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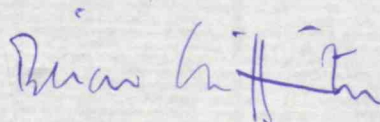
GAELIC TELEVISION SERVICES

In my earlier note on this subject I expressed scepticism at the Scottish Secretary's proposals. Since then a group of officials has looked at the subject in greater depth and the following arguments clearly carry some weight.

- (i) Apart from English, Gaelic and Welsh are the only living indigenous languages in Britain; given that we support Welsh through S4C, it is difficult to argue that there should be no support for Gaelic;
- (ii) the scale of support being recommended for Gaelic is modest, which reflects the difference between the two languages;
- (iii) the White Paper hoped that Cable and MVDS could be used to satisfy the demands of Gaelic viewers; because of the geography of Scotland this has not proved possible.

It would seem to me it is difficult not to permit some arrangements to be made for Gaelic television services in Scotland.

It is crucial, however, that if the subsidy is to come from the taxpayer, then it must be funded out of the Scottish vote rather than some special grant.



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