

Nixon Aide 'Disowns' Agnew Blasts at

Former Vice President Spiro Agnew was actually just speaking as a private citizen when he was criticizing television broadcasting, the Nixon administration's top TV man said here yesterday.

Clay Whitehead, director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, told a group of television people that President Nixon's basic idea is — and always has been — to keep hands off the press, electronic and print.

"The administration's position is quite different from the former vice president's," he told a luncheon meeting of the local Nation-

al Academy of Television Arts and Sciences at the Jack Tar Hotel.

And, he said, the administration would like to see the Federal Communications Commission ease up on some of its present or proposed regulations for TV and radio.

APPROACH

Whitehead said the FCC takes the regulatory approach that outlines what stations must do — "in effect, programming from Washington."

The administration, he said, would rather have fewer regulations and then lift the licenses of stations at re-

newal time if "the local community brings in the burden of proof . . . that the station has not been serving its needs."

And Whitehead said the Nixon administration would like to see more UHF and VHF channels opened up around the country to create more competition and possibly one or more new networks.

"If I read the First Amendment properly," he said, "the government does not in any legal way control the content of what is printed or broadcast."

Whitehead conceded the recent move to force broad-

casting of sold-out home professional football games presented some problems to the administration's hands-off philosophy.

"That's why we wanted to do it through the antitrust laws rather than directly act on the networks," he said.

The former vice president, Whitehead told the broadcasters, was perfectly within his rights asking that newsmen investigating the case against him in Baltimore be asked to divulge the sources of their information.

"But that was done under the Bill of Rights," he said, "and was not a First Amendment matter."

"Actually," he said, "I came prepared with a lot of Agnew jokes . . . and I'm still tempted . . . but I don't think it's really proper at this time . . ."

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