

I said earlier we are still on the threshold of the importance of broadcast journalism. That importance is understood rather heavily when we are told that the majority of the American public today says it receives the bulk of its news from television. There is, of course, a corollary to this importance, and that is responsibility. More on that responsibility in a moment.

If the first amendment is to apply to the print media alone, is not the American public then being deprived of a vital flow of information?

Ninety-four percent of the people watching television have a choice of at least three stations to view. But 94 percent of the daily newspapers in America have no competition.

The average newspaper reader has no choice. There are more radio and television stations on the air today than there are daily newspapers. And these broadcast outlets are increasingly devoting more time to news and information programing.

It was back in 1965 when Fred Friendly, then president of CBS News, predicted before an RTNDA gathering in St. Petersburg, Fla., that by 1970, more than 50 percent of prime time television programing would be devoted to news or information.

More hours per week will be devoted to general news programing in 1968 than there were last year. There was more news programing in 1967 than in 1966, and the trend continues upward.

The half-hour news format inaugurated by CBS-TV in September of 1963 was viewed with skepticism by many at the outset. Now there is serious discussion with the industry about 30 minutes not being long enough and new methods are being sought to increase the flow of broadcast news.

We all know that length alone is not the answer. Substance is the key. And broadcast news is producing substantive news programing to such a degree that additional program time is a necessity.

Our role in broadcast journalism is the same as printed news—to inform the public. This is journalism and trained journalists must do the job. Basically, the only difference between the newspaper reporter and the broadcast newsman is equipment.

Both deal in facts. Both weave these facts into a report, or story. Both communicate this finished product, the story, to the general public.

I believe the broadcast newsman has a distinct advantage over our newspaper colleagues. Our facts are fleshed out with the sight and sound of the story, which breathes life into our reports. The television viewer not only hears what we are talking about, he sees the story developing as we sketch it for him.

This type of reporting really is not so excitingly new that it can't be easily defined. It is basic communication. And it demands that the practitioners be good reporters first. They must also be responsible.

I am confident, however, that the mere existence of the Fairness Doctrine carries the implication that, without it, broadcasters would not be fair or responsible. The record has proven otherwise.

The American public have grown to know and trust what they see and hear via broadcast news. They have come to expect excellence, and I believe the industry has grown right along with that trust and is providing the viewing public with a high quality—and responsible—product.