

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc. Professor Griffiths

BROADCASTING BILL: DIVERSITY IN RADIO

Following the Prime Minister's reaction to Brian Griffiths' note of 23 March, Brian spoke to David Mellor's Office in the Home Office to give the Prime Minister's reaction.

I was subsequently rung by Colin Walters in the Home Secretary's Office who said that they would much prefer No.10 to send out a letter on this point rather than for the Home Secretary to initiate correspondence. If so, they would like No.10 not only to point to the need for diversity in awarding the franchises for new national independent radio stations, but also to the desirability of a power for the radio authority to make stipulations about the types of programming. I agreed to reflect on this proposition.

Having discussed the position with Brian Griffiths, I spoke to Sara Dent in the Home Secretary's office again today (in Colin Walters' absence) and said that:

- it would be much more appropriate for the Home Office to initiate this correspondence rather than for No.10. If they did so, then the Prime Minister would be prepared to welcome a proposal for diversity.

- she was not, however, likely to welcome a proposal that the radio authority could stipulate types of programming. This would go well beyond the aim of securing greater diversity, and raised all the objections about greater quality criteria that had been discussed in the ITV context.

Rec.

PG

28 March 1990

jd c:griffiths