

I mention this not primarily as a chamber of commerce-type plug for Oak Ridge or my newspaper, but rather to point out that one of the big reasons this massive transition has worked well was because the public involved was given maximum information all during the process.

The Atomic Energy Commission, citizen groups and news media, working together, usually in harmony, told, often in the minutest detail, each step of the extremely involved arrangements for selling a whole city's housing within a matter of months. And, most familiar with the situation agree that it just could not have happened had not citizens been so completely and promptly informed.

What does this have to do with House bill 5012?

Just this. There is every reason for House bill 5012 to be thought of as legislation aimed at assisting Federal agencies to do a better job—this in contrast to the generally accepted notion that this and similar bills are designed primarily to assist the press, and through the press the public.

How help the agencies?

Simply as H.R. 5012 is an inducement to these agencies to make fullest information available to the public. The fuller the information available, inevitably the better understood will be the agencies' programs, policies, and purposes. And once understood by the public, then these policies, programs, and purposes are inevitably strengthened.

This may sound like a rather grand oversimplification of an over-optimistic view. Rather, it is a very realistic view and it has been proven time after time. The great public consensus—so long as it is a well-informed consensus—has historically shown itself to almost always ultimately be on the side of wisdom, else how does a democratic society progress, survive?

In two very current instances this philosophy has proven itself. The U.S. Information Agency, all during the recent unpleasantness in Selma, Ala., told the story promptly, fully throughout the world.

Why this unpleasant chapter of U.S. history related to the peoples of other nations by our very own national information facilities?

Why not?

It happened. It is truth, fact, reality.

Second, it was being told and is still being told by many other nations' information agencies—or, more properly, propaganda agencies. And it was being exploited to the maximum, as are all of our current racial problems, by the Communists.

Essentially, of course, the USIA and its Voice of America is a public relations more than a strictly news agency of the United States. Its purpose, avowedly, is to advance the best interest of the United States through the giving of information to those in other countries.

However, as many a good public relations man, or at least what I think of as a good public relations man, will vouch, the best way to advance the best interests of the United States, or whatever nation, company, or organization, is simply to tell the truth, give the news, make the truth, the news, available readily.

It is a misguided philosophy to assume that either distorting or withholding information will do you client good. Inevitably such practices backfire. Just tell the people, fully, factually, promptly.