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PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING BILL: IMPARTIALITY

The Home Secretary's minute attached represents significant progress but you will need to judge whether it goes far enough. He has agreed:

- i) to delete the reference to "current" political and industrial controversy
- ii) to bring "personal view" programmes within the scope of the impartiality regime
- iii) to include in Clause 6 some prescriptions on what the ITC's code must cover, e.g. timescales for broadcasting balancing programmes and arrangements to ensure that the audience is made aware of them.

He proposes to set out the Government's approach on 11 July but to table the detailed amendments in the overspill. His conclusion is that the ITC licensees would find these steps difficult to circumvent.

But he is not proposing to make these provisions directly applicable to the BBC, though he proposes to call in the chairman and tell him that the Government will expect the BBC to bring its code into line. Also he is not proposing to give a policing role to the BSC.

He argues that to tackle the BBC head on would rekindle the fierce controversy which the Bill encountered initially but which has been successfully diffused.

The Home Secretary has spoken to Lord Wyatt who was content with the proposed changes to Clause 6 (they are very similar to his own proposals). Lord Wyatt will still be seeking a watchdog role for the BSC. The Home Secretary still hopes that by securing the

undertaking from the BBC described above he can reach an accommodation with Lord Wyatt.

Do you feel that sufficient progress has now been made?

*Yes not*

Or do you, even at the risk of greater controversy, still want to pursue the policing role for the BSC?

*AT*

ANDREW TURNBULL

*The Home Secretary*

*has gone a long way -  
don't think we can press  
him further. not*

5 July 1990

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