

20th July 1978

Thank you for your letter about special television programmes during the General Election. I understand you to be suggesting a number of programmes in which Mr Callaghan and I would be the only politicians taking part. This is an interesting suggestion which I am certainly ready to consider. However, there are a number of factors which ought to be taken into account.

First, what are the reactions of the other four political parties at Westminster, the Liberals, the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, and the Ulster Unionists? Have you put your proposal for such special programmes, in which Mr Callaghan and I would be the only politicians taking part, to them? If not, bearing in mind this is not a Presidential but a Party contest, we must know their views.

Second, it is just not possible to separate a general proposition from the details. What would you have in mind on format, Chairman, choice of interviewers, rules governing interviews, including time and length of interviews themselves, arrangements to ensure equality, impartiality, etc?

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When you have considered these points and have got a little further with the shape of your proposals, perhaps you would discuss them in the first instance with Lord Thonneycroft and advisers.

Ian Trethowan Esq