



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
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Further to our telecon. today, please find attached a copy of the Merriman report. I should be most grateful if I could have your minister's comments, if any, by close of play Monday 18th July due to the printing deadlines. My apologies for the difficulties this will cause.

With the Compliments of the
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for
Industry

Jan Weston
15/7/83



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

4 July
4 June 1983

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15/7

Dear Michael,

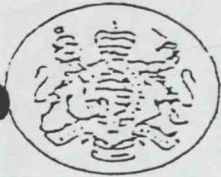
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RADIO SPECTRUM (30-960 MHz) (MERRIMAN REPORT)

in folder attached to file.

I enclose a copy of the Report of the above Committee, which was submitted to the Home Secretary on 7 June, together with a note on summarising its main points.

2 The Home Secretary established the Review because there was increasing difficulty in finding spectrum to meet the growing needs of land mobile radio, and an increasing level of criticism of present procedures and allocations from, in particular, some of the private mobile radio lobbies. An independent review was therefore needed of the pattern of spectrum use in the 30-960 MHz range, in the light of the criticism that major users such as broadcasting and defence had a disproportionate share; and of the machinery for consultation and the assignment of frequencies, in the light of the alleged inadequacies of that machinery.

3 Dr Merriman and his colleagues interpreted their terms of reference widely, and their recommendations cover matters some way removed from the details of their brief. In particular, they discuss the place of radio regulation within the machinery of Government, and recommend that, in the interests not only of radio regulation but also of the well-being of telecommunications generally, responsibilities for all aspects of telecommunications be concentrated either in a separate department or in a distinct



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unit within an existing department. These questions have, of course, now been over-taken by the decision to transfer the Radio Regulatory Department to my Department: the views of Dr Merriman and his colleagues on this matter were made known in advance of their report, and were taken into account.

4 For the rest, there is nothing that calls for an immediate response, and much that needs careful thought before the Government's position is formulated. I propose therefore, subject to your views and those of Cabinet colleagues, to publish the Report as a Command paper. Publication would be accompanied by an arranged PQ along the lines of the attached draft, which simply welcomes the Report and indicates that we shall give it further consideration before announcing any conclusions. The implementation of most of the recommendations will largely depend on the outcome of the proposal that there should be some strengthening of the resources of the Department. Many of the recommendations will concern my Department alone. Where they affect other Departments, they will be explored initially in the Official Committee on Government Telecommunications, and I shall of course be consulting colleagues as necessary.

5 I am sending copies of this letter to the other members of the Cabinet and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Handwritten signatures:
J. G. ...
S. ...
A. ...

ARRANGED PQ - DRAFT

To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Report of the Independent Review of the Radio Spectrum (30-960 MHz) has been received; and if he will make a statement.

DRAFT REPLY

The Report of the Independent Review of the Radio Spectrum (30-960 MHz) was submitted to the former Home Secretary on 7 June 1983, and is being published today as Cmnd 0000. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House. The matter now falls within my jurisdiction in view of the recent transfer of the Radio Regulatory Department from the Home Office to the Department of Trade and Industry.

I am very grateful to Dr Merriman and his colleagues for their thorough and wide ranging analysis of the problems of regulating the radio spectrum. The conclusions and recommendations in the Report cover both the pattern of use in the range 30-960MHz, and the machinery for frequency management. We shall be giving these recommendations careful study and will announce our conclusions in due course.