

PUBLIC OPINION IN SCOTLAND1. Introduction

We have just received the preliminary results from the survey O.R.C. conducted in Scotland. The research was conducted from 17th February to 10th March and O.R.C. interviewed more than 1,000 electors throughout Scotland. We will have a full O.R.C. report on the research in mid-April. This note presents some of the 'headline' findings from the research.

2. Most Important Problems Facing the Country

O.R.C. asked respondents (a) 'Which three of these problems do you think it is most important for the Government to deal with?' (b) 'Which if any of these problems, would you say are more serious for the people of Scotland than to those in other parts of the United Kingdom?' O.R.C. found:-

MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS FACING COUNTRY AND SCOTLAND

(respondents could select up to three problems)

i) Most Important Problems for the Government to deal with*

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
		<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	71	59	78	69	69
Rising Prices	40	31	45	41	32
Maintaining Law and Order	26	36	21	36	23
Reducing Vandalism, crime, etc.					
Improving the Productivity of Industry	20	25	15	29	16
The level of taxation	15	14	16	13	17
Dealing with the Unions	14	33	7	12	8
Helping Old People	14	8	22	9	11
People claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to	14	23	12	12	13
Managing North Sea Oil to help the country	14	10	14	11	22
The Economic problems facing Scotland	14	11	13	15	16
Dealing with the Common Market	11	7	13	13	12
The Housing Problem	10	6	12	8	12

* Only including issues mentioned by more than 10% of respondents

	Electorate	Conservative	Labour	Liberal	S.N.P.
	%	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters	Supporters
	%	%	%	%	%
Unemployment	56	50	58	56	50
Rising Prices	20	20	21	21	20
Economic Problems Facing Scotland	17	14	21	22	17
Managing North Sea Oil to help the country	17	14	19	13	17
Improving the System of Government in Scotland	16	7	18	10	16
Maintaining Law and Order, reducing vandalism, etc.	13	20	11	9	13
The Housing Problem	13	10	14	10	13

* Including problems selected by 10% of the electorate or more.

Both nationally and with regard to Scotland the Scottish electorate considers unemployment to be the most important problem faced by the Government. With regard to general problems the Government faces, rising prices was regarded as the second most important problem by supporters of the Labour, Liberal and S.N.P. parties. Conservative supporters rated maintaining law and order, reducing vandalism, crime etc. as more important than rising prices. Among the electorate the problems regarded as important for the Government to deal with (after unemployment and rising prices and mentioned by more than 10% of the electorate) were maintaining law and order and reducing vandalism, crime etc., improving the productivity of industry, the level of taxation, dealing with the unions, helping old people, people claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to, managing North Sea Oil to help the country, the economic problems facing Scotland, dealing with the Common Market and housing problems. Among Conservative supporters the order of problems regarded as important to deal with was substantially different after unemployment and maintaining law and order. The issues selected (again in order of importance) were dealing with the unions, rising prices, improving the productivity of industry, people claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to, the level of taxation, the economic problems facing Scotland and managing North Sea Oil to help the country. Among Labour supporters after unemployment and rising prices the issues regarded as important for the Government to deal with (in order of importance) were helping old people, maintaining law and order, the level of taxation, improving the productivity of industry, people claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to; the level of taxation, the economic problems facing Scotland and managing North Sea Oil to help the country. Among Labour supporters after unemployment and rising prices the issues regarded as important for the Government to deal with (in order of importance) were helping old people, maintaining law and order, the level of taxation, improving the productivity of industry, managing North Sea Oil to help the country, the economic problems facing Scotland, dealing with the Common Market, the housing problem and people claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to. Among S.N.P. supporters issues regarded as important for the Government after unemployment and rising prices were (again in order of importance) managing North Sea Oil to help the country, the level of taxation, improving North Sea Oil to help the country, the level of taxation, improving the productivity of industry, the economic problems facing Scotland, people claiming social security benefits they are not entitled to, dealing with the Common Market, the housing problem and helping old people.

When asked what they thought were the most important problems facing Scotland - unemployment topped the list amongst supporters of all three parties. In the electorate as a whole rising prices was the second most

important problem, among Conservative supporters rising prices shared second place with maintaining law and order, among Labour supporters it shared second place with the economic problems facing Scotland. Amongst S.N.P. supporters after unemployment their supporters regarded the second most serious problem facing Scotland as being improving the system of government in Scotland, followed by managing North Sea Oil to help the country and only then by rising prices. Full details of the answers obtained are shown above.

3. Blame for the Economic Problems Facing Scotland

O.R.C. asked respondents to select from a list of possible causes the two which they regarded as being mainly to blame for the economic problems facing Scotland. They found:-

BLAME FOR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING SCOTLAND

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
	%	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
		%	%	%	%
The Common Market	44	25	51	45	50
The Government in London	42	8	58	38	59
World Economic Conditions	41	45	39	51	23
Trade Unions	29	53	16	34	21
Nationalised Industries	18	30	10	14	18
The last Labour Government	8	26	2	4	6
Manufacturers & Businesses	8	7	10	5	6
The Scottish Office	3	1	4	4	6

44% of electors selected the Common Market as being mostly to blame for Scotland's economic problems, 42% the Government in London, 41% world economic conditions, 29% trade unions, 18% nationalised industries, 8% the last Labour Government, 8% manufacturers and businesses and 3% the Scottish Office. Conservative supporters were more likely to blame trade unions for Scotland's economic problems than the supporters of the other parties - they were less likely to blame the Common Market and the Government in London. As was to be expected a significant number of Conservative supporters still blame the last Labour Government for Scotland's economic problems. In order of importance Conservative supporters blamed trade unions, world economic conditions, nationalised industries, the last Labour Government, the Common Market, the Government in London, manufacturers and businesses and the Scottish Office. Labour supporters blamed the Government in London (as did S.N.P. supporters) followed by the Common Market (so did S.N.P. supporters), trade unions (also same S.N.P.) and nationalised industries (ditto S.N.P.). Full details of the breakdown of the answers for the main parties are shown above.

O.R.C. asked respondents who blamed 'the Government in London' for Scotland's economic problems whether they blamed it because the Government is based in London or because it is a Conservative Government. Those answering the question were almost evenly divided with 48% blaming the Government in London because it is based in London and 49% because it is a Conservative Government.

4. Conservative Government's Handling of Economic Affairs

31% of those interviewed thought the Conservative Government was handling the economic problems of the country as a whole 'very well' or 'fairly well' - 21% thought it was handling the economic problems of Scotland 'very well' or 'fairly well'. 67% thought the Conservative Government is handling the country's economic problems 'fairly badly' or 'very badly' and 50% that it was handling Scotland's economic problems 'fairly badly' or 'very badly'.

When asked similar questions about how a Labour Government would handle both the country's and Scotland's economic problems, we found 40% thinking Labour would handle the country's economic problems 'very well' or 'fairly well' (40% thought they would handle Scotland's economic problems 'very well' or 'fairly well') and 51% thinking they would handle Britain's economic problems 'fairly badly' or 'very badly' (51% thought they would handle Scotland's economic problems 'fairly badly' or 'very badly')

When asked how well or badly they thought the S.N.P. would handle Scotland's economic problems we found 35% thinking they would handle them 'very well' or 'fairly well' and 40% would handle them 'fairly badly' or 'ver badly' (25% did not answer the question).

5. Causes of Unemployment

We asked respondents to select from a list we gave them what they thought was the most important cause of high unemployment. 14% selected the Government's policies, 14% world recession, 13% strikes and bad industrial relations, 13% Mrs Thatcher, 9% lack of investment in industry, 6% trade unions being too powerful and 6% low productivity. Other possible causes were selected by less than 5% of those interviewed.

6. Things to Help Reduce Unemployment

Respondents were asked to select from a list we gave them what measures they thought would reduce unemployment. We asked them also to select which if any of the measures on the list the Conservative Government is doing, which a Labour Government would do and which a S.N.P. Government could do. We found:-

Items That Would Help to Reduce Unemployment

(items mentioned by 20% or more of respondents)

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
	%	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
		%	%	%	%
Reducing the Age of Retirement	45	41	50	48	48
Government providing money for investment in business	41	28	50	36	41
Reducing Interest Rates	39	40	36	44	40
Selective Import Controls to restrict the import of a few products	34	30	35	31	37
Cutting taxes on individuals - income taxes and VAT	33	26	38	29	33
Cutting taxes on companies	28	31	25	31	28
Withdrawing from the E.E.C.	27	11	36	20	31
Reducing the power of the trade unions	26	42	15	31	29
General Import Controls	24	19	28	18	28
People voluntarily accepting low wage rises	21	37	12	22	19
Government spending more money	20	7	29	15	19

Things Conservative Government are doing to help reduce unemployment

(items mentioned by 10% or more of respondents)

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Government spending less money	27	29	28	22	30
Reducing the power of the trade unions	25	45	19	21	21
Reducing Interest Rates	13	19	8	14	12
People voluntarily accepting low wage increases	11	15	8	18	10
A wages policy limiting wage increases by law	10	12	7	14	17
Government providing money for investment in business	10	15	7	12	9

Things a Labour Government would do to help reduce unemployment

(items mentioned by 10% or more of respondents)

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Government nationalising more businesses	31	46	24	36	31
Government spending more money	30	41	30	30	22
Withdrawing from E.E.C.	21	26	24	20	16
Reducing Interest Rates	19	15	21	17	24
Government providing money for investment	18	6	28	19	17
Reducing the Age of Retirement	16	18	21	17	11
Cutting taxes on individuals - income tax and VAT	12	8	16	13	14
Selected import controls to restrict the import of a few products	11	11	15	7	11

Things an S.N.P. Government would do to help reduce unemployment

(items mentioned by 10% or more of respondents)

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>S.N.P.</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>	<u>Supporters</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Withdrawing from E.E.C.	22	22	18	23	38
Government providing money for investment in business	12	6	9	12	28
Government spending more money	11	11	8	12	19
Reducing Interest Rates	10	6	5	15	25

7. Unemployment versus Inflation

When presented with a straight choice between the Government bringing down the rate of inflation and bringing down the unemployment rate 28% of wanted the Government to bring down inflation, 64% to bring down unemployment and 8% did not answer. 80% thought the Conservative Government would concentrate on bringing down inflation, 12% bringing down unemployment and 8% did not answer. 78% thought a Labour Government would concentrate on bringing down unemployment 12% bringing down inflation and 10% did not answer. When the idea of an S.N.P. Government was put to the electors 9% thought it would concentrate on bringing down inflation 47% bringing down unemployment and 44% did not answer.

8 Is the Government Making Unemployment Rise on Purpose?

22% of electors thought the idea that the Government is making unemployment rise on purpose is true, 33% thought there was a certain amount of truth in it and 42% thought it was not true.

9.. Unemployment and Oil Prices

18% of electors thought the idea that the sharp increase in oil prices has harmed the economies of all Western countries was true, 44% that there is a certain amount of truth in it and 32% that it is not true.

10. Schemes for Unemployed Heard Of

We gave respondents a list of schemes for the unemployment and asked them which they had heard of. We found:-

	<u>Heard Of</u>
Youth Opportunities Programme	82%
Special Temporary Employment Programme	23%
Job Creation Schemes	87%
Community Employment Programme	29%
Temporary Short Time Working Compensation Schemes	14%
Job Release Scheme	52%

11. Unemployment Groups - Priority

We asked respondents to select from a list we gave them those groups they thought should have priority with regard to measures to help the unemployed. 68% selected school leavers who have never had a job, 61% people who have families to look after, 27% people who have been unemployed for a long time, 20% young people with no qualifications or skills and 6% older people.

12. Government Money Spent in Scotland

When asked 'Do you think Scotland gets more or less Government money spent on it per person, than the rest of the United Kingdom, or is it about the same?' 10% thought Scotland had more money spent per

person than the rest of the U.K., 53% less money spent in Scotland per person & 26% about the same amount per person.

13. North Sea Oil

68% of those interviewed thought Scotland gets less than its fair share of money from North Sea Oil - 20% that it gets about the right amount and 2% that it gets more than its fair share.

62% thought Scotland gets 'too little' of the taxes on North Sea oil profits paid by the oil companies (15% right amount and 3% too much). 33% thought Scotland has got 'too little' of employment in the North Sea oil rigs and shore installations (46% about right amount, 1% too much). 52% thought Scotland was getting 'too little' of new industry developed as a result of North Sea oil (33% about right amount, 2% too much).

41% of respondents thought that if Scotland got its fair share of benefits from North Sea oil that it would help to solve Scotland's economic problems but would not be enough to solve 40% that 'it would go quite a long way towards solving Scotland's economic problems', 10% that 'it was hardly make any difference' and 6% that 'it would solve Scotland's economic problems'.

71% of those interviewed agreed or agreed strongly with the view 'the oil off Scotland's coast should be used to benefit all of Britain not just Scotland alone' (21% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

29% agreed or agreed strongly with the idea 'the oil off Scotland's coast belongs to Scotland alone' (61% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

68% agreed or agreed strongly with the idea 'Scotland will probably get very little benefit from the North Sea oil discoveries, it will all go to the oil companies and the British Government (20% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

38% agreed or agreed strongly with the idea 'the economic benefits from North Sea oil will permanently improve Scotland's position' (44% disagreed or disagreed strongly)

57% agreed or agreed strongly with the idea 'a good deal of the money from North Sea Oil will be used to pass off Britain's debt abroad so we shouldn't expect too much from it' (25% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

62% agreed or agreed strongly that 'the oil companies will make far too big a profit from the North Sea (20% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

80% agreed or agreed strongly that 'Scotland should get more of the benefits of North Sea Oil'

26% agreed or agreed strongly that 'if Scotland got its fair share of benefits from North Seal Oil it would not have any economic problems (58% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

40% agreed or agreed strongly with the idea 'the oil companies don't pay enough taxes on their profits (22% disagreed or disagreed strongly).

14. The Image of the Parties

We asked respondents to identify a series of statements with political parties. We found the parties tended to be seen in the following terms:

The Conservative Party was seen as:

- Having very few Scots in its top ranks
- Not understanding the problems of Scotland
- The party of landowners
- The party of the small businessman
- Respected abroad
- Not being the traditional Scottish party
- Not having Scotland's interests at heart
- Not caring for ordinary people
- As standing up to the trade unions
- As spending too much time attacking other parties
- Caring too much about big business
- Being united
- Having clear policies
- Not putting the good of Scotland before the good of the party

The Labour Party was seen as:

- The part for the working class
- The traditional Scottish party
- Caring for ordinary people
- Not putting the good of Scotland before the good of the party
- Getting on well with the trade unions
- Spending too much time attacking other parties
- As disunited
- As being influenced too much by trade unions

The S.N.P. were seen as:

- Not being the party of the landowners
- Not being the party of the small businessman
- Being the traditional Scottish party
- Having Scotland's interests at heart
- Putting the good of Scotland before the good of the party
- Spending too much time attacking other parties
- Having no clear policies

15. Knowledge of Politics

54% correctly named George Younger as the Secretary of State for Scotland. Of those who named him 41% thought he was doing a good job, and 42% a bad job.

37% of those interviewed named Bruce Miller as the Shadow Secretary for Scotland, of those 41% thought he was doing a good job and 32% a bad job.

16. Left - Right

54% thought the Labour party had moved left recently, 47% that the Conservative party had moved right and 46% that the S.N.P. had not moved left or right recently.

17. The Referendum

69% of the electorate claimed to remember the outcome of the referendum and of those 44% thought the result was fair and 49% unfair. Of those who thought the referendum was unfair 30% blamed the unfairness on all the English political parties, 27% the Labour party, 13% the Government and 11% the Conservative Party.

18. Devolution

When asked about a number of options in the field of devolution, 54% agreed with the view 'There should be changes in the constitutional relationship but Scotland should remain part of the United Kingdom', 29% agreed 'There should be no change in the constitutional relationship between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom' and 14% agreed 'Scotland should become completely independent of the rest of the United Kingdom'.

78% thought the Conservative Party stands for no change in the constitutional relationship between Scotland and the rest of the U.K. 37% thought the Labour Party also stood for this but 48% thought the Labour Party stands for some changes in the constitutional relationship. The S.N.P. was seen as standing for an independent Scotland.

Con. 22% Lab. 53% Lib. 8% S.N.P. 15% S.L.P. 2%

January 1980

Con. 24% Lab. 51% Lib. 8% S.N.P. 17%

February 1980

Con. 23% Lab. 51% Lib. 9% S.N.P. 16%

April

Con. 29% Lab. 46% Lib. 10% S.N.P. 14% Others 1%

May 1980

Con. 24% Lab. 53% Lib. 7% S.N.P. 16% Others 1%

July 1980

Con. 22% Lab. 52% Lib. 9% S.N.P. 15%

August 1980

Con. 21% Lab. 53% Lib. 8% S.N.P. 17%

September 1980

Con. 20% Lab. 57% Lib. 9% S.N.P. 14%

October 1980

Con. 19% Lab. 59% Lib. 7% S.N.P. 15%

November 1980

Con. 27% Lab. 54% Lib. 10% S.N.P. 15%

December 1980

Con. 18% Lab. 56% Lib. 9% S.N.P. 16%

~~FEB 1981 LAB 47~~

FEB 81

CON 19% LAB 47% LIB 13% SNP 18%

APRIL 1981

CON 17% LAB 46% LIB 10% SNP 22%

CON ^{OR} 14% LAB 38% LIB 8% SNP 19% SDP 20%