

Letters to the Editor

Executive Succession

To the Editor:

Now that Vice President Agnew has thoughtfully alerted us to the advisability of "discarding rotten apples from the barrel," mightn't it be time for Congress to reappraise the law governing succession to the Presidency?

Until rather recently, of course, members of the Cabinet, starting with the Secretary of State, followed the Vice President in line of succession. Congress changed this on the stated rationale that Congressional leaders were more democratically chosen than Presidential appointees. Whatever one might say of this theory in the abstract, it's been clear in practice that these senior legislators have been somewhat beyond the age at which they could handle the Presidency.

I can't think of any very inspiring Presidential prospects among recent Secretaries of State, but at least they've tended to be men of full physical and intellectual capacity. Certainly at the moment Secretary Rogers would inspire more confidence as President than Speaker Joseph McCormack.

If Congress took the salutary step of returning to the old system, moreover, then perhaps some pretext could be found for easing Warren Gamaliel [Harding] Agnew from his present office. This man's chances of becoming President are roughly equal to his chances of being the last President. It's too great a risk for sane men to take.

JOHN F. HELLEGERS
Tokyo, Nov. 1, 1969

Agnew—Catching On

To the Editor:

I recall the Olympian suavity—or was it Machiavelian *lese majeste*?—with which The Times ran most of Ronald Reagan's pronouncements in the 1968 Presidential campaign on its entertainment pages.

From all indications, a similar *reductio ad absurdum* is now being programed with Vice President Agnew. But this time the scope of the operation clearly transcends Times Square.

My husband and I have suspected for some time that this thoroughly sound, engaging and articulate man may well be the hottest property the Nixon Administration has. Obviously he's catching on with a lot of other Middle Americans, too.

Item: The President's shrewd, low-keyed maneuver of launching Agnew on the banquet circuit. Item: The well-nigh manic

zeal of those whose hides he's already affixed to the barn door—you know, the "effete snobs" and "classically confused thinkers" stretching from here to the Potomac—to pay him off the only way they know, in editorial overkill. The strategy is to make him out to be a clown and thus (hopefully) to discredit him with us media-mesmerized yahoos.

It won't work. Too much incorruptible, nondemonstrating bedrock sanity still abides in this bedeviled Republic to be stomped down that readily by the seven-league cleats of Messrs. Galbraith, Fulbright, Lowenstein, et al.

CATHLEEN BURNS ELMER
Boston, Oct. 28, 1969

Victory for Fusion

To the Editor:

Analyzing and rationalizing the New York City mayoralty election has produced some misleading pronouncements that might be unfortunate guides to future political actions. One such pronouncement is the statement in Tom Wicker's column [Nov. 6] that Mayor Lindsay "owes nothing to national state or local Republicans."

The fact is that most Republicans voted for Lindsay that he had the almost support of the Manhattan publican organization led by Vincent Albano, and certainly had the largest part of financial support contributed by individual Republicans.

The fact is also, as generally acknowledged, that party were of less significant appeal in this election than before, although that has been evident for many years. There is thus little justification for any Liberal party claim that it was the principal reason for Lindsay support.

Lindsay brought more party line than the liberals.

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