

Secret Conference on Book Reported

NEW YORK (AP) — A highly placed official in President Kennedy's administration Friday described a secret conference which — inadvertently — may have led up to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy's legal action.

"The question of a lawsuit was put down as a last resort," the anonymous former official said. "It was only mentioned."

He said he is "sure" that the publishers of the book learned of the sense of the meeting. And he said he believes they therefore concluded that they could resist further requests by Mrs. Kennedy for revisions or deletions in the manuscript of the book.

The former official gave this version of the conference:

It was held last October in Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's New York City apartment. It lasted five hours.

Mrs. Kennedy did not

attend. Sen. Kennedy was present "only a short time."

The meeting was called "because things had reached a difficult state with respect to certain parts of the book. The purpose was to work out compromises on them."

The group included Richard Goodwin, Theodore Sorensen, Pierre Salinger, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Burke Marshall, James Greenfield, John Douglas and John Seigenthaler.

A few of those at the conference had read the whole book. Others had read the parts of it which had come into dispute. "Some of it was read in the meeting."

All had held important

positions in the Kennedy administration.

The ex-official described the book as "beautifully written," adding, "there's a headline in every page."

But, he continued, referring to Manchester's two interviews with Mrs. Ken-

nedy, "It's clear that Manchester took stuff from the tape recorder when Mrs. Kennedy was not in control of her emotions."

"Also, the book presents a rather unfortunate picture of President Johnson."

Nonetheless, he said, the sense of the meeting was to try to work out compromises.

"Until a couple of weeks

ago," he said, "I had the impression that things were getting along pretty well on that. They must have run into a real snag."