

PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING: MONITORING THE 25 PER CENT INITIATIVE

Lord Young has now come forward with proposals for monitoring the 25 per cent target for TV programmes produced by independents. His package is at Flag A. Against the background of a lack of willingness by the BBC voluntarily to provide full details, he proposes six monthly reports by the Director General of Fair Trading - which would draw on quarterly figures on hours commissioned from independent producers, supplemented by quarterly meetings with the Independent Access Steering Committee. He proposes to review in two years whether further reports are needed.

Douglas Hurd (Flag B) supports this approach.

But the Chancellor (Flag C) and Brian Griffiths (Flag D) express concern. They both strongly criticise the BBC. Brian suggests that powers should be taken in the Broadcasting Bill to compel the BBC to disclose the terms of contracts with independent producers so that they match what the ITV companies are voluntarily doing.

If you want to adopt the approach recommended by Brian, I suggest this issue needs to be added to the future business of MISC 128. Content for me to minute out in these terms on Monday morning, in advance of the afternoon meeting of MISC 128, indicating that this issue will need to be included on the agenda of a subsequent meeting?

Yes

PGC6

Paul Gray
21 April 1989

MJ2DLM

I think the answer is to include a clause which requires the B.O.C. to submit each year the OFT that 25% of production goes to independent producers as a condition of the B.O.C. licence or of the necessary use of certain wavelengths. This will need to be included in the agenda.

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