

NYT
2-5-70

Proposal to License Reporters— Made by Violence Unit Member

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 (AP)—Government licensing of reporters was suggested today by a member of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. He said that such certification would increase public confidence in the news media, while weeding out "individuals who are totally inept."

"This in no way assures complete perfection of the profession," said Dr. W. Walter Menninger, a 38-year-old psychiatrist who is the youngest of the 13 members on the commission.

Licensing would serve, however, as the registration of doctors, lawyers and teachers serves, "to assure the public that the practitioners of the art are qualified practitioners," Dr. Menninger said.

The suggestion drew a reaction from Gilbert P. Smith, managing editor of The Observer-Dispatch of Utica, N. Y., president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association. He said: "A license

never made a doctor good or competent. Certification never has made a good teacher." He added that the doctor's statement was, "to say the least, unworthy of him."

Mr. Smith continued: "I suggest that Dr. Menninger knows as well as the rest of us that education, devotion, energy, integrity and a desire for public service are the ingredients that make newsmen or anyone else competent, and sometimes excellent, in their jobs. And lack of those qualities results in inadequacy in any field."

Dr. Menninger, a staff psychiatrist at a Topeka, Kan., mental health foundation that bears his family name, said some segments of American society felt that their only channel to the news media was through violent action.

"Regardless of their performance, the media will never be able to assure the nonviolent resolution of conflict; but they can assure the violent resolution of conflict," the psychiatrist said.