Baruch; congratulatory messages to American astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts; statements on signing legislation, including the splendid remarks given in the Capitol rotunda on August 6, 1965, when Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act.

What is the merit of these publications? As any novice in the study of history knows, there often is a large difference between the public and private statements of a political leader. Of course what the president has to say to a visiting delegation of the Y.M.C.A. really is not very important. Still, public messages and statements offer insight to the ideas and policies of a leader, and the student of Johnson or any other occupant of the White House must take them into account. These compilations, then, have the virtue of saving the historian the arduous task of paging through the *New York Times Index* and the *Times* itself in search of the President's public remarks; everything is neatly set out in these nicely bound and indexed books. The contents also reveal the endless trivia that command the time of the man whose judgment—or lack of it—can determine whether the world survives.

A final thought: here are nearly 1,200 double-column pages. The President's staff, of course, writes most of the statements uttered by the President or given over his signature. But does he have to read every word of it?

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