

CONFIDENTIAL

Public Opinion Background Note 12

(Produced 20th April 1980)

1. Introduction

The results from our latest 'tracking' study are the same as those carried in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday 17th April 1980. The research which was conducted between 10th-14th April 1980 found a 8½% Labour lead compared with a 12½% Labour lead in the previous published Gallup poll (conducted 11th-17th March). This same published Gallup poll included a number of questions designed to test public reactions to the budget - unlike the previous M.O.R.I. survey on reactions to the Budget the research was conducted after the immediate Budget publicity had abated and is likely to provide a better indicator of the long term effects of the Budget. Full details of the results from the research are given in the final section of this note.

2. Voting Intention

Recent trends in support for the main parties as found in our 'tracking' surveys are shown below :

	<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	43½	12	2½	- 1½
<u>1980</u>					
11/17 March	37	49½	11½	2	-12½
20/24 March	38	45½	13½	2	- 7½
27/31 March	40	43	14	3	- 3
2/ 8 April	39	45	13	3	- 6
10/14 April	36½	45	15	3½	- 8½

* First Gallup post-election survey.

In the week immediately after the Budget Labour's lead fell to 3% - the lowest since early February, since then their lead has widened to 8½%.

2. Government Record

Our post - budget tracking studies have shown an improvement in Government popularity that has been maintained (with a slight fall) in our latest study.

Cont'd../2

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
13/18 June 1979*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
11/17 March	30	59	11
20/24 March	32	56	12
27/31 March	38	49	13
2/ 8 April	36	51	13
10/14 April	36	52	12

* First Gallup post-election survey.

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Almost no change in popularity of Mrs Thatcher and Callaghan in the latest study but fairly large jump in popularity of Steel.

Popularity of Political Leaders

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Disat</u>	<u>D.K.</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not</u>	<u>D.K.</u>	<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Is Not</u>	<u>D.K.</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
11/17 March	38	59	6	53	35	12	60	19	21
20/24 March	40	56	5	51	34	15	60	18	22
27/31 March	41	49	7	53	35	12	60	18	22
2/ 8 April	40	51	6	56	31	12	55	19	26
10/14 April	41	54	5	55	33	12	60	19	21

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4. Communication

In the week 10th-14th April we found 7% of the electorate claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined toward the Government in the previous seven days. When asked for reasons - 2% mentioned international affairs and 2% relations with the unions. In the same week 19% of the electorate claimed they have heard something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days - 4% mentioned international affairs, 4% cost of living, 3% public spending cuts, 2% relations with unions and 2% policies in general.

5. Published Polls

(a) Gallup Post-Budget Survey

The Gallup poll published in the Daily Telegraph (17th April 1980) and conducted 10th-14th April found 50% of electors thinking Geoffrey Howe was doing a good job and 58% believing the Budget was fair.

On specific measures Gallup found:-

	<u>Approve/Disapprove of Budget Measures</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Increase in pensions, with a £10 Christmas bonus (%)	83	15	2
Increase in price of cigarettes, cigars & tobacco (%)	65	28	7
Supplementary benefits to strikers families will be cut by £12 per week (%)	64	29	7
Increase in child benefit (%)	62	31	7
Increase in price of beer, wines and spirits (%)	60	32	8

(Cont'd../4)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Unemployment benefits no longer to be related to previous earnings (%)	42	42	16
Some social security benefits not to rise at the same rate as inflation (%)	39	37	24
Road tax to be raised from £50 to £60 a year (%)	37	55	8
Prescription charges to be raised to £1.00 (%)	34	63	3
Increase in the price of petrol (%)	22	71	7

6. Gallup Attitudes to E.E.C.

The Gallup poll published in the Sunday Telegraph (20th April 1980) and conducted 2nd-8th April found a majority of British electors saying they would vote to leave the Common Market if they had the opportunity - 27% said they would vote to stay in 59% would vote to leave, 7% would not vote and 7% said they did not know how they would vote.

The majority (57%) of the electorate think Britain's membership of the community is a bad thing for the country and only 22% think it is good for Britain.