

ANCRAM, I.P.

1st July, 1980

Thank you very much for your letter of 25th June, with which you enclosed your Pre-Polling Day Report on the Glasgow Central By-Election.

Your assessment turned out, in the event, to be most accurate.

You clearly did a very great deal of work in the Constituency yourself - well done.

IAN GOW

Michael Ancram, Esq. M.P.
House of Commons,
Westminster, London SW1

From: Michael Aueram M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

25th June 1980

Dear Ian,

I enclose a report on the by-election for information and background. It is I hope realistic although you will see from the histogram postscript that I have had to qualify the earlier part.

Anna was delighted with the P.M.'s message which the press did not use as widely as we had hoped. They have shown little interest in the day-to-day campaign as they see the result as a foregone conclusion.

This report incidentally has been circulated only to yourself.

Yours ever

Michael

P.S. I attach the final leaflet which I hope may at least sow seeds for the future.

PRE-POLLING DAY REPORT ON GLASGOW CENTRAL BY-ELECTION

(based on a number of personal visits and assessments)

Wednesday 25th June
1980

1. This constituency, as we suspected, has proved a difficult one in which to fight a by-election campaign. It is a city-centre constituency and it has proved difficult to get a public feeling of campaign off the ground in an area where so much else has been taking place. The main contender other than ourselves, the Labour Party, have played a very low key campaign, and it has been difficult to generate a great deal of press interest.
2. Our Candidate, Anna McCurley, has fought a very good campaign in these difficult circumstances, circulating a number of hard-hitting leaflets dealing with the run-down of the constituency during 40 years of almost uninterrupted Labour rule. She has campaigned hard personally and has made something of a personal impact. *The press regard her as the best candidate by far.*
3. The Hampden decision does not seem to have had a great deal of adverse effect, although it obviously cannot have helped. The main issues on the street have, not surprisingly, been prices and unemployment.
4. Rightly, Anna McCurley has seen the campaign as the start of an effort by Conservatives to identify locally with local problems, and in particular, to start the theme that Glasgow has been blighted by Socialism and that Tories have relevant answers for big city problems. It is a theme which takes longer to put across than the three weeks available. In many ways she is laying the groundwork for the future, when parliamentary boundary redistribution will pose a new set of challenges in the city.
5. It would be unwise to predict the result, particularly because of the general lack of public interest and the number (seven) of Candidates. While there has been markedly little enthusiasm for Labour on the doorsteps, and little open aggression about Conservative policies^φ (both of which attitudes are significant in the long-term) nevertheless the traditional Labour support cannot be underestimated.
6. I do not believe that the result will have much practical national significance, especially after such a short campaign. I am disappointed with local ^{Glasgow} help but have found it is not an easy area to persuade locals to go into. The whole Scottish Ministerial team and most M.P.s have helped and this has been well received.

Michael Anaran

^φ Since dictating the above I have just returned from another two days in the constituency. The latest unemployment figures have had a fairly severe and immediate impact. Indications are that this could help to boost the SNP vote. In reality I cannot rule out their beating us into 3rd place with them coming 2nd. Obviously press speculation to this effect is being strongly resisted by the Conservative campaign. Even were this to happen, it cannot detract from the impressive personal campaign Anna herself has mounted.

M.A