



Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST

CC PM

Rt Hon Norman Lamont MP
Chief Secretary
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
LONDON
SW1

MBPm & Ami
stage.
PC 6
1/3

27 February 1990

Dear Norman

BROADCASTING BILL: THE NORTHERN IRELAND LICENCE

- Hewitt PC

I have read with interest your letter dated 7 February 1990 to David Waddington and his further letter dated 21 February 1990. As the Northern Ireland dimension is likely to be the main issue in question I thought it might be helpful if I underlined David's concerns.

Northern Ireland constitutes a natural broadcasting region which could not easily in my view be linked to another licensee. For this reason and the difficult political and security situation which exists, it is vitally important to ensure that events in Northern Ireland are broadcast in a fair, accurate and balanced manner from a number of different sources. Any decision to close one of the important broadcasting avenues would look very odd to people within Northern Ireland and in my view would be extremely difficult to defend.

I therefore strongly support David Waddington's plea for recognition that in the last analysis, and subject to the qualification he spelt out, it might be necessary to consider offering some measure of financial support to the incumbent Northern Ireland licensee.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe, Douglas Hurd and David Waddington.

Z even
PC

PB

