

September 17, 1980

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE HOME SECRETARY TO THE RT HON LORD CLEDWYN OF PENRHOS

When you, accompanied by the Archbishop of Wales and Sir Goronwy Daniel, came to talk to me last week about Welsh language television broadcasting, I undertook that Nicholas Edwards and I would consider most carefully what you had to say to us.

I had already told Parliament that if our proposal to have Welsh language television programmes on two channels was seen after an experimental period not to be serving the best interests of the Welsh language, the Government would be prepared to change to a single channel.

I do not need to repeat here the arguments you and your colleagues put to us with seriousness and moderation after what was clearly anxious deliberation. But in brief, you asked us to consider arranging for all Welsh language programmes to be shown on the new fourth channel from the start, with the possibility of changing to a two-channel solution after a period if there should be a widespread feeling in Wales that this would after all be in the best interests of the Welsh language.

Nicholas Edwards and I have reflected on our discussion and the conclusion we have come to is that we should accept the single channel proposition you put to us. The Government will table the necessary amendments to the Broadcasting Bill for debate in the House of Lords when it resumes on 6 October and subsequently for consideration by the House of Commons.

The amendments will be tabled as soon as I have been able to work out the details which will need to ensure that a proper service and not just a number of programmes is provided and that the financial arrangements are on a sound basis. I believe that you will find the changes we shall propose fully meet the points you put to me.

In view of the public interest in this subject I am making this letter public.

WL/PD

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