

Parade 5/27/73

CREDIBILITY Vice President Spiro Agnew, the Nixon Administration's most celebrated media critic, may find it a bit more difficult to criticize the news media since the Watergate upheaval.

Mr. Nixon's speechwriters, among them William Safire, now a columnist for "The New York Times," used to provide Mr. Agnew with material for his alliterative denunciations of American journalism.

Such material may no longer be forthcoming from Administration sources, or, if it is, Mr. Agnew may be too prudent to use it.

What is involved is credibility.

Whatever its considerable faults and inadequacies, U.S. journalism now ranks higher in credibility than an Administration blackened by the sordid conspiracies of Watergate.

A few weeks ago at Harding College in Searcy, Ark., in a speech written for him by who knows who, Mr. Agnew declared that the opinion-making media of the nation had not yet achieved a creditable balance. "...We do not think they have yet diversified their undertaking sufficiently to fairly report the activities of government of the American people," he concluded.

Had Watergate been left to the exposures of Mr. Agnew and his suppliers, what sort of fair reporting might the American people have expected?