

Conservative Research Department

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KB/SEN

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr. Richard Ryder,
10 Downing Street,
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Dear Richard,

8th May 1980

Public Opinion Background Notes 10-14

In recent weeks it has not proved possible to produce a regular weekly note on public opinion based on results of our Gallup tracking research. The tracking exercise has continued and I thought copies of the missing background notes on public opinion might be of interest.

I would hope that future numbers of this weekly background note will be produced more quickly.

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D.K. Britto.

Encs.

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Public Opinion Background Note 10

1. Introduction Produced 5th April 1980

The results from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are taken from a survey conducted after the Budget. The survey shows a further narrowing of Labour's lead over the Conservatives - down to 3%. This is the smallest Labour lead we have found since early February. The proportion of the electorate saying they would vote Conservative has increased slightly to 40%, the proportion saying they would vote Labour has fallen for the second week running and now stands at 43%. These figures are of course unpublished but are in line with the results of the post - Budget M.O.R.I. poll published in the Sunday Times (March 30th) which showed a 4% Labour lead.

2. Voting Intention.

Full details of movements in support for the main parties as shown in our 'tracking' study are detailed below:-

Voting Intention.

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
May 1979 (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*42		43½	12	2½	-1½
<u>1980</u>					
6/11 Feb.	37½	42	18	2½	-4½
13/18 Feb.	39½	42½	15½	2½	-3
20/25 Feb.	38	47	13	2	-9
27/3 March	36	47	14½	2½	-11
5/10 March	37	46	14½	2½	-9
11/17 March	37	49½	11½	2	-12½
20/24 March	38	45½	13½	2	-7½
27/31 March	40	43	14	3	-3

*First Gallup post election survey.

The latest published Gallup poll was in the Daily Telegraph on March 20th and showed a 12½% Labour lead - our unpublished post-budget poll shows a considerable narrowing of this lead down to 3%.

3. Government Record.

Our tracking study shows a considerable increase in the popularity of the Conservative Government after the Budget - up from 32% approving the Government's record before the Budget to 38% approving afterwards. This is the highest level of approval for the Government's record since early November 1979.

Government Record

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	%	%	%
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
6/11 Feb	30	55	15
13/18 Feb	31	58	11
20/25 Feb	30	57	14
27/3 March	28	58	14
5/10 March	31	56	13
11/17 March	30	59	11
20/24 March	32	56	12
27/31 March	38	49	13

*First Gallup post-election survey.

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Almost no change in the popularity of the leaders of the three main political parties in our latest tracking study - see below for details:-

Popularity of Political Leaders

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dissat.</u>	<u>DK.</u>	<u>Is Good</u>	<u>Is not</u>	<u>DK.</u>	<u>Is good</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>DK.</u>
	%	%	%	<u>Leader</u>	%	%	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Not</u>	%
6/11 Feb	37	55	9	50	36	14	60	18	22
13/18 Feb	41	53	5	49	40	11	62	15	21
20/25 Feb	39	54	7	50	37	13	58	18	24
27/3 March	37	56	7	53	33	14	57	18	25
5/10 March	37	57	6	52	34	13	58	17	24

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u> %	<u>Dissat.</u> %	<u>DK.</u> %	<u>Is Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Is Not</u> %	<u>DK.</u> %	<u>Is Good</u> <u>Leader</u> %	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
11/17 March	38	56	6	53	35	12	60	19	21
20/24 March	40	55	5	51	34	15	60	18	22
27/31 March	41	52	7	53	35	12	60	18	22

5. Communication.

In the week after the Budget we found 20% of the electorate claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government over the previous seven days - 11% in the previous week. On the negative side we found 36% claiming to have heard something making them feel less favourably inclined towards the Government - 31% in the previous week. 44% claimed to have heard nothing making them more or less favourable inclined towards the Government over the previous seven days - 58% in the previous week.

Among those claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government - 10% mentioned the Budget - the only item to get a significant positive mention. On the negative side 17% mentioned the budget, 5% prescription charges, 4% cost of living and 4% public spending cuts.