

PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING BILL: MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS

The Home Secretary's minute of 8 September (Flag A) sets out his proposals for safeguarding access to broadcasts of major sporting events.

He proposes partially to liberalise the present arrangement where only BBC and ITV can broadcast a specified list of major sporting events. A new more limited requirement would be introduced requiring that the listed events should not be shown on a pay-per-view basis. But he is resisting pressure from the traditional broadcasters to continue any requirement that would prevent new broadcasters like Sky or BSB purchasing exclusive rights to these events. And he also envisages reducing the number of listed events over time.

Brian Griffiths (Flag B) welcomes this measure of deregulation. But the Chancellor (Flag C) is a bit more guarded and urges that, if any continuing restrictions are judged necessary, these should be kept as narrow as possible and phased out as quickly as possible.

(i) Content to approve the Home Secretary's proposals?

or

(ii) Support the Chancellor's views that restrictions should be kept to a minimum and quickly dismantled?

Recg.

PAUL GRAY

15 September 1989

EAM

My sympathies are with
the Chancellor. I believe the
list should be very limited and
phased out as quickly
as possible.