

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 1980

WELSH LANGUAGE BROADCASTING

Present: Home Secretary Secretary of State for Wales
Mr Brittan Mr Wyn Roberts
Lord Belstead [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 5 OFFICIALS PRESENT

The Home Secretary had called the meeting to discuss with the Welsh Secretary the policy on Welsh language broadcasting.

2. In the Home Secretary's view, there were now two alternatives: either (1) to go back to the one channel solution, or (2) to do everything possible to build on and strengthen the proposal for the Welsh Language Television Committee. Option (1) had large financial implications and would not certainly satisfy Gwynfor Evans. Option (2) would entail setting the Committee up, announcing a Chairman and members and letting the Committee get on with making recommendations on slotting of programmes etc.

3. The Welsh Secretary reported on the discussions he had recently with Welsh members. During those discussions it had become clear that there was a majority in favour of the status quo. He had pressed home the need for unity amongst the Party on this issue, and thought that he had now secured that, with the exception of Geraint Morgan MP. His assessment of the feeling in Wales was that apart from a powerful articulate minority, there was no great interest in the subject. His conclusion, based on the practical and financial difficulties of the one channel solution and the strong feeling of colleagues that a change would be seen as surrender to blackmail, was that the Government must keep to its decision on the two channel solution. At the same time it was essential to make all that could be made of the Welsh Language Television Committee. The BBC would have to be encouraged to take the attitude that the IBA was taking, and the idea of joint presentation exploited. The people of Wales could not be expected to sacrifice money which would be spent on other important areas for the simple convenience of having to switch channels to watch Welsh broadcasts.

4. The Home Secretary welcomed the Welsh Secretary's reasoned and courageous decision, and said that he and the Home Office must now give all the help possible. An immediate start should be made on the proposals for the Committee, and its composition and membership decided upon as soon as possible. [REDACTED] was a contender for the Chairmanship and it would be necessary to talk

/to him soon.

