

# For Sale: One Used Presidency



**Arthur Hoppe**

THE GREAT DEBATE that is tearing the nation asunder may soon be resolved. The question, of course, is whether or not Mr. Nixon should either voluntarily give up the presidency or see it confiscated by impeachment.

A third course, fair and equitable to all involved, was first proposed by the noted political economist, Karl Anderson. His solution is admirably simple: Mr. Nixon should sell the Presidency.

The Presidency is, after all, worth something. And to deprive Mr. Nixon of it without due compensation is patently unjust.

This is not to imply that Mr. Nixon bought the Presidency. That is not the American way. The American way is for a consortium of friends, admirers and favor-seekers to buy the Presidency and give it to their candidate free of charge.

As you know, it cost them \$60 million to buy the Presidency in 1972. And the basic question is what it's worth today.

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ACTUALLY, negotiations to establish a fair price have been underway since early February when a consortium of ITT, the dairy lobby, the oil industry and other public-spirited citizens was formed to buy the Presidency back from Mr. Nixon.

Their representative, Attorney Homer T. Pettibone, carrying a well-stuffed Mexican laundry bag, appeared on The Committee to Re-Erect The President's lot on February 7. He was promptly buttonholed by the head salesman, Maurice (Honest Morrie) Mitchell.

"I'm interested in that used Presidency," said Pettibone for openers. "I want to trade it in for a new Ford."

"It's a steal at \$72 million," said Morrie, rubbing his hands.

"But it only cost \$60 million new," protested Pettibone.

"Inflation," said Morrie, shrugging. "The price of everything's gone up."

"A Presidency's only good for four years," said Pettibone. "Therefore it's depreciated at least 25 per cent. That makes it worth no more than \$45 million — if it's in top condition."

"It's very clean," said Morrie. "For the past year, it's been up on blocks."

"Frankly, said Pettibone, "I never saw one in worse shape. It's obviously been in a number of messy accidents. Its inflationary brakes are gone. Its steering mechanism's erratic. And I doubt it's got the power left to get up Capitol Hill."

"With a little fixing up," said Morrie stoutly, "it'll be good as gold for three more years."

"And furthermore, it's clearly a big, energy-consuming Presidency," said Pettibone. "What the people want these days is a small, dependable one they can have confidence in."

"Okay," said Morrie, throwing up his hands, "I'll let you have it for fifty."

"I'll give you ten," said Pettibone, "if you've got change for a quarter."

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SINCE THEN, the negotiations have unfortunately been broken off. This occurred after Pettibone had delivered a report in detail to his principals. There was a long silence. Then one hard-hearted executive voiced the opinion of all.

"Would you," he said, shaking his head, "buy a used Presidency from . . .?"