



SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
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Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

23 November 1983

*nb pm
DWB
23/11*

Leon Brittan

CABLE AND BROADCASTING BILL

Thank you for sending me copies of your letters of 4 and 11 November, to Michael Heseltine and Willie Whitelaw respectively.

As I indicated in my letter of 25 April^{pt 3} to Willie Whitelaw which commented on the White Paper on Cable Systems and Services, I am concerned that the arrangements for monitoring and vetting programme content should provide a reliable means of preventing terrorist propaganda or other material of a nature likely to offend tastes and sensitivities in Northern Ireland.

I was reassured by Willie Whitelaw's letter to me of 5 May in which he stated that the Bill will require the Cable Authority to ensure that nothing is included in programmes which is likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feelings. I should, nevertheless, like to take this opportunity to stress the importance I place on minimising the risk that cable subscribers in Northern Ireland will be subjected to subversive or otherwise offensive material. I would not wish to press for the inclusion of reserve Ministerial powers in the forthcoming Bill on Northern Ireland's account alone. But I should welcome confirmation that you remain satisfied that the arrangements in the draft Bill will in themselves provide adequate protection against the risks I have outlined.

I agree with your proposal for a free standing clause in the Bill to make Cable subject to the law on incitement to racial hatred.

/...

CONFIDENTIAL

I am sending copies of this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours
—
KL

Broadcasting
Direct,
pt 4

23 NOV 1985

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RESTRICTED



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

29 November 1983

2 Jim,

*nbpm
JWB
29/11*

Thank you for your letter of 23 November.

The draft Bill has now been circulated to L Committee and I am satisfied that it provides the sort of safeguards which you are seeking. Clause 9(1)(a) requires the Authority to do all that it can to secure that all licensed cable programme services include nothing which offends against good taste or decency, is likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling. While the Authority will not normally see programmes before they go out, it will, under clause 15(a), have the power to intervene and direct that a particular programme should be excluded from a service before it is shown. Non-compliance with a direction can lead to the revocation of a licence under clause 17(1)(a).

I was glad to be able to agree that Ulster Cablevision's proposals for Belfast could be included in the list of those which we should be willing to license subject to further discussions on some specific points. Assuming that the project comes to fruition, the substantial involvement of Ulster people (through UTV) on the programming side should be a way of ensuring that local risks and susceptibilities are kept fully in mind.

Copies of this letter go to recipients of yours.

W
con

The Rt Hon James Prior, MP

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BROADCASTING: Cable
PX 4

29 NOV 1989

