

Public Opinion Background Note 145

(produced 17th January 1983)

1. Introduction

We have just received the results of our first Gallup 'tracking' study conducted in 1983. The interviewing for this survey was conducted from 7th to 11th January and the results are very similar to those of the MORI survey published in the Evening Standard on 17th January, (conducted 6-12 January) Details of the results of the two surveys are shown below:-

Voting Intention (excluding don't knows)

| | <u>Gallup</u> (7/11 January) | <u>MORI</u> (6/12 January) |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Conservative | 44 | 44 |
| Labour | 33 | 35 |
| Liberal | 10½ | } 20 |
| SDP | 11 | |
| Others | 1½ | 1 |

Conservative support shows no signs of a downward trend when compared with the results of the last few surveys conducted in 1982. The latest study found a slight increase in Conservative support - up to 44% compared with 41% in our last 1982 study (8/13 December). Labour support fell from 34½% to 33% over the same period, Liberal support increased from 9% to 10½% and Social Democrat support fell from 13% to 11%. The Conservative lead over Labour increased from 6½% to 11% - this latest figure compares with 9% in the latest MORI study. We understand that the Daily Telegraph will publish the results of the next Gallup study on Thursday 20th January 1983.

The two tables overleaf show the trend of support for the main parties since early September - the first shows support when 'don't knows' are excluded (the 'conventional' way of presenting opinion research findings) and the second shows the figures when don't knows are included.

Opinion research figures can be projected into a 'hypothetical' result in terms of seats in the House of Commons. Such a procedure based on the existing constituencies and taking no account of regional variations would give a Conservative majority of 80-100 seats on the basis of our latest Gallup figures.

Voting Intention
(unprompted question, excluding
don't knows)

| | <u>CON</u> | <u>LAB</u> | <u>LIB</u> | <u>SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT | <u>OTH</u> | <u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab | <u>LIBERAL & SOCIAL</u> DEMOCRAT |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| <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>1982</u> | | | | | | | |
| 1/6 Sept | 43.5 | 28.5 | 8.0 | 17.0+ | 3.0 | +15.0 | 25.0 |
| 8/13 Sept | 44.0 | 30.5 | 8.5 | 14.5+ | 2.5 | +13.5** | 23.0 |
| 15/21 Sept | 42.0 | 33.0 | 8.0 | 15.0+ | 2.0 | +9.0 | 23.0 |
| 22/27 Sept | 43.0 | 29.5 | 12.5 | 13.0+ | 2.0 | +13.5 | 25.5 |
| 29 Sept/4 Oct | 40.0 | 31.5 | 13.5 | 13.0+ | 2.0 | +8.5 | 26.5 |
| 6/11 Oct | 42.5 | 32.0 | 10.5 | 13.0+ | 2.0 | +10.5 | 23.5 |
| 13/18 Oct | 43.0 | 31.0 | 9.0 | 13.5+ | 3.5 | +12.0 | 22.5 |
| 20/25 Oct | 40.5 | 29.0 | 12.0 | 15.0+ | 3.5 | +11.5** | 27.0 |
| 27 Oct/1 Nov | 48.0 | 31.0 | 8.5 | 11.0+ | 1.5 | +17.0 | 19.5 |
| 3/10 Nov | 44.0 | 33.0 | 9.0 | 12.0+ | 2.0 | +11.0 | 21.0 |
| 10/15 Nov | 42.0 | 35.0 | 8.0 | 13.0+ | 2.0 | +7.0** | 21.0 |
| 17/22 Nov | 41.5 | 33.0 | 9.0 | 14.0+ | 2.5 | +8.5 | 23.0 |
| 24/29 Nov | 46.5 | 32.0 | 7.5 | 11.5+ | 2.5 | +14.5 | 19.0 |
| 1/6 Dec | 43.0 | 35.0 | 9.0 | 11.0+ | 2.0 | +8.0 | 20.0 |
| 8/13 Dec | 41.0 | 34.5 | 9.0 | 13.0+ | 2.5 | +6.5** | 22.0 |
| <u>1983</u> | | | | | | | |
| 7/11 Jan | 44.0 | 33.0 | 10.5 | 11.0+ | 1.5 | +11.0 | 21.5 |

* First Gallup Post-Election Survey, ** Published Polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

VOTING INTENTION(unprompted question, including
don't knows)

| | <u>CON</u> | <u>LAB</u> | <u>LIB</u> | <u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u> | <u>OTH</u> | <u>DON'T</u> <u>KNOW</u> | <u>LEAD</u> Con over Lab | <u>LIBERAL</u> & <u>SOCIAL</u> <u>DEMOCRAT</u> |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| <u>1979</u> | | | | | | | | |
| May (GE) | 43.9 | 36.9 | 13.8 | - | 5.5 | - | +7.0 | 13.8 |
| <u>1982</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 1/6 Sept | 39.0 | 26.0 | 7.0 | 15.0 | 3.0 | 10.0 | +13.0 | 22.0 |
| 8/13 Sept | 40.0 | 28.0 | 8.0 | 13.0 | 2.0 | 8.0 | +12.0** | 21.0 |
| 15/21 Sept | 38.0 | 29.0 | 7.0 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 11.0 | +9.0 | 19.0 |
| 22/27 Sept | 39.0 | 27.0 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 9.0 | +12.0 | 24.0 |
| 29th Sept/4th Oct | 37.0 | 29.0 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 8.0 | +8.0 | 24.0 |
| 6/11 Oct | 38.0 | 29.0 | 10.0 | 12.0 | 1.0 | 10.0 | +9.0 | 22.0 |
| 13/18 Oct | 39.0 | 28.0 | 8.0 | 13.0 | 3.0 | 9.0 | +11.0 | 21.0 |
| 20/25 Oct | 37.0 | 27.0 | 11.0 | 13.0 | 4.0 | 8.0 | +10.0** | 24.0 |
| 27 Oct/1 Nov | 44.0 | 28.0 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 1.0 | 8.0 | +16.0 | 18.0 |
| 3/10 Nov | 41.0 | 31.0 | 8.0 | 11.0 | 2.0 | 8.0 | +10.0 | 19.0 |
| 10/15 Nov | 38.0 | 31.0 | 7.0 | 12.0 | 2.0 | 10.0 | +7.0** | 19.0 |
| 17/22 Nov | 41.0 | 29.0 | 11.0 | 9.0 | 1.0 | 9.0 | +12.0 | 20.0 |
| 24/29 Nov | 41.0 | 29.0 | 7.0 | 10.0 | 2.0 | 11.0 | +12.0 | 17.0 |
| 1/6 Dec | 39.0 | 32.0 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 1.0 | 9.0 | +7.0 | 18.0 |
| 8/13 Dec | 37.0 | 31.0 | 8.0 | 11.0 | 3.0 | 10.0 | +6.0** | 19.0 |
| <u>1983</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 7/11 Jan | 39.5 | 29.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 1.5 | 10.5 | +10.0 | 19.0 |

** Published polls, + includes those saying they would vote for the Alliance.

2. Government Record

The latest Gallup study found an improvement in the popularity of the Government with 43% of the electorate approving of our record to date, 44% disapproving and 13% not having a view. This state of affairs compares with the situation at the start of 1982 when only 23% approved of our record in Government, 65% disapproved and 12% did not have a view.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the record of the Government since early September are shown in the table below:-

| <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>1982</u> | | | |
| 1/6 Sept | 41 | 45 | 14 |
| 8/13 Sept | 40 | 48 | 13 |
| 15/21 Sept | 38 | 49 | 13 |
| 22/27 Sept | 38 | 50 | 12 |
| 29 Sept/4 Oct | 36 | 51 | 13 |
| 6/11 Oct | 40 | 47 | 13 |
| 13/18 Oct | 38 | 48 | 14 |
| 20/25 Oct | 40 | 49 | 11 |
| 27 Oct/1 Nov | 42 | 45 | 13 |
| 3/10 Nov | 41 | 45 | 15 |
| 10/15 Nov | 39 | 48 | 13 |
| 17/22 Nov | 39 | 47 | 13 |
| 24/29 Nov | 44 | 44 | 13 |
| 1/6 Dec | 42 | 47 | 11 |
| 8/13 Dec | 37 | 50 | 13 |
| <u>1983</u> | | | |
| 7/11 Jan | 43 | 44 | 13 |

3. Popularity of Political Leaders

The latest 'tracking' study found no signs of a downturn in Mrs Thatcher's popularity with 48% of the electorate claiming to be satisfied with her as Prime Minister (30% in early January 1982), 47% dis-satisfied (65% in early January 1982) and 6% with no view (5% in early January 1982). Mr Foot's popularity remains low and there is very little change in Mr Steel's popularity. The electorate remains uncertain about Mr Jenkins with 30% seeing him as a good leader of the Social Democrats, 33% as not being a good leader and 36% not having a view.

Details of the trend of approval/disapproval for the four political leaders since early September 1982 are shown below:-

POPULARITY OF POLITICAL LEADERS

| | <u>Mrs Thatcher</u> | | | <u>Mr Foot</u> | | | <u>Mr Steel</u> | | | <u>Mr Jenkins</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>Is</u> | <u>Is</u> <u>Not</u> | <u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u> |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| <u>1982</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1/6 Sept | 49 | 45 | 6 | 14 | 74 | 12 | 59 | 20 | 21 | 35 | 30 | 35 |
| 8/13 Sept | 48 | 47 | 5 | 16 | 74 | 10 | 59 | 21 | 20 | 37 | 32 | 31 |
| 15/21 Sept | 46 | 49 | 6 | 14 | 73 | 12 | 62 | 19 | 19 | 33 | 34 | 33 |
| 22/27 Sept | 46 | 50 | 4 | 16 | 74 | 11 | 64 | 20 | 16 | 35 | 31 | 34 |
| 29 Sept/4 Oct | 44 | 51 | 5 | 27 | 60 | 13 | 64 | 19 | 17 | 36 | 33 | 31 |
| 6/11 Oct | 46 | 48 | 6 | 25 | 62 | 13 | 62 | 22 | 17 | 35 | 33 | 32 |
| 13/18 Oct | 45 | 50 | 5 | 23 | 66 | 11 | 56 | 25 | 19 | 34 | 36 | 30 |
| 20/25 Oct | 46 | 50 | 4 | 20 | 69 | 12 | 60 | 22 | 18 | 35 | 34 | 31 |
| 27 Oct/1 Nov | 48 | 48 | 4 | 20 | 66 | 14 | 57 | 24 | 18 | 35 | 37 | 28 |
| 3/10 Nov | 48 | 48 | 5 | 23 | 65 | 11 | 58 | 24 | 18 | 34 | 37 | 29 |
| 10/15 Nov | 44 | 52 | 5 | 22 | 67 | 12 | 59 | 22 | 19 | 37 | 33 | 30 |
| 17/22 Nov | 44 | 51 | 5 | 25 | 63 | 11 | 59 | 20 | 20 | 33 | 36 | 31 |
| 24/29 Nov | 48 | 47 | 5 | 18 | 68 | 14 | 57 | 22 | 20 | 31 | 35 | 34 |
| 1/6 Dec | 45 | 51 | 5 | 23 | 67 | 10 | 62 | 18 | 19 | 35 | 34 | 31 |
| 8/13 Dec | 44 | 53 | 4 | 20 | 69 | 10 | 60 | 23 | 17 | 34 | 34 | 31 |
| <u>1983</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7/11 Jan | 48 | 47 | 6 | 18 | 68 | 14 | 62 | 20 | 17 | 30 | 33 | 36 |

4. Published Polls(a) Evening Standard (17th January 1983)

The Evening Standard on 17th January included the results of a MORI poll conducted from 6th to 12th January. We have considered the general voting intention question in the introduction to this note. The table below shows voting intention in the main groups in May 1979 and January 1983.

| | <u>VOTING INTENTION</u> | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| | <u>May 1979</u> | <u>Jan 1983</u> | <u>Swing to Tories</u> |
| | % | % | % |
| All | +7 | +9 | +1 |
| Men | +3 | +10 | +3½ |
| Women | +12 | +9 | -1½ |
| <u>Age</u> | | | |
| 18-24 | +1 | -6 | -3½ |
| 25-34 | +5 | +9 | +2 |
| 35-54 | +11 | +11 | 0 |
| 55 plus | +9 | +14 | +2½ |
| <u>Class</u> | | | |
| ABC1 | +35 | +38 | +1½ |
| C2 | 0 | -7 | -3½ |
| DE | -15 | -13 | -1 |
| Trade Unionist | -18 | -11 | +3½ |
| <u>Regions</u> | | | |
| North | -5 | -7 | -1 |
| Midlands | +12 | +5 | -3½ |
| South | +16 | +24 | +4 |

MORI also asked respondents what they regarded as the most important problems facing the country. They found:-

| | <u>MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS</u> | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | <u>Oct</u> | <u>Nov</u> | <u>Dec</u> | <u>Jan</u> |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Unemployment | 76 | 77 | 68 | 70 |
| Defence/Foreign affairs | 3 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| Prices/Inflation | 6 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Law and order | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Common Market | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Unions/Strikes | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |