

Mrs Goodman

POST OFFICE

tele **communications**

JOURNAL

ONE SHILLING

AND

SIXPENCE

AUTUMN 1962

Some of the members of the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting which was set up in 1960 to consider the future of the broadcasting services in Britain. Sir Harry Pilkington, the chairman, is fourth from the right. On the extreme right is Billy Wright, the former England international footballer. "The importance of the issues, and the far-reaching nature of certain of the Committee's recommendations, make it wise to avoid precipitate decisions," says the Memorandum presented to Parliament by the Postmaster General.



The Future of Broadcasting

The Government will authorise a second television service for the BBC which will start in London by the middle of 1964 and be extended to the rest of the country later. Part of the new service will be in colour and all of it on 625 lines in ultra high frequency. Later, "there will be scope" for a second television programme under the Independent Television Authority, its shape and date of introduction depending on the future structure of ITA.

These are two of the Government's most important proposals contained in a "Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting" and presented to Parliament by the Postmaster General, Mr. Reginald Bevins, on 4 July, a few days after the Pilkington Committee report was published.

The Memorandum declares that there are obviously two opinions on whether the Pilkington Committee's arguments for a radical change in Independent television, structurally and financially, are valid and goes on to say that the practical difficulties presented by the Pilkington proposals have not been fully appreciated. "The evidence suggests that more people watch its programmes than those of the BBC. In some fields—for example, light theatre, news and religious broadcasting—it has undeniably contributed something of value to television and by bringing competition into the world of television exercised an enlivening effect on television in general."

After stating that the Government believes that an ultimate pattern of six television programmes

should be kept in sight, the Memorandum agrees with the Pilkington Committee's view that educational programmes would best be provided as part of the general service programme and says the Government are prepared to authorise additional hours for both BBC and ITA television services, so long as they are used for programmes for adult education.

The Memorandum also proposes to authorise the BBC to provide a new transmitter as soon as possible to enable a distinctly Welsh television service to be given on a frequency in Band III to South Wales. Stations to serve North-east Wales and South-west Scotland would probably also be needed to implement the conception of self-contained national television services. The Government would discuss with the BBC and ITA the use of the remaining unallotted frequencies in Band III to improve the reception of existing programmes and to extend their coverage. Ultimately, a fully self-contained UHF television service for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be possible in Bands IV and V and when this is provided it will be possible to close down the special VHF services now to be provided as a short term measure.

On the question of local sound broadcasting, the Memorandum says that as there has been little evidence of any general public demand and the Government would be loath to create extra demand on resources which, at present, should be concentrated on national requirements, it would prefer to take cognisance of public reaction before reaching a decision.