

BS

PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING BILL: QUALITY

You saw last weekend my note at flag A below attaching a minute from the Home Secretary and comments from Brian Griffiths, about proposed changes to the quality requirements for ITV. You decided you wanted to talk about this to Home Office Ministers.

We now have a slot in the diary for you to see the Home Secretary next Tuesday afternoon. I had originally also invited Mr. Mellor, but the Home Secretary asked his office to tell me he would prefer to see you alone without Mr. Mellor present. As it happens, Mr. Mellor has commitments in the House next Tuesday that clash with our present diary slot.

So as things stand, you are scheduled to have a bilateral with the Home Secretary. But his original minute was copied to all members of MISC 128. And others have discovered that your Tuesday meeting is taking place. As a result, the Chancellor has asked whether the Chief Secretary could come to your meeting; the minute from the Chief Secretary at flag B indicates he would be supporting your serious reservations about the Home Secretary's proposals. And Mr. Ridley flag C has also sent a letter suggesting there should be a collective discussion, possibly extending to some other outstanding items of broadcasting business such as the cross-ownership rules.

I assume you would not want to have a full-blown meeting of MISC 128, at any rate at this stage, but would prefer to handle this in a smaller meeting. I think there is also a good deal to be said for handling the "quality" issue separately from other bits about standing business. The two main options are:

- (i) stick with the present arrangement for Tuesday of a bilateral with the Home Secretary; and then, if appropriate, bring in other colleagues at a later stage.

- (ii) invite Mr. Ridley and the Chief Secretary to Tuesday's meeting, but not include any other MISC 128 colleagues.

Which option would you prefer?

Rec.

PAUL GRAY

mark
2 February 1990

*I will have this
meeting with Home Sec
but would appreciate letter
from Norman Lamont
and Nick Ridley*

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