

words and which would be reported in full in some newspapers and magazines. In brief, on most evenings the average citizen who wishes to be better informed or to stretch his mind a bit or even dip into the best in our culture has no opportunity to do so—he is deprived of choice.

The educational station in a service area is a part of the media that the licensee analyzes. To the extent that the educational station is airing special interest viewing, it may not be necessary for the commercial station to carry as much of this type programming as might otherwise be necessary to “meet the needs of the community.”

Thus it seems to me, the commercial station has a selfish motive in insuring the continuation of a viable educational station, and limiting his obligation to carry programs that he cannot sell. By appropriate encouragement, he might be persuaded to undertake an annual contribution to the station, in his budget, to insure that the educator stays on the air for a full program schedule. Under this reasoning, he should be able to charge off such contributions as a business expense. To this extent both the responsible commercial and educational TV stations serving the same community can better allocate their prime time evening hours. For example, the commercial station could provide greater depth in its regular hard news coverage realizing that the in depth analysis need not be provided because this is the function of the adequately financial ETV station. As a matter of fact, on a current basis, there is a possible marriage between commercial and ETV television stations. (I hope one or the other will not get pregnant.) ABC has already announced that it does not intend to cover the Republican and Democratic Conventions from gavel to gavel. I do not see why all networks could not cooperate and financially support the ETV coverage from gavel to gavel. The networks would then be free to monitor the entire conventions and select for presentation what they choose. Also any member of the public, would have a choice to view the entire proceedings over ETV.

A commercial station can, of course, make a tax deductible charitable contribution to an educational station. However, I find that revenue regulations limit tax deductible charitable contributions of all kinds to 5% of the companies' taxable income and this could be a limiting factor on the amount the commercial station could contribute to the educational station. If my reasoning is sound, it follows therefore that support should be given to a proposal to regard these contributions by commercial stations to educational stations as a business expense. The presentation of news over broadcast media has now become one of the public's primary sources of news. They want more of it and they want the details which are not possible with headline or capsule news presentation. They also want to know what the other fellow thinks.

One of the matters you will be discussing in this National Television News Conference is a new element—public opinion polling. Regardless of the judgments you may reach on the merits of television polling, I welcome the broadcasters use of new methods to inform the public. From what I can observe, the public opinion is not without problems. Students could have a ball loading the results. They can have one group repeatedly call in with a “yes” vote and another group with a “no” vote. This not only distorts the public's view but also may deny the vote to someone with a genuine interest in the issue. It is also possible for special interest pressure groups to alert their membership and insert an unknown loading factor. Many other statistical inaccuracies can creep into such polls. Time Magazine in its October 20, 1967 issue cited an example of one city having inconsistent votes on related questions and that one station discontinued its poll when 82% of the listeners indicated they believed poll results invalid. In essence, the question is “Do broadcast polls or poll results constitute news?” The broadcaster is aware of the problems and his response is an automatic caution signal.

The broadcast industry has and must in the future assume responsibility for the news it presents. Our system will simply not permit or tolerate news to be presented under the auspices of the government. Yours is the responsibility to accurately report the news. We both have a responsibility to make sure this right is not diluted. This requires a great deal of mature common sense.

If your judgment is to program these polls, so be it. I would caution disclaimers as to results and I would certainly coordinate closely with your local telephone company to insure that local communications are not jammed particularly those involving safety of life and property. There have been some specific examples of this problem.