



CAMPAIGN for INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING

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Formerly-National Commercial Radio Movement

The undermentioned is a summary of the minutes taken by Miss Jean Goose Private Secretary to the Minister for Post and Telecommunications, during our visit with the Minister on 14th July, 1970.



NOTE FOR THE RECORD

1. The Minister saw Mr Prewett and Mr Hasler of the Campaign for Independent Broadcasting on 14 July 1970. Mr Lawrence and PS/Minister were present.
2. The Minister said he was glad to have this opportunity to explain the Government's policy, and to hear their views on the organisation of commercial local radio. He asked whether the Campaign for Independent Broadcasting agreed that there should be a system for the orderly allocation of frequencies both nationally and internationally.
- 3.. Mr Prewett said the CIB agreed that such a system was necessary and they were against illicit broadcasting. They were, however, opposed to jamming though they recognised the Government's difficulties. A considerable volume of complaints was still coming into their headquarters of interference by the Government's station to reception of BBC programmes, and they asked the Minister whether he would be prepared to reduce the power of the signal to the minimum necessary to be effective.
4. The Minister said the Government considered it essential to continue jamming Radio North Sea International, otherwise the country might soon be ringed by pirate stations. If this happened, no legal system of commercial radio would be possible because the frequencies would not be available. He regretted that the jamming signal had caused some interference to the reception of Radio 1, but all the evidence showed that this had been confined to a very limited area. There had been many unsubstantiated general complaints of interference, but investigations by his officials indicated that the pirate station itself had caused more interference to Radio 1 than the jamming signal. He took note of the suggestion that the power of the signal should be reduced to the minimum necessary.



5. Mr Prewett handed the Minister a further paper he had prepared on the organisation of independent broadcasting in the United Kingdom. He thought that something more than local commercial radio would be necessary in order to provide real competition with the BBC's services; some form of regional broadcasting might be preferable, as the frequencies would probably not be available for a competing national service. They thought that any new radio service should be on VHF: he recognised that some advocates of commercial radio wanted the service on medium wavelengths rather than VHF, but he thought that the ownership of VHF sets was increasing, and if vertical rather than horizontal polarisation were used it would be possible to overcome the difficulty of reception by car and portable sets. They also thought that there should be a Broadcasting Council to supervise commercial radio which would adopt some of the ITA's practices eg on advertising codes, but that the Council should be wider based than the ITA. This might be a useful trial working-model of a different organisation in broadcasting, before any changes were made in 1976.

6. The Minister said he had not yet come to any firm conclusions about the organisation of commercial radio, and he was glad to have the CIB views at this early stage. If they would like to send him any further thoughts he would be glad to have them in writing within the next three months. Mr Prewett said they would probably wish to submit further views to the Minister. He thanked the Minister for seeing representatives of his organisation at such an early stage in his planning.

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