



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

22 January 1988

Dear Lord Young,

WITH 19?

Thank you for your letter in reply to my Private Secretary's letter of 19 January with a draft reply to Michael Darlow of the Independent Access Steering Committee.

You suggest that the reply needs to refer to the proposal discussed at MISC 128 concerning regular reports on progress towards the independent production initiatives. I think the immediate need is for a letter to go to Mr Darlow quickly to encourage the independents to look to the IBA's initiative as the immediate way ahead. I see some difficulty in including at this stage any reference to the idea of regular reports from the broadcasters. This all needs more careful thought and indeed preparation with the broadcasters if in the event we do decide to follow that route.

The particular possibility canvassed at our meeting on 17 December was that the BBC and IBA might be required to publish periodic information about the contracts concluded with independent producers. (The idea you mention in your letter of asking the BBC and IBA to provide six-monthly reports to you on the basis that they would not be made public but might be referred to the Director General of Fair Trading is rather different.) The conclusion of the meeting was that you were invited to work up proposals for requiring the BBC and IBA periodically to publish information about the contracts made with independent producers and to bring a paper to the group in due course.

I can see the attraction of an approach on something like these lines, though MISC 128 obviously wanted to look at the implications of a particular proposal before agreeing to it. For the moment I think we should aim to get a reply to Michael Darlow promptly and I hope that you can now agree to my sending the draft circulated with my Private Secretary's earlier letter. It does not of course preclude a later decision by MISC 128 in favour of your proposal or any variation of it. We might indeed cover your point in general terms by adding the words "or indeed other means by which Government might monitor progress" after the phrase "While I would not wish to rule out legislation at a later stage" in the third sentence of the last substantial paragraph.

I am sending a copy of this to the Prime Minister, other members of MISC 128 and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely,

Glin R. Miller

Approved by the Home Secretary
and signed in his absence.

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