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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 September 1980

As you know, the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Wales had a word with the Prime Minister this afternoon about Welsh language broadcasting.

The Home Secretary set out the advice which he and Mr. Edwards had received in the course of their wide-ranging consultations on the matter. He referred in particular to their recent meeting with Lord Cledwyn, the Archbishop of Wales and Sir Goronwy Daniel.

He and Mr. Edwards had been taken aback by the strength of feeling that the Government ought to reconsider its policy.

Against this background, and in view of the threat that the legislation might be amended in the Lords, leaving the Government to seek to change it in the Commons during Mr. Evans threatened hunger strike, Mr. Whitelaw had made up his mind that the Government should reverse its position. He could not recommend going on to colleagues in view of the likely consequences. Mr. Edwards confirmed that he had also tried to look at the problem afresh after taking a break. He still believed that the Government's original decision was probably right, but it was now fostering intolerable consequences. Opinion in the Conservative Party in Wales was now firmly in favour of going back to the manifesto position.

The Home Secretary said that Lord Cledwyn, the Archbishop of Wales and Sir Goronwy Daniel had said that it would be reasonable for the Government to announce that it was reversing its approach to the trial period, and now intended to adopt the single channel option during this period. Mr. Whitelaw saw this as an acceptable basis of presenting a change of position. He had it in mind to announce this on 17 September, although he would first need to discuss the financial implications with the Chancellor and Parliamentary business implications with the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Duchy. Mr. Edwards also drew the Prime Minister's attention to Mr. Evans' subsidiary demands. The Government could not be confident that Mr. Evans would immediately call off his hunger strike threat when this change of approach was announced.

The Prime Minister agreed with the course of action recommended by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Wales.

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You will now no doubt wish to expedite consultations with other Ministers whose agreement is necessary before an announcement can be made. I would be grateful if you could keep us in touch with progress so that we can settle the detailed handling of the proposed announcement.

I am sending a copy of this letter to [REDACTED] in the Welsh Office.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE	
ACTION	[REDACTED]
COPY FOR INFORMATION	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
by Junbo

[REDACTED]
Home Office.