

Prime Minister<sup>2</sup>

cc DG



HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

23 December 1987

Dear David,

ms

STRUCTURE OF BROADCASTING

Prop.

I am sorry we have not responded before now to your letter of 2 November about the Prime Minister's interest in the operation of the IBA, and her question whether this could be improved, and if so, how?

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The Home Secretary agrees that this is an important issue, which needs to be addressed. There is a lot of action already under way. First, the bulk of the IBA's resources is committed to its responsibility for transmission of television signals. Ministers have already agreed that transmission arrangements in relation to both the IBA and the BBC should be reviewed, including the scope for privatisation. That review, on which the next step is a discussion at the Official Group (MISC 129), will therefore focus on matters central to the IBA's existing responsibilities. Second, many of the IBA's functions will be crucially changed as a result of decisions Ministers are now taking on new broadcasting legislation. Ministers have recently decided that the IBA should no longer have responsibility for radio. The work now done by the IBA on the television side will depend on the arrangements for the award of ITV contracts, the future structure of Channel 4 and the provision of news, which are all under discussion. The networking system too will operate very differently from 1993 onwards.

The Home Secretary therefore proposes in the New Year to return, in the light of progress on the transmission system and other matters now being considered by Ministers, to the question of the nature and scope of the IBA's operations, bearing in mind that Lord Thomson's term of office as Chairman expires at the end of 1988.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the other members of MISC 128 and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Lawton

P J C MAWER

David Norgrove, Esq.,

BROADCASTING : BBC Pinangas PTS

