

Nixon Trying to Bring Press

NEW YORK — (UPI) — Walter Cronkite believes the Nixon Administration "has tried to bring, and may have succeeded in bringing, the press to heel" in America.

In an interview in the June issue of Playboy magazine, the CBS newsmen accuses the Nixon Administration of "an orchestrated coordinated campaign" against the press.

Cronkite said he felt Spiro Agnew's 1969 speech in Des Moines, Iowa, in which the Vice President attacked TV news commentators as "a tiny, enclosed fraternity of privileged men elected by no one and enjoying a monopoly sanctioned and licensed by government," was a turning point in the administration's attitude toward the news media.

"I think that was the open declaration in the battle," Cronkite said. "Before that it was simply felt that this Administration's antagonism had been about like the antagonism shown by previous administrations."

"The Administration has tried to bring, and may have succeeded in bringing, the press to heel. It has tried to suggest in every possible

to Heel--Cronkite

way that the press has no privileges in the society, that, indeed, if anything, the press should be put under much closer scrutiny by society as a whole.

"And this, I think, is a dangerous philosophy. This campaign against press credibility to divide the nation from the press, is continuing — and is being

stepped up, as a matter of fact."

Cronkite said that although he regretted using the term "conspiracy" in a speech a couple of years ago, "I still feel that this is basically what has taken place: A well-directed campaign against the press, agreed upon in secret by members of the administration."