

OCT 15 1971

A.B.C. OFFICER TELLS OF THREAT TO PRESS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14 (AP) — A broadcasting executive said today that a free press was endangered if newsmen were compelled to disclose unpublished information or sources of information.

Elmer W. Lower, president of A.B.C. News and vice president of the American Broadcasting Company, made the statement in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, which is studying press freedom.

"If the journalist is forced to betray information obtained in confidence, whatever the immediate short-term gain for law enforcement, the long-term effect is to dry up valuable sources of information and to severely restrict the flow of information to the public," he said.

Mr. Lower said that "one or two instances of forced disclosure can have a snowball effect."

He said another press freedom danger was the Congressional subpoena power to compel production of untelevised material, as the House Commerce Committee attempted to do in the controversy over the Columbia Broadcasting System's program "The Selling of the Pentagon."