

preventing them from expanding within their core business, to consolidate their businesses and benefit from economies of scale, and makes them vulnerable to takeovers from outside ITV.

Programme Quotas

Historically, the ITV companies have operated an unofficial quota to show 86 per cent domestic originated programmes before midnight and 75 per cent afterwards. From 1993, the only statutory quota will be the EC minimum that a majority of programmes should be of EC origin. However, as part of the "quality threshold" which all ITV companies had to pass in order to win their licences, the ITC stipulates that at least 65 per cent of hours of programming transmitted within a calendar year must be originally produced or commissioned by ITV. Consequently, not more than 35 per cent should be acquired programming originally made for another market. They will also have to commission at least 25 per cent of programming from the independent sector. Under the terms of their licences, ITV companies must transmit a proportion of regional programmes, news, children's, factual and religious programming.

Acquired films and programming on the BBC accounted for 22 per cent of hours transmitted in 1991/2, although there is no official quota. This is likely to decrease in the run-up to Charter renewal in 1996, as the BBC has already stated its intention to concentrate on "distinctive", high quality programming and to cut down on the number of imports which it shows.

Advertising Regulations

Advertising is restricted to a maximum of 7.5 minutes per hour peak-time (07.00 - 09.00 and 18.00 - 23.00) and seven minutes per hour at other times. Commercials advertising tobacco, spirits, gambling, political parties and religious groups are all prohibited. Static logo sponsorship is allowed on Channel 4 and ITV.

For satellite channels the ITC sets a maximum of 9 minutes of advertising per hour.

Other Restrictions

In October 1988, the Government introduced legislation which banned broadcasters from transmitting statements supporting or on behalf of certain proscribed organisations associated with terrorism in Northern Ireland. This forces broadcasters wishing to carry news items, current affairs programmes, etc., which might include such material to dub the relevant sections, with actors to read out the words spoken by such organisation's representatives.

All broadcasters must also comply with the Obscene Publications Act, and the Official Secrets Act.