



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

28 July 1987

nbpm

Dear Nigel,

COMPETITION POLICY AND BROADCASTING

As you will recall, I recently reminded you of my interest in the implications for broadcasting of copyright law and restrictions on needle time. I hope that my Department will be fully involved before this question is brought back to the Competition Policy Sub-Committee of the Steering Committee on Economic Strategy (E(CP)).

I have read with interest the minutes of the Sub-Committee's recent meeting on 20 July (E(CP)87 1st meeting). I see that there are one or two other points in issue which may touch on my interests and I hope that in any further consideration of them I am fully consulted.

First, during the discussion of competition and employment law, you are recorded as saying that one possibility for a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for investigation is restrictive labour practices in the broadcasting industry. The Secretary of State for Employment is invited to give this question further thought and to submit a paper to the Sub-Committee before the end of the year suggesting suitable candidates. I would not at this stage wish to offer any comments on the merits of this possibility: only to register that I would like to be fully consulted.

Second, in discussion of the action programme and future work of the Sub-Committee you invite the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to arrange for papers to be submitted on radio frequency spectrum management and on needle time. I have already mentioned my interest in needle time and as a result of my earlier intervention my Department and the Department of Trade and Industry are now in touch on this. I should also like to reiterate my interest in any consideration of radio frequency spectrum management, which I have of course registered in the correspondence associated with the consultants' report "Deregulation of the Radio Spectrum in the UK".

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President and members of E(CP), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

Douglas

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson, M.P.

