

# Humphrey Book in a Bind

By TIMOTHY LEE

Authors, editors and White House spokesmen today were disputing each others' explanations about why McGraw-Hill junked a critical biography of Vice President Humphrey.

Robert Sherrill, co-author of the book McGraw-Hill had planned to call "The Authentic American," said the publisher dropped his book after receiving a telephone call from Washington describing him as a "dangerous character."

Sherrill, whose 1967 book, "The Accidental President," was an unfriendly account of President Johnson's career, said that McGraw-Hill plans to publish a collection of the President's speeches this summer and suggested that its desire to publish his memoirs later also may have influenced its decision.

Publisher Robert Grossman, who will issue the controversial Humphrey biography with a

new title, "The Drugstore Liberal," said a McGraw-Hill editor told him the company dropped the book after receiving "flak" from someone in the Johnson Administration.

But Dan Lacy, senior vice president of McGraw-Hill, denied that.

"We didn't publish it because we didn't think it was a very good book," Lacy said, "The manuscript was very disappointing. There was no pressure from anyone. I doubt if anyone in the Administration even knew about the book."

Lacy confirmed that McGraw-Hill will publish the President's speeches but declined to comment on whether the company was negotiating for the Johnson memoirs.

"Like every publisher in town we'd be interested in the President's memoirs," he said. "But there's no connection bet-

ween the two books."

A White House spokesman said: "You can be sure that no pressure was brought against any publisher to withhold or publish any book."

A Humphrey spokesman said the Vice President knew that Sherrill and his co-author, Harry Ernst, former Washington correspondent for the Charleston (W. Va.) Gazette were working on a biography but declined further comment.

Sherrill, Washington correspondent for The Nation, says in an article based on the book in the current issue of the magazine that Humphrey's reputation as a liberal is questionable.

"The subsequent years have proved in a startling way, however, the ease with which Humphrey believed in things—as in his wavering on civil rights and the shifting of his sympathies between labor and management as his ambitions mounted."