

F.Y.I. *Per 12/16/69*

The Vice President mentioned us yesterday in a speech, which was nice, and we would like to say something about it, under the rubric, For Your Information, which seems appropriate because we employ it ourselves from time to time to talk about our business. It was a temperate and thought-provoking speech and in no way menacing on its face, it seemed to us. "Before my thoughts are obliterated in the smoking typewriters of my friends in Washington and New York," Mr. Agnew said, "let me emphasize I am not recommending the dismemberment of The Washington Post Company." We have absolutely no wish to obliterate that thought, because frankly, we think the present arrangement, with a newspaper, a news magazine, a television station and an all-news radio station all under one corporate roof, produces better products all around than would otherwise be possible given the economics of our business these days. That's arguable, of course, and no harm will come if people think about the implications of "the growing monopolization of the voices of public opinion on which we all depend," as the Vice President suggested. We think about it a good deal ourselves, worry about the trend, and oppose, for one example, efforts in Congress to favor newspapers with special consideration under the antitrust laws. It's a problem. But like the Vice President, we don't have a solution, though we might note in passing that none of the news outlets of The Washington

Post Co., and least of all ourselves, are exactly unopposed.

One other point in the Vice President's speech needs a little attention—where he talks about "four powerful voices (that) harken to the same master" and about them "grinding out the same editorial line." You might not believe it, but there are people in this building, mentioning no names, who think there is entirely too little harkening. As for a common editorial line, you will note our view, above, that Judge Haynsworth, while not a first rate choice, ought to be confirmed by the Senate today. You will note to the right of it the opinion of Herblock. How's that for harkening? Similarly, our television cousin, WTOP, does not agree with us on this issue. We advised Justice Fortas to resign from the court; WTOP left that decision up to him. We support the Three Sisters Bridge; WTOP does not. The two of us take different views on the kind of representation we would like the District of Columbia to have in Congress. And so it goes. Our editorial views on certain matters affecting the television business—public television, for example—are directly contrary to those of most people in that industry. And we did not see exactly eye to eye with Newsweek on the one rare occasion when that magazine resorted to an editorial format to express its opposition to the Vietnam war.

So our typewriter isn't smoking, Mr. Vice President. There is nothing here to get "polarized" about.