

Conservative Research Department

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Director: ALAN HOWARTH

Mr Ian Gow, MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1

30th September 1980

Dear Ian,

PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 35

I attach a copy of the brief note that sets out the main findings from our latest Gallup 'tracking' study. This survey was conducted from 17th to 22nd September and found a 12% Labour lead. This lead can be compared with the 9½% lead Gallup found in their last published opinion poll (conducted 10th/15th September).

This latest public opinion background note, as well as the results from our tracking research, includes details of a whole series of opinion polls conducted in the lead-up period to the Labour Party Conference.

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PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 35

(produced 28th September 1980)

1. Introduction

The latest published Gallup poll (Daily Telegraph 18th September) conducted from 10th to 15th September 1980 found a 9½% Labour lead. Our latest unpublished Gallup tracking study conducted from 17th to 22nd September found a 12% Labour lead which can be compared to the 10% Labour lead Marplan found in a survey conducted on September 22nd and published in the Sun on September 25th and a 15% Labour lead found in a O.R.C. survey conducted for T.V. Eye from 5th to 8th September. It would appear that Labour's lead has settled at about 12% compared with a lead of around 4% in August. The jump to a Labour lead of 12% took place immediately after the publication of the July unemployment figures on 27th August.

2. Voting Intention

Details of the trend in support for the main parties from both published Gallup polls and our unpublished tracking studies are shown in the table below and in the attached graph.

VOTING INTENTION

	<u>Con</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Lib</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Lead</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>					
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	5.5	+7.0
13/18 June*	42	43.5	12	2.5	-1.5
<u>1980</u>					
4/9 June	39.5	43	15.5	2	-3.5
11/16 June	40.5	45	11.5	3	-4.5**
18/23 June	39	43	15	3	-4.0
25/30 June	37	45	15	3	-8.0
2/7 July	37.5	44.5	14.5	3.5	-7.0
10/14 July	40	43.5	14	2.5	-3.5**
16/21 July	37	44.5	15	3.5	-7.5
23/28 July	33.5	49	14	3.5	-15.5
30 July/4 August	38.5	42.5	16	3	-4.0
6/11 August	40	43.5	13.5	3	-3.5
14/18 August	38.5	44	14.5	3	-5.5**
20/26 August	37.5	45.5	13.0	4	-8.0
27 August/ 1 September	37	49	11.5	2.5	-12.0
2/8 September	36.5	48.5	12.5	2.5	-12.0
10/15 September	35.5	45	16.5	3	-9.5 **
17/22 September	35	47	14	4	-12.0

* First Gallup post-election survey

** Published polls

Support for the Liberals has fluctuated slightly over recent weeks but we have no evidence to indicate the start of a major movement of support to them.

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3. Government Record

30% of the electorate in our latest study approved of the record of the Government to date - Gallup have found almost no change in the rating given to the Government in this measure since just after the publication of the July unemployment figures in late August when they recorded a sharp drop in approval for the Government.

For full details of the results we have obtained from our standard Government record tracking questions please see table below and attached graph.

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June*	34	41	25
<u>1980</u>			
4/9 June	35	54	11
11/16 June	35	52	13
18/24 June	33	55	12
25/30 June	31	56	13
2/7 July	31	56	13
10/14 July	33	54	13
16/21 July	35	52	13
23/28 July	31	58	12
30 July/ 4 August	34	53	13
6/11 August	34	55	11
14/18 August	35	53	12
20/26 August	35	53	12
27 August/1st September	31	56	13
2/8 September	31	58	11
10/15 September	29	57	13
17/22 September	30	59	12

* first Post Election survey

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Mrs Thatcher's personal popularity remains at the lowest level we have recorded since the May 1979 General Election. There has been a slight (but not statistically significant) improvement in Mr Callaghan's personal popularity - it must however be remembered that this survey was conducted before the Labour Party Conference started. Our latest study found no change in the personal popularity of Mr Steel which has remained high since the Liberal Party Conference.

For full details please see table on the next page and attached graph.

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Popularity of Political Leaders (continued)

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Callaghan</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>	<u>Sat</u>	<u>Dis-</u>	<u>Don't</u>
	%	sat	Know	%	sat	Know	%	sat	Know
4/9 June	40	55	5	50	38	12	59	19	22
11/16 June	43	52	5	48	37	15	57	18	25
18/23 June	40	55	6	44	42	13	57	20	23
25/30 June	39	55	5	45	41	13	55	20	25
2/7 July	38	56	6	45	42	13	61	19	20
10/14 July	41	51	7	46	41	13	53	24	23
16/21 July	39	54	7	49	35	16	55	18	27
23/28 July	35	57	8	52	35	13	55	18	27
30 July/ 4 August	40	54	6	47	38	15	55	20	25
6/11 August	39	55	6	47	38	15	54	20	25
14/18 August	41	54	5	52	34	14	58	18	24
20/26 August	41	53	6	47	38	15	52	21	28
27 Aug/1 Sept	38	56	6	48	37	15	50	21	29
2/8 Sept	35	59	6	51	34	15	57	18	25
10/15 Sept	37	58	5	48	39	13	59	19	22
17/22 Sept	35	59	5	50	36	14	59	17	25

5. Issues

Our weekly tracking questions on public reaction to a range of current issues found yet again almost no change. The table below shows trends in reactions to some of the main issues since early July - it is interesting to note that on almost all issues there has been almost no change in the public's reactions to the Government since early July. The exception is with regard to the public's perception of Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister - here we found in early July that 30% of the electorate claimed that having Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister made them feel more favourable towards the Government - in our latest survey this had fallen to 23%.

ISSUES

	<u>10/14</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>16/21</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>23/28</u> <u>July</u> %	<u>30 July</u> <u>-4 Aug</u> %	<u>6/11</u> <u>Aug</u> %	<u>14/18</u> <u>Aug</u> %	<u>20/26</u> <u>Aug</u> %	<u>27 Aug</u> <u>-1 Sep</u> %	<u>2/8</u> <u>Sep</u> %	<u>10/15</u> <u>Sept</u> %	<u>17/22</u> <u>Sept</u> %
<u>Mrs Thatcher as Prime Minister</u>											
More favourable	30	28	26	29	28	29	26	26	25	25	23
Less favourable	45	41	47	43	47	43	43	46	47	48	47
No difference	24	29	25	26	21	26	30	26	26	26	28
Don't Know	1	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>The Government's Taxation Policy</u>											
More favourable	27	24	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	31
Less favourable	43	42	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	36
No difference	21	22	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	17
Don't Know	9	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	16
<u>The Government's Policy on Trade Union Reforms</u>											
More favourable	45	43	44	46	46	48	47	47	44	47	45
Less favourable	30	29	27	24	28	25	26	28	30	27	26
No difference	11	12	11	13	11	11	11	10	11	11	14
Don't Know	14	16	18	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15
<u>Public Spending Cuts</u>											
More favourable	27	23	24	28	28	25	26	25	23	27	24
Less favourable	57	60	59	56	58	56	58	60	61	55	57
No difference	11	11	10	11	9	12	10	10	9	12	11
Don't Know	5	7	7	6	6	7	7	5	7	6	8
<u>The Cost of Living</u>											
More favourable	11	8	10	8	11	11	11	10	8	10	10
Less favourable	69	70	68	65	67	64	64	67	70	69	66
No difference	17	19	19	21	17	22	21	19	17	17	21
Don't Know	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	4	4	3	3

ISSUES (continued)

	<u>10/14</u> <u>July</u>	<u>16/21</u> <u>July</u>	<u>23/28</u> <u>July</u>	<u>30 July</u> <u>-4 Aug</u>	<u>6/11</u> <u>Aug</u>	<u>14/18</u> <u>Aug</u>	<u>20/26</u> <u>Aug</u>	<u>27 Aug</u> <u>-1 Sep</u>	<u>2/8</u> <u>Sep</u>	<u>10/15</u> <u>Sept</u>	<u>17/22</u> <u>Sept</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>The Level of Unemployment</u>											
More favourable	5	6	5	6	6	6	4	5	5	.4	6
Less favourable	77	71	76	72	74	72	76	77	80	82	76
No difference	15	17	15	18	15	19	16	16	12	12	15
Don't Know	3	7	4	5	5	3	4	2	3	2	4
<u>The Government's Pay Policy</u>											
More favourable	27	29	25	30	32	31	31	32	29	33	31
Less favourable	41	38	42	39	42	38	40	37	41	37	36
No difference	17	18	17	16	11	16	14	15	15	14	17
Don't Know	15	16	16	15	15	15	15	16	15	16	16
<u>The Government's Policy on selling Council Houses</u>											
More favourable	-	-	-	51	52	52	53	51	54	51	51
Less favourable	-	-	-	23	26	26	24	27	24	27	23
No difference	-	-	-	19	14	15	15	16	14	11	20
Don't Know	-	-	-	7	8	6	8	7	8	15	6

6.. Published Polls(a) System Three (published Glasgow Herald 25th September 1980)

A poll conducted only in Scotland by System Three from August 25th to September 3rd found S.N.P. support at 14% compared to 17% at the 1979 General Election. Support for the Conservatives remains much below that in the General Election whilst Labour's support is much higher. Details of the results of recent System Three polls are given below:-

	<u>September</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>Aug</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>July</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>June</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>May</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>April</u> <u>1980</u> %	<u>General Election</u> <u>May 1979</u> %
Conservative	20	21	22	-	23	-	31
Labour	57	53	52	-	53	-	42
S.N.P.	14	17	15	-	15	-	17
Liberal	9	8	9	-	8	-	9

(b) Gallup (published Sunday Telegraph 28th September 1980)

A Gallup survey published in the Sunday Telegraph (28th September 1980) and conducted between 17th and 22nd September found a majority of the general public wanted Mr Callaghan to continue as leader of the Labour Party. Gallup found 58% of the electorate (70% of Labour supporters) who thought that Mr Callaghan should continue as Labour leader - in 1979 (also just before the Labour Party Conference) 67% of the electorate (81% of Labour supporters) took this view.

Gallup also asked a series of questions on public attitudes to some problems currently being faced by the Labour Party. They found 69% of the electorate taking the view that M.P.'s should have to submit themselves for re-selection by the local party and only 16% thought the choice should be automatic. Almost one in two electors wanted the leader of the Labour party to be chosen by an electoral college composed of M.P.'s, trade unionists and party members and a slightly greater percentage wanted a similar group to have more say in the Party's manifesto. In addition more than one in two (55%) of the electorate believed that it is a good thing for the Labour Party to have a close relationship with the trade unions. Only one in three took the opposite view - 77% of Labour supporters approved of the relationship (15% disapproved). It is the first time any polling company has attempted to ask questions in this area of Labour Party reform and it is tempting to question the way Gallup actually phrased the questions.

On the key question of whether Labour is seen as a divided Party - 83% of the electorate saw them as being divided (only 77% after the May 1979 Election).

(c) M.O.R.I. (published Sunday Times 28th September 1980)

An M.O.R.I. Poll conducted between July 24th and 29th but only published on 28th September looked at attitudes to a possible change of Labour leadership and to some possible Labour policies at the next election. When looking only at supporters of the Labour Party they found that the following percentages of supporters would stay loyal to the Party despite a change of leadership:- 90% said they would remain loyal to the Party if Healey became leader, 90% if Shore was leader, 84% Foot, 82% Hattersley 76% Silkin and 73% Benn.

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(c)

Looking at attitudes among Labour supporters to possible Labour policies at the next election M.O.R.I. found:-

I would like you to tell me whether or not you think the Government should:-

(figures show the percentage of Labour votes favouring policies minus those opposing particular policies)

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1980</u>
Spend more money on retraining the unemployed	N.A.	+67
Introduce import controls	N.A.	+64
Take Britain out of the Common Market	+27	+54
Introduce a wealth tax	+19	+48
Keep remaining grammar schools	+30	+42
Sell more council houses to occupants	+47	+37
Introduce an incomes policy	N.A.	+36
Reduce tax on company profits	+ 5	+23
Reduce spending on defence	- 7	+16
Abolish the House of Lords	0	+ 3
Nationalise the banks	-21	-17

Labour supporters tend to be against Europe but also in favour of keeping remaining grammar schools and tend not to be in favour of nationalising the banks.

(d) O.R.A.C. (published Times 27th September 1980)

A poll conducted by Opinion Research and Communication between August 29th and August 1st and published in the Times on 27th September looked at public attitudes to picketing and related issues. The detailed answers O.R.A.C. obtained are given below:-

Here are some ideas on picketing. For each one I read out would you say whether you agree with it or not.

	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	
	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Each union should draw up a code of picketing and expel from the union any member breaking that code	90	90	7	7	3	3
Only members of the union or unions involved in a strike should be allowed to picket. Others should be subject to removal by the police	86	85	11	11	3	4
Companies whose businesses are harmed by picketing when they themselves are not involved in the strike should be able to sue the union concerned for damages	76	71	17	21	7	8

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(d) O.R.A.C. (continued)

	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	
	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>	<u>All Members</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Workers not involved in a strike who lose wages because of secondary picketing should be able to sue the <u>union concerned for compensation</u>	74	68	19	24	7	8
It should be a legal offence for a picket to threaten anybody with having their union card taken away if they refuse to join a strike.	72	69	23	26	5	5
The number of pickets allowed on any gate should not number than half a dozen.	72	67	24	30	4	8

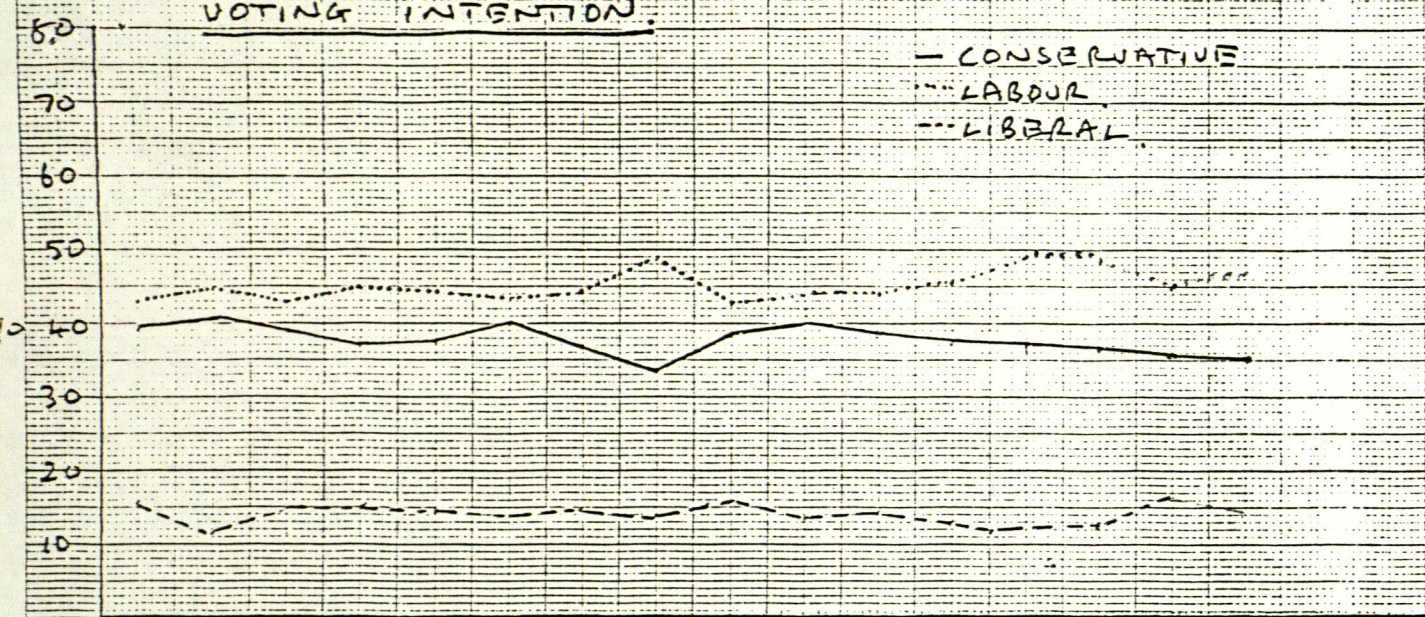
They found 86% of the electorate (85% of trade unionists) agreeing that 'only members of the union or unions involved in a strike should be allowed to picket. Others should be subject to removal by the police'. 76% of the electorate (71% of trade unionists) agreed that 'companies whose businesses are harmed by picketing when they themselves are not involved in the strike should be able to sue the union concerned for damages'. 74% of the electorate (68% trade unionists) agreed that 'workers not involved in a strike who lose wages because of secondary picketing should be able to sue the union concerned for compensation'. 72% of the electorate (69% of trade unionists) agreed that 'it should be a legal offence for a picket to threaten anybody with having their union card taken away if they refuse to join a strike'. 72% of the electorate (67% of trade unionists) agreed that 'the number of pickets allowed on any gate should not number more than half a dozen'. 90% of the electorate (90% of trade unionists) agreed that 'each union should draw up a code of picketing and expel from the union any member breaking that code'.

(e) Marplan (published Sun September 25th 1980)

A Marplan poll published in the Sun on September 25th and conducted on 22nd September looked at public attitudes to the Labour Party. They found 58% of the electorate (62% of Labour voters) thinking that Jim Callaghan should stay as Labour's leader, 31% (31% Labour voters) taking the view that he should resign and 11% (7% of Labour voters) not answering the question. When asked who they thought should be the next leader of the Labour Party 38% of Labour voters named Denis Healey, 18% Shirley Williams 20% Tony Benn, 11% Michael Foot and 4% Peter Shore.

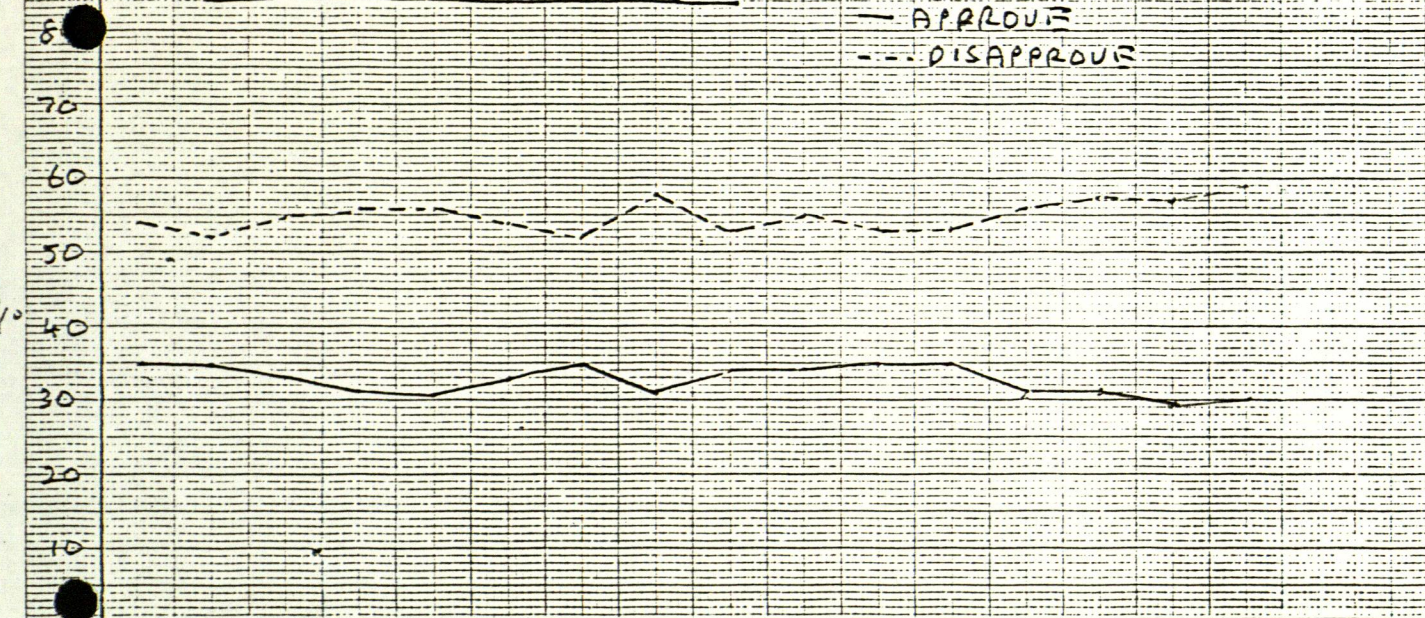
When Marplan asked about possible constitutional changes in the Labour Party they found 50% of Labour supporters (47% of the electorate) taking the view that the manifesto should be produced by the National Executive and 35% of Labour voters (37% of the electorate) that it should be produced by the Labour leadership. 73% of Labour supporters (68% of the electorate) agreed with the idea of M.P.'s having to stand for re-selection by local parties before an election. On the question of the Labour leadership 58% of Labour supporters thought the Labour leader should be elected by Labour M.P.'s, trade unions and local parties and 38% by Labour M.P.'s only.

VOTING INTENTION



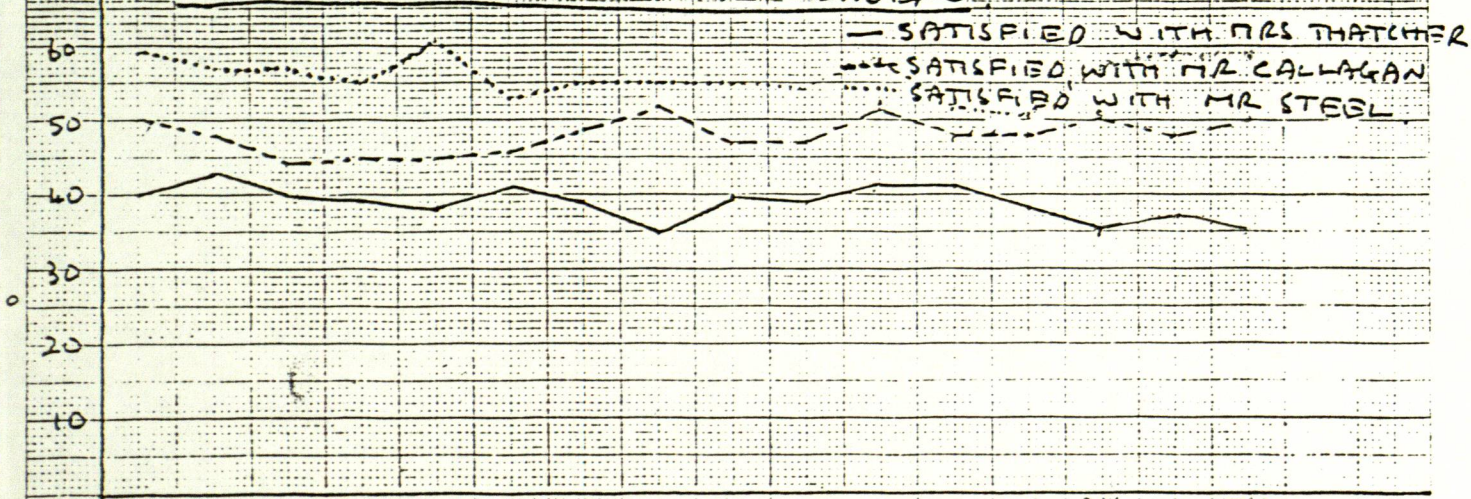
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GOVERNMENT RECORD



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug 2/5 9/15 17/22
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POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS



4/9 11/16 18/23 25/30 2/7 10/14 16/21 23/28 30 JUL 6/11 14/18 20/26 27 Aug 2/5 9/15 17/22
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