

① I think we should try to  
keep the present non-statutory basis  
for Ministerial ~~and~~ party political. Some  
think's system prepared to put in a  
general requirement for balance. I am

PRIME MINISTER ①

CONFIDENTIAL

~~and party~~  
reluctant to make more conditions for  
a licence ~~sub~~

#### BROADCASTING BILL: REQUIREMENT FOR POLITICAL MESSAGES

The Home Secretary (Flag A) proposes that the current non-statutory arrangements will in general be unworkable when each of the independent licensees is a broadcaster in their own right. He therefore proposes:

- that the Broadcasting Bill should require licensees to show Ministerial announcements and party election broadcasts;

? - but that the requirement to balance programmes politically across a range of programmes should meet the need for broadcasters to show party political broadcasts. ?

The Home Secretary receives broad agreement from Mr Ridley (Flag B) but the feeling here (see notes from Mr Ingham and Mr Whittingdale at Flag C and D) and in central office (see Mr Baker's note at Flag E) seems to be that:

- the distinction between Party Political and Ministerial and Election broadcasts would invite trouble;

- would lead to the demise of the party political broadcast (which John thinks may not be a bad thing).

There are also a number of related detailed points raised by Bernard and Kenneth Baker.

Do you:

- agree to the Home Secretary's approach and if so do you accept that this would lead to the end of Party Political Broadcasts? or

- wish the Broadcasting Bill to include a requirement for licensees to broadcast Party Political Broadcasts?

CBS

Caroline Slocock

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If the present position  
is not on a statutory basis I should  
have thought it better to continue that  
way and not distinguish between party political  
and election party political. The non-discrimination  
and balance requirements are far more  
important.

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