

February 2, 1966

Recruitment membership of
men ~~James W. M. M.~~
Cant

A. M. Townsend, Jr., M.D.
2900-A N. Union Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63115

Dear A.M. —

It was nice hearing your voice in our telephone conference and at the time I called you just before that.

I confess that I was a little bit surprised and disturbed about some of the things you mentioned about the prerogatives or lack of prerogatives of the office of president. I am sure that we have the kind of constitution that can be strictly (constructed) or broadly (constructed) in our interpretation of it. Strictly constructed I agree with you that he has no particular function except to make some recommendations and a couple of speeches. If constructed a little broadly, as I have observed it is usually interpreted, then there are certain things that he can do and certainly the eyes of the country and of the rank and file members expect him to do something beyond the two points you mentioned.

I discussed the question you raised, regarding trying to find out if prospective white members were communist, to the legal advisor, Mr. Coleman. His opinion was that this would be witch hunting and that we could not afford to do so. If, however, the persons qualified by the same standards that we have taken in Negro members and they were taken in and later found to be subversive, we would then have reason to act whether it was a white person or a Negro. Recently in Chicago we took in a dozen outstanding doctors, some who are chiefs of surgery in hospitals which may give us opportunities, also chiefs in other fields. It is my sincere hope that by now you may have submitted the names for at-large membership to members of your council, and that they may be cleared at least by the time of, and perhaps before, the Trustee Board meeting February 12-13. Army said that he was going to ask you to come so that we can discuss the C.A.P. Brown matter.

Sincerest regards and best wishes,

Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.

LHB/ld