

# Executive Secrecy Attacked in Report

Text of the summary of facts and proposals, Page 11.

By ALLEN DRURY

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3 - The American Civil Liberties Union attacked Government secrecy under the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations today. It said abuses of authority to withhold news "were never so rampant as now."

In a special report prepared by Allen Raymond, a newspaper man, the organization said: "It is a fair consensus that these abuses have already curtailed the power of the press and of Congress itself to be of service to the people by finding out what goes on in government: that they have been accompanied by an arrogation of powers within the Executive of doubtful constitutionality: so

far inadequately challenged; that they have advanced to the point where the civil liberties of the people themselves are threatened; and that some prudent remedial action by Congress is necessary."

Mr. Raymond based his report on six weeks of interviews and discussions with Government officials and leading Washington newspaper men.

Some, such as Elmer Davis, radio commentator and wartime head of the Office of War Information, doubted that any real harm was being done by current Government secrecy practices. But most, Mr. Raymond reported, expressed alarm at the trend.

### Lauds A. N. P. A. Efforts

Mr. Raymond praised efforts of the freedom of information committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in combatting unjustified secrecy. He added, however, that "their efforts thus far have been ineffective in turning the tide."

The report suggested a study by "non-governmental agencies" of laws such as the Administrative Procedures Act, the Atomic Energy Act and the Federal Communications Act that tend to restrict the flow of information to the public.

It also recommended creation of an independent agency within the Government to handle declassification of previously secret documents and to work for greater disclosure of information. And it urged extension of the act governing registration of lobbyists with Congress to cover lobbyists who attempt to influence the various Government agencies.

Mr. Raymond's report said

that the power of the press to be useful in fighting the situation posed by Government secrecy was curtailed "in great degree" by two factors—the Government's control of free discussion on two other media, radio and television, and "a widespread distrust of the press itself by large segments of the population, as, for example, in the labor movement."

At the moment, Mr. Raymond noted, the problem of secrecy "has not become one of widespread public concern." But he said it had "impinged on the consciousness of Congress" in the form of a House Government Operations subcommittee study of Government secrecy.

The subcommittee, headed by Representative John Moss, Democrat of California, has scheduled hearings starting next Monday.

Mr. Raymond singled out President Eisenhower's directive of May 17, 1954, as having "immeasurably" increased the area of Government suppression of news.

The President, in a letter to

Defense Secretary Charles Wilson, directed that it was "not in the public interest" to disclose letters or conversations between officials of the Executive branch.

The letter was designed to prevent certain testimony by John Adams, former Defense Department counsel, during Senate subcommittee hearing last year on the dispute between the Army and Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin.

"If you extend Presidential immunity to examination of the entire Executive Branch of the Government," Mr. Raymond said, "you enable the Executive to violate the civil liberties of any citizen without Congressional power to formulate corrective legislation, because Congress would be unable to learn the facts in the case."

The report also criticized directives by Mr. Wilson restricting information from the Defense Department and activities of the Atomic Energy Commission in limiting the spread of scientific information.