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MEA



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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
Home Secretary
Queen Anne's Gate
LONDON
SW1H 9AT

NBPM

11 July 1985

Dear Home Secretary,

COMMUNITY RADIO

will request if required

Your letter of 28 June about announcing an experimental scheme for community radio prompts me to put down a marker about the need for careful handling of this issue in Northern Ireland.

I understand from officials that it is not your intention to include Northern Ireland in the experiment, and I am quite content with that and with the PQ reply which you proposed. There may well be pressure for Northern Ireland to be included, but exclusion can be defended on grounds of population as well as the need to protect the soon-to-be-established second independent local radio station.

However, in the longer-term I can see both that there will be a strong case for community radio in the Province, and that the issue has great potential for political controversy. For example, an Irish-speaking community station could be a useful concession to the minority but would enrage the Unionists. Accordingly I would be grateful if my officials could continue to be kept in touch with developments as the experiment proceeds.

I am sending copies of this letter to colleagues on H Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours Sincerely
N Ward
(Private Secretary)

for D H

(Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence)

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