

Johnson Won't Discuss Book

Austin, Tex.

President Johnson will not discuss the controversial book "The Death of a President" and he has instructed his staff to refrain from discussing it, White House press secretary George Christian said yesterday.

Christian made these disclosures when questioned about Newsweek magazine's report on the President's recollection of his succession to the Presidency on Nov. 22, 1963.

Mr. Johnson has not seen the manuscript of the forthcoming book by William Manchester, Christian said. Nor has he seen the text of the Newsweek report of his own memories of that fateful day.

"I'll not discuss the various attributions credited to so-called friends and alleged intimates except to say that I believe them to be inaccurate and untrue," Christian said.

Newsweek editor Osborn Elliott replied: "Newsweek

has confidence in its reporter and in the reliability of the source from which the information came. Had it been otherwise, we would not have printed the story."

Newsweek did not claim that it interviewed the President. It said intimates of the President reported his recollection of the events of the day and of his conversations with Mrs. Kennedy.

For months the White House has been deeply interested in the Manchester book and has made attempts to

obtain the manuscript. While Christian said he knew of no White House staff member who has seen it, it was understood that retiring press secretary Bill D. Moyers has seen the excerpts which Look magazine will begin publishing next month.

When first word leaked out several months ago that the Manchester book was critical of the President, the White House assembled considerable documentation to uphold the President's side of the argument that he had shown the greatest possible consideration for the Kennedy family.

But it has never made any of the material public. Christian said yesterday that Mr. Johnson declined to grant Manchester an interview but that he did respond to written questions which Manchester submitted.

Christian said that the President intends to stay in Texas all week.

Times-Post Service