

NB RN at this stage
BIF Monday

CCSG



PRIME MINISTER

GREEN PAPER ON RADIO POLICY: LOCAL RADIO

I am generally content with the proposals in the Home Secretary's minute of 27 November on local radio regulation.

However, I am concerned about the limited requirement for balance in the coverage of politically controversial issues.

The requirement proposed is to avoid giving undue prominence in programmes to the views and opinions of particular persons.

I recognise that this is the same formulation as in the Cable & Broadcasting Act 1984 for cable TV. However, I think that in the local situation this could cause serious problems. Where a local authority is massively dominated by a particular group, there is a risk that a local radio station will fail to give adequate attention to the views of the opposition group. They could then argue that all they were doing was to give "due prominence" to the majority view. I do not think that the possibility that there may be another radio station in the area is an adequate safeguard.

I would therefore suggest that the requirement should be that, where a local radio station chooses to broadcast material on matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy, it should be required to give a balanced coverage of the questions.

I am copying this minute to Douglas Hurd, to the other members of MISC 128, to the Foreign Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

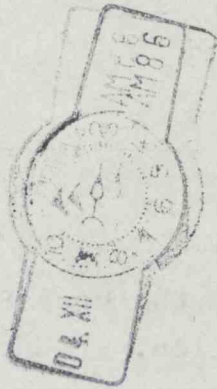
NR

4 December 1986

BROADCASTING

LEGISLATION

PT 2



[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. Some words like "legislation", "broadcasting", and "legislation" are faintly visible.]