Time. Here you will find only fleeting and spasmodic reference to the fact that this nation is in mortal danger."

A judge for the television Emmy Awards last year watched for two full days all the news and public affairs shows, which presumably is the best that television has to offer and, of those, the very best the networks could find to put into competition. (Mason got an Emmy, incidentally, and it prompted him to quip that, "Getting an Emmy from television is like getting a kiss from someone with bad breath.") The judge concluded:

> Yet for all of the Vietnam film, the riots, the politics, how little we had seen of the world in twenty-two hours. There was nothing about American or foreign education. There was nothing about deGaulle or France, nothing about Franco's Spain, the Communist block, Sino-Soviet relations, nothing about drugs, sex -- everything was made with a high degree of technical competence. Nothing was boring" -- I think that's a generous comment -- "nothing was boring, but how little we had learned and how infrequently I had been moved.

Well, those are the comments of someone who was watching the very best of the very best of television.

Charles Sopkin set out to view television in its totality -- some of you may know from his book, Seven Glorious Days, Seven Fun-Filled Nights, written here in New York City while watching twenty-four hours a day for seven days the outpouring of the television stations in this city, which one must assume is one of the best television markets in America. At the end of the week, he concluded, "I naively expected that the ratio would run three to one in favor of trash. It turned out to be closer to a hundred to one."

Listen to James Kunen, author of The Strawberry Statement, because I think of all the American dissatisfaction over television perhaps American youth are the most cynical and turned off of all. "I am of the opinion," says James Kunen,

> that the United States is engaged in a controversial war in Southeast Asia and that the country has other problems too. I think people ought to at least think about these things. But I've noticed that the radio medium is a tremendous airy goof ball which anesthesizes everyone who listens. I'm curious about the motivations of the people whose fifty thousand watt pump pours such crap into the already polluted air.

Dick Salant [Richard S. Salant, President, CBS News] and I have been back and forth over what television will and won't show and I'm not going to rehash our TV Guide article exchange,

[Johnson, "The Silent Screen," TV Guide, July 5, 1969, page 6; Salant, "He Has Exercised His Right -- to be Wrong," TV Guide, September 20, 1969, page 10; Johnson letter, TV Guide, September 27, 1969, page A2], but I will toss out a few more examples of subjects that I haven't seen much on television in recent weeks.

How about S. 2004? That's kind of an important subject.(applause) I haven't seen many documentaries or much news coverage of that. How about the hearings on the new Chairman of the FCC [Dean Burch] and Commissioner Wells? I didn't see too much discussion of that on television. How about the problem of news staging? It's certainly been in the print news a lot, and the subject of a number of very significant decisions out of the FCC. I haven't seen much serious discussion of the problems of news staging on television, or even information about how a network news team goes about putting together the evening news. How about some critics talking about the quality of the new fall programs? Only one of twenty apparently is going to last into the new season. What the public wants? Not this year. (laughter) They do this on the BBC. At the end of the evening they have some guys sit around and talk about how well the BBC did that day. I'm waiting for the evening that happens on NBC. (laughter) How about the impact of television on children? The impact of television violence on the society? Those would be interesting subjects I would think. Or how about some documentaries on the quality of advertising, deceptive advertising practices, people's response to ads, the impact of television as the principal manipulator of consumer demand in our society according to economist Ken Galbraith [Professor and former Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State (1967)]. How about the license challenges around the country? They're now going on in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and other cities. It would seem to me that might be interesting to television viewers. How about a documentary on Joe McGinniss's book The Selling of the President 1968? It certainly has been a very interesting subject. The book's been selling very well. People seem to be interested in it. Or how about a show on the radiation hazards from television sets, (laughter) or fire hazards? Nat Hentoff has come up with a list of subjects [Hentoff, "Participatory Television," Evergreen, October 1969, page 53]

that he claims he hasn't seen much of on television: the position of the Black Panthers in a serious discussion. The Justice Department's attitudes towards suppressing dissent in the country. The slowdown in civil rights enforcement by the new administration. Our criminal courts. Conflict of interest on the part of congressmen. Failures in the schools. The way hugh corporations influence legislation and governmental executive appointments. The revolutions to come in Latin America. The contempt in federal regulatory agencies for the public.

Well, that's a start, Mr. Salant. I'll be watching.

How, I want to spend the bulk of my time with you on an effort to bring together what it seems to me you are doing, and others are doing, in trying to improve the contribution of broadcasting to the quality of life in this country. In Iowa, when somebody asks what he can do to help, the common reply is, "Grab a plow and start plowing." And there's something to that. It works pretty well. But you're sometimes better off if you have a view of the overall strategy and plan and a sense of how all this plowing is going to fit together in some way.

First of all, there are kinds of activities and then there are areas of activities. We've always had kinds of activities like speeches, proposals, conferences, luncheons like this, reports, publications, and that sort of thing. What's new that's happened the last couple of years? I think what's new is what's symbolized by what Dr. Everett Parker [Director, Office of Communication, United Church of Christ, and the recipient of the first Alfred I. duPont's Columbia University Awards in Broadcast Journalism for outstanding achievement during 1968-69] and Dick Moore [Earle K. Moore, counsel to Dr. Parker as well as NCCB] have done. They have translated this into legal action: participation as a party before regulatory commissions, appealing decisions to the courts when you lose before the regulatory commission (which inevitably you do -- and their record in court in winning is just as impressive as their record at the FCC in losing), proposing legislation and testifying before the Commission and Congress. We have a lot of legal machinery lying about rusting in this country, and if you can find the "push-to-start" button you can get an awful lot of this machinery in motion. That's just exactly what's happened. That's what's going on. It's the difference in writing a letter and filing a fairness complaint, as John Banzhaf discovered when he got one hundred million dollars

worth of free television time for anti-smoking commercials, and brought about one of the first declines in cigarette consumption in this country. Originally, public groups didn't have standing at all before the FCC. The FCC didn't treat them as legal persons, or parties. That's what prompted the United Church of Christ appeal to the Court of Appeals and then-Judge Burger's opinion saying that when things have come to the state that they now are at the FCC, the very least you can do is let the public in to fend for itself [United Church of Christ vs. FCC, 359 F.2d 994 District of Columbia Circuit (1966)]. Since then the public's been doing just that.

Now, what are the areas of activity in which this legal action has been taking place -- along with the proposals and studies and all the rest of it? There are about nine areas I want to mention briefly.

One is the increase in the number of outlets in the mass media system in this country. We now have roughly ten times as many physical facilities as we had thirty-five years ago. We've increased the number of AM stations. We've added to that FM radio. We've added to that VHF television. We've added to that UHF television -- Channels 14 to 83. We've gone from some seven hundred outlets to some seven thousand five hundred. There are still unused channels available in some smaller communities (not, obviously, in the larger cities), especially in FM and UHF. In other parts of the country these could be activated and they would provide even more outlets. Cable television is gradually making its way. Fred Friendly [Fred W. Friendly, Edward R. Murrow Professor of Journalism, Columbia University, and advisor on television to the Ford Foundation] headed a cable television task force here for Mayor Lindsay, as many of you know. New York City's taken the lead in this and the FCC is gradually following. Cable television contains the potential for a virtually unlimited number of channels of television into the home which would really radically revolutionize the functioning of the mass communications system as we know it in this country.

Think for a moment of your telephone -- if you'll pardon that expression (laughter) -- when it works, the telephone provides a cable connection to one hundred million other telephones in the country that can be accessed in roughly thirty seconds when the system is working properly. There's