

panded cable universe will have its greatest negative impact (about a minus 10%) on network VHF stations in markets below the top 100, but that it may help the independent UHF, and in some cases encourage lighting up presently dark UHF channels. Mr. Baer also suggested an integrated telecommunications universe, in which, among other things, cable systems would be wired directly to the TV stations whose signals they carry, rather than relying on off-the-air pickups.

■ And Paul Klein's (Computer Television Inc., New York) analysis that mass media (like network television) become vulnerable when you start to chip away at their edges, and that, like the mass magazines, they eventually die. That, he said, is the basis for the conflict that exists today between the creation of multiple specialized television services and the medium's established giants.

Whitehead sees pay as key to networking in cable television

But message from Nixon stresses growth of cable should avoid disruptions of commercial TV

Clay T. Whitehead, director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, said more backstage at the NCTA convention than he did from the podium. He walked into the "video environment" last Tuesday afternoon, and was soon engaged in

video-taped conversation by Anda Xorats of a Chicago media group. A crowd gathered and a pointed, if polite, exchange disclosed these paraphrased Whitehead observations:

The government always extracts some sort of commitment in exchange for its gifts [in this instance, public access]; no FCC, no Congress is going to stand up for a right to program salacious material on access channels; cable will not have the same sort of monopoly control that exists in conventional TV; there's nothing wrong with preferential rates for nonprofit organizations in a common-carrier television system as long as the operator has an opportunity to make the difference back elsewhere; if you get it free you become beholden to the guy or the government who gives it to you; the development of specialized networks depends on the advent of pay cable; there ought to be a way for Joe Doe to come in off the street and plunk down his money to be on TV; it's the government's responsibility to insure nondiscriminatory access.

Mr. Whitehead, who took President Nixon's greetings to the convention, said in his prepared remarks that the cable industry's future is really up to the cable industry, not the government. "Government can go only so far," he said. "The industry will have to decide whether to expand the range of programing and services presently available to the viewing public and ultimately take its place as a full-fledged member of the communications industry. Or whether, instead, to accept the view of many of cable's

detractors and remain simply an ancillary retransmission medium or merely as a purveyor of stale old films."

President Nixon, in the remarks read for him by Mr. Whitehead, referred to cable television's "strong potential" for "significantly increasing the importance of the television medium for American viewers." His message also described cable television as a "dynamic industry that can dramatically encourage citizens to use the television medium to improve the quality of their lives."

But it indicated he was not prepared to write off cable TV's older brother. It said that in meeting the challenge the industry faces, its members will have to "lay the foundation for a future in which the cable and broadcasting industries will individually and jointly provide a wealth of quality information and entertainment program services."

The President's message also promised the White House's assistance in seeking to establish policies "that help insure the stable, orderly growth of the cable industry while at the same time avoiding any serious disruptions in the existing level of television service."

Pay cable: the great hope for wiring the big cities

NCTA sessions are convinced it's no flash in the pan and that the hard-cash feature is what's needed to back the heavy costs in bringing CATV to urban centers

When the subject was pay at last week's NCTA convention, the sessions were jammed.

There was no mistaking the gut feeling among the cable operators—particularly those who are aiming at big-city markets: Pay TV, they were told and they believed, is the only extra CATV service now available that has been proved to bring in cash—and wiring the big cities is going to take a heavy capital investment.

The reports to cable operators at the convention, plus soundings among pay-TV exponents, indicate that the initial testing period is over. People will pay for movies, sports and other items—as evidenced, for example by Theatrevision's announcement that it was expanding nationally after only a little more than six months of testing its system in Sarasota, Fla. (see page 37).

One conflict seems still unresolved—the question of whether pay-TV marketing will be on a per-program basis or a flat monthly charge.

Perhaps the most detailed report on pay-cable TV came from Geoffrey M. Nathanson, whose Optical Systems test has been running for almost four months over a leased Cox Cable channel in San Diego. That system (channel 100), Mr. Nathanson said, now has over 5,000 sub-



Preliminary. Even before the NCTA convention was officially under way last Monday (June 18), Mayor-elect Tom Bradley of Los Angeles (on chair) gave a select audience attending a Sunday VIP reception something to think about: "We [city administrators] are looking for ways of reaching more people. The more ways we have, the better off we are." But, he said, city officials did not really understand the potentials of cable, and he indicated that—as president-to-be of the National League of Cities—he intended to improve that awareness. And at one point, Mr. Bradley made it clear he felt the cable bargain that had been struck in Los Angeles was too one-sided: "We were babes in the woods. I think we got taken." Among those listening to Mr. Bradley was NCTA's new chairman, Amos (Bud) Hostetter (far right).