

69/022

- c. Sir P. Warr
- Mr Burns
- Mr Ryrie
- Mr Middleton
- Mr Battisbill
- Mr Unwin

PS/IR  
PS/CEE

- 1. Mr Cooper
- 2. Mr Chapman O/R
- 3. Mr Kelly
- 4. Mr [unclear]
- 5. Mr [unclear]
- 6. Mr [unclear]
- 7. Mr [unclear]
- 8. Mr [unclear]
- 9. Miss Compton (F)

CHANCELLOR

CC

(without attachments)

- Chief Secretary
- Financial Secretary
- Minister of State (C)
- Minister of State (L)
- Mr Ridley
- Mr Cropper

BUDGET: LETTERS FROM PUBLIC

25/3

I have read the first 386 letters you have received from members of the public. This note gives a sketchy analysis.

2. 52% of the letters were critical or hostile. 24% were letters of congratulation and praise - sometimes really effusive. One cannot read too much into these figures: the remaining 24% could not be categorised (some for example just asked for clarification), and in any case the sample is of course unrepresentative of the general public.

3. The most common complaint was about petrol duty (mentioned 111 times). The second most common complaint was about increases in excise duties generally (43 times). And the third most frequent was the complaint that the dog license should have been increased: 29 times.

1 ind. guess  
that after  
6 Apr  
the extra  
NICs would  
figure  
more  
prominently

4. Only 16 letters complained about no increase in personal allowances. A further 9 pointed out that the allowances would leave widows' pensions partly liable to tax.

5. 22 letters demanded immediate payment of the November increase for pensioners, and another 11 simply wanted a higher pension. 12 people thought child benefit should be reduced or abolished.

6. 17 people complained the Royal Family were being paid too much.

7. Only one letter brought up the Len Murray Question.

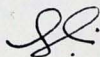
OB  
7/3

8/1/30 26/1/3

8. Only four people said they would switch their vote to the Social Democrats.

9. One person was convinced that your Budget Speech was a coded message you were reading out on behalf of the CIA.

10. I attach a small selection of letters for you to get the flavour of the response. The selection includes letters from people who seem to know you and from people who appear to be constituents.



GEORGE CARDONA

16 March 1981

RESTRICTED

69/015.

FACS

Note

Mrs. [Signature]

Spoke to  
 Finance  
 of [Signature]  
 of [Signature]  
 of [Signature]  
 of [Signature]

Care for, with Conf.  
 provide some ammunition on  
 the [Signature]

CHANCELLOR

CC Chief Secretary  
 Financial Secretary  
 Minister of State (C)  
 Minister of State (L)  
 Mr Ridley  
 Mr Cropper  
 Mr Battishill

BUDGET: LETTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

I have been keeping an eye on the letters arriving from the general public since my last note on this subject. There has not been any great difference in the proportions of letters complaining about petrol, etc., but there have been a few shifts of emphasis in this second week.

2. Rather more congratulatory letters are being received, and many of them praise your performance on "Question-Time". Also there is a growing minority of letters praising the petrol duty increase - usually on ecological grounds. There are a few letters from Labour and Liberal supporters who say they have never voted Conservative, and are unlikely ever to do so, but that they admire your courage in bringing in a harsh Budget. (I have of course excluded from this category the merely sarcastic!)

3. The proportion of letters calling for a higher dog license has gone up a little. Most of them want a £5 license; some want £50.

4. I have realised that I have not been counting a category that has turned out to be numerous: those who want sharply increased taxes on gambling. My impression is that there is absolutely no understanding (even among MPs) of the increases implemented last year. It would be useful if we could remind people of what we did in this area in the last Budget: Mr Battishill may be in a position to supply some telling figures.

X

[Signature]

GEORGE CARDONA  
 19 March 1981

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