

(F)

## Conservative Research Department

32 Smith Square,

~~24 Old Queen Street~~, London SW1H 9HX Telephone 01-222 9511

---

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Richard Ryder, Esq.,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1.

9th April 1980.

*Dear Richard,*

### Public Opinion Background Note 9.

I attach a copy of the latest of my Public Opinion Background Notes. This Note is based largely on the results from our latest "tracking" study that was conducted before the Budget.

*Yours  
D.K.*

D.K. BRITTO.

*P.S. Largely for the record - post-budget  
'tracking' study available nearby.*

CONFIDENTIAL

Public Opinion Background Note 9

(produced 30th March 1980)

1. Introduction

The results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study are taken from a survey conducted before the Budget - from 20th to 24th March. The interviewing for the 'tracking' study that will be available immediately after Easter will have been conducted after the Budget and will provide an indication of immediate public reactions to the Budget. It would be misleading to attempt to build too much on the results from the first post-budget 'tracking' survey as it is the long and medium term effects of public reactions to the Budget that we should be concerned about.

It is to be expected that the Daily Telegraph on Thursday will carry a report in a Gallup Survey on immediate reactions to the Budget measures. The results of the Marden survey conducted in Greater London by telephone on the evening of Budget day should be treated with the greatest caution due to the problems of getting a representative sample using telephone interviewing in the United Kingdom.

Our latest 'tracking' study showed a  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$  Labour lead over the Conservatives, in May 1971 at a roughly equivalent point in the 1970-1974 Conservative Government, Labour had a lead of  $12\%$  over the Conservatives, by June 1971 this had widened to  $18\%$  and increased to  $21\frac{1}{2}\%$  in July 1971.

2. Voting Intention.

Our latest figures show a small fall in support for Labour with almost no change in our support and a slight increase in Liberal support - all the changes are well within the bands of error inherent in any public opinion survey. The table below gives details of the results from some recent 'tracking' surveys.

	<u>Voting Intention</u>				
	<u>Con</u> %	<u>Lab</u> %	<u>Lib</u> %	<u>Other</u> %	<u>Lead</u> %
May 1979 (G.E.)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June 1979*	42	$43\frac{1}{2}$	12	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$-1\frac{1}{2}$
<u>1980</u>					
6/11 Feb	$37\frac{1}{2}$	42	18	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$-4\frac{1}{2}$
13/18 Feb	40	43	15	2	-3
20/25 Feb	38	47	13	2	-9
27/3 March	36	47	$14\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	-11
5/10 March	37	46	$14\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	-9
11/17 March	37	$49\frac{1}{2}$	$11\frac{1}{2}$	2	$-12\frac{1}{2}$
20/24 March	38	$45\frac{1}{2}$	$13\frac{1}{2}$	2	$-7\frac{1}{2}$

\* First Gallup post-election survey.

### 3. Government Record

Slight improvement again in Government popularity - up to 32% approving of Government record. Improvement not statistically significant and it should be remembered research conducted before the budget.

#### 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

\* First Gallup post-election survey

### 4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight improvement in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - improvement not statistically significant and Mrs Thatcher's popularity (40% satisfied with her as Prime Minister) still remains far short of the levels reached in October and early November 1979.

Popularity of Political Leaders

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

5. Communication

Our latest tracking study found 58% of respondents claiming to have seen or heard nothing making them more or less favourably inclined towards the Government - 11% something making them more favourably inclined and 31% something making them less favourably inclined.

Items mentioned as making electors more favourably inclined towards the Government included - Common Market 3%, Relations with Unions 3%, the Leader 2% and the Olympic Games 1%. Items mentioned on the less favourable side included - Olympic Games 8%, cost of living 6%, Public Spending Cuts 4%, relations with Unions 3% and the Leader 3%.

6. M.O.R.I. Survey on Budget

An M.O.R.I. poll published in the Sunday Times (30th March 1980) and conducted on the Thursday and Friday after Budget day found a widespread view that it was good for Britain, even though very few people expected to be better off in the short run.

Do You Think the Budget Proposals Generally are a Good Thing or a Bad Thing?

	<u>For You Personally</u>		<u>For the Country</u>	
	June 1979	March 1980	June 1979	March 1980
Good	26%	40%	39%	47%
Bad	50%	40%	39%	36%
Don't Know	24%	20%	22%	17%

The voting intention section of the M.O.R.I. study is encouraging with Labour's lead down to 4% - we need, however, to await confirmation from our tracking study.