

Broadcasting

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Conservative and Unionist Central Office

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH Telephone 01-222 9000 Telegrams Constitute London SW1

Chairman of the Party: THE RT HON THE LORD THORNEYCROFT

Deputy Chairman: R. ALISTAIR McALPINE

Vice Chairmen: SIR ANTHONY ROYLE KCMG MP
THE BARONESS YOUNG

1st October, 1979

Mr Ian Henry

I have made enquiries about the ITV strike and there is no chance whatever of LWT being on the air for this coming Sunday for an interview with the Prime Minister.

The position, I gather, is this. The employers had very high hopes that once they could get their offer to the rank and file that the employees would vote for an immediate settlement. This was not the case, the offer has been rejected in most shops by a majority of 2 to 1. It is worth remembering that the original vote to give the ACTT negotiators a free hand was carried in most shops by 100%. The minority in favour of a settlement was both articulate and persuasive and my informants understand that the position of the unions in terms of rank and file support is not as strong as the 2 to 1 majority suggests. The general expectation is that a further offer will be put in the week beginning October 15 and that this in turn will be put before the various shops for a hand vote. My information is that the employers will not increase the basic offer but will re-jig the cash so that certain groups will receive a little more and others a little less. They are hopeful that this will do the trick. If they are right, ITV will be back on the air for the last few days of October or at the beginning of November. If this offer fails we cannot expect ITV before December.

This morning the five principal Managing Directors of the ITV companies agreed that under no circumstances would there be any semblance of an improved offer but provided 15% in the first year was accepted and ENG agreed they would listen to amendments in the second year provided there would be no overall increase involved. There were some discussions among the five principals that they may be looking for a mediator. Asked what they mean by mediator they say it does not mean arbitrator. There was discussion amongst them but nothing yet agreed. The most likely names being mentioned Noel Annan and Merlyn Rees. This latter point is still in the discussion area.

Gordon Reece

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Henry James, Esq.,
cc Richard Ryder, Esq.,