

the station and, therefore, you would not have the Government or the FCC require that there be an opportunity to reply to personal attack, is that correct?

Mr. CROUSE. Yes.

Mr. ADAMS. I would like you to help me by telling me why it is that you believe that this is violative of free speech or unduly inhibitory. Maybe you want to shade this into the news broadcasts or the spot news.

But tell me how you are inhibited if you decide in your own judgment you want to attack somebody. The doctrine says you can say anything you want, you can say it about anybody you want, you can say it any time you want to say it. Why is it so bad to simply say that he has a right to reply to whatever you say about him?

Mr. CROUSE. The position is why should an agency of Government have the right to make that determination for you. The mere existence of the Fairness Doctrine implies that broadcasters are not going to be fair without it.

I just don't agree with that position. I think the broadcasters are fair. I think they are operating fairly and I think they are doing an excellent job.

Mr. ADAMS. As I understand the way the system works now, no agency tells you—well, I will put it this way: Would you object, then, to a system that would say, "You don't have to reply or offer the opportunities to reply unless he complains. Then, if he complains, then you have to let him on." Do you object to that?

Mr. CROUSE. You have the situation where if somebody objects to something that you have said in your coverage of the news and they complain to you, you have the direct confrontation. That decision can be made at the local level.

Mr. ADAMS. I didn't understand you. You make an accusation or a statement and he complains. What was it you said then?

Mr. CROUSE. If he complains to the station on the local level. That is where it ought to be worked out.

Mr. ADAMS. If we had a system where if he complained at the local level and you said, "Don't forget it," and he had a right to go to the FCC and say, "I have asked but they won't let me," would you agree with that kind of a system?

Mr. CROUSE. Only if the regulation that the FCC would be operating under would be spelled out in specifics. I think Mr. Porter put his finger on the key when he said the root of the problem is the impreciseness of what is fair.

Mr. ADAMS. You want rules and a complete system as opposed to Mr. Porter who indicated that a case-by-case basis might be a little better. Get down to nuts and bolts on what you are going to do.

Mr. CROUSE. First, what I want is the abolition of the Fairness Doctrine. If you are going to make it an either/or, we can go in that direction.

Mr. ADAMS. And you don't distinguish on personal attacks either. You spread the whole spectrum. Thank you.

Mr. PORTER. I would like to add one thing, if I may, to this dialog, which may have been mentioned when I was not here yesterday. Any aggrieved citizen who is injured because of an unfair personal attack,