



Prime Minister

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You were unhappy with the Home Office draft. This

letter follows discussions between A. MacDold and Brian Griffiths and reflects their joint views.

Content for us to ~~send~~ tell the

Home Office to

amend in these terms?

12 January 1988

W Hyde Esq
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RECC

13/1

Dear Wilfred, Thanks - Y. W. M.

MEMORANDUM FOR SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS

I know that Martin Hollobone has put several suggestions to your colleagues on the memorandum circulated with Colin Miller's letter of 6 January; but there is an important general theme which I want to put to you.

I appreciate the difficulty of presenting a clear picture to the Committee at a time when the White Paper is still being prepared and Ministers have still to address some difficult issues. But I am concerned that the memorandum in its present form comes across very much as a factual document; as a result there is little sense in the text of the spirit of change which was present during the Prime Minister's Seminar in September. Could I therefore suggest some amendments, as follows:

- (i) Paragraph 2 might give more emphasis to the economic opportunities of the development of a satellite-led international market place; and it might be better to preface the discussion of the (historical) importance of public service principles in Paragraph 3 with an indication of the Government's intention to introduce wide-ranging reforms;
- (ii) the Government's intention to establish a Broadcasting Standards Council could be presented as a more positive step than the drafting of Paragraphs 7 and 8 currently suggests;
- (iii) Paragraph 10 could usefully recognise the role of new technologies (especially satellite services)



which we cannot ignore, even if we wanted to) in stimulating the current review of policy;

✓ (iv) British Satellite Broadcasting's plans could be described more positively - and more fully - than in the current draft, and well before Paragraph 25 where the company currently receives its first mention;

✓ (iv) greater emphasis could be given (particularly at Paragraph 30) to the radical nature of the Peacock Report and its role in stimulating radical review inside Government.

✓ I also feel the memorandum should be more tentative, in Paragraphs 42 ff, about the future of public service broadcasting. The submission might simply note that while the Government remains committed to the underlying principles of public service broadcasting it needs to consider how best to preserve them in the developing broadcasting market.

I appreciate that such comments will not be altogether welcome so close to your deadline for submission, but it is important that, even in an essentially factual document of this nature, we do reflect the spirit of radical change which underlies Ministers' current thinking in the broadcasting area.

*Very kin
A J Macdonald*

A J MACDONALD