

# Cronkite Blasts Radio, TV Control

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Walter Cronkite, citing government "intimidation and harassment" of the broadcast industry, called today for an end to federal control of radio and television.

While conceding that both print and broadcast journalists are "far from perfect," Cronkite said the human failings of newscasters should not be sufficient excuse for government control of programming through its licensing power.

"Broadcast news today is not free," he said at a Senate hearing on press freedom. "Because it is operated by an industry that is beholden to the government for its right to exist, its freedom has been curtailed by fiat, by assumption, and by intimidation and harassment . . .

"The cleanest and perfect solution . . . would be to eliminate all government control of broadcasting . . . The time is past when there can be any legal justification for controlling broadcasting's program content."

Cronkite, anchorman on

the CBS-TV Evening News, said all that is needed is an agency to assign channel numbers and monitor technical performance.

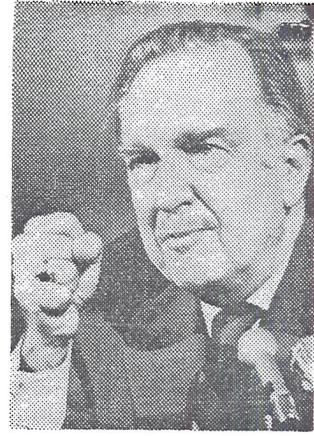
Sen. Sam J. Ervin, D-N.C., called the three weeks of hearings, which started Tuesday, to explore what he said was a "general time of crisis" of freedom of the press in the United States.

He said he was concerned about "sharp and angry" attacks on the news media by high government officials and "equally hostile responses" by media representatives.

#### Views His Own

Cronkite, who has spent the last 21 of his 35 years in journalism with CBS, said his views were entirely his own and had not been approved by the network.

At the very least, he said, Congress should assure by law the right of broadcast newsmen to the same freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution to print journalists. Once the broadcast industry is "set free," he went on, natural competition will insure



**WALTER CRONKITE**

Making news this time

—AP Photo

excellence in broadcast news.

#### Resumption

He said suggestions in Congress that a government panel be set up to examine broadcast news were moves to put as effective a clamp on press freedom "as direct censorship."

"Any government panel that presumes to call a news organization to account for its actions must be presumed to be hostile," Cronkite said. "It scarcely would seek to investigate reporting with which it agreed . . .

"The effect would be more than chilling on broadcast reporting. It would put journalistic enterprise in the deep freeze . . .