

ms
PUBLIC OPINION BACKGROUND NOTE 104

(produced 14th March 1982)

Box

1. Introduction

The interviewing for our latest Gallup study was conducted before the Budget - from 3rd to 8th March. This unpublished Gallup study found 33½% claiming they would vote labour, 30% Conservative, 21% Social Democrat (or Alliance) and 4% for 'other' parties.

An MORI survey conducted on the day after the Budget (March 10th) and published in the Daily Star on Friday March 12th found a Conservative lead in terms of voting intention. MORI found 37% claiming they would vote Conservative, 33% Labour, 19% SDP (or Alliance), 8% Liberal and 3% for 'other' parties. Until we have confirmation of these findings from later research, the results of this single poll need to be treated with a degree of caution.

Since early December 1981 Alliance support has collapsed - our 'tracking' study in early December (2/7) found 51½% claiming they would vote Liberal or Social Democrat - in the latest Gallup study (3/8 March) this was down to 32½% and in the MORI post-Budget study down to 26%. The table on the following page shows the trend of support since June 1981.

VOTING INTENTION

(unprompted question, excluding don't knows)

	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>							
May (GE)	43.9	36.9	13.8	-	5.5	+7.0	13.8
13/16 June*	42.0	43.5	13.0	-	5.0	-9.0	13.0
<u>1981</u>							
3/8 June	31.0	40.0	14.0	12.5	2.5	-9.0	26.5
9/15 June	29.5	37.5	18.0	12.5	2.5	-8.0**	30.5
16/22 June	32.0	37.0	15.5	13.0	2.5	-5.0	28.5
24/30 June	29.0	40.0	17.0	12.0	2.0	-11.0	29.0
1/6 July	30.5	39.5	14.0	13.0	3.0	-9.0	27.0
8/13 July	30.0	40.5	14.5	12.0	3.0	-10.5**	26.5
15/20 July	29.0	36.0	16.0	17.0	2.0	-7.0	33.0
22/27 July	26.0	38.0	13.0	21.0	2.0	-12.0	34.0
29 July/3 Aug	25.5	40.0	11.5	20.5	2.5	-14.5	32.0
5/10 Aug	27.0	36.0	15.0	19.0	4.0	-9.0	33.0
12/17 Aug	28.0	38.5	13.0	19.0	1.5	-10.5**	32.0
19/24 Aug	29.0	34.0	17.0	18.0	2.0	-5.0	35.0
26/31 Aug	26.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	2.0	-15.0	31.0
1/7 Sept	25.0	41.0	15.0	16.0	3.0	-16.0	31.0
9/14 Sept	32.0	36.5	11.5	17.5	2.5	-4.5**	29.0
16/21 Sept	25.0	36.5	16.0	19.0	3.5	-11.5	35.0
23/28 Sept	24.5	33.5	16.5	24.0	1.5	-9.0	40.5
30 Sept/5 Oct	26.0	38.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-12.0	33.0
7/12 Oct	27.0	31.0	12.5	26.5	3.0	-4.0	39.0
14/19 Oct	28.5	34.0	12.5	22.0	3.0	-5.5	34.5
21/25 Oct	29.5	28.0	13.5	26.5	2.5	+1.5**	40.0
28 Oct/2 Nov	26.5	29.0	13.0	29.5	2.5	-2.5	42.5
4/9 Nov	26.5	28.5	14.5	28.5	2.0	-2.0	43.0
11/16 Nov	26.5	29.0	15.0	27.0	2.5	-2.5**	42.0
18/23 Nov	25.5	26.0	14.0	32.0	2.5	-0.5	46.0
25/30 Nov	25.0	26.5	15.5	30.0	3.0	-1.5	45.5
2/7 Dec	26.0	21.0	13.5	38.0	1.5	+5.0	51.5
9/14 Dec	23.0	23.5	14.5	36.0	3.0	-0.5**	50.5
<u>1982</u>							
6/11 Jan	25.5	30.0	17.0	25.0	2.5	-4.5	42.0
13/18 Jan	27.5	29.5	13.0	26.5	3.5	-2.5**	39.5
20/25 Jan	30.0	27.0	14.0	26.5	2.5	+3.0	40.5
27 Jan/1 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	24.0	3.0	0.0	39.0
3/8 Feb	29.0	29.0	15.0	26.0	1.0	0.0	41.0
10/15 Feb	27.5	34.0	14.5	21.5	2.5	-6.5**	35.0
17/22 Feb	26.5	33.5	14.0	22.0	4.0	-7.0	36.0
24 Feb/1 March	31.0	32.5	11.0	22.5	3.0	-1.5	33.5
3/8 March	30.0	33.5	11.5	21.0 ⁺	4.0	-3.5	32.5

* First Gallup post-Election survey

** Published polls

+ Includes those saying they would vote for the 'Alliance'

Turning to the Hillhead by-election, since the Systems Three poll (conducted 6/7 March) which found a 1% Labour lead over the Conservatives (32% Labour, 31% Conservative, 25% Alliance and 11% SNP) we have had two opinion polls in the constituency.

Details are shown below:-

<u>Glasgow Hillhead Polls</u>				
(excluding don't knows)				
	<u>CON</u>	<u>LAB</u>	<u>ALLIANCE</u>	<u>SNP</u>
	%	%	%	%
Systems Three (6/7 March)	31	32	25	11
NOP (11/12 March)	34	30	21	15
Telephone Polls				
Sunday Standard/BBC				
Scotland	30	27	27	15½

The results of the telephone polls should be treated with a degree of caution as they tend to underestimate Labour support. What is clear from both the polls is the closeness of Conservative and Labour support and the poor showing of Roy Jenkins.

2. Government Record

The interviewing for this survey was conducted before the Budget - and found 24% approving of the record of the Government to date, 65% disapproving and 11% did not answer. The interviewing for our next study will have been conducted after the Budget and will reflect in part reactions to the Budget.

GOVERNMENT RECORD

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	%	%	%
<u>1979</u>			
13/18 June	34	41	25
<u>1981</u>			
1/7 September	23	65	13
9/14 September	26	63	11
16/21 September	21	67	11
23/28 September	21	66	13
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	21	70	10
7/12 October	20	68	12
14/19 October	24	65	12
21/26 October	24	62	13
28 October/ 2 November	23	66	10
4/9 November	27	64	9
11/16 November	23	66	11
18/23 November	22	66	12
25/30 November	22	65	14
2/7 December	20	69	11
9/14 December	18	70	12
<u>1982</u>			
6/11 January	23	65	12
13/18 January	24	65	12
20/25 January	26	62	13
27 Jan/1 Feb	25	62	13
3/8 Feb	26	63	11
10/15 Feb	24	66	10
17/22 Feb	22	66	13
24 Feb/ 1 March	23	63	13
3/8 March	24	65	11

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest study found a slight fall in Mrs Thatcher's popularity - it still remains well above the ratio reached just before Christmas. It found almost no change in Mr Foot's popularity and a slight improvement in Mr Steel's popularity.

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Mr Foot</u>			<u>Mr Steel</u>		
	<u>Sat.</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>sat.</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>Is</u>	<u>Is</u> <u>Not</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1981</u>									
1/7 September	28	67	5	29	52	19	63	18	19
9/14 September	32	62	6	28	54	18	56	21	23
16/21 September	27	68	5	28	52	20	64	16	20
23/28 September	28	67	5	25	57	18	64	17	19
30 Sept/ 5 Oct	27	68	6	31	49	20	60	20	20
7/12 Oct	26	68	6	28	50	22	62	19	18
14/19 Oct	31	62	7	31	50	20	64	15	21
21/26 Oct	33	62	5	27	54	19	64	20	16
28 Oct/ 2 Nov	29	65	6	25	59	16	64	19	17
4/9 Nov	32	64	3	24	62	14	68	16	16
11/16 Nov	28	66	6	16	67	17	64	17	19
18/23 Nov	29	66	5	18	68	15	69	15	16
25/30 Nov	29	65	5	18	68	15	67	15	18
2/7 Dec	29	66	5	18	68	14	64	18	18
9/14 Dec	25	70	5	19	67	14	63	18	19
<u>1982</u>									
6/11 January	30	65	5	20	65	14	62	20	18
13/18 January	32	65	4	18	67	16	59	22	19
20/25 January	32	64	4	17	68	15	59	22	19
27 Jan/1 Feb	33	62	5	19	64	17	60	18	22
3/8 Feb	31	65	4	20	63	17	61	20	19
10/15 Feb	29	66	5	19	66	15	59	23	17
17/22 Feb	29	65	5	20	64	16	58	20	21
24 Feb/1st March	32	63	5	21	64	15	55	23	22
3/8 March	30	66	4	20	64	16	58	24	18

4. Published Polls(a) MORI (Daily Star March 12th 1982)

The Daily Star on Friday March 12th included the results of an MORI poll conducted immediately after the Budget (Wednesday 10th March). MORI found a 4% Conservative lead over Labour - 37% claimed they would vote Conservative, 33% Labour, 19% SDP/Alliance, 8% Liberal and 3% for 'other' parties.

MORI also asked a number of questions on public attitudes to the economy and the Budget. They found a majority of electors who believe that Britain's economic situation is likely to improve in the next 12 months - or at least get no worse. They found 31% thinking the economic situation will improve, 28% not change and 39% get worse.

MORI asked whether respondents thought the Budget measures were a good or a bad thing for them personally and for the country. They found 36% thought the measures would be good for them personally, 47% bad and 17% did not answer. 48% thought the Budget will be good for the country, 38% bad and 14% did not answer.

59% thought the Budget was better for them personally than they expected, 21% worse than expected and 20% did not answer. The most popular measures in the Budget were increased pensions (96% in favour) and more money to ease youth unemployment (80% in favour). Most unpopular measure was the increased tax on petrol - disapproved of by 80%. Increased beer prices were disapproved of by 50% to 46% but dearer tobacco was approved of by 53% to 43%.

(b) NOP (Observer 14th March 1982)

An NOP survey conducted in Glasgow Hillhead was published in The Observer on 14th March. When the voting intention figures are re-calculated to exclude 22% don't knows, they found 34% claiming they will vote Labour, 30% Conservative, 21% Alliance and 15% SNP.

(c) Telephone Survey Research Unit (Sunday Standard 14th March 1982)

The Scottish Newspaper 'The Sunday Standard' on 14th March included details of a telephone survey conducted in Hillhead on 13th March. The results of this latest survey and earlier telephone polls are shown below:-

	<u>March</u> 13th %	<u>Feb</u> 28th %	<u>Feb</u> 7th %
Conservative	30	29	26
Alliance	27	28½	31
Labour	27	28	31
SNP	15½	14	12
Others	½	½	0

The latest figures exclude 8% 'don't knows'. These polls have found a movement of support from the Alliance and Labour to the Conservatives.

The survey found a majority of Hillhead voters thought the Budget would be good for them personally and 69% thought it would be good for the economy. Sir Geoffrey Howe received a strong endorsement with 68% of the electorate saying they thought he was doing a good job. Only 36% thought that Roy Jenkins would do a better job as Chancellor and 42% thought a Labour Budget would be better. In Hillhead, 31% thought the Budget was 'too tough', 48% 'about right' and 21% 'not tough enough'.