

MR WICKS

TV DINNER

The idea of a dinner to discuss the development of television comes hard on the heels of the Prime Minister's dinner last evening with ITN. This excited her interest in the subject of television's enormous potential and a dinner in the merdium-term might be useful.

Essentially she grasped the point, put over most strongly by Alastair Burnet, that Britain has a real genius for television. It ought to exploit what is the coming era of world news service broadcasting by making sure that:

1. Britain provides a world news channel and wins world advertising business.
2. Britain provides an opportunity for British industry to sell itself by advertising into world markets.
3. Britain makes its own accesories - eg dishes - and gets into the export of them; and pre-empts the Japanese.

The danger of the kind of dinner envisaged is that it will bring out clashes of ideas, attitudes and interests which exist not merely between for example BBC and ITV but also within organisations; I understand that Paul Fox and Alastair Burnet had a row about the organisation of ITN before the Prime Minister arrived last night.

My worry about the format of a dinner is that I am not sure it works unless there is firm chairmanship. This leaves me wondering whether a seminar might not be better.

Either would, of course, be well received by the industry, for to judge from Alastair Burnet last night they want the

Prime Minister to give television public recognition as an international growth industry and to encourage the kind of British participation set out above.

Alastair Burnet has promised the Prime Minister a paper after last night.

In the meantime, I am sure the whole nature of the meeting would be changed if we had journalists present. The purpose of the meeting is free and frank discussion; not to play to the gallery.

I would welcome the opportunity to attend any such seminar or dinner.



BERNARD INGHAM

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