

Bill Opposed By Newsman

Washington PRESS

A United Press news executive urged Congress yesterday to reject an Administration-backed bill to tighten restrictions on disclosure of government information, saying it would reduce Washington correspondents to "handout reporters."

Grant Dillman, UPI vice president and Washington manager, told a Senate Judiciary subcommittee the proposed revision of federal criminal codes would dry up news sources and prevent Watergate-type exposes.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Roman L. Hruska (Rep-Neb.) would remove a provision requiring the prosecution to prove that information disclosed without authority would damage national security and that a defendant intended to harm the national interest. The bill would require proof only of intent to use information whose disclosure would "prejudice the safety or interest" of the country.

It also would equate theft of government "information" with stealing federal property or documents, Dillman said, and thus have a chilling effect on reporters' sources by threatening them with jail.

Dillman spoke in behalf of the Joint Media Committee, consisting of the Associated Press Managing Editors, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the National Press Photographers Association, the Radio Television News Directors Association and Sigma Delta Chi.

United Press