

# TV Heads, Agnew Discuss Dispute

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Chafing at Vice President Agnew's description of them as a "tiny fraternity of privileged men," the nation's television news directors spent an hour with the Vice President yesterday, trying to undo his impression of them.

Afterward, spokesmen for both sides agreed there was not much agreement, but the broadcasters said they were satisfied that they had impressed on the Vice President their concern that his criticism of the electronic news media might inhibit the airing of controversy.

J. W. Roberts, president of the Radio and Television News Directors Association, said the level of hostile mail to stations has risen sharply, coming from persons demanding that the new programs "stop showing the long hairs and the demonstrators."

He said the newsmen asked the vice president to do something to dampen the flow of such mail, which was sparked by his Nov. 13 speech in Des Moines, Iowa. The vice president urged his audience (the speech was carried live by the three major networks) to write letters, offering their views on broadcast news.

Herbert L. Thompson, the vice president's press secretary, said Agnew feels that the hostility of many Americans toward the news media existed before the Nov. 13 speech. He said vice president merely acted as a catalyst to bring the viewer response to the attention of the broadcasters.

Roberts and Thompson reported the vice president as

feeling that he could only attempt to turn off the hostile reaction if the networks report something on "the positive things."

The specific example the Vice President cited of something "positive" would be to broadcast the views of Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird to balance those of W. Averill Harriman, Thompson and Roberts reported.

The Vice President was particularly critical in his speech of the use by one network of Harriman, former peace negotiator in Paris, as a commentator on President Nixon's Vietnam address on Nov. 3.

The group of 18 news directors met with the vice president in his office in the Executive Office Building for a little more than an hour.

Roberts, director of Time-Life Broadcasting, said representatives of National Broadcasting Company and Columbia Broadcasting System declined to participate in the meeting.