

PRIME MINISTER

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

Michael Alison has copied to me a letter he has written to David Mellor about the clauses and schedules dealing with religious broadcasting. As you are aware, religious bodies were originally prevented from holding broadcasting licences but the Bill has subsequently been amended to allow this, subject to a test of "appropriateness". Michael Alison is worried that if this test is left vague the judgements will be taken by the existing religious advisors to the BBC and the IBA. They have been hostile to the campaign to allow independent religious broadcasting and are likely to advise that this should be tightly controlled. The end result will be the continuation of the virtual monopoly for the Church of England.

Michael Alison and others are seeking to spell out in the Bill rather more of the way in which discretion will be exercised. ✓

Agree I find out from David Mellor's office how he intends to respond to this?

AT

7 to 15

ANDREW TURNBULL

2 July 1990