

Broadcasting

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Broadcasting.



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

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22/9

22 SEP 1982

Dear Tim,

with TF ?

When I wrote to you yesterday about the interim report of the Merriman Committee on the future use of T.V bands I and III, I am afraid I omitted to send copies to other interested Departments.

I am therefore sending a copy of this and my earlier letter to the Private Secretaries to members of E Committee and to Richard Hatfield, with apologies for the omission.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Pallett.

MRS. L. PALLETT

Tim Flesher, Esq.

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

20 SEP 1982

MA

Prime Minister:

JA
20/9

Dear Tim,

I am writing to let you know that the review team under the chairmanship of Dr. James Merriman which is examining the use of the frequency range 30-960 MHz., has now submitted its interim report on the future use of T.V. Bands I and III. The Home Secretary proposes to publish the report as a Command Paper on 22nd September, and to issue a press notice in the attached form summarising its recommendations.

The Home Secretary will shortly consult his colleagues about the action to be taken on this report. As soon as it is published we shall be conferring urgently with the broadcasting authorities about the implications of accelerating the programme of closure of the 405-line transmitters.

Yours sincerely,

Lealey Pallett.

MRS. L. PALLETT

Tim Flesher, Esq.

22 September 1982

LAND MOBILE RADIO SHOULD GET OLD TV BANDS SAYS SPECTRUM REVIEW

TV Bands I and III should be used for land mobile radio when the obsolete 405-line TV service is closed down, says the Interim Report of the Independent Review of the Radio Spectrum (30-960 MHz), published today.*

The Review, chaired by Dr James Merriman, recommends that the bands should be used for a combination of land mobile radio services and broadcasting ancillary services used for operational control and programme production. Where necessary, the priority should go to land mobiles, says the Report.

Dr Merriman and his colleagues also recommend that the closure of the 405-line service, scheduled for completion in 1986, should be accelerated to allow these changes to take effect from the beginning of 1985. The Review considered proposals for new broadcasting uses, including area TV and teletext, but, taking account of other means available or being developed for distribution of Britain's TV broadcasting services, concluded that the needs of land mobile services and the broadcasting ancillary services had the stronger claim.

Another recommendation is that radio amateurs be given an allocation in the 50-54 MHz range (part of TV Band I), if possible.

The Home Secretary received the Review's report on 10 September. He is considering it urgently and expects to announce his decisions later this year.

* Cmnd 0000, HMSO, £0.00

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Home Secretary announced his intention to set up the review of the radio spectrum on June 15, following the report of the Mobile Radio Committee. The committee is a standing body appointed by the Home Secretary to advise him on questions affecting users of mobile radio. Its membership is drawn from industry, government, users and academics, and the report pointed out that:

"The land mobile service makes a substantial contribution to the industry and commerce of this country as well as being an essential tool in the operation of the emergency services. It is a growth industry; it creates employment, it makes the most of resources and in doing so saves fuel and other costs ... the congestion in the VHF bands is, however, now such as to leave little room for manoeuvre and already the grade and quality of service that can be obtained in the busier areas is unacceptably low."

2. Members of the review team are Dr James Merriman, Air Vice Marshal Arthur Foden and Mr Philip Vine. They were asked to submit an interim report by September 1982 on the future use of Bands I and III, and to report on other matters within their terms of reference by June 1983.

Their terms of reference are:

...../1. To help

1. To help Ministers to formulate a view on the long-term problems foreseen in the radio frequency spectrum between 30 and 960 MHz, and specifically to assist in taking a decision on the future use of TV bands I and III when the present 405-line TV services are withdrawn, there is to be an independent review of the radio frequency spectrum in this range. The review is to:

- (a) examine the present pattern of spectrum occupancy in this range taking into account:
 - (i) the international commitments and constraints arising from the international Radio Regulations, and from membership of the United Kingdom of such bodies as NATO, ICAO, INCO, etc; and
 - (ii) the desirability of aligning spectrum usage as far as possible with that of neighbouring Administrations;
- (b) investigate the likely continuation of the upsurge in additional requirements for accommodation in this part of the spectrum, and consider how they might be satisfied within the available spectrum and by innovative technological developments;
- (c) identify and quantify those requirements which cannot be accommodated by these means and examine what scope there is for meeting them in some other way;
- (d) make recommendations for consideration by Ministers as to changes that may be required to meet the situation and specifically in respect of the future use of TV bands I and III;
- (e) consider the adequacy of the existing machinery:
 - (i) for consultation regarding the use of the frequency spectrum; and
 - (ii) for the assignment of frequencies,

and to recommend any changes that might be made in the interest of public confidence in the system.

2. The review is to cover the time-scale up to the end of the century, and any foreseen improvements in technology are to be taken into account. The economic resource and operational consequences of any recommended changes in spectrum occupancy are also to be considered; and any cases of inefficient use of the spectrum - having regard to the operational characteristics and other constraints on the users - are to be brought to light, together with any recommendations for improvements.)

3. Closure of the VHF 405-line TV services, in broadcasting bands I and III, (41-68 MHz and 174-223 MHz) was announced in May 1980. It began this year and is being phased over about four years by the broadcasting authorities in consultation with the Home Office. The firm intention is that transmitters serving significant areas not covered by UHF 625-line services will not be closed down until towards the end of the period, after the phase II UHF engineering programme (aimed at communities of 500 or more) is complete, though this cannot be guaranteed in any area .)

Phase III of the UHF programme will be aimed towards people not served by UHF services and who will lose their 405- line service. Provision is already made for small communities who wish to provide a relay at their own expense.