

27 October 1983

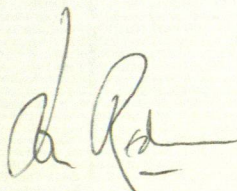
MR TURNBULL

Further to the draft Guildhall speech, I now have the information I needed from British Telecom.

The waiting list for telephones, as they define it, is now under 2,000 compared with 2,500 at the year end. At its worst, it was around 200,000. It should be noted, however, that their definition of a waiting list customer is one whose needs cannot be met owing to a lack of British Telecom equipment: it does not cover problems with installation. They are currently working on a revision of their definition of the waiting list. Nonetheless there has been a startling improvement in customer service in this area.

There are now 21 different styles of basic telephone receiver, incorporating various facilities. There are 3 more on regional trial. Five years ago, before the liberalisation, there were only 2 different styles of phone receiver. In addition, they are nurturing 3 or 4 smaller firms by giving them orders for the production of phone receivers, in order to widen the spread of companies manufacturing for their purposes.

Finally, the rate of tariff reduction on the busiest trunk routes - eg London-Birmingham and London-Manchester - has been up to one-third off the cost of the call unit.



JOHN REDWOOD