



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

9 August 1989

From the Private Secretary

Dear Peter,

BROADCASTING BILL: REQUIREMENT FOR POLITICAL MESSAGES

The Prime Minister has seen the Home Secretary's minute of 28 July. She has also seen Mr. Ridley's letter to him of 7 August and Mr. Baker's letter of 3 August.

I would be grateful if you and copy recipients would ensure that this letter is seen only by those on a strict need to know basis.

The Prime Minister thinks that the Government should try to keep the present non-statutory basis for Ministerial and all Party Political broadcasts. She thinks that this would be better than distinguishing between Party Political broadcasts and election Party Political broadcasts. She does think that the non-discrimination and balance requirements are far more important. She would be quite prepared to put in a general requirement for balance in the Broadcasting Bill. But overall, she is reluctant to make more conditions for a licence.

*Yours sincerely,
Caroline Slocock*

CAROLINE SLOCOCK

Peter Storr, Esq.,
Home Office

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keep the present non-statutory basis
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PRIME MINISTER ①

CONFIDENTIAL

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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