

Editors Warned of Sanctions

WASHINGTON — (AP) — A top Justice Department official has told newspaper editors they run the risk of prosecution by publishing secret or stolen government information.

Columnist Jack Anderson replied that editors should not be intimidated by such statements.

The opposite views were expressed during a panel discussion yesterday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, an organization embracing 700 medium and large-size dailies.

Kevin Maroney, a deputy attorney general in the Justice Department's internal security division, told a panel on press rights and responsibility that editors should check whether a document has been properly classified before deciding whether to publish it.

An alternative, he said, is for newspapers to print whatever information comes into their possession—thus assigning editors the question of security.

"One must ask," Maroney said, "on what basis do they

arrogate to themselves the right to make such serious determination. For although the members of the press are particularly well informed, they do not and cannot have access to all the facts . . . whether a particular document or piece of information, which has been classified, should be published."

Anderson, whose recent publication of papers attributed to International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. and of secret White House discussions of relations with India and Pakistan focused attention on the issue, said the government practices censorship by classifying.

"The editors of this country have demonstrated their patriotism and love of country just as often as the people in the internal security division," he said.

Anderson said he is told by numerous government sources that 95 to 98 percent of material that is classified should not be.

"This is not national security," he said. "This is political security.

"Everything that happens

at the White House is classified. Everything that happens at the Pentagon and State Department is classified. When the decision is made, they sit down and decide 'what should we tell them.'"

"There can certainly be no greater danger to our heritage of freedom than an erosion of freedom of speech and freedom of press," said Eryin, chairman of the Senate subcommittee on constitutional rights.

"Indirect assaults by government, through subtle harassment and intimidation or from increased regulation, can chill these freedoms and put them into cold storage just as effectively as direct assaults."