

Tell them when it is good. Tell them when it is bad, or at least open the channels of information so that they may find out for themselves.

Trust the people with the truth and they will seldom betray your trust. Mistrust them, deny them the truth, and you will reap what you sow.

Tell the truth yourself before someone else has a chance to step in and mislead and gain credence for their misleading in that you have been negligent, less than frank.

In the long run, the self-admission of the United States about Selma will pay dividends. For indeed, although many parts of the story are painful, many other aspects show America at its very best as it struggles, within itself, for justice.

The other example is that of the recent U.S. space shots, particularly the live television pictures from Ranger 9 as it zoomed down on the moon on March 24.

Seldom before has the individual citizen felt so much a part of a Federal program. Undoubtedly there is now a well of public support for the space effort like seldom before, simply because so much information has been fully, freely available.

Two exceptional events have been cited here. However, the same principles are applicable to why the Agriculture Department should tell fully the situation relative to farm surpluses or the Federal Communications Commission should make available its records on the allocations of television or radio channels and frequencies.

We have attempted here to make primarily a positive rather than a negative case for freedom of the press, freedom of information, the public's right to know. However, the negative may help complete the argument.

For if one asks, "Why should the public be given every last detail about a Federal agency's workings?" then one must also ask "Why not?"

Because the agencies feel that dispensing information is distracting, takes too much time?

Because the agencies feel that they are entitled to some measure of administrative arbitrariness?

Because the agencies feel that full access will reveal instances of incompetency, even corruption, and therefore, distract and discredit the agency's work?

None of these are valid arguments. Indeed all, as they may reflect attitudes of some agency administrators, are powerful arguments for insisting on fullest information. For such attitudes must surely be counteracted.

Information should be restricted because the uninhibited giving of information may endanger military secrets or diplomatic tactics?

Of course such information should not be given, and H.R. 5012, as do all responsible freedom of information proposals, clearly excepts "matters—specifically required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy."

Present laws on Federal information are inadequate because they are attuned to the philosophy that the public and the press must make a case when they feel that information is being withheld. H.R. 5012 would change this misdirected emphasis. H.R. 5012 would provide that the obligation is on the agency rather than the public seeker of