MONDAY, MAY 17, 1954

Breakfast at the White House at 7:15. - Pres., Brownell, Rankin, Adams, McG, Persons, Hagerty, Morgan, Morton

President approved letter and memorandum at breakfast meeting. Agreed to sign letter at 8:30 and send it over immediately to Anderson at Defense Department. Also agreed for me to release correspondence at 9:00 from White House and to say in answer to any questions relating to subpoena (not mentioned in letter) that "the principle applied equally". Everyone at meeting unanimously agreed on step and only discussion concerned how to handle it at leaders meeting at 8:30. It was finally agreed that the President would tell the leaders that he had sent this letter and that it was being made public -- Would present it as an accomplished fact so that they would not have an opportunity either to oppose it or to offer changes.

Leaders Meeting - Those in attendance were: Knowland, Milikin, Saltonstall, Ferguson, Bridges; The Speaker, Halleck, Arends, Allen, Dan Reed, Secretary Humphrey, Len Hall, Bassett.

President opened the meeting with brief discussion by Secretary Humphrey for the need for passage of tax bill so that benefits could affect business and industry in September and October. Also urged speed in passage of health and security measures in Mrs. Hobby's program which was classified by the President as "bills which will give us the atmosphere we all need when we run as a party for being liberal when we deal with humans."

Turning to his letter the President announced that they all knew that he had been trying to stay out of the "damn business on the Hill", that many people have been begging him to get into the struggle, to attack McCarthy personally but that he had refused to do so. However, he said, a situation had come up in the threatened subpoena of his confidential advisers that made it necessary for him to act. He said that he had written a letter to the Secretary of Defense ordering him to refuse to permit their people to discuss confidential matters with the Committee and that he had also attached the Attorney General's memorandum outlining the precedents taken by twelve of his predecessors - "Pseudo liberals all over the country have been urging me to raise hell. I have not done that, but I have issued instructions to the Secretary of Defense which order him to keep confidential any advisory discussions in the administrative side of this government -- "Any man who testifies as to the advice he gave me won't be working for me that night " -- "I will not allow people around me to be subpoenaed and you might just as well know it now" -- Knowland said that he believed executive discussions and papers should be protected, but

that he would hate to see the subpoena power of Congress challenged or he would hate to see the Administration ignore the subpoena power. The President reported that he had not mentioned subpoena in his letter but pointed out also "let me make one thing clear - Those people who have a position here in this government because of me, those people who are my confidential advisers are not going to be subpoenaed. Governor Adams' official job is really a part of me and he's not going up on the Hill" - "I've gone to utmost lengths to be cooperative with Congress. I have declined to get into this mess even when I have been needled by the press, but this is one thing I will fight with all my power - I will not have my men subpoenaed."

Halleck and Ferguson said that they believed that Congress would have to do something about investigations and that there was a limit to what Congressional committees could ask witnesses - Len Hall urged everyone in the room to support the President's position on this matter - Knowland at his press conference following the meeting said the President had discussed the letter with the leaders and that everyone in the room had agreed that the President was perfectly within his rights in ordering Administration personnel to refuse to discuss confidential and advisory matters of the administrative side of the government.