

REMARKS UPON SIGNING THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING ACT

LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1908-1973)

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The law that I will sign shortly offers one answer...

It announces to the world that our Nation wants more than just material wealth; our Nation wants more than a "chicken in every pot." We in America have an appetite for excellence, too.

While we work every day to produce new goods and to create new wealth, we want most of all to enrich man's spirit. That is the purpose of this act.

It will give a wider and, I think, stronger voice to educational radio and television by providing new funds for broadcast facilities.

It will launch a major study of television's use in the Nation's classrooms and their potential use throughout the world.

Finally—and most important—it builds a new institution: the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

This Corporation will assist stations and producers who aim for the best in broadcasting good music, in broadcasting exciting plays, and in broadcasting reports on the whole fascinating range of human activity. It will try to prove that what educates can also be exciting.

It will get part of its support from our Government. But it will be carefully guarded from Government or from party control. It will be free, and it will be independent—and it will belong to all of our people.

Television is still a young invention. But we have learned already that it has immense—even revolutionary—power to change, to change our lives.

I hope that those who lead the Corporation will direct that power toward the great and not the trivial purposes.

At its best, public television would help make our Nation a replica of the old Greek marketplace, where public affairs took place in view of all the citizens.

But in weak or even in irresponsible hands, it could generate controversy without understand-

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ing; it could mislead as well as teach; it could appeal to passions rather than to reason.

If public television is to fulfill our hopes, then the Corporation must be representative, it must be responsible—and it must be long on enlightened leadership....

I believe the time has come to stake another claim in the name of all the people, stake a claim based upon the combined resources of communications. I believe the time has come to enlist the computer and the satellite, as well as television and radio, and to enlist them in the cause of education.

If we are up to the obligations of the next century and if we are to be proud of the next century as we are of the past two centuries, we have got to quit talking so much about what has happened in the past two centuries and start talking about what is going to happen in the next century beginning in 1976....



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