

BROADCASTING



file 245.
G/R checking

25/10

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

18 March 1987

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Thank you for your letter of 5 March about the suggestion that the Prime Minister might hold a dinner to bring together a cross-section of opinion in the broadcasting industry.

The Prime Minister sees some attraction in such a dinner, but she has decided not to pursue the possibility for the time being.

Let us consider the matter again sometime in the Autumn.

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5 March 1987

AB
How does the day
look. To go to a
dinner meeting or
do it separately?

N.C.W

Dear Nigel,

We had a word the other day about the suggestion that the Prime Minister might hold a dinner to bring together a cross section of opinion in the broadcasting industry.

As we mentioned, such an occasion might have a number of complementary purposes: it would provide an opportunity for the Prime Minister to signal her own close interest in the development of broadcasting policy and in the well being of the broadcasting industry; it would give her a chance to explain the broad context in which the Government will address the issues; and of course it will enable her to hear at first hand the views of those engaged in different aspects of broadcasting. It would, we suggest, be of the essence of such an occasion that the various different strands of opinion, often conflicting, would be represented. The Home Secretary has himself held one or two dinners bringing together not only those from the existing duopoly, but also representatives of the new and emerging media and this has sparked a lively exchange of views.

You will no doubt have your own views on how the matter might be arranged. It seems to us that one might think in terms of 15-20 guests. It might be sensible to arrange that by their present or past experience they could speak with some knowledge of:

BBC (both as broadcasters and members of the Board of Governors);

IBA (again as members of the Authority and as officers);

ITV companies;

Channel 4;

Independent producers;

Cable Authority;

Cable programme providers (e.g. Sky Channel Superchannel);

Cable operators;

Specialist journalists (e.g. Mr Ray Snoddy of the FT,
Mr Richard Brooks, Observer).

There are, of course, a number of individuals whose experience reflects a number of these different backgrounds. The list above does not take account of radio, and we assume the Prime Minister would wish to concentrate on the much larger television industry.

We are very ready to make suggestions about individuals if you would find that helpful.

Yours,
Stephen

S W BOYS SMITH

Nigel Wicks, Esq.,