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Prime Minister

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3 November 1989

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BROADCASTING STANDARDS COUNCIL (BSC):  
ANNUAL REPORT & CODE OF PRACTICE

The Broadcasting Standards Council has just issued its first annual report and published, after a great deal of consultation, its Code of Practice dealing with the portrayal of violence, sex and bad language on television and radio. Both the Report and the Code of Practice are worth glancing at.

The most interesting aspect of the Report is the findings of a major survey commissioned by the Council.

Parental & Adult Concern

- \* Over one half the children in Britain aged 5 or over have a television set in their bedroom.
- \* Almost 7 out of 10 parents with children of school age claimed to have turned off the television, or turned to another channel as a result of an unsuitable programme - the older the child, the more likely the parent turned over.
- \* These were not isolated incidents: over 4 in 10 parents claim that they turn off or over at least once a month. In addition, 25% of adults claimed that they had been disgusted by something they had watched in the previous month. (By contrast the figure was only 3% for radio).
- \* The major reasons for disgust were bad taste, sex, violence and swearing, in that order. (Chart 1, page 28).

### The Watershed

(ie the time for programmes unsuitable for family viewing)

At present the watershed is 9.00pm.

- \* Of parents with children aged 11-14, 46% felt the watershed should be 9.30pm or later, and 27% felt it should be 10pm or later. Of parents with children 15-16, 78% felt it should be 9.30pm or later, and 58% felt it should be 10.00pm or later.
- \* The research concludes that this is an attempt by parents to control the behaviour and shape the attitudes of teenage children.

### Warning Viewers

- \* 91% approved of a policy of specifically warning viewers in advance about feature films which contain upsetting or offensive scenes.
- \* 52% wanted to see spoken warnings before all programmes which contained upsetting or offensive scenes.

### Standards: Swearing & Nudity

- \* Hard swearing was frowned on in most cases, though it was more acceptable after 9.00pm and in drama.
- \* Nudity was acceptable providing the context was suitable (eg topless women in travel programmes), but unacceptable if the intention was suspect and the context degrading.

### Violence

- \* Viewers were "profoundly concerned" about sexual violence and rape. 75% were unwilling to allow the context or story

to create conditions which would justify violence; only 19% were in favour of this.

Privacy

- \* | Strong respect for privacy of families in disasters, funerals and memorial services.

Conclusion

The BSC has made a good start and Lord Rees-Mogg in particular is to be congratulated for making considerable progress in hostile territory.

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