

# Whitehead Says Bill on TV 'Would Restore Equilibrium'

By ALBIN KREBS

NYT 1/12/73

Clay T. Whitehead, director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, reiterated yesterday that the Administration's bill to change the broadcasting laws "would restore equilibrium to the broadcasting system."

Mr. Whitehead meticulously explained what he called the intent of the draft bill in a speech before a largely hostile audience in the Imperial Ballroom of the Americana Hotel.

More than 500 members of the New York chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences heard what Mr. Whitehead warned would be a "dull" speech.

Normally, the Academy's weekly speakers draw from 100 to 200 broadcasting industry listeners. The turnout yesterday was apparently attributed to the furor that has arisen over Mr. Whitehead's Dec. 19 speech in which he first mentioned the Administration bill and at the same time delivered a tough criticism of "flitist gossip," "ideological plugola" and "biased" reporting in TV network news programs.

## Wield Too Much Power

In the speech yesterday, discussing the Federal Communications Commission, he said that "recently instability and uncertainty have developed in the broadcast licensing process," which "gives rise to the threat of arbitrary and subjective determinations that promote the Government's own view of what programing is good for the public to see and hear."

The Administration would correct that, Mr. Whitehead said, by taking away much of the commission's present power to deny renewal of licenses to broadcasters it determines have not lived up to F.C.C. standards.

Under questioning he said the trouble with the networks was that they wield too much power without having to be

answerable for their views and actions.

"If the public didn't approve of President Nixon's actions, they didn't have to re-elect him," Mr. Whitehead said. "Can they do that with the networks when they disapprove of what they do?"

One questioner suggested that the Administration's record in the field of press freedoms and "attempted Government control of the media" suggested "1984," George Orwell's novel about the ultimate manipulated society.

Mr. Whitehead said that what some people should do is read the Orwell book, as it points out the danger that "a great many people in 1984 liked what Big Brother was doing because they thought he was doing it in their interests." That, state, he said, "is the opposite of what we intend."

There were jeers, and Mr. Whitehead observed: "I appreciate that there are those in the audience who think we are a malevolent Administration. But when you go home tonight, ask yourselves if we are really as dumb as you think."