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## Conservative Research Department

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KB/SEN

Director: ALAN HOWARTH

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

*Dear Richard,*

5th March 1980

### Public Opinion - Background Note 5

As arranged, I enclose a copy of the background note I produced for Alan Howarth's Political Meeting last Monday. The note was based on the findings of our Gallup Tracking Research up to Monday 25th February.

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D.K. Britto.

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Public Opinion - Background  
Note 5 (Produced 2nd March 1980)

1. This background note is based on the results of our latest Gallup 'tracking' study completed on 25th February 1980.

2. Voting Intention

The results from our latest tracking study completed last Monday (25th February) before Mrs. Thatcher's appearance on Panorama and the vote of censure debate show an increase in Labour's lead from the 3 per cent I was able to report last week to 9 per cent in our latest study. Support for Labour increased at the expense of both the Conservatives and the Liberals. Full details of the trend in voting intention since the start of the year are given below:-

Voting Intention

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
9-14 Jan	36	45	16	3	-9
17 - 22 Jan	38	42	17	3	-4
23 - 28 Jan	40	39½	18	2½	+½
30 Jan - 4 Feb	37	45	16	2	-8
6 - 11 Feb	37½	42	18	2½	-4½
13 - 18 Feb	40	43	15	2	-3
20 - 25 Feb	38	47	13	2	-9

In terms of Labour lead we are now back to the situation we faced at the start of the year. The only encouraging factor is the continuation of the downward trend in national support for the Liberals.

3. Government Record

The electorate's approval of the record of the Government declined slightly during the last week for which we have information. It does however still stand just above the low point reached at the start of February - but only just!

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Government Record

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
9 - 14 Jan	33	53	14
17 - 22 Jan	32	56	12
23 - 28 Jan	35	52	13
30 Jan - 4 Feb	29	58	13
6 - 11 Feb	30	55	15
13 - 18 Feb	31	58	11
20 - 25 Feb	30	57	14

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs. Thatcher's personal popularity has dropped very slightly since last week (we found 39% of electors satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister (41% in previous week). There was almost no change in Callaghan's popularity although Steel's dropped.

5. Communication

In the week up to 25th February 16% of electors claimed to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government (13% in the previous week) and 28% something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government (33% in the previous week).

When we asked our respondents what they had seen or heard in the previous seven days tending to make them more or less favourably inclined towards the Government we found:-

<u>Heard making them more favourably inclined towards the Government</u>	%	<u>Heard making them less favourably inclined towards the Government</u>	%
Relations with Unions Trade Union Reform/TU Law/Legislation on Secondary Picketing	6	Cost of Living	7
Steel Strike/Handling	4	Relations with Unions	5
The Leader	2	Public Spending Cuts	5
		Steel strike/Handling	4
		International Affairs	2
		The Leader	2

(Percentages based on total numbers interviewed by Gallup - just under 1,000 electors).