

Public Opinion Background Note 11(Produced 13th April 1980)1. Introduction.

The first of our post - budget Gallup 'tracking' studies conducted from 27th - 31st March found a Labour lead of 3% compared with 7½% in the last pre - budget tracking study. Our latest study conducted 2nd - 8th April found Labour's lead had increased to 6%. The results of our first post - Budget tracking study are in line with the findings from the M.O.R.I. Budget survey published in the Sunday Times on March 30th which showed a 4% Labour lead.

2. Voting Intention.

Trends in support for the main parties as found in our 'tracking' surveys are shown 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	40	43	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
2/8 April	39	45	13	3	-6

\* 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The latest published Gallup poll was in the Daily Telegraph on March 20th and showed a 12½% Labour lead - our latest unpublished 'tracking' survey shows this lead having been halved.

2. Government Record.

Our post - budget tracking studies show an improvement of Government popularity in the wake of the Budget. Our first post-budget tracking study found Government popularity at its highest level since early November 1979, this however declined slightly in our second post-budget survey.

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
2/8 April	36	51	13

\* First Gallup post-election survey.

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

Slight improvement in Callaghan's popularity over our last three weekly tracking studies and fall in Steel's popularity in our latest survey. No significant change in Mrs Thatcher's popularity.

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</u>	<u>Is</u>		<u>Is good</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>D.K.</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
6/11 Feb	37	55	9	50	36	14	60	18	22
13/18 Feb	41	58	5	49	40	11	62	15	21
20/25 Feb	39	57	7	50	37	13	58	18	24
27/3 March	37	58	7	53	33	14	57	18	25
5/10 March	37	56	6	52	34	13	58	17	24
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

4. Communication.

In the week 2-8 April we found 16% of the electorate claiming to have heard something making them more favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days. When asked for reasons 6% mentioned the Budget, 4% relations with the Unions, 2% the Common Market, 2% the Leader and 2% policies in general. In the same week 34% of the electorate claimed to have heard something making them less favourably inclined towards the Government in the previous seven days - 14% mentioned the Budget as the reason, 5% prescription charges, 5% cost of living, 3% relations with Unions, 3% pensions and 2% public expenditure cuts.