

Whitehead Resigns as Nixon TV Aide

By LES BROWN

Clay T. Whitehead, director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy since its formation four years ago, submitted to President Nixon Wednesday the letter of resignation he had announced as forthcoming last December.

Aides to Mr. Whitehead said the resignation was effective Sept. 15 and that he has accepted teaching and consulting assignments at both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his alma mater, and Harvard University. Mr. Whitehead could not be reached personally yesterday.

John M. Eger, who earlier this year joined the office as deputy director, will serve as

acting director until the White House appoints a successor to Mr. Whitehead.

Mr. Whitehead's career with the office was two-phased: For most of the first three years, he had been perhaps the Administration's most militant spokesman against alleged liberal bias in network news and public television. But during the past year his voice became subdued and he devoted himself to formulating proposals for national policy on electronic communications.

He supervised the White House Cabinet committee report on cable television, whose general outlines received wide approval from communications practitioners and academic

theorists when it was released last January, and under his leadership the office produced a long-term funding bill for public television, which was submitted to Congress on July 16.

During his assaults on the networks, Mr. Whitehead coined the terms "elitist gossip" and "ideological plugola" to describe the quality of their journalism, and he was instrumental in causing the public television industry to reconstitute itself with an emphasis on local station autonomy.

At the Senate communications subcommittee hearings on the long-term funding bill for public television on Tuesday, which were televised by the Public Broadcasting Service that evening, Mr. Whitehead said the legislation completed the work he had set out to do at the White House and indicated that his resignation was imminent.

The subcommittee's chairman, Senator John O. Pastore, Democrat of Rhode Island, called Mr. Whitehead "a brilliant man" and, after acknowledging their differences of opinion over the years, wished him well on his departure from government service.