



Broadcasting July 79

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

31 August 1983

Dear Cecil,

Dr 31/8

will request if required.

I have seen Douglas Hurd's letter to you of 16 August about television licences and hotels.

I am very much in agreement with his general statement of principle. There is a case, of course, for abolishing the television licence fee and financing the BBC by other methods. However in the absence of such a decision we must try to ensure that the law and its administration are in line. If the Government cannot apply its own laws correctly, we are open to considerable criticism and it might be said, we are wasting our time in passing even more laws.

As far as our policy line is concerned, I also agree that we should begin from the standpoint that the existing law should be applied unamended. Only if the hotel industry present a convincing case for relief based on some objective factors eg room occupancy, should we consider amending the law. We should not do so simply because hotels will have to pay more for the service they receive. The fact that they have had an advantage for so long should not in itself give them a prescriptive right to it for the future.

I am copying this to other members of H, to Douglas Hurd and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JOHN BIFFEN

The Rt Hon Cecil Parkinson MP
Secretary of State
Department of Trade and Industry

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