

Johnson Is Leaving Decision on Letters To Mrs. Kennedy

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17 (AP) — President Johnson left to Mrs. John F. Kennedy today the decision whether to permit publication of letters he wrote to her and her children after the assassination of her husband.

In a legal settlement Mrs. Kennedy reached with William Manchester and the publisher of his book "The Death of a President," there was a stipulation that letters President Johnson wrote to Mrs. Kennedy and her children, Caroline and John Jr., would not be published without President Johnson's consent.

Asked if the President would give such consent or make public the content of the letters himself, George Christian, acting White House press secretary, had this reply:

"The President doesn't know which letters are involved. He is content to leave entirely to Mrs. Kennedy the question of publication of letters he has written to her. He will willingly abide by her judgment. The President does not intend to express any views or opinions on the subject of the letters."

After the settlement of Mrs. Kennedy's suit, announced yesterday, an informant said that there was no objection to the contents of the letters written by President Johnson.

"In fact, they are friendly and kindly," he said. "But we insist that the President should approve them before publication."