



CCPU

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SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

Rt Hon David Waddington QC MP  
Home Secretary  
Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1

NBPM

REC G

6/3

5 March 1990

*Dear David*

**BROADCASTING BILL**

*wilks?*

Your minute of 22 February 1990 to the Prime Minister sought colleagues' agreement to a number of modifications to the Bill which you feel are necessary to secure its passage through Parliament.

Two of the amendments have a particular significance for Northern Ireland. I have always taken the view (as outlined in my letter to you dated 8 August 1989) that high quality regional news is a matter of overriding policy interest in Northern Ireland. Your suggestion to include a specific requirement to that effect is, therefore, one which I warmly welcome.

Religion occupies an important place in the lives of many people living in Northern Ireland. As you know, representations have been made directly to your Department from Northern Ireland interests about the omission of a requirement to broadcast religious programmes. In my view the proposed requirement that Channel-3 licensees should include a suitable amount of religious programmes is right and will be widely welcomed in Northern Ireland, and elsewhere in the UK.

Although the other changes proposed may not have distinctly Northern Ireland implications I believe they will provide an opportunity to strengthen support for the Bill without any loss of principle. It is important that our new regime, while preparing for the new broadcasting environment, is seen not to jeopardise unnecessarily features of the present arrangement to which importance is attached. Accordingly, these proposals also have my support.

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, other members of MISC 128, Kenneth Baker, Malcolm Rifkind and to Sir Robin Butler.

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BROADCASTING: Policy  
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