C • O • D • E • S • A

CODESA DELEGATION VISIT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM TO OBSERVE THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION -

APRIL 1992

Transcript of Proceedings

For the attention: -

G Bartlett	***National Party***
P J Gordhan	***Natal Indian Congress/Transvaal Indian Congress***
P Hendrickse	***Labour Party of South Africa***
J Love	***CODESA Secretariat***
N J Mahlangu	***Intando Yesizwe Party***
F T Mdlalose	***Inkatha Freedom Party***
M Phosa	***African National Congress***
S S Ripinga	***Inyandza National Movement***
P Soal	***Democratic Party***
cc	***CODESA Secretariat***
	CODESA Administration

CONVENTION FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

PO Box 307, Isando, 1600, South Africa.
Telephone (011) 397-1198/99. Fax (011) 397-2211

Contents

The Civil Service
Part One: Sir Robert Butler, Cabinet Secretary **1**

The Civil Service
Part Two: Election Business Unit **8**

Independent Television News **13**

The Police Service
Manchester Police Officer **25**

Electoral Law & the Electoral Process
Manchester University speakers **43**

BBC Regional Television News
North West Region **81**

Candidate's Agent
John Walsh, Conservative Party, Bolton North East **92**

Regional Newspaper Media
Editor, Manchester Evening News, & colleagues **114**

Labour Party Campaign Workers
Agents, candidates & volunteers in Bolton constituencies, including Member of European Parliament for the area & two representatives of the Trade Unions Council **129**

Local Authority Electoral Officers
Salford City Council **156**

British Army Officers **183**

Meeting between CODESA delegation and others **206**

British Constitutional History & the Constitutional Process **218**

Key

plain text	UK speakers' words NB: Names of these speakers were not supplied to the transcriber
bold text	Any question or comment by a CODESA delegation speaker NB: Speakers are identified only where the transcriber is sure of the voice or where the speaker is clearly identified in the context of the remark. Sometimes a guess at identity is hazarded, usually in an interchange involving several delegates
[ ]	Indicates an annotation by the transcriber
_____	Demarcates a portion of text which has been transcribed with exceptional difficulty, and from which much key information/sense has been lost
[unintelligible]	After repeated attempts to decipher a word or phrase, transcriber still cannot make it out
[?]	Word or phrase immediately preceding has been noted by transcriber as being the most likely sense, but a query still exists as to whether this is really what was said
[sic]	Word or phrase immediately preceding has been accurately transcribed, although it appears incorrect or does not seem to make logical sense
...	Speaker tails off or interrupts himself, or is interrupted by another speaker - no actual text is missing
[...]	Text is lost through a break in recording

CODESA DELEGATION VISIT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM TO OBSERVE THE BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION, APRIL 1992
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

6 April 1992 - Cassette 1

The Civil Service Part 1 - Sir Robert Butler, Cabinet Secretary

The civil service, you will know, in our system is politically impartial, so the most important thing for the civil service to do during a general election period is to keep their heads down. And we do that.

The politicians, including Ministers, are all out on the stop [unintelligible], so, if there remain things to deal with, then they are still responsible for dealing with them. But in general, they don't want to be disturbed from their electioneering.

Now, what we try to do in a general election period - the convention in the British system - once a campaign has started, is to avoid taking decisions that will commit a future government. No new appointments are made once the election begins and no new announcements of policy take place. But of course one cannot stop the world outside from continuing, so there is still a certain amount of business to be done.

For example, the Portuguese joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European Community over the weekend gave quite a bit of work in negotiation, which was mainly carried by officials. The European Community continues, the officials go to that, to get instructions and to try to preserve the position of the parties. But you can't altogether do that, because the other parties may want to take decisions. But, in general, the principle is that we avoid any committing decisions.

Now, that is the ordinary line of business, but the real thing that the civil service is doing is planning what will happen after the election. For the likes of me, that will be a big moment. If the Conservatives come back, that won't be too difficult - but they've got some new policies and it will need some working out to know what those involve, so that when Mr Major comes back and says: "Well, I've been thinking about this during the general election, and no doubt you have?" then we'll be able to say: "Yes, we've got some plans to carry on in the new Government".

What will be the biggest task is if Labour come back because, of course, they've got a lot of new proposals. Mr Kinnock may walk through the door of 10 Downing Street at half-past-four or thereabouts next Friday afternoon - and there will have been a lot of press about and cars outside - he'll say: "Right! What are we going to do?". At that point, our aim is to hit the ground running. So we'll say: "We've read your Manifesto, what you intend to do about new appointments and new departments. We've thought about where they would sit, premises for them, staff for them, and you can now get ahead".

The first thing he'll do is appoint new Ministers and that will involve a whole series of decisions about the machinery of government.

The next thing, once he's got his Ministers appointed, will be to think about the proposals he puts to Parliament in the Queen's speech.

If the Conservatives win, I expect that there will be a weekend of making appointments, starting work on the proposals for the Queen's speech and then they will want to go away. [Unintelligible]. Now, that's the briefs to the Labour Party and it falls into four categories:

+ Decisions for the first evening
+ Decisions for the first weekend, if possible
+ Decisions for the first week
+ The background

Those are just the things for the Prime Minister and each department will be preparing briefs for the Minister that they get in their department. The point is to come up with something that he really can do, to hatch something that's much thicker than that for the first evening ... decisions that actually do shape the fortunes of the Administration for some time to come.

If the Conservatives get in, there'll be quite a lot of work until Easter and then I guess that they'll want to take an Easter break before Parliament begins again.

[Some fragmented conversation including an unintelligible question]

You don't have a Constitution as such?

No. [Further fragmented conversation.] There's no civil service law, but there are Parliamentary ... it's called the Ordering[?] Council, which governs recruitment in the civil service. The reason there is no law is that we are governed by the Queen's prerogative, we are called Her Majesty's civil service. As I said, there is an Ordering[?] Council governing our recruitment and what that law says is that we are impartial and that appointments in the civil service must be made on merit and by fair and equal competition. So, no new politician or existing politician can come in and say: "I want to appoint Mr So and So". The civil service Commissioners are there to guard against that and in that way we seek to guard against political patronage.

What does that imply? It implies that a political party coming in can't get rid of us - or can't get rid of us easily. If Mr Kinnock came in and said: "I haven't got any confidence in this department or the Cabinet Secretary, I would like somebody else to do it", then I would expect to be compensated for the breach of my contract. And I think there would be quite a fuss. It would be against our traditions. Now, part of our work as the civil service is to ensure that this doesn't happen.

If I had been quoted as saying: "Sir Robert Butler thinks that only the Conservatives will form a decent government next time", Neil Kinnock would have reason to be upset with me. So I and my colleagues take great pains not to do that. We also will try to convince any government that comes in that we will support it wholeheartedly - as we did for their predecessors. That's the tradition of our service.

And are the civil servants also members of political parties?

They are not members of political parties. At least, the senior civil servants aren't. Again this isn't governed by the law, but it's governed by the conditions of service. We have three groups:

First, the *restricted* category, who are all senior civil servants, who are not allowed to take part in any sort of politics. Then the *intermediate* category, who are junior civil servants, working often in the Social Security offices, not near to policy making, who are allowed to take part in certain types of political activity: canvassing in local government elections for example. Finally, the *non-restricted* group, who will probably be dock-workers or who have got no connection with policy making at all. They can do anything they like.

But for practical purposes, none of the likes of me, or my private secretary would be able to belong to any political party or take any active part in politics. And of course, come election day, we vote by secret ballot.

There is a possibility for your department to study the manifestos of different political parties and to look at terms of how their policies can be implemented. So, whoever comes to power, you have a packet ready for them?

Exactly, that's right

So if you woke up on Friday morning to a Liberal Democratic government, you'd have a packet ready for them?

Well, we have two packets ready. Don't tell the outside world that! If the unthinkable happens, I wouldn't go to bed on Thursday! There would be a good deal of panic, but I think that I can promise that by the time they arrive on Friday afternoon, I'd have something for them.

[Question about the time the new Prime Minister arrives at 10 Downing Street]

If there's a clear majority, I should think on Friday afternoon. Mrs Thatcher arrived at four o'clock in 1979.

And Mr Callaghan goes out the back door?

No, he goes out the front door. He went out at two-thirty. He goes off early to resign at Buckingham Palace. The Queen then asks the new party to come.

We've got all these traditions.

The leader of the winning party goes to Buckingham Palace in their own car, and then they inherit the car that was previously driven by the former Prime Minister. There are all these arrangements with cars, all of which signifies that the governments are changing hands.

Can the Prime Minister who's been defeated go home in the car of the Prime Minister who's won?

That would rather surprise me.

The Conservatives have been in government for rather a long time. What is the frequency of change of governments?

Well, it's interesting you should say that. This is the longest Conservative Government since 1951 to 1964. In the 1964 election, I'd just been through my first general election in the civil service. I'd just been in the civil service for three years. Now I'm just over five years away from retirement. So, at the beginning of my civil service career and towards the end of my civil service career, there is the possibility of a change after thirteen years of Conservative administration.

And how long have you been Secretary of the Cabinet?

Since 1988.

So, this is the first time you might have a change?

Yes. I've seen quite a lot of changes because I was Private Secretary to Ted Heath in 1974 and then I was one of the Private Secretaries in 10 Downing Street when there was a change from Conservative to Labour in 1974, and I was Private Secretary to Mrs Thatcher from 1982 to 1985, during which time there was a general election but no change of government. So I've been quite close to a number of these events.

Now, just worth mentioning. In '74, it was a very bitterly contested general election. There was a coalminers' strike going on and the Labour Party supported them. The Conservative Government had passed a law about limiting wages which the coalminers' union were defying. One of the issues of the campaign was parliamentary law against industrial force. Because the coalminers were restricting the supply of coal to the power stations, electricity was rationed. Industry was working restricted to a three-day week, losing a lot of money. So it was a very traumatic time. And they won it. They only just won it, by a majority of four votes. Mr Wilson arrived and kept exactly the same team of Private Secretaries and civil servants as had worked for his opponent.

By the standards of most cultures, that is a most extraordinary arrangement and a lot of people can't understand it. A lot of my own friends couldn't understand it.

It seems in one sense that these professional civil servants provide the continuity.

Yes.

How do they see their role?

They see their role as two things. First of all, providing advice about whether things will work, whether the Minister has thought of something. Whether he has thought of the kinds of argument that will be thrown against him.

Are the civil servants not sometimes tempted to ...? They may have believed they would

be working for one Government for life, and now they are working for its opponent. Is there not a temptation to influence or impose or advise along the lines of the preceding government's policies?

Yes, well that's a very good question. In writing these documents, the heart of the question is not to be coloured by the view of the previous Government. Which is quite a difficult thing.

I have been reading the documents and try to ask myself: what would an incoming Labour Government think of that? Is it objective enough?

You have said that you don't belong to any particular party, but you are involved in platforming for Party A or Party B. Now, does that not influence your operators, if your candidate doesn't win?

Well, I've never found that it does, because I think I know too much about the problems and the politicians. And I have certainly never found myself approaching a general election in the way of saying: "Party A is so clearly right!". One sees some things that one can agree with in Party A and some things that one can't. And likewise with Party B. Maybe we are lucky in this country that politics has never been terribly polarised. It is possible to take a very pragmatic view of things.

But it is something that politicians find very hard to understand about the civil service because many politicians have gone into politics because they have very strong views about things either way. They find it difficult to understand that civil servants are a different breed.

You have worked closely with the Conservative Party for thirteen years, so you have gained good insight into their ideas. How have you gained insight into the Labour Party, apart from reading what is written down on paper, in order to be able to formulate those briefs that are in front of you?

Because we have been involved in the political debate all the way through that period. We have been advising one side, but you hear all the time what the Labour Party say in Parliament, what their arguments are. You see them on television, you see their manifestos, and you meet them to some extent socially.

The other important thing to mention is that six months before the opening of Parliament, we have a convention where the Opposition leaders - their spokesmen - may have confidential talks with civil servants. We don't report these to our bosses. It's the one extent to which our loyalty to the government of the day is qualified - and that's only at the most senior level.

Do you call the opinion of civil servants who might not be party-political in the sense of standing for election, but who are, say, academics, large-scale economic actors, to give advice on policy positions in order to draw up briefs?

No. Not at the stage of drawing up briefs. It's quite possible that the incoming Government will bring in independent people of that sort. But we wouldn't go to someone outside and

say: "Will you interpret for us?". We don't have a problem there. We understand quite well what the Labour Party's position is.

What is the protocol level of the Private Secretary? Is he what we consider in South Africa Director or Director-General of the Department and can he be replaced by an incoming Cabinet, as for instance a professional or an academic?

No, it would be very unlikely. Certainly, the government couldn't make it happen. What they could say: Suppose they didn't like the Secretary of the Treasury. To get rid of him, it would be expensive and they would have to compensate him. They couldn't say: "We would like to replace him with Professor So-and-So, coming from outside". But they can say: "We would like to put this post up to competition". Then there would be a competition run by the civil service Commissioners.

In order to try and preserve this impartial civil service, that's the kind of defence we have.

Just suppose they do appoint Professor So-and-So. A couple of years later, there's another general election and the Conservatives get in. The first thing they'll want to do is get rid of Professor So-and-So. And then you're right into political appointments and into the American system, which has got its advantages, but it's different.

If a senior member of the public service retires, do they look throughout the public service? Do they give you a list of all the people with the right qualifications, so that you can make a short list?

Yes exactly.

[Break in recording]

The whole office make regulations, but then there's a code out by local government, who provide polling stations, print papers, maintain the register.

Are they the public service?

Yes, but local government public service.

How many levels of public service are there?

Well, two really: central government and local government. But local government itself has two levels. There are county councils and district councils. But our local government service is a separate service from the public service. It's also non-political.

What about the Scottish Home Office? Do they have a degree of their own public service?

No, not yet. It's one of the issues in the election.

Given the permanent nature of the civil service, would you recommend a radical change

when the new Government comes in?

[Break in recording]

I note in some cases that if you keep the senior people, as the position is now, they will be reluctant to implement the decisions and policies of the new Government ...

You're obviously thinking of South Africa. That's a very special problem and I wouldn't presume to advise you, who know the situation so much better than I do.

All I would say is that I strongly believe in the non-political civil service. I think it has got great attractions and I think if you can create a civil service where people take a professional pride, then whatever their private feelings are, their job is to work for the government of the day, to serve democracy and to serve and implement the policies of the government that the people have elected. And that I think is what one ought to aim at.

How you will bring that about in South Africa, I don't know. But I should think that you would find a lot of people actually in the civil service at the moment will accept that it is their duty, it is their job to do it. I can imagine you would want to ... you would need to take special measures to bring about a mixed civil service quickly. But for me to try and tell you how to do that ... It would be like you telling me how to run my civil service!

Those conventions you have in respect of the civil service, would it be possible for you to arrange for us to have copies of those convention papers? They would be very informative.

I would. On the duties and responsibilities of civil servants? My predecessor wrote quite a short paper on that subject. I think that would sum it up for you completely and I would be very glad to arrange for you to have copies of that.

Thank you.

[Discussion about room being used as the set for a television programme. Portion of recording unintelligible]

[Break in recording and apparently end of section by Sir Robert Butler]

The Civil Service Part 2 - Election Business Unit speaker

What we thought we'd do is fill you in a bit on what is happening now in the civil service. [Unintelligible]. The first point is that there continues to be a government. The Prime Minister has not resigned. The Cabinet has not resigned. In an ordinary department, the work goes on as normal. Our collective problems are dealt with, information is set out for the press, all the things a government department does continue [unintelligible] officials meet and talk about government policies.

Secondly, the principal parties are distinct from the government and part of the role of Sir Robert and his office is to ensure that the impression is not given that the government machine is used for party political purposes. For example, a Health Minister ought not to open a brand new hospital during the election campaign, but might use this time as an opportunity to say: "This is what the Conservatives have been doing for health". So, the guidelines relating to use of government property are that it may be used to issue press statements and that sort of thing. And that is what our office has been doing during the election campaign.

And the third thing is that parliamentary candidates are all equal. Once Parliament has been dissolved, there are no more MPs and everybody has the same right of access to the government machine. The organisation that I'm from is called the Election Business Unit and it's really there to give advice [unintelligible] to field enquiries wherever they come from, in a way that is not party biased. So that anybody asking a factual question of a government department should get an answer ideally within twenty-four hours. Most of that work is done by the department and they can come to us if they need any assistance.

Our second function is to act as a channel of communication between the political element of the government of the day - so, at present usually the Conservative Central Office - and the government department, so that if they want, for example, to give a Minister a statement to issue on a matter of new policy, we check its factual accuracy, and things like that.

So you're saying ... I am a candidate and I have as much access to you as a Minister or a city MP?

No, the candidates should go straight to departments. If a candidate contacted a department in writing or by telephone and it was a matter touching on government policy or the Conservative Party manifesto, then we would expect the department to refer the enquiry through to the Conservative Central Office.

You said candidates are equal.

Yes.

Now, if a Minister is a candidate, would you not expect that it might happen that he receives greater privilege than the other candidates or MPs?

In the campaign period, the Minister might write to another Minister for information or with some kind of enquiry that's been put to him. If it's a factual enquiry, the department will

answer it in the normal way and in some cases, the correspondent will be referred to the central office. Ministers, in effect, don't need special treatment in that respect, because, in fact, the central office provides ... prepares for all their candidates whether they wish it or not.

So, he would have special treatment when he deals with his own department and his own ministerial duties. But if the Minister of Housing wanted to know about health, he would be treated like any other candidate. If the Minister of Housing wanted information on housing so that he could be an effective Minister, then he would get special treatment. It's generally accepted that he would be aware of his own policy ruling[?], because the department would really only give him the same information as they would give anyone else.

What you're saying is that any candidate, whether he is a former MP or not, when he seeks government information from any government department, will be given it in an unbiased way?

Yes, that's if it's a question about existing government policy. When it strays from either pure fact or information on existing policy, into an area which is party-political such as manifestos and so on, invariably the query will be directed to the party concerned. The department will usually only go so far as providing certain information, factual material or previous material on government policy. But it will be up to the Minister concerned or the cental office to provide party-political ...

In other words, you wouldn't use the government department to promote the Conservative manifesto?

No.

Where is the central office situated? Where is it contactable?

In the Conservative Party headquarters.

Or the Labour Party?

Yes.

And where would it get government information?

It, like the candidates, would in normal circumstances go direct to the government department. The central office, like any candidate, would, if it had a factual enquiry, go to the government department which is responsible for that area of policy and ask the question. And local authority headquarters in the same way. The difference between them is that the government party are entitled to ask us to check any policy statements that they initiate themselves, to check with the relevant department that it is factually correct.

In terms of the election period, regarding the privilege of the Prime Minister and other Ministers of State - in terms of state vehicles and state transport, are there any restrictions?

They can use them for official party use, for when they are travelling with other Ministers ...

You mean John Major can address a public meeting tonight for the elections ...?

But he can't use the official car unless there are security leaks. And certain Ministers can use the cars ...

And your official election period is from the time that the election is announced ... Now, if your election is only going to be announced in six months' time, can your Prime Minister use his official vehicle during this period for what can be described as party propaganda purposes?

Technically, no. I mean, the campaign starts when the election is announced. If they wanted to have a campaign that ran for six months, then they would have to abide by the rules for those six months.

Let's say the elections are over and you have a Prime Minister in power. He decides two months on to have a party-political meeting in a constituency to tell people why his party's such a wonderful party ...

Well, not only during the election period should there be a distinction between the party and the government. The civil service is impartial and its functions are impartial, so civil service property and civil service cars should not be used for party functions. But during an election campaign, this is particularly important because there's so much at stake. But the election really only represents the principles that obtain all the time.

How long are the election campaigns - one month, two?

One month. Normally. In certain areas [unintelligible]. The recent election has been three weeks ...

In the election period, are there not mechanisms that they use to monitor the issue of impartiality and the use of government infrastructures? What about the position of the Cabinet Minister who, during the election, is the Cabinet Minister and exposed to his office infrastructure which produces his [unintelligible]? Can he get copies of posters and other leaflets? How is that controlled?

It's monitored by the staff themselves. If I were the Cabinet Minister's Private Secretary and he asked me to photocopy party information, I should say: "No. This is not part of my job".

If he asked you a little thing, like: "Would you book me a plane ticket tonight, to go to my public meeting?"...

They have people available to help them with their engagements at all times. The Minister has his Private Secretary in the government and at the office. It falls into the same category as the government car, you can't use it for party engagements ...

The Private Secretary?

Yes. They have someone in the House of Commons, usually, who is their Constituency Secretary, quite separately, and who will organise their party engagements.

And would that person also sit in the Minister's office?

No, in the House of Commons.

Their office is in the House of Commons? Totally separate?

Yes ... One might agree to do the post for half an hour or twice a week or something, but the department's attitude is completely different. If I, as a civil servant, have been asked to do something that I feel I shouldn't do, and I'm not happy about that, I then go to my senior officer and tell him I've been asked to do something I object to. In the end, it could be taken to Sir Robert Butler, and he has the power to ...

It's been made quite clear in each department. Because if a Minister writes about departmental issues on behalf of the constituents, then certainly in the department which I come from - which is the department of the Environment - it goes down in the department in a very special form, and it's made quite clear that this is for a constituency case. Or if you're asked to make a briefing, it's made quite clear that it's for a political engagement, so that people know that they can use only official material or that that Minister is ...

Working for somebody else.

So, the civil servant then is appointed on the basis of competence and merit, as opposed to party-political loyalty in the first place?

I can say that the politicians know that the civil servant is impartial and that generally speaking they're happy with it. Because when they're in Opposition ... they want it fair both ways. It's a two-way acceptance of each other's roles.

And does that apply at local government level as well? Is that the recourse? Because we were told that in elections and at registration, that that is handled not by the civil servants but at the local government level.

The administration of the election?

The administration, the registering and, in a sense, there's party political activity at a local level in a big way. And if people are going to be influenced in constituencies, the role of local government personnel could play ...

[Response made by G Bartlett?]The registration officials, whether they are at central or local government level, are acting in accordance with the terms of the Electoral Act. When an election is called, each party or candidate, according to the Act, is allowed to appoint his election agents and in the process of the election, he appoints his people. And other people from other parties monitor the election process, so that at any time

[unintelligible] you can start the count or you can tell the official [unintelligible]. And that applies to all parties. So, the officials have to be very unbiased and abide by the rules laid down in ...

But you'll see all that, I'm sure, when you go up to Manchester.

[Fragmented, unintelligible discussion]

I'm afraid I'm going to have to ...

[Unintelligible. Break in the recording and apparently end of section by Election Business Unit speaker]

[P Gordhan][...]climate for free political activity, to which is linked the media issue. And we have raised a number if concerns in this regard with some of the Foreign Office people. And you may want to take account of that when you address us. The first is: what legal framework do you operate within? Second, is there any independent authority which monitors electronic media, on one hand, and the print media, on the other hand? If so, how do they operate, what are their criteria? Thirdly, what do you see as the role of media in the election process? What are the dos and don'ts that you would apply? And how can we relate that to our own situation?

Independent Television News speaker

Yes, I think I've got that more or less intact, and if you'd like, at twenty to six, when our early evening news comes on, we'll break and we'll watch that and comment on that coverage and that might add some further questions.

Before I go to the headings which you've described, I'd like to spend a couple of minutes explaining what ITN is - in relation to the BBC and other broadcast electronic media at the moment.

Independent Television News is the news provider for ITV and Channel 4, two of the terrestrial channels. The other two terrestrial channels are, of course, run by the BBC. We are the news provider for the Independent Television Commission and the Commission is the regulatory authority for independent television. BBC operates under its own Charter which is up for renewal in 1996, and it derives its regulation from that Charter. We in independent television derive our rules and regulation and authority, if you like, from legislation - most recently, the Broadcasting Act of 1990. It's the job of the Commission - which changed its name fairly recently - to see that the rules are observed.

ITN has been in existence since the 1950s and, to a very great extent, we've inherited or acquired the same approaches to news and foreign affairs as the BBC. The Reedian principles of impartiality - Sir John Reed set up the BBC in the 1920s - have very much been assumed by the commercial stations. So we approach political coverage and coverage of elections with very, very similar principles to the BBC. The rules about impartiality are enshrined in the BBC Charter, they are enshrined in the Broadcasting Act. They are further detailed for us in the Independent Television Commission's Code of Practice and on top of that we obviously have our own codes of practice and guidance inside this company.

So that's the superstructure, if you like, under which we operate; and we do so fiercely defending our own independence. We are independent because we do not derive our authority from any political party, any political movement.

There has been a tradition over decades, since the founding of the BBC and BBC Radio, a tradition of independence and impartiality which spreads over all television and radio channels. We have new satellite channels, and even though they do not fall under the same regulatory authorities, they stick to the same principles. It's almost an ingrained principle in our democratic society. The television and radio media are impartial.

Not so the press. The press operates under no such restrictions and has no such traditions of impartiality. In comparison with the broadcast media, the press are plain biased. Most of the British newspapers, with a few exceptions which I shall come to, support the Conservative Party to some degree or another. The Daily Express, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Evening Standard - oh, I could go on - all support the Conservative Party to a lesser or greater degree of hysteria. The Daily Mirror is a Labour newspaper, The Independent is more or less what it says it is, and The Guardian is, on balance, a supporter of the Labour Party, but makes its judgements on the issues.

There is no regulatory authority for the press, as there is governing the broadcast media. The reason for that is that the market in newspapers is regarded as a free commercial market which anyone may enter, whereas the airwaves are regarded as a scarce resource. There is only a limited number of frequencies on the television spectrum. Because it is a scarce resource, it has to be allocated under some regulatory framework. The rules about impartiality, and the other rules - about ownership, for instance - of television companies, derive from that principle.

We are, in parenthesis, going through much change in television. One of the policies of Mrs Thatcher's government was a complete shake-up in independent television. I won't take you through all that. It's very confusing, even to those of us who've lived through it. But we are under a process of rapid change. I will mention one aspect in particular:

Independent Television News is currently a wholly-owned subsidiary of the ITV companies. There are fifteen companies in the ITV network. Whereas the BBC is one organisation, independent television on Channel 3 or the Third Channel is a group of fifteen companies, regionally based. They are franchises based on regions in the country.

Who owns them?

The ownership will vary. They are large companies. In London, for instance, there are two companies. Thames Television which has the weekday franchise. The weekend franchise is held by London Weekend Television. But they all have different shareholding structures. There's no particular point I can seize on there. They all have different shareholding structures.

Are they part of conglomerates?

No. Not in many cases. Granada Television is quite a well-known company and is part of the larger Granada Company but not the kind of massive conglomerate you're thinking of.

Do the owners of the press, the owners of the newspapers also own TV?

There are severe limits on ownership of television stations. Owners of newspapers are not allowed to have more than twenty per cent of a shareholding in a television station. That requirement was repeated in the last Broadcasting Act.

There is one exception which is Mr [unintelligible] Foxworth[?] and one exception which is Sir Rupert Murdoch, of whom you may have heard. And for various technical reasons,

mainly that his Sky Television is beamed out of Luxembourg, even though it is received in Britain, it escapes the regulatory framework. You may ask if this isn't someone looking through the wrong end of the telescope, but that is nevertheless the case. They're the one exception.

But ITN is for the moment the wholly-owned subsidiary of these fifteen ITV companies. But one result of the Broadcasting Act is that from next year, we have to become a commercial, profit-making company, and we will be a commercial profit-making news company. And there aren't many of those in the world. But we're half-way towards that. We're in a transitional phase at the moment of achieving that objective. Any queries on that, before I move on?

If you haven't been a profit-making company up to now, in what sense are you [unintelligible]?

Because we're a wholly-owned subsidiary of the other companies. Effectively, our budget has been provided on a pro rata basis - the basis being advertising revenue, the share of advertising revenue, by all these fifteen companies. That's where our budget has come from, and its been negotiated annually, agreed annually. From next year, we will have to move over to a much more commercial system, where we will have to negotiate contracts with all the ITV companies that we supply with news. We will remain a supplier of news under the regulation of the ITC. That's the basis on which we will operate.

The BBC is as yet unchanged, although its Charter, as I mentioned, comes up for renewal in 1996, and the government is about to institute an enquiry into the workings of the BBC. Or, the outgoing Government was about to establish an enquiry into the workings of the BBC. And we'll see what happens. The BBC employees have a vested interest in the outcome of this election.

Shall we move on to the election coverage itself?

Yes.

We made a boast in the promotion material which we put out to both television and the press that our coverage of this election was going to be *sharp, fair and independent*. These three adjectives mean something to us and I'll explain what.

Sharp, because we are concerned to make politics interesting to the viewer. We wish, and I believe we have succeeded, in making the coverage attractive and interesting, while at the same time covering the salient points in the campaign and covering the salient issues. We have a belief - which I am sure will be challenged by the BBC - that we are far less boring than the BBC. And we regard that as important, because it is important to ensure that the viewers don't just switch off when the election coverage comes on.

But secondly, there is a duty which we feel we have to the public, to let them know what is happening in this election campaign. Some people say that there is too much election coverage: "You're showing too much, why do you show so much of these politicians all the time?". And the answer to that is we still have ... We may be commercial television, but we

still have a public service duty to the viewers to portray, as accurately as we can, the choice before them in the ballot box. And this is, if you like, a public service duty which is a tradition inherited from the BBC, a tradition which we share with the BBC. And you won't find much difference in attitude and approach.

Fair, because we try our best to observe the obligation imposed on us of impartiality. Impartiality is, of course, a difficult concept - it depends on where you begin and where you end. We're not impartial towards terrorists. We're not impartial towards those who advocate violence. But within those parameters, we do our best to be balanced and impartial towards those who are contributing or fighting in a democratic election.

Obviously, we devote most of our coverage to the major parties: Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat. But we have a number of minor parties. We have the Nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales.

We've especially covered the issues in Scotland, which are particularly acute this time, as you've probably been aware. With the rise of the Scottish Nationalists, and their demands for independence, they get their due share of coverage and maybe they'll be getting their independence. There's no discrimination against them on those grounds.

We've covered the Green Party. We've even covered very briefly the Natural Law Party, which is the Party based on the views of the Maharishi. They believe in Yogic flying. We've even covered those ...

We saw your broadcast at twelve o'clock with George Harrison.

That's right. We've even covered those, however briefly. We've covered the parties in Northern Ireland. And that is an example of how we've attempted to be fair. Also balanced. And the concept of balance is also difficult. You can never define it absolutely. But it basically means giving each party a fair crack of the whip. Now how do you define that?

The answer is: you have to take into account the strength of each party from the vote that they had in the last election, what they have done in bi-elections since, what candidates they are fielding and the general strength of the lead that they have, based on journalistic judgement. But balanced means giving a fair crack of the whip to all major players.

In past elections, the concept of balanced and impartial was defined purely according to the stopwatch. And allocation of time ... Time was allocated between political parties on the basis of pure time. This is a complicated formula based on election broadcasts, which David has got to talk about. Election broadcasts are divided amongst the parties by the regulatory authorities, depending on various formulae and news and current affairs coverage did follow that formula based on the allocation of time.

We've moved away from that this time. We do keep a stopwatch to monitor the amount of time that each party has, but it's only one ingredient in the calculation of whether or not we're being fair. And the others are: our duty to the public, to let them know what all the main players are up to, also news value. We are a news programme, so, news value, the level of interest in what the party is doing, also matters vitally.

Independent, because we take a robust view about pressure from the political parties. But we're impartial. We have to develop our own sense, within the guidelines and framework which I have described, of what constitutes impartiality. Having taken a considered view as to what that means in practice, we must defend and implement that. And that means resisting robustly the pressure from political parties.

Let me give you a few examples of that kind of pressure which we've had and I may say that it hasn't been as great as some have said it was going to be. There was a period earlier this year when pressure from the political parties was very acute, with telephone calls almost every bulletin we had, querying this phraseology, that order of events, that clip of speech. That did decline and the pressure during this campaign has not been as great as it could have been. But, nevertheless, it has been applied in various directions and I will give you three examples.

First: the Liberal Democrats, perhaps, were the only party to go into an open clash with the broadcasters - ourselves and the BBC. Primarily with ourselves. They have always objected to our abandonment of the stopwatch, the strict allocation of time, because the Liberal Democrats are the third party which previously benefited most from the very strict allocation of time. And so, when we abandoned it, we had a long-running fight or argument - some of it in public - as to the whys and wherefores of that.

At one point during the campaign, in fact the middle of last week, they actually held a press briefing to complain to the press about the amount of time - or what they regarded as the inadequate amount of time - which we and the BBC were giving to the Liberal Democratic Party in their campaign.

He wrote a one-page letter initially and I wrote a two-page reply and then got a three-page reply back. So it was quite a vigorous correspondence. I think it's fair to say that the result was a stand-off. We didn't agree with his argument, he didn't agree with ours. But that is the nature of the relationship. We are entitled to make the judgements we have. That is our role. Having considered our position, it was up to us to be robust in defence.

The second example I shall give you is from the Scottish Nationalists. Last week we carried three interviews with the Party leaders on the use of [unintelligible], which you may have seen. Two of them were live, done by our political editor, Michael Bradson[?], on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. They were about five minutes each. And they were intended to be the sort of set piece interview in the campaign of our coverage on the three party leaders.

The Scottish Nationalists wrote - faxed - and said: "Why are you not interviewing our party leader, Alex [unintelligible]?. If you are interviewing the other party leaders, you should interview ours". To which I replied that these interviews were interviews with the leaders of those parties who were challenging the government of the United Kingdom as a whole and not for just part of it - which is what the Scottish Nationalists are doing. And they had to accept that they can argue, they can make a great fuss about it, they can go to the ITC, but it is our right to make that decision. And that is what we did.

The third example is a far more low-key example: the Labour Party complaining within the

last twenty-four hours that they felt the Labour Party was not getting the prominence in our programme which they felt that it deserved, given its position in the polls. There were a number of examples to back up this particular case, one of which we didn't agree with, one or two of which had a degree of common sense about them. One or two of the points that they made, we take on board.

So, we don't regard ourselves as being entirely defensive. If a legitimate point is being made, we'll take it on board. But if our central judgement is being challenged, it depends - we're very robust indeed.

That is, I think, a fair summary of how we go about our election coverage. Would you like to ask any questions on that before I hand over to David?

How do you put together your Board of Directors? Do the subsidiaries take into account any individual leaning and how do they ensure that these human beings are so independent and so balanced?

The decisions about how we are doing the coverage are taken in advance by the editor-in-chief. In our structure, we have under him a head of programmes which go out on Channel 3, and under him a head of programmes which go out on Channel 4, like Channel 4 News. They and a few others decide the process, how we will go about making our minds up and the principles which we will apply.

[David]Our Board of Directors is also made up of fellow television people, people with experience in the region and people involved in television from the various television companies. So we don't have a large number of people from outside saying you should do this, or you should do that.

[First ITN speaker]The Board ... Our structure is slightly peculiar. Our Board would have had no role in this decision at all. The Board of Directors is there to make the commercial and management decisions about the company and not to make editorial decisions. The editorial decisions rest ultimately with the editor-in-chief.

Who runs the Independent Television Commission?

The government appoints the members of the Commission. They are people who have established themselves in their professions - but not really in politics. I know of no politicians on the ITC. There was an ex-politician who was deputy-chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC. But the ITC is non-political.

If, at any stage, it was felt that we were not interpreting the rules of impartiality correctly, the complaint would go to the Commission and the Commission would have to arbitrate as to whether we were accurately and fairly implementing impartiality. But it wouldn't take a great deal of imagination to work out that the likes of me spend quite some time clearing my lines with the officials of the ITC. So, I am not going to make any move on such an important issue without knowing what the ITC thinks.

Do you know of an instance where a matter might have gone to the ITC?

There's no matter on election coverage which has gone to the ITC. I think it's fair to say, going back to the Gulf War, when there was one very obvious example which went to the ITC. I know this because I went into the lions' den myself!

That was the fact that we had a representative in Baghdad, reporting on events in Baghdad and there was a political movement amongst Conservative MPs that was very opposed to the BBC and ITN having reporters in Baghdad. It was regarded as being on the enemy's side. In fact, one MP got up in the House of Commons and called the BBC the Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation.

So, there was some feeling about that. But the BBC made no concession and we made no concession, even though there was discussion at the level of the ITC. They decided that it was our right to decide to do that. They did ask for some changes in the way that it was presented, but fortunately before we had to do anything about it, the war was over.

I was in the office of the ITC on Friday visiting a senior official and it would appear that broadcasters approach the ITC before they do something because while we were talking, we were interrupted by a broadcasting company, phoning to ask advice of the person to whom I was talking, on the way in which they wanted to handle a particular programme. He advised them against doing so.

It arises particularly ... The other issue I didn't touch on was the legal framework. Quite apart from the Broadcasting Act and impartiality, there is a whole legislation called the Representation of the People Act which has particular reference to the way broadcasters cover constituencies. This piece of legislation is appallingly drafted, it's an absolute minefield. Both I for ITN and, I know, other representatives of other organisations, might ring him up if we're in doubt on the finer points of this legislation.

The concept of impartiality sounds a good one. May I ask what constitutes impartiality, what social values guide it for example? What are the hard criteria?

I was at a dinner about ten days ago at which Norman Tebbutt was the speaker. Now, Norman Tebbutt is a fairly right-wing politician who is retiring this time around. A BBC man got up and said: "It's our job to represent what is happening to the public from the middle ground", which he tried to give as his version of impartiality. And Norman Tebbutt-Gardener said: "But that middle ground keeps moving. Where were you when the middle ground moved?".

So, there are no absolutes where this concept is concerned. It is your best impression of where the democratic system stands at any point in time. I've discussed our parameters. ITN don't report those who advocate violence or terrorism in the same way as those non-violent or democratic politicians. Not that I approve of this, but there is a ban on reporting Sinn Fein, apart from during elections.

Within that, you will basically use as the guiding light, the structure of the outgoing House of Commons - the relative power of the political parties in the House of Commons. That is the basis. There are variations and finer points on all that, but that has to be the basis of your assessment of the strength of the parties and the amount of time and coverage you give them.

Should we listen to the news?

Right. Yes. Absolutely.

You're about to watch the wrong channel!

[Channel 3 News broadcast begins and discussion temporarily halts. Break in recording]

Cassette 2

[Channel 3 News broadcast continues]

[ITN speaker resumes]On the central issue of the day, I think that you'd ensure that they all had a chance to say their piece - have a clip of speech on each of them. But it's a matter of judgement. There's no absolute about it.

That is the [unintelligible] parties?

Knowing them, yes. I mean, there are other political parties fighting this election - there's the Greens, there's the Nationalists, there's the Irish parties and we don't report their views about every issue every day.

In the case of the Greens, we tend to do an item specifically about them, or about environmental issues. In the case of the Scottish Nationalists, we would look at some Scottish issue, some local or national Scottish issue and they would be reported. You can't make any absolute categoric judgement. You can only look at the political situation you've got and try and make judgements on how the line of balance, impartiality lies and this can often consist of quite fine judgements at times.

David, can you in just a few moments summarise the election broadcast polls?

Independent Television News speaker - David

Party election broadcasts have a significance which has already been referred to. In Britain, we do not allow political advertising on television or radio. It's forbidden by law. There's no such restriction in the newspapers. So there there's party political advertising and I'm sure if you've had a chance to look at our newspapers, you'll have seen lots of party-political advertisements. It's always been forbidden on radio and on television.

But the concession, if you will ... You'll notice that in the United States, people buy endless broadcasts on television. But in Britain, the price that some people would say that we pay for that restriction, is that the authorities come together with the parties and decide that for the election, so many party election broadcasts will be allowed. And those party election broadcasts, as we've said before, are based upon the number of candidates that you are putting up in the election, and also on the relative size of the votes that you achieved at the previous election, and your strength in the House of Commons.

If I may take two examples, quickly.

In 1987, it was agreed that the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the then Alliance parties would have five election broadcasts each. This was throughout the four weeks of the campaign. And that five/five/five that I've just referred to was very important, because the broadcasters took the five/five/five relationship to be stopwatch.

So that meant that, although the Conservative Party in 1987 - before the election - had a majority of one-hundred-and-forty in the House of Commons, and although the Labour Party had about two-hundred-and-nine seats and the Alliance parties had about twenty-five, five/five/five/ meant that they each had equal coverage. So, if by the stopwatch, the Conservatives had five minutes, then Labour had to have five minutes and the Liberal Democrats [sic] had to have five minutes.

Now, this is supposed to be brought about by the broadcasters - BBC, ITV - coming together with the political parties as agreed. But in 1987, in [unintelligible] and in this election, they hadn't agreed, they refused to agree. So the broadcasters took the decision for them.

This time around, because the Liberal Democrats were not [unintelligible] as well as in the previous Parliament, the allocation of time was five/five/four. Five Conservative, five Labour and four for the Liberal Democrats. What they took into account was that the Liberal Democrats in bi-elections had done nothing as well, nothing like as well, as they had done in the previous Parliament. And the opinion polls also showed that their support was very much down - half, a third, sometimes a quarter of what they had achieved in the previous Parliament. Therefore - that was taking in the balance - it was decided, in a sense to demote. But these are public decisions taken in discussion and - they're made public, rather - and there was dispute and the rest of it. But that was the important thing.

Now, these political broadcasts. The authorites, BBC, ITC have a responsibility to broadcast, but it is for the political parties to decide and to provide the film.

So, the Labour Party knocks on the door: "This is our broadcast". BBC, ITV know nothing about it. You pray to God that there is no libel in it.

Sometimes - I was talking to a colleague, and he said that on one occasion, I think in the last election, they had not seen ... They were committed to the broadcast - these broadcasts are advertised, as you will imagine, in advance ... They did not receive the material until thirty minutes before going on air. And I think on this occasion, it was highly controversial. So there was a thirty-minute discussion about: "What do we do? Do we stop this broadcast? After all, if we stop this broadcast: uproar, pandemonium".

That is an extreme example, but it identifies the obligation that we have to show these broadcasts. The production of them is entirely up to the political parties. Those go out and they are, if you like, the concession we make to refusing the party, any party, the right to buy television or radio time to advertise.

Before you go - I realise your time is short. I've got here a list of all the political opinion polls that have been published in this general election so far. We've only had three weeks of it and there've been forty-two opinion polls. And probably by the time ... There's one tonight [unintelligible] to find what the latest one says. We've got one of our own coming

out tomorrow, and there will be four others, I think, on the eve of poll, published on the polling day itself. These opinion polls come from generally five big companies: May[?], Harris[?], NOP[?], ICM[?], Gallup - and are commissioned by generally media clients. Most of them are newspapers, as you will see. Sometimes television.

Generally the question comes: are they biased? The Daily Express is a paper which most people would say, and I think the Daily Express itself would say most proudly, has Conservative leanings. The Daily Mirror equally has Labour leanings. Neither of them would deny it. Does that mean if commissioned by the Express or the Mirror, that it becomes a biased poll?

I can't speak from any other experience, but in this country, we always remember that the political opinion poll companies are known to most people by virtue of these opinion polls. But apparently such opinion polls only account for five per cent or less of the whole company. So, if they get a reputation for fiddling the figures, they will be finished commercially.

So you get "bad results", so to speak, for papers. The Express has carried five per cent Labour leads, other papers sympathetic to Labour have carried two per cent Conservative leads. So the companies provide the figures and it's not that the figures are fiddled or distorted or changed. Where there is a question, perhaps, about how you report an opinion poll, is that what the media client decides to report is up to them.

Either the Daily Express or the Daily Mirror might have commissioned a poll. There are ten questions, nine of them are bad news for the Conservative Party or the Labour Party, one of them is good news. The client chooses to use that one question only. So, the power of presenting opinion polls comes from the editorial decision on what you use.

But our observation in Britain is that a poll is not distorted by a company coming in and saying: "Five point Labour lead? Well, let's make that three point Conservative. Or five point Conservative lead, let's make that ten point Labour". The problem comes in when you editorialise, particularly when you choose what to use.

Where do these figures come from? Where does the sample come from?

We are a small, homogeneous society, there is no point in this country which is more than eighty miles from the sea. We have fifty-five million people. We have a long experience commercially and politically of doing a sample of a thousand or more, which generally replicates the country as a whole, because we are a small island. There are Conservative areas and Labour areas and Liberal Democrat areas, there are rural areas and urban areas - but these are well-known and the sample is designed to take account of those things.

I know in your own country that you are massively bigger, and also that you have many more societies, in terms of groups. So I speak only for our experience. I recognise that for yourself and the United States probably, other countries as well, the problem of sampling is much more difficult than in Britain. But I think in those countries, polls have been carried out successfully. But it's a lot harder.

[First ITN speaker]The minimum sample that can be relied on in this country is a thousand, on the basis that David has described. The higher the sample, whether it's two thousand or three thousand or even ten thousand - as is the case I think with one of the polls coming out tonight - the more likely your result is to be accurate. So, there are all sorts of probability which affect it.

Yes, because just looking at six of these, the Liberal Democrat percentage varies from seventeen per cent to twenty-two.

On a sample of one thousand, there's a margin of error of plus or minus three per cent. Obviously, in a hung parliament situation, where the parties are level pegging, that margin of error is a matter of win or lose.

What is the result of this poll - the one tonight? Do you know?

I haven't been down to the news room. Last time round it was a Harris poll for the Daily Express. It was a one per cent Conservative lead, which was slightly out of focus with the others. I guess it might be one or two per cent Labour, is my guess.

Will the PA 10 000 be on the late news?

Oh, it will be. And let me just say a word about that. It's a big poll, because there are what we call ten [?] regions in Britain - by virtue of the Registrar General, or census in other regions - administrative regions: London, South East, South West, East Anglia, West England. The PA poll is actually an individual poll in each of those regions. And what will be significant - if you have the opportunity, and the information, it might be worth reading it up - is that these polls are national polls. They say: "This is happening across the nation". The regional polls give us a fascinating story about how different regions are behaving differently.

And the results will be in the paper tomorrow?

Yes it should. Or on Wednesday at the latest.

What effect does this kind of report in the newspapers, or wherever, have on the people?

That is a subject of great argument and there are those who say the public opinion polls should be banned during an election period. They feel that it affects the way people regard the election and affects the way they eventually vote. There is no hard evidence of this at all. Frankly, the general response is very straightforward, which is that in a free society, you can't ban information.

The polls carry on right up to the eve of the election?

Yes. No polls are on the day of the election itself. So the last broadcast, as far as we are concerned, will be on the seventh[?].

[David resumes]May I just say on the question of opinion polls in bi-elections in this country, that the opinion polls can be seen to decide people's tactical voting. So that if there is a Labour seat, and the Conservative voter wishes to [unintelligible] Labour, if they see an opinion poll which shows Liberal in second place, half of the Conservatives will move to Liberal to destroy Labour. If it's Conservative, the Labour voter seeing Liberal in second place will go to Liberal for that bi-election, in order to bring down Conservative.

In general elections, we do not have that experience. And the fundamental question comes in: If it's a proper sample, then it should be showing you the same as when you look in a mirror, it should show you what the people think, and you're one of the people. It simply informs you of what's new, a snapshot of the country as a whole.

[First ITN speaker]There's one opinion poll from last February and the question was asked: "How much do you trust each of the following to tell the truth in the forthcoming general election?". This is about trust. And the answer to that is Independent Television News - sixty-seven per cent, BBC News - sixty-six per cent, your daily newspaper - twenty-nine per cent. And the political parties varied about the thirty per cent.

So the level of trust which the broadcasters get in political coverage is a direct result of the impartiality which we try our best to adhere to.

[Unintelligible fragmented discussion. Break in recording and apparently end of section on Independent Television News]

Manchester Police Officer

[...] Yes, seven thousand policemen and three thousand employees. Of which I am [unintelligible], for the [unintelligible].

The interesting thing about the police service - and it's important for the kind of questions which you are likely to ask me - is the control of the police service and who it is responsible to in any area of the United Kingdom.

Basically, we have what is called a tripartite agreement. Now, it's quite easy to explain but very difficult to answer questions on, because that tripartite is made up of: the government (whichever government is in power), the local authority (which is the local government and locally elected) and the Chief Constable.

Each has certain powers and responsibilities. None of them impinges upon the authority of the other.

The Chief Constable's job is to police Greater Manchester according to the law of the land. It's as simple as that.

The local authority's job is to ensure that Manchester has sufficient police service ...

They pay for it?

Just a second, I'll come to that in a moment ... and partly pay for it. They pay forty-nine per cent.

The government's job is to make sure that the authority's doing its job and that the Chief Constable is doing his job, and they have a series of inspectors, usually retired policemen, whose function it is to ensure that those two tasks are carried out. And the government pays fifty-one per cent.

Neither the government, the local government, nor the Chief Constable can affect the law, unless of course that law changes, goes through Parliament in the usual process, the legal process. The local authority cannot tell the Chief Constable how he should do his job in operational terms. That's a matter entirely separate. He will listen to local authority advice, but he will make the decisions. And nobody, not local politicians nor national politicians, may tell the Chief Constable how he should police Manchester. That's his sole responsibility.

The obvious question is where all this is written down and the answer is that it isn't. It's a system that has evolved over a hundred and fifty years. It has worked by the theories of convention, custom and practice. And people who grow up in the system are brought up in the system.

And respect it?

And respect it.

I have had, occasionally, the local council, a local politician say to me: "I want this, this and this". And I point out to him, very politely, that that's my decision and not his. I listen to what he's telling me and if it's a problem to do with vandalism or litter or car stealing or whatever it is, then I will do what I can to please him too. But I make the decisions, not him.

He cannot directly ... I know this is a stupid example, but if he said to me: "I don't like people with beards and I want you to arrest everybody with a beard next Sunday!", I would advise him to go and see a doctor. It's a psychiatric case as far as I'm concerned. It just cannot happen and it would not happen under our system.

But you've got to have full co-operation and discussion between the person, obviously, who supplies the money, and the person who carries out the act. But irrespective of that, to go [unintelligible] opposite to the law, is in this country an illegal act. And I, just like anybody else, am subject to the law. And any person is entitled to take due process against me if I exceed my authority. And that means anybody. And occasionally they do - or try to.

What about if the [unintelligible] decides you're not doing your job? Who would that be?

All police officers, up to the rank of Chief Superintendent, come under the control of the Chief Constable. He's responsible for their recruiting, their training, their promotion if necessary, and their discipline, their dismissal, anything like that. Senior police officers, Assistant Chief Constables, Secretaries-in-Chief, come under the control of the local authority as far as their regulation. But disciplinary regulations are - not narrow, that's the wrong way to describe them.

But nobody can dismiss me for failing to do my duty as they see it, without the Home Secretary's permission. They can certainly dismiss me if I decide to rob the national bank in the middle of town or run away with forty policewomen, or whatever it is. In other words, if I do something in my personal conduct which prejudices my position, or which is against the law, then I am accountable. But in relation to my duty, I am not accountable.

For example, quite often I get letters complaining about some administrative function which I have decided upon. I've gone through the papers, and I've decided there's insufficient information to process them. I'm not happy and I've decided not to prosecute or not to do whatever this individual's writing to me about. He often writes to me ... Well, not often, although I think I had six in one week about three weeks ago. It must have been a bad week. He writes and complains about my conduct. I would pass that complaint to the regional authority and say: "This man is complaining about my conduct and these are the circumstances". They decide.

Their decision is quite simple. If I have carried out an administrative function and I've done it correctly as far as they're concerned - not in relation to my physical act - but I've done nothing malicious, I've done nothing vindictive, then they merely say: "We have no claim in this". If the complaint were about my personal conduct, in other words, if I'm drunk and

running down the street and throwing stones through the window, [unintelligible] then they would take me before discipline and rightly so.

So the rules are quite clear. If I act as a policeman and carry out an executive police decision, I am accountable to nobody except the law.

You're from the Manchester police - what is the geographic area of that? And you've got seven thousand policemen and three thousand civilians - how many citizens live in the area that you police and how many such police forces are there throughout the country?

We have approximately two-and-a-half million, sorry two-and-a-quarter million citizens whom we police. And we police in Manchester and the towns of Wigan, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport, Trafford - all the surrounding towns in the area. We are the largest provincial police force outside London. Of the Metropolitan Police, we are the second largest. Depending on the size of the geographical area, and how close is the urban area, and how it needs to be policed, police forces range from approximately two-and-a-half thousand to seven thousand. And there are forty-three of them.

Forty-three police forces?

Yes.

From two-and-a-half thousand members to seven thousand?

To seven thousand.

But you've got seven thousand?

We've got seven thousand. But the point to make is each Chief Constable is responsible for the policing in his own area - and does so.

When I asked the question about who would have authority over the Chief Constable, you answered it to an extent, but you answered in terms of misconduct. What happens if, within you area, policing is seen to be deteriorating - ie, crime is increasing, etc? Who decides that you are functioning inadequately and how?

As I said before, the central government has, at its disposal, an inspectorate. An inspectorate is made up of a team of individuals, or ex-senior policemen, or an ex-Chief Constable. In fact there are eight of them. And each area in this country has an inspectorate which is responsible for reporting to the central government on the official policing of the area. If the Chief Constable is not policing efficiently, the inspectorate will bring that matter to the attention of the Home Secretary, who is of course a member of the government in power, and that Chief Constable can, and I use the word can, be dismissed very efficiently.

It happened once, in 1945.

Following on that question, I imagine that in the area adjoining Manchester there is a

particularly severe problem which requires reinforcement. Who ... how can that kind of decision be taken and who can be expected to do so?

The Chief Constable from that area requests my Chief Constable to supply him with what we call mutual aid. The key, of course, is - what I said at the beginning - that all policemen are paid the same, are equipped the same and are trained the same, irrespective of the police force they're in.

Now, for example, some - time passes so quickly - some seven or eight years ago now, we had in this country a severe industrial disorder in the miners' strike. And I commanded a number of men across in the West Yorkshire border, because I come from that force. And I had on some days police officers coming from four different forces. And it made no difference whatsoever. Their training was the same, their equipment was the same. They obeyed the orders of the senior officer where it was and it made no difference at all.

How do you recruit the members of your force?

How do we recruit them?

Recruitment is open to everybody or anybody above the age of twenty-one in our force. There are certain national rules, but the Chief Constable can, provided he keeps within those rules, add some additional ones himself. Now, the national age is nineteen, but my Chief Constable said twenty-one. He said that, in his opinion, a person is not experienced enough at nineteen to be a police officer, and he prefers them to be twenty-one. Then they're required to be a UK citizen, that is a British citizen, and fall within certain height limits and health limits and eyesight limits and pass the necessary entrance examination. [Unintelligible].

Do you have local training? Or is there central training?

We recruit locally. We start their training locally, but only for a week. We then send them to what we call distance training centres, in other words, throughout the country, there are a series of distance training centres, and all the men are therefore centrally trained.

So your men go to be trained with men from London and the rest of the country, but they come back to you?

Basically men from the North of England - from Cheshire, from Central/West Yorkshire, from Cumberland, from Lancashire and from Merseyside.

But they come back to your force?

Yes, they come back to us but they are trained centrally.

Could you comment on your code of conduct?

We have disciplinary regulations in respect of, if you like, laws within the law. Remember, a policeman is always subject to his country, to the law of the land. Always. Be that criminal

law or civil law. In relation to his conduct as a policeman, he is also subject to a set of regulations called the Policemen's Regulations[?]. I, for my sins, am the man who am called upon to investigate any complaint against a police officer for breaching these regulations. You'll gather from this that I am very popular! I am the policemen's policeman, if you like. The Provost Marshal in military terms. And I thoroughly investigate all complaints which are made against police officers.

These regulations lay down not only the conduct, but also, if they are found guilty of misconduct, the punishment that can be administered, and who can administer the punishment.

Now, who investigates that type of situation? The police from the same area or from outside?

The police investigate in the normal routine. If it's a matter of any importance - and that's a very difficult concept, of course, because it's important to anybody who complains - but if it's a big thing, then a policeman from another area will investigate.

For example, in December last year, there was a shooting incident in Cheshire. A man, having shot his wife, shot his brother-in-law, tried to shoot an ambulance man, tried to shoot a policeman, was eventually confronted and shot dead by two policemen. That's in Cheshire, not my force area. But I am the officer that has been called in to investigate that matter. I'm just, as a matter of fact, coming to the end of that enquiry. In fact I'm finishing it tomorrow. [Unintelligible], if you know of anyone that is well worth considering.

In our system, you have a completely separate organisation, called the Police Complaints Authority - they're set up by statute - whose function is very simple. On matters of a serious nature, or on matters which are so designated by a Chief Constable to be brought to their attention, they supervise the investigation. So, in this investigation, where unfortunately a man was shot dead, I am being supervised in my investigation by a member of the Police Complaints Authority.

Is that national government or local authority?

No, when you say national government ... They are set up by statute, but they do not come under the control of Parliament in relation to - under the control of government, sorry - in relation to day-to-day operation. They are set up by Act of Parliament and their function is to supervise complaints against policemen.

So, are they public servants?

Yes. Yes, but not in the sense of being public servants where you are accountable, if you like, where the government is your employer. Although your salary is paid by the government, your powers are ...

Autonomous.

... Are autonomous, separate from the government. One instance is Sir Norman Duke[?]. In

fact, he's a PCA member. He's full-time now. He used to be a local authority official at Wolverhampton. He was the deputy town clerk, if you like, the [unintelligible] of a fairly large town.

Who answers in Parliament on behalf of the police and [unintelligible]?

The Home Secretary. The Home Secretary is the Minister for Home Affairs who is responsible for prisons, police, all sorts of things like civil defence. He answers in Parliament.

And are the police allowed to belong to trade unions?

The Police Act of 1964, it's an Act of Parliament which came out in '64 - there's a previous Act which came out in the 1930s - but the Police Act of 1964 says that as a police officer, you cannot belong to any trade union. But, the Act also says that, as a police organisation, you can set up within your own structure, a residential body who can talk on your behalf to government and local government. But they should have no affiliation with either politics or any other trade union. And in fact it works quite well.

In the structure of the police service, the ranks up to Chief Inspector are represented by the Police Federation, which is their negotiating and representative body. Superintendents to Chief Superintendents are represented by the Superintendents' Association and Assistants, Deputies and Chiefs are represented by an organisation called ACOFF[?] which is the Chief Officers' Association and which is known in this country euphimistically as the most powerful lobby, non-trade union there is. And I say that in a jest. There are only two-hundred-and-forty-six of them, but they are always consulting in relation to the law and the application of the law.

And the police themselves?

No. It is illegal by virtue of the Act of Parliament of 1964.

What is the role ...?

Can I just add one more thing? The Act of Parliament also says that a policeman shall not, <u>not</u>, engage in any kind of political act. He cannot belong to a trade union, be cannot run for a political party, he cannot carry out any act which is a political act. In other words, we've got a general election running now and a policeman cannot go and canvass or urge people to vote this way or that way, or put up a poster in his house which says: "Vote for ..." whoever it is, or anything of that nature. That is a political act and is forbidden by Act of Parliament. Sorry, you were going to ask a question?

Yes, you've answered my question in advance. I just wanted to know the role of the police in the situation you are in - the election.

Yes, because of the election as it stands now, I have very, very little role in this election. My role is quite simple. It is public order and preventing breaches of the peace.

Now, let's start with the time when the election is declared, when the Prime Minister says that we're going to have an election - and that is in Parliament - goes to see the Queen and gives us the date of the election. The law in this country changes at that point.

There are certain laws which control political meetings prior to ... But at that point legislation comes into effect and it's known as the Representation of the Peoples Act. And there are a series of these Acts and they define their role in relation to the political process.

We then have the build-up to the election and quite naturally we get visited by a number of senior politicians from whatever political party it might be. And it is our responsibility to look after their safety and their welfare, while they are with us. And as you've seen while you've been here, or seen on television, the politicians, like all politicians, with respect to you, gentlemen and lady, love to get out and talk to people and make their presence felt and so on.

Watch the eggs!

Watch the eggs, that's right. In fact, in our area, we've had one politician - poor old Mr Major again - hit by an egg in Bolton. And Margaret Thatcher was assaulted by a bunch of daffodils. Somebody hit her with a bunch of daffodils down in Stockport.

It's a matter of common sense, really, looking after people in an election. You'll gather that our election process - although people can become heated if they have a certain point of view - very rarely results in violence and never in violence of a serious nature. You'll get abusive language, and fist shaking and pushing and jostling, but never anything worse than that. I mean, I've been involved in the police force for thirty-one years and been involved in, I think, ten general elections, and numerous local elections, nearly one every year, and have never come across a serious incident.

Have you ever had any incident of political intimidation?

Never. Never. What we've had - occasionally - is misguided enthusiasm. What I mean by that is that someone will put up in their yard, or in their garden, a sign which says: "Vote for ..." - whichever party it is - and someone else will come over and punch holes in it or rip it down. You'll get sometimes on election day someone who stands outside the polling booths, shouting enthusiastically: "Don't forget to vote for ...". Then he's just sent on his way by the policeman.

So, what you've got is the odd individual with some misguided belief in certain causes, who makes himself unpleasant to either other individuals, or one individual. But you never get ... We've never had ... I've never seen an organised attack on the system or an organised breach of that law by a political party or a political group.

I have certainly seen that, but never in an election. I've seen it in demonstrations which have been anti something the government is doing, but never at election time. The other thing I can say, of course, and I don't mean to be disrespectful when I say this, is that when you have a mature electorate, the misconduct by a political party at the time of election, of that nature, is anathaema to them, because they will certainly lose votes. People will see that

they've adopted practices which are outside the accepted democratic process. And that's why you often see leading politicians saying rude words about each other but at the same time passing the message out [sic]. For example: When John Major was hit yesterday by an egg hurled by an individual, the leader of the political party, which was the Labour Party, said: "It's absolutely disgraceful! This is not the way we conduct our affairs and we do not accept that sort of conduct". Now, in a mature electorate, that's the way things are. Now, I'm not casting aspersions, but it's a process which has been built up over a long period of time.

[Unidentified voice]May I just interrupt at this stage. We'll be leaving in half an hour. May I just suggest that we move up, get ourselves sandwiches, something from the buffet and carry on?

[Police officer resumes]You had a question?

You have experiences in the way ... where they have decolonised, especially in Africa?

Yes.

Now, what is the role of the police in the various circumstances which have involved decolonisation and where they have had elections and new governments and where you had a very inexperienced electorate? It must have sometimes become very heated and animated. What role did the police play to ensure that [unintelligible]?

Well, all I can say is - I served in the [unintelligible] in Kenya, way back in my previous time and I can only give you my personal opinion. I ... my own opinion - I'm not speaking as a policeman but speaking as my own man - I think it is extremely difficult to transfer attitudes and things that have grown up over a long time to a new arena. It's very, very difficult. But, it can be done under certain circumstances.

If you take as an example the elections that took place in Rhodesia - the then Rhodesia: Zimbabwe - when the democratic process came in. When the [unintelligible] it was decided, brought in English ... British policemen on to the scene to control. Now, I'm not suggesting you do that, of course. But somehow you've got to get an element in there to see that the process is followed. It worked wonderfully - I think more by good luck than by nature, but it worked very, very well. Because they were able, if you like, to impose the standards of the control of an election on that process.

It's very difficult ... when you think of the election that's taking place Thursday. The policemen have no function whatsoever in that election. The booths, the polling booths, are controlled by what is known as the presiding officer. He has total control of that booth and of everything that happens in relation to it. If he's unhappy with something, he'll call a policeman - simple. The policeman doesn't act without his authority.

Is he a policeman?

No. No, he could be a school teacher, he could be a local authority. He could be anybody.

The same applies at any political meeting prior to an election. The chairman of the meeting

is the sole deciding factor on the conduct of that meeting. Now, obviously if there was a serious riot inside, he could order his men in and take the necessary action, because it would be a breach of the peace. But the law is quite clear. If you've got, in a political meeting, a disorderly person, who is heckling and causing all kinds of mayhem, and the policeman is asked by the chairman of the meeting to relieve him, he will relieve him. But the law is specific: the policeman cannot even ask that person's name or address. If the chairman asks him to get the name and address, he can attain it and pass it to the chairman.

Otherwise he just removes him from the hall ...

Just removes him from the hall.

Like that chap who threw the egg yesterday?

Yes, well, he was arrested for breaching the peace. I mean, the law is clear. No matter where you are and under no matter what circumstances, if you assault someone by throwing an egg at them, you will appear before a magistrate.

And is that a minor offence?

Yes.

Sort of admission of guilt fine?

I should imagine he'll get fined ... he may just get bound over to be on good behaviour, but he'll be fined twenty-five or fifty pounds. It's a minor offence.

Can a policeman vote for any party?

Look, a policeman, has, of course, like any other citizen in this country, a right to vote. Now, I shall come in on Thursday morning, I'm working on Thursday, on Thursday evening, but on my way in to work, I shall vote. The Ballot Act of 1872, of course, says that the ballot in this country is a secret ballot. It says you are right and entitled to a secret ballot. And I shall vote as I feel, like anybody else.

The Chief Constable, for example, he votes for the party he likes? This type of [unintelligible] can influence you in the force, because you are always tied to the conduct of [unintelligible]?

We have been trained, if you like, over long, long years on what is a lawful order and what is not a lawful order. And if my Chief Constable gave me an order which I considered to be unlawful, I would not obey it. It once happened to me in my service when I was a Chief Inspector and the Deputy Chief Constable I reported to gave me an instruction. And I said: "Sir, that is an unlawful order, and I refuse to obey it". He promoted me to Superintendent eventually, so it didn't seem to have done any harm.

But the Chief Constable does not designate and does not give any hint whatsoever on what his own personal views are. It's a rule that we have that you do not take part in politics and

that you do not express your political views.

The role of the police in events such as strikes, pickets and mass demonstrations. What's the code that guides you in your responsibilities?

Quite simply, it is irrespective of what the strike is about, what the picket is about, what the industrial dispute is about. The law is the law, and the policeman enforces the law. And the law says in this country that you have a right to peacefully picket. It also says that you have no right to watch and beset - lovely terms, aren't they? But, of course, they come from the early 1900s. Watch and beset means, if you see a man who works with you - you're on strike and he's not - and you make an effort to visit his house, beset him in his house, go to the pub, beset him in the pub, or when he's taking his children off to school, that's an illegal act in this country: watching and besetting.

The law also says that if you're a picket in an industrial dispute, that picket shall not be more than six, or, to that which is safe [sic] which a senior police officer so decides. Usually six, a six picket.

At one spot?

At one spot. Say, by the gates of a factory.

If for example, you are picketing an embassy, can you have six here, six there?

That's it, yes.

Many groups of six?

Yes. I mean, the law ... As long as these people peacefully picket ... If that's what you're up to ... If you misbehave, it is irrespective of what the cause is, irrespective of what the political position is, that's an offence against the law and will be dealt with by the law.

Public demonstrations, large numbers of people, public marches?

Right. We have an Act of Parliament which deals with public order. It's called the Public Order Act and it deals with things such as processions and demonstrations. And anyone has a right to organise and run a procession. They must inform the Chief Constable and he has a certain right then to control the route and the times it takes place.

For example, if somebody wanted to hold a march and the rest of the population were unhappy with it. Say, we had - and I use this one advisedly - a National Front or a Neo-Nazi demonstration through an area which has a large Muslim population in Manchester. We could obviously anticipate a certain amount of trouble. The Chief Constable is perfectly entitled to say: "No. Your right to march is less than the right of public order - and serious disorder at that, I fear". And he'll refuse. But he has to account for why he's refusing.

We often get marches here on a Saturday. They might be anti-vivisectionists or anti-abortionists. But we're always very careful to control the places and times because we have

a number of large sporting venues in Manchester and the worst thing that you can possibly get is a football crowd going to a football match, meeting a demonstration that's a political demonstration. You're asking for trouble.

So what we say to the organisers is: "Certainly, have your demonstration. The route however will be X,Y,Z and you will start at eleven o'clock in the morning".

And if they're unhappy with the route that you've laid down? Who do they have to go to?

They can go to the courts.

To the courts?

Yes.

But you cannot refuse them the right to march?

No. You can advise them and they take the consequence.

This part of the recording largely unintelligible

[Another unidentified speaker]It's usually by negotiation, in other words [unintelligible]. Annually, the university students in Manchester have a charity parade when they walk through the town [unintelligible]. In order to raise money for charity, they want to come through the centre of town. In terms of traffic control, in the middle of the day or in rush-hour traffic, this can cause absolute chaos [unintelligible]. So, we always try to advertise their march in the city centre [?] or we negotiate with the town clerk at a time when it is most regular with the traffic [?]. Usually it is done by common sense or by negotiation [?].

So you don't give permission, but you control it?

We control it.

But the permission issue is not involved?

No. [Unintelligible]. Generally, the demonstration will go ahead. Before the event, we have publications in relation to public considerations [?] [unintelligible]. Then you would try to negotiate on either [unintelligible] public order [unintelligible].

What if they hold a demonstration without consulting you? If a thousand people start walking down ...

[First speaker resumes]No, that would not happen. [Unintelligible]. Quite simply. [Unintelligible].

[Second speaker][Unintelligible]If you had a thousand people suddenly start gathering

[unintelligible] you can't let it [unintelligible]. You would make quite sure that the rest of the life of the city was inconvenienced. [Unintelligible].

[Unintelligible question]

[First speaker]Yes, we would allow that of course. If we had a demonstration that's organised, it's been agreed, and the organisers deviate somewhat from that demonstration ... They might want to go a certain route and, because of the force of numbers, they go that certain route. We are very, very reluctant to take any kind of action at that late stage against the organisers. Because our point of view is, if you work to a set of rules which achieves both objectives, then we're happy. [Unintelligible] means that you are building up a reservoir, if you like, of bad feeling and a combative position for the future. And we try and avoid it if we can. So we work on compromise and [unintelligible].

You did indicate that if things are too large, or there are too many things happening, that sometimes Chief Constables co-operate with one another and a force in another area, where they help out. Do you have, in a sense, the same relationship with the army? In other words, is the army ever expected to do policing, and do you have any relationship with the army? And secondly, what about a situation like in Northern Ireland? The situation is obviously very dissimilar to here.

On the mainland of the UK, the army has no function whatsoever. In fact, the army cannot operate, if you like, as a civil power, without the Home Secretary's and the government's permission and the request of the Chief Constable. In our system, there's probably legislation [unintelligible]. In our system, the civil power, in other words, the policeman, is the [unintelligible] power.

If you have certain circumstances where you are dealing with a very serious situation, not, in general, in relation to the numbers of a demonstration, but in a terrorist situation, there we have a well-laid-down process, where we take it to a certain stage, and then, if we need special military help, it is asked for - through government. And you talk about legislated for ... It even gets down to the last act when the Chief Constable signs a form to hand over to the military power his function - the Chief Constable - for that one specific terrorist incident. When the terrorist incident is resolved, finished, the army officer hands it back to the Chief Constable. And we even have a piece of paper for that.

And it's happened of course. It happened in the Iranian siege in London.

Now, the Northern Ireland situation, of course, where you've got a continuing terrorist situation ... The government has sent the military into Northern Ireland with certain civil powers. But without the Act of Parliament which gives them those powers, they cannot operate.

I know you're going to see an army officer and he'll be amazed at your question because he has no process whatsoever to power and no authority at all. None at all. That Act of Parliament is specific to Northern Ireland.

[Break in recording]

Of course you've got an extremely ... you mentioned that you've got a mature - a politically mature - society. And its history, as you have said ... The convention has taken many, many, years ... In fact, even hundreds of years ...

Quite so.

But if you had a situation, for argument's sake, let's say you've got a Northern Ireland situation, where you find it necessary to have the assistance of the army ...

The Northern Ireland elections run exactly the same. However, besides policemen, you will have armed soldiers on the streets, at the polling booths and at the counting - for security reasons.

Let's look at a hypothetical situation - in London: Brixton or Notting Hill Gate where you've had some problems in the past, the police have been able to handle them. But if it ever got to the situation where, as you said, Neo-Nazis and the Muslim community started firing bullets at one another and so on, what would happen if it got beyond the capability of the police? That's when you'd call in the Special Force ...

Hypothetically.

... Like they did in the Namibian [?] situation.

It hasn't occurred since 1840, was it 1842? Or 1836, or whenever it was. That was in Manchester. But that was before the formation of the modern police force. The magistrate called in the militia to control a riot and the cavalry, the militia cavalry, charged the crowd and killed ...

Where do you keep your forces, do they live in barracks?

No. Where do you have to live in this country if you're in the police force? You live in the community like anybody else.

[Fragmented, unintelligible discussion]

What are your own experiences of the local or federal system, I suppose, of the police forces, where each metropolitan area is independent from the other one?

Well, again I shall speak advisedly, because there's a member of the foreign office here! But really, I do not see too many demerits in it. I see more merits than demerits. And I'll tell you the reasons why.

Again, I don't mean disrespect to any politician. But our system is: you should never trust a politician with too much power. A politician cannot order any policeman to do certain things. Not that you ever would. But, in other words, it's a safeguard; which means that although they have certain powers, they are limited to certain areas. The Chief Constable's

powers are related to certain areas, according to local authorities. And it works.

I'm not saying, though, I'm not saying - and this is an important point when you look at what we call the tripartite agreement - that it works because of laws. It works not because you have a Parliamentary absolutely [unintelligible] law, but because of goodwill, convention, and because people are willing to work and talk together.

Your police force here in Manchester, where you have seven thousand men and women. Are they from this region? Are they locals?

Yes. Mostly.

So they have a close affinity with the department ...

Yes. That decision, of course ... There's no barrier to entering the police force. Well, as I told you, you've got to be a certain height and have good eyesight and so on.

There was a time, certainly about five years ago, when it seemed that the image of the English Bobby had suffered a lot. Is that true, and if so, have you done anything to change it, and what?

I think you're right. But to put it in perspective. I think that under our system, that many of the concepts of the administration - the Church, the legal profession, the banks, all those aspects of our society, have come under close ... pressure by members of our society. And there has been a far greater requirement to be accountable to your local people through that process. And that's a good thing, I think, because I certainly believe in accountability. If you do something, you must be able to actually tell people why you did it. I see nothing wrong with that.

Now we suffered - and I put that word in brackets [sic] - "suffered", if you like, from that close scrutiny. And our society fluctuates, of course, depending on any number of things going on at the time. Now, when we actually go to polling organisations, looking at different aspects of our society and ask people what they perceive or how they see the police officer, the way they've always gone: policemen come second or third, and politicians come last. You'd think the journalists would come last but it <u>was</u> the politicians.

It's a thing you've got to be aware of and you've got to try everything you can to keep your stable image.

Now, you asked a very important question in relation to the number of policemen and the number of population. We have something like fifty-four, fifty-five, or fifty-six million people in this country - depending on the census. And there are one-hundred-and-eighty-two thousand policemen. Now work that out for yourself. And it doesn't take long to work out that the police service in this country that doesn't police with the consent of the population, would not survive. It just does not have sufficient numbers. Therefore you cannot poll a department unless there is a consent[?].

Those are the police officers, they're not the civilians?

Those are the police officers.

And how many are there?

One-hundred-and-eighty-two thousand, at the moment. In a population of fifty-five, fifty-six million.

[G Bartlett?]Those figures clearly indicate we don't have enough policemen in South Africa. [Unintelligible]. We have about half of what we should have.

[J Love responds]No, but the army plays a direct ...

[Another question in the background]What are the chances of promotion in the police service to senior positions [rest of question obscured by continuing discussion on numbers of police in South Africa]?

Promotion in the police service is the question I was asked ... excuse me ... sorry?

[J Love]No, I think it's true that we don't have the same kind of ratios in the police, but I think in South Africa, the army plays a constant, direct policing role all the time, throughout the country.

[G Bartlett]Now, that is not true, because you have an Act of Parlimant which has to be called into operation under certain circumstances ...

[J Love]Well, it's been in operation ...

[G Bartlett]... for example, a State of Emergency ...

[J Love]Well, it's been in operation over a long period ...

[P Gordhan]This gives you some idea of our very different perceptions of these issues. So, let's move on.

You've really got to work out what you brief them to do. Quite often in this country, policemen go beyond their limited police duties and go into a lot of what are really social duties.

Let's talk about another ...

First, let me answer the question about promotion. What you do in the police service ... You qualify by examination and by interview, irrespective of who you are, what your background is and how you've progressed. I can give you the example of myself ...

Do you give financial assistance?

By the police.

... I am a Barnardo's boy. Now that means quite simply in this country ... it's an organisation which runs orphanages. I came out of an orphanage. I was in the army at fifteen, I did nine years in the army, five as a paratrooper. I came out and over to the police service and from that moment on, I decided to get an education and to study. I did my O-levels and A-levels and I have two degrees. Private study in the evenings, financed by the police force. I have been through every rank in the police service and I am a strong believer in belonging to nothing. In other words, I belong to no other organisation which could give me any sort of advantage.

Now, quite specifically, in relation to race. I really believe in racial terms that there are certain amounts of acceptable conduct. And I say that advisedly because I am Welsh and I get abused abysmally by these English people. I also say that because I serve in Lancashire and in fact I came from Yorkshire. You know our history, you know that we've been a [unintelligible] for about four hundred years - so I get abused again. But that's all part of [unintelligible]. There's very little racial abuse internally that we have problems with. One of our greatest problems is officers we have who are of either Asian descent or of African/Caribbean descent who get abused from outside, not inside.

Now, if you look also at the promotion of those officers, simply because of the time those officers joined the service and the age they are, you have no high-ranked officers. But we are actually achieving better levels. We have a number of Caribbean officers. We have a couple of inspectors who are Asian or Caribbean. We had a Superintendent who left us for another force, for a promotion, of Asian origin. And the officers of those origins are moving up through the service. I have no doubt that one day they'll reach the highest ranks. It's a matter of [unintelligible]. It's a progression of time.

But we have never barred on class, creed, background or experience, as far as ... You can nip into the police station nearest you, and you are judged on your merits. And believe me, from the background I come from, I am one of the people who judges, and I insist that they are judged on their merits. I allow no class privilege - "Daddy's yacht" is the term I use, or "son of the managing director", if you know what I mean. You won't get by on that - it's not allowed.

You mean you could have a Nazi person in your police force?

Sorry?

A Nazi ... In your police force.

Well, you'd never know. Let's look at the recruiting of the police force. The law says that you are not involved ... you are not allowed to be involved in politics. If you have someone who's involved in politics and their conduct is such that, as far as you're concerned, they would be subject to disciplinary regulations, they must be subject to the disciplinary regulations and can be dismissed because of that conduct.

Also in our system, we generally say that you are a recruit, if you like, for the first two years. We use the term "observation". In that first two years, the Chief Constable can dispense with the services of the individual without leave. We use the expression: "Is

unlikely to make a good and efficient police constable". What it really means is that we don't like him, there's something about him, either his demeanour or in his conduct - and that's the sort of conduct I'm talking about: bullying, or prone to violence, or his treatment of people both inside his job and outside his job - is not what we accept. We can dispense with him. And we occasionally do.

We have talked about the police force in a general sense. But as all of us know, there are a lot of different branches to the police force. Could you give us some description of these? If there are forty-three police forces, where does the Criminal Investigation fit in?

Every police force has basically the same structure. Depending on the area of policing, we require certain additional facilities. Now, in our force, we have the uniformed branch and the CID. It is our belief that you cross-fertilise the two all the time. In other words, you might have a man join, as I did, as a uniformed constable. I then became a detective constable, and then a uniformed sergeant. I then became a detective sergeant. I then went back into uniform [unintelligible] managing the uniformed branch.

So you have this cross-fertilisation which is very, very important, so that you do not allow internal cliques to build in any organisation, which are self-perpetuating. If they do, you avoid that by changing people over. We have a philosophy in this force that every post in this force is [unintelligible] and the post-holder can only remain in post for two or three years. He then goes on to do some other job, unless you professionally assess that you need to keep him there.

[Another unidentified speaker]Everybody joins as a uniformed officer. You don't join as [unintelligible].

[First speaker resumes. At first unintelligible]Then because of the size of our force, we have a horse section, we have dogs, we have traffic policemen, we have drug squads, flying squads. We have all sorts of different aspects that we need to address.

Can we just clarify ... The traffic police are part of your police?

Yes. [Unintelligible]. Everybody. A man can be moved, after mid-Monday morning from one band to another and from one station to another.

To what extent do you deal with intelligence and counter-intelligence?

Right. We have - and every force has, depending on its size - a Special Branch. There are those officers who deal with intelligence information, terrorist information, subversives, and that sort of element in relation to government intelligence. It's not a very large branch because we have no call for a [unintelligible]. So, we have a special branch which deals with those aspects, although I shan't give a size, quite obviously, because that wouldn't be right, but it is a relatively small organisation.

It deals at the moment with those aspects of IRA activity in England which we are concerned with. It obviously has direct links with the intelligence forces of the government - MI5 and

MI6 - and it deals with those things which cause us concern, like ... We've a quite prominent, quite violent [unintelligible] animal liberation [sic] organisation at the moment which commits damage to butchers' shops, sets fire to vehicles and warehouses, and this sort of thing. So Special Branch deals with that sort of thing.

At that level, you wouldn't have any external influence?

No. We are not allowed to deal with political aspects and political parties.

[Unidentified voice]May I just add one point there? I assume that your Special Branch works in relation to what we know as Security Service, which is known as MI5 for historical reasons. It's worth making the point, I think, that the activities, and function and control and accountability of the Security Service, that is the internal intelligence agency, is subject to an Act of Parliament.

[Break in recording and apparently end of section on the police service]

Speakers on Electoral Law and the Electoral Process (Manchester University)

[Much of this portion of the recording is inaudible / speakers are drowned out by foreground noise. Transcriber cannot vouch for accuracy of transcript]

I will ask Mr Gordhan to add more points. But I think it would be effective if, in this session, we dealt with the key tenets of the electoral law, as it affects both the candidates and the campaign. And as it impinges upon the process of polling the electorate - things like the registration of the electorate. In particular, you might wish to comment on how political parties seek redress, if, for example, they feel that some aspects of the law have not been observed or they have been subjected to unfair treatment or anything like that.

For example, in this country, we don't have an overall Electoral Commission. So, what is the role of the controlling officer? What is the role of the [unintelligible] in relation to the controlling officer?

And I suspect that you may get asked to comment more generally on constitutional issues, and the relation of power to function. Quite possibly, although I don't know if it's in your brief, you may get asked to comment on the relation of local government to power. I know it's a very complex issue.

The question of consensus, I think we agree on in this room. But the aspect of the degree of the devolution of power is a question on which we may disagree quite vigorously.

[P Gordhan]I think you have covered quite a few of the things I was going to ask. But one of the things we would be keen to hear, is information on what constitutes a free and fair election, both in terms of theory and what happens in the actual institutions that are involved, at different levels of government.

You will find us interested in all sorts of issues related to elections, the constitutional process, levels of government. What we might want to do is, once you've made your presentation, structure our discussion in a way to cover our topics - and so help us to field the discussion.

[Electoral Law speaker]I think I'll start by picking up that point about the theory and what constitutes a free election. That's perhaps where we should start, because you are, in a way, over here, at a time when there's a certain degree of debate as to the fairness of our own electoral system. The electoral system which has long stood in the minds of many British people, as best defined by producing an allegedly strong government and clear outcome for the electoral process.

So when one asks what constitutes a fair electoral system, I think one first has to ask: what is the end result that one is looking for? By a fair or just system, are you looking for a

system which is some way proportional to the voting [unintelligible], or are you looking for a system which will produce a very clear and strong outcome? And these two requirements do not go hand in hand, indeed some people would say that they are often actually opposed to one another.

If one takes the point about fairness is terms of proportionality, there are some political theorists who would argue that there is no system which produces genuine proportionality. There are very elaborate and rather mathematical theories about voting and political choice, which actually show that there is no method of voting by which the ultimate result accurately reflects the preference of the voter.

In other words, if you think that a political system will result in a proportion of parties or policies that accurately reflect the preferences of parties or the preferences between politicians of the voters - there is no such system.

Just to elaborate. There is something called the Impossibility Theory and a man named [unintelligible] won the Nobel Prize in Economics for coming up with this rather embarrassing result. Impossibility Theory because it seems to prove that democracy is impossible. Now, what usually happens is that politicians and other political theorists ignore this extremely inconvenient outcome and say that it is a rather abstract conception of democracy. But, nevertheless, I think it must be borne in mind, because if one is going to explain that a political system is not just because it is unproportionate, then one must remember that it is a matter of degree and that one cannot get the perfect proportional electoral system.

So, I think one then has to look at the different forms of proportionality - and I am sure that all of you know that there is a tremendous variety of proportional electoral systems. And we've seen some examples in Europe just this last week. And I stress this point, because you should look at the results in Germany and at the results in Italy of different proportional systems. You might want to assess which of these is fairer and to assess if either of them is fairer than the kind of result which we expect to get some time on Friday afternoon.

[Unidentified voice]I suspect we'll have to wait till quite late on Friday, won't we?

[First speaker]Well, we have things called exit polls here. They're perfectly legal. And they normally take place at about ten o'clock, just before the polling stations close. This is to get a snapshot of people who have voted and if you can get a thousand or one-and-a-half thousand people to tell you, and if they are representative of the nation as a whole, you can get a pretty good indication of what the overall indication will be. And it does often happen that the whole night-long process is merely a fulfillment of what you already know. They tell you what you know. And these exit polls - there have been some problems with them, but they're quite reliable. So we might know the overall shape of the results by fairly late on Thursday evening, I would have thought.

The exit polls, are they done by polling the people who have just left the polling station?

Yes.

So, you're gauging the late voters, that sort of thing?

[Unidentified voice]What you are gauging is not what people say they ... People are not telling you how they are going to vote, they tell you how they have voted. Assuming that they're not, obviously ... I mean, you assume that people aren't going to ...

Throughout the day? Are they throughout the day?

Yes. And the results come after the polls.

Throughout .... Not just after the polls ...?

One of the problems though, of course, is translating those results into seats - which will be more difficult on this occasion than in the past, because of things like the Scottish dimension. So, I suspect that we will be hanging on for the result longer than we have in the last couple of elections.

In '74, I seem to remember that we had to hang on until Saturday afternoon, until the very last result had come in from Northern Scotland. But, by then, it was obvious that there was no overall majority, so there was a period of negotiation. That's, really, the closest model to what seems to be going to happen on Thursday ... There was a period of negotiation for two or three days when the Conservative Government still had in mind - Heath at the time - tried to do a deal with the Liberals to get some kind of working majority. There I think it failed, because the conditions weren't good enough for the Liberals. No, the Liberals ... Thorpe accepted it, but the Liberalist Party threw it out, so then Wilson was asked to lead a minority government, which he did. And something a bit similar might happen ...

Could you explain your reference to Germany and Italy?

[First speaker resumes]Well, they have different forms of proportional representation. The Italian system depends the most on proportion in that the results will accurately - pretty accurately - translate into the number of seats voted ... translate accurately into the number of seats in an assembly. So, this is a system which benefits small parties. There's virtually no threshold in the Italian system. In other words, no party has to get over a barrier for it to come into Parliament.

One-hundred-and-twenty-six parties voted in the Italian elections. Four of the ... The system's been [unintelligible], which ... Four main parties have always formed a coalition to produce the government. This is an outcome which partly, however, reflects not just the electoral system, but the political balance in Italy. And this is one of the difficulties in talking about proportional representation. One of the standard claims which has been advanced by political scientists and also put forward by politicians, is that there is a close relationship between proportional representation and the number of parties in the parliament. Now, this is a ... there is indeed a relationship between the two. But the relationship is a very complicated one in that it is not clear whether it is proportional representation which causes the large number of parties, or that rather, historically, there is a strong element to say, that it is in those societies where there are large numbers of parties, that proportional representation has been an option. In other words, the community in many cases existed first

and the electoral system was introduced, in order to register the divisions that existed in the society.

Now, in Italy, the system was intended to provide, as it were, a democratic contrast to the authoritarian regime during the war. But, of course, in Italy, there was a strong anti-system party in the Communists. They were opposed to the operation of the democratic system, as also they feared, of course, the resurgence of the far right. And so, what has happened is, despite the proportionality in the system, despite the number of parties, the same four parties have virtually formed the government throughout the post-war period. So, one impression that people often get of Italy is of enormous political instability, because governments hardly last more than eighteen months, two years. But it's the same people all the time, the same man as Prime Minister over and over again. So, from one perspective, there's been enormous stability in Italy - and stability against the odds, as it were, stability in the face of a strong party, which is, of course, the democratic system.

Now, the Italians, I gather, are having some second thoughts about their electoral system. And, interestingly, this is the first election in which the four government parties have not been the majority. They're just under - seven per cent or so, something like that. So, they will have to call in one of the other parties - and, possibly, now, the Communist Party which has, of course, renamed itself as The Democratic Party of the Left. The Democratic Party of the Left may be drawn into government for the first time.

Now, Germany has a different system, that ... In some ways it seems more of a problem that Germany also wanted a system which would exclude the anti-regional parties - obviously wishing to exclude any resurgence by the extreme right Nazi party and also from the extreme left. So, they have a system which is much favoured by some people who want the [unintelligible] in Britain. They have two ... each voter has two votes. One vote goes to the member of their constituency, the territorial position. The other vote is proportionate [?] [portion of recording has been lost]. So, the two add up in a way which is quite proportional, but also has the advantage of having a member for your constituency.

But you also have a threshold ... In order to get a seat in the Legislative Assembly, they have to get over a threshold of five per cent of the votes. And that is intended again to keep out the small, extremist parties.

[Unidentified voice]At this point ... I'm not sure that that's entirely clear. What you do is you have two votes. One for a constituency MP, and one for a party. And then representatives are elected on the basis of the proportion of the votes that each party has managed to muster. The overall figure then works out roughly proportionate. So you can get a situtation where the Free Democrats don't have a position.

[Fragmented and unintelligible discussion]

[First speaker resumes]Of course, the difficulty with that system ... It gives a lot of power to the party, the way that the party can construct [unintelligible] and in terms of whether a certain candidate can [unintelligible] for an office.

You've got to stick to the party list?

That's right, yes.

From one to a hundred?

That's right. [Unintelligible]. It has the advantage of giving the opportunity to parties to push candidates to the front that they would like to be represented. So, for example, you can push winning candidates up, ethnic minorities up ... So there's that advantage.

In Italy, you said that there were a hundred and twenty six parties. How many of them earned representation in Parliament?

[Unintelligible muttering. The answer seems to be "about fifty per cent or thereabouts".]

That's the difficult thing, that the voting papers in some of these proportional systems are so complicated. I think one has to say that. And that is really a disadvantage of the system. The British system is probably the simplest voting paper of the lot. The Italian one is really quite baffling.

You vote for the party, or the party of your choice?

For the party.

Let's look at the German system a bit. You have one vote for the constituency and one vote for all over the whole country - proportional representation. Now, with regard to the totality, this means you have fifty per cent constituency and fifty per cent proportional. The second question is, with regard to the proportional representation, do you have a party list drawn up so that it is for the whole country, or do you have a party list perhaps in terms of regions ...?

Yes, within the regions.

It's a party list in terms of regions, that's in terms of proportional representation. Then for all the parties, the party has no choice between having proportional lists, organised in lists for the whole country and having one in terms of regions? That is the second point.

In other words, the lists for the proportion of members ... If you've got ten regions in Western Germany, there are ten lists for each. Now, is there any advantage in having ten regional lists or just one national list?

People who are prominent in particular areas of the country get the chance to serve for that particular area, whereas if you have a national list, then that regional representation would not be achieved.

Would you then mean that for the party ... for that one party that has in the ten regions ten lists, then the ten lists would be taken ...? If you've got two, two, two, two, from each region, would you say then that you take the top two, the top three for each region, or do you say: "For this region I take five, and for that one I take two, the first

two ..."? How do you sort it out as a party now?

It's just that the percentage of the votes achieved will determine the number of representatives the party is entitled to. The convention is - and this is rather an interesting question - but the convention is that the top ... the people at the top of the list attained it. Now, whether the party can say, at some late stage: "Well, we'd like the top two and then the seventh and the eighth" - whether they can say that, I don't really know. But I suspect not.

Or the top two here in this region can then mean the top three in another region.

[Other CODESA delegation speaker]I think what one needs to say here is that you've got ten regions and a particular party. Overall, the total nationwide got ten per cent of the vote. But that varies from one per cent in one region to, say, ten per cent in another region. Does the party have to take their members per region or can they say: "Look, totally we got twenty per cent so instead of taking one per cent out of the region I got one per cent in, I'd rather take two per cent" - or how ever many per cent? You've got to stick to the region in other words ...

Yes, that's right. Does it reflect the vote that is elected for the constituency level?

I suppose if one reversed ... Say that I had twenty per cent vote in one region, so, I could take one of those names and put it ...

What the party often does is to switch the candidates they want to those constituencies or those regions that will ensure that that person ...

I think that is the point I'm trying to get at.

[Another CODESA delegate]Not after the election?

No, no. Not after. That's before ...

That's <u>before</u> the election ...

In other words, you can bring somebody totally ... somebody who's previously been in a totally different region, and get them to stand in that area which ...

[Fragmented discussion: a joke among the CODESA delegation]

What is the relationship between the vote for the member of the constituency and the proportional vote?

You've got an overall .... If a party scores forty per cent in the region, okay, but on the constituency basis gets that number of seats, okay ... Now, let's say forty per cent is here, then they'll be allocated, within that region, extra numbers of candidates for each ... So, the next party may be down there, but still actually gets forty-five per cent, okay. So, he'll get more seats from the list. And that's done on a sort of regional basis. So, you've got a

completely different ballgame which then takes care of ...

If you're on the list ... if you're standing as a candidate in a constituency, can your name also be on the list?

No. Yes, at least under the German system, but if you ... you immediately fall off the list if you win your constituency.

[Several people talking at once: unintelligible]

I think you have the reverse situation in Germany, where you can have a candidate who failed to get elected in a constituency, but still pops up in Parliament a week later, because he qualifies on the list.

So, a candidate can be on a constituency ballot paper and on the list?

That's right. He can appear twice.

[A question, largely unintelligible, followed by fragmented discussion. The substance of this is: who replaces, at a national level, the person who has won at constituency level?]

[...] So, in that case, the next person on the party list comes in on the national level.

Now, if he wins on the constituency level ... his party falls off?

No, he falls off, but not the party. The constituency level is the first level and then you top up with the party list. So, if you get a seat at the constituency level and you're on the party list, you drop out. [Portion of the recording is lost.]

The Liberal Democrats in Britain ... what sort of [unintelligible]?

Well, it's not clear. They were traditionally [unintelligible] the German system.

[Unidentified voice]No, no, no ... the Liberal Democrats.

[First speaker resumes][Unintelligible]. Which is the system used in Ireland for a multi-member constituency, where you have a total of votes and you vote for each candidate [unintelligible]. On the ballot paper, you put your number one against your first preference. You have, say, five members of a constituency. And then the votes are counted and they are redistributed according to preference. So, all first preferences are counted first and there's a formula as to how many votes.

[Unidentified voice]There's a quota.

[First speaker]Yes, there's a quota. Your quota is the number of votes divided by the number of candidates ...

[Unidentified voice]Plus one.

[First speaker]... plus one. If one of the candidates on first preference votes reaches that quota, they are declared elected ... It's a very complicated way of ...

[Unintelligible question and comments]

It takes a long time ...

It takes a long time, yes. But, in fact, in Ireland, [unintelligible]. But it's a complicated system.

[Unidentified voice]It's complicated ... There's a national list and regional lists ...

[First speaker]Yes, I know ... but the thing about it, the point that's being made about the vote is that, yes, you have five people represented in each constituency. If you do have as many votes as there are candidates, in the sense that you could, perhaps ... Say, there are fourteen candidates for five places, for five seats, you can put down your choices from one to fourteen and they might actually be employed. Or you can just put down one. If you only want to vote ... if you only favour [unintelligible: a name] or something like that, you just put down one and you don't bother to vote for the others. Or you might just vote for five. So, you can put down preferences for the whole list. The advantage is that this system enables the voter to make an individual choice, to vote for every person on the list - including people from the same party. So, it could ... Everybody is in competition with each other, even people in the same party. So that makes it a very voter-friendly kind of system. Much more so than the regional list system, where you don't really need the names at all. All you do is vote for the party. But the SDB [?] gives the emphasis to the ...

To what degree does only voting for one distort the poll? If it was a strategy on behalf of a party, say ... Instead of exercising your full fourteen votes, you only exercise one vote. Does that distort or not? Because of the ...?

Only that one is counted, so, yes, it would distort it.

But you're denying all your other candidates, your second, your third, your fourth, your fifth ...

[Unintelligible] democracy. But some of the candidates would be from your own party, you see ...

Each party would actually have five candidates?

So, you would virtually be saying, we are only going to elect one of our own candidates, by doing that.

I know, sometimes, in our own party, if we are electing office-bearers and we say we need four candidates to go into particular ... We have [unintelligible]. Because, if a person has his own agenda, or if a number of them only vote for one main guy, that immediately affects the count. So, we insist that they exercise more. Because there is a distortion.

Yes, but in a sense, that means, as it were, if you've got the party with one candidate - that would be equivalent. So, whereas, in Ireland normally, the main parties are running certain candidates [unintelligible]. It's a system which allows relatively small constituencies and it's consistent with proportionality. So, that's one of the things that's advanced for SDB [?] usually, because many proportional systems require large constituencies, multi-member constituencies. So that, as it were, the purest of these is Israel, because there the whole country is taken as a single constituency.

The Labour Party, in its recent discussions about proportional representation, has fought shy of SDB [?] because one of the consequences is that the voters may vote for, let us say, a Labour candidate who is the one who is least favoured by the Labour Party leadership. So, if one could imagine in, say - I think this is what caused the horror for the Labour Party in Liverpool, where they have this extreme, radical wing, militant wing of the Labour Party. You could have had a situation where the voters, instead of voting for the favoured, centrist Labour candidate, chose the extreme left wing. And so, it's for this reason that the Labour Party's deliberations - its [unintelligible] committee - has tended to steer away from that.

But I gather that there is some internal argument within the Labour Party, because - as one might expect from my example - some of those from the left of the Labour Party say: "Well, then if we are going for proportional representation, then we would prefer SDB [?], because it is more democratic. It's the one way in which we can challenge the Party leadership - the Party leadership of the left's control of the elective apparatus".

[Unidentified voice]The leadership tends to favour the additional member system, which is the German system. I think this is an interesting point [unintelligible] in Britain [unintelligible]. When, assuming there is a hung Parliament, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats go out to negotiate and Ashdown wants a commitment to proportional representation, there's not going to be any kind of easy agreement on what system to use. And you can argue for ten years over that. And there's a huge argument somewhere in the future, somewhere down the line, on which system ... Because SDB [?] is the one favoured by the Liberal Democrats and it's <u>not</u> what the Labour Party ...

[Unintelligible, fragmented discussion]

Elections are about democracy. The other issue pertaining to democracy is ... in South Africa we've spoken about ... I don't think we've come up with any answers yet ... The level of participation in democracy? Voting once in five years is one level of participation. But what other formulae are there for ...?

[Unintelligible, fragmented remarks]

Do we have any new examples?

Not a British [unintelligible] ... American ...

In America, yes, indeed. Well ... Yes, let's start with voting and then we can go on into other areas of participation.

The American example is a very interesting one. Because not only, of course ... You know of the use of the referendum, but also the ability to vote for a huge range of offices.

And there's an interesting comparison drawn where someone once calculated that, in an average five-year period, the average voter in Britain would have the opportunity to vote four times in a constituency, both in the national elections and in the local elections. The equivalent average voter in the United States would have the opportunity of voting two-hundred-and-sixty times, for the local ... for the President, for the ...

[Unintelligible remark]

That's right ...

The Attorney General, the State government, the ... and so on.

So, when people talk about the low turn-outs in the United States at the Presidential elections, what they forget is that those who do turn out, are really voting for such an enormous variety of offices. By one criterion, the Americans are extremely conscious of [unintelligible], but by another criterion, if you just take this year's turnout, of course, you've only got fifty-odd per cent voting at Presidential elections. You've only got something like fifty-odd per cent of the total electorate voting - or, at least, of those who might have registered.

Is that affected by registration?

[Another CODESA delegate]It is. Because,in America, it's difficult to register.

It is. Because in America, it is up to the individual to register him or herself. Whereas in Britain, you're automatically on the Register, whether you like it or not.

If you don't pay your poll tax ...

If you don't pay your poll tax, it's up to you whether you go on the Register or not, and some people may avoid the Register. In most constituencies, in most local authority areas, they will come around with the registration form, which they will actually come and collect from you, instead of the voter going and handing it back. But some people do go off the list, because they think the Register is being used to check up on tax.

I was led to believe that you came off if you didn't pay your poll tax.

No. The two registers are supposed to be completely separate under the legislation set under community charge. But there is a little bit of paranoia about that. Whether it's justified paranoia or not, I wouldn't know.

I think it's that the poll tax officials are allowed to use a variety, all sorts of information to establish who was present and the Electoral Register is one source of information. But the idea was that if you got yourself off the Electoral Register, it would be more difficult to find you. But there are other sources of information available.

You said that every citizen had to be registered?

Yes. The way that it works in this country is that ... The legal requirement on the householder is to register all persons living in that household. And there are penalties if you fail to register people.

And that happens once a year? And it happens the same day, every year, if I recall ...?

That's right. Around October.

And does that mean that the previous list is then scratched, or is it simply updated or amended, or ...? Do they throw the old one away?

Well ... In effect, it's updated.

So, if I don't change my address and I move from London to ... and next year to Manchester, and the following year to Edinburgh and so on, and I didn't re-register, I would still be on the list ...?

No, sorry. I beg your pardon. I thought you meant just technically what we do. No. But, officially, the new Register ...

So, if I leave, I've got to re-register? I don't remain on the list in London ...?

You remain on the list in London if you have moved during the year ...

Yes ...

But the next year you have to re-register ...

Otherwise ...

[Another member of CODESA delegation]It's an enormous task of work to do every year, in one day, isn't it - to re-register the whole nation?

Well, it's **not really** in one day. It's issued in October and it's actually ready in February. So the new **Register** is in February. This does mean that even a new Register ...

Is out of date.

... is out of date ...

Yes, if people move between October and ...

It's estimated about six per cent out, even when it's new. So, the older the Register, the more the problems.

But I'm fascinated by the system that you have now developed that people ... Conservatives abroad, for instance, who are operating in South Africa and people who are on the list in the UK are voting in South Africa. Now, how did they get on to the list if they've been in South Africa for ten years, say? Or two years?

If you're a British citizen?

Yes, if they are a British citizen.

[Unidentified voice]It was a special piece of legislation, wasn't it?

[First speaker]Yes, that's right ...

[Unidentified voice]For people living outside of the United Kingdom.

[First speaker]It was thought ... It was passed by the Conservative Government, because it was thought that it would favour ... that people living abroad would support the Conservatives. But I think only thirty thousand people took up the offer ...

We have many people living in South Africa, who have lived there for thirty years or so, and still British citizens. So they could have been registered ... In terms of that [...]

[Break in the recording]

Cassette 3

[...] Yes, but the electoral registrar of the constituency [unintelligible]. So there's a positive ... there is a certain degree of initiative, as it were, within the society, by the householder. I think that other countries have more automatic registration than we do, where you're virtually automatically registered, aren't you?

[Unidentified voice]Yes.

That happens in South Africa today. As the date of your birth comes up, that you're eighteen, you're automatically on the Voters' Roll.

Yes, I think that's how it's done in the European countries.

How do you identify voters? I mean on election day. What kind of [unintelligible] do they have?

[First speaker]Well, they're on the Register. So when you vote, your name is on the Register, and you go along and your name is crossed off. Now, you may receive what is called a polling card. Now, you don't have to have a polling card ... which is just a little card with your voting number on it.

What's to prevent someone voting on your name?

Sorry?

What's to prevent me voting on your name?

Well, that's called impersonation, which is ...

It's called, yes, but, I mean, what's to stop me ...?

What's to prevent it?

[Unidentified voice]Well ... The law of the land.

[First speaker]Yes, the law of the land - in the sense that, if you turn up ... just say they handed you over, you've given up your only chance at the vote, as well.

And if you don't really want ...?

[Another CODESA delegate]You don't have to show an ID?

[Several people talking at once. Unintelligible]

Well, impersonation does go on. It's a known practice in certain constituencies. I mean, the Irish phrase has always been: "Vote early, vote often". [Unintelligible] the list of people that have gone off the register, because, for example, it was always said that, if the Church would know, for example, who had died, on the Register, they would be available, as it were, to vote! That is, you'd vote for them.

But, it's not often that you get a case where somebody's taken to court.

I was involved in an election in Scotland in 1970 and everybody who was involved in impersonation in that particular constituency, in that it was a vote that was available to that ... And, oddly, the only person who was arrested for it was the Scottish National Party candidate. And they weren't doing it extensively. But he was hit and got arrested. It was very unusual and created quite a scandal.

[Unidentified voice]It very seldom comes up. I suspect there may be a great deal more of it going on than we actually know about.

Why will the United Kingdom government not prescribe certain things to be produced, in order to avoid that?

[First speaker]We all have a National Insurance number which is actually our identity number, but it's not official.

With your photograph on it?

[Unidentified voice]No, no. The majority don't. It'll be on your driving licence.

[First speaker]It's thought to smack of totalitarian regimes to have identity cards. There is a kind of myth in Britain that we'll never have identity cards. I think it's completely irrational. There's nothing totalitarian about identity cards. But there is somehow a connection with Nazi Germany and ...

[J Love] Do you ... By law, do you have to register everybody living in a particular household? If you're living in a household, or whatever it's called? But if you don't, what happens if you ...? Is it in Ireland, that we heard about yesterday where it's an anti-election zone or something, an election-free zone ... There was something on television about an election-free zone, where you must not even talk about elections ...

Right. It was a joke, actually. It was a joke.

But this was yesterday. It wasn't April Fool's Day.

It was a joke. Somebody trying to prevent the monopolisation of pub conversation by voting, so ... But the answer to your question is that there are, as it were, officially, legal penalties which fall upon the householder for failing to register someone. So, if I, say, have failed to register, for example, my partner, who's at university, I would strictly be liable for this penalty.

Such as? What type of penalty? A fine? A hundred-pound fine or something?

A fine, I think, yes. A hundred pounds?

What is the voting age here? Have we asked?

Eighteen.

[Unidentifed speaker]It's very difficult to check the Register. So, it's one of those things where you don't know ... If you're not on the Register initially, no-one would know whether you exist. So how would you know if somebody wasn't on it, actually? Who's checking?

[First speaker]Well, that's right ... Unless, supposing my son had gone abroad or moved to another constituency, I wouldn't register him and there would be no real way of their checking. They would think, well, why was he on this year ... last year, and not this year? All they're working from is the new Register. So again, tracking people down would be extremely difficult.

Wouldn't you say that, because of the history of democratic government in Britain - [unintelligible] - you have a far more, let's say, politically mature society and a lot of things which in other parts of the world are looked upon as being vital and urgent - your people don't take it that seriously? For example, there's an election coming up in the Philippines, for instance, that Mrs Marcos is back in ... The talk is that she is going to run for election ... I mean, you hear what happened in the Philippines: packing of ballot boxes and things like that. But that doesn't happen ... I mean, you've gone through it, maybe, two hundred years ago ...

We had a period of a great deal of election fraud. And then you had various controls brought in, like the secret ballot and that sort of thing. Of course, in Ireland there are all sorts of people and all sorts of bribery and corruption, so, we've had that for a long time. And there is very little evidence, other than impersonation - and there is some evidence of that - of any kind of election fraud of that nature. You generally can trust ballot boxes [unintelligible].

Of course, we have had cases ... There was a chap fiddling with the postal votes and things like that. In Hillbrow ... He was, in fact, brought to jail, wasn't he?

[Several people talking at once and laughter]

There was a notorious one a few years ago with trade union elections, when ballot rigging was quite a scandal. But certainly one hardly hears of things like that in a general election period. There are breaches of regulations about, say, expenditure, by candidates. Because there are limits on the amount that a candidate may spend in a general election ...

It's very low, isn't it?

Quite low, yes. That's right. And you get questions as to whether something was a legitimate expenditure or not.

It's usually done by his agent, doesn't it?

[Unidentified voice]Yes, that's quite right. Suppose you were the candidate who had been spending too much money, then I might have to provide the evidence and then I can take a court case against you. It might be brought after the elections, would be brought after the elections. But a certain amount of odium is then brought upon the person who has been found guilty. And generally speaking, they follow those limits very, very carefully.

Would the candidate then be unseated? Say, I'd won? And you felt that I'd spent too much money and you brought an action against me and you were found to be correct? Would I then be unseated? Is that an offence? An illegal act?

I think it could be, yes. I can't ... I'm just trying to think ...

We are talking of the money that's yours. You are spending your own money?

Yes. This is a limit on each candidate in a constituency. There is no limit on the national campaign. Where you can, as it were, readjust the expenditure, is, first of all, if you spend before the campaign begins, and, secondly, if it's national spending that does not mention the candidate's name, it can't qualify as the constituency limit. There is no limit on national campaign spending at all. This is a question which has been ... It's a matter of some concern. So, you can buy up poster space all over the country, or buy advertisements in the newspapers. But what you can't do - which is the crucial difference between our system and America - is to buy time on television. And that really means that ... A lot of analysts believe that it doesn't matter how much money you spend on poster campaigns, it doesn't make much difference. But television is a key thing. Modern elections are fought on television. And the amount of time that is made available to each party on television in

Britain is strictly controlled. The legislation that affects this side of things is really quite strict. So, for example, the Representation of the Peoples Act of 1983 makes it impossible for just one candidate in an election contest to be interviewed on his own, or her own. If one person is interviewed, then everybody else has a right to be interviewed. And you musn't mention the names ... If I'm interviewed on a local radio, I musn't mention the name of any candidate, otherwise that will be seen to be giving that person an advantage. It is a violation of the Representation of the Peoples Act.

[Another unidentified voice]Is that the case with ... I mean, we get, for example, numerous candidates in constituencies, including parties like the [unintelligible] which is actually, sometimes I think, rather sane. But you wouldn't actually have to interview them?

[Unidentified voice]You'd have to mention the candidates ... but they have to be serious candidates. In the Act, it is mentioned ...

How do you define serious?

Yes, well, that's what we have courts for. It would be up to the judge in his great wisdom to decide whether Lord Such is a serious candidate or not.

[First speaker]But you will always find that in the reports ... At the end, if they have done a report by constituency, where they have, say, interviewed the major parties, then they're required to say that the other candidates standing in the constituency are ...

Tell me, do you have any provision for State funding for political parties?

No. Well ... the Opposition in Parliament gets some money, in order to run ...

... for Parliamentary offices. No, I was asking in terms of the American system, where you come with matching funds from Government ...

For campaigning?

Yes, for campaigning ...

No.

It's a very small amount. You've overlooked the fact that you give ... each candidate gets a free post.

Yes, [unintelligible]. But there is something which hasn't been raised ... is [unintelligible] are paid for, for parties. And it's discussed quite extensively also in the published literature on democratic political theory. The major theorist of democracy - an American, Robert Dahl[?] ... he talks about systems of floors and ceilings ... That is, that there should be a basis, a basic right, a basic fund for all those parties in the political system, and also limits as to how much will be spent in a political system, to prevent it being distorted by vast corporations being involved or whatever - in effect, as if they are buying votes. So, he wants an extension of the American system, and also, relatively low limits that can be spent on the

candidate or by parties. The American system, although it does this to some degree, has all sorts of little dodges.

But you've got to police it, surely?

Well, indeed, yes. But instead of the Democratic Party providing the funds, you have academic ...

Action groups ...

... academic seclusion, in getting together money and by-passing the system. So, you get a certain ... each academic putting in a hundred dollars into the fund, adding to the fund available to the party. But it's an extremely difficult thing to police ... But there is a principle behind it: There are some things that money shouldn't buy, and one of those things should be votes. But how you ensure that money doesn't buy votes is another matter.

[Unidentified voice]It's interesting, when I went to America recently, we spoke to congressmen and one member of the Senate, and I said: "How do you justify the amount spent on television and all the rest of it?", and he said: "Well, yes, in fact, it's not right. We're against it". And then I said: "Why don't you take some action against it?". And then ... they're all against it in theory. They concede it's unjustifiable. But in practice, it is a system which pertains there *in situ*, it's one of the means whereby representatives in Congress can retain their position. There is a very high level of renewal of members in both houses of Congress, so it's in their interests to stick with the present system. But in terms of principle, they actually think it's wrong.

[First speaker]The American system is very interesting, because it reflects on methods of election used now. The House of Representatives, as you know, [unintelligible], means that there is in effect a constant in any electoral campaign. What it means is that the job of the congressman is to bring back the goodies to the constituency - not to support the political party. And the incumbent congressmen has enormous advantages in terms of the [unintelligible] services, as well as access to federal power by voting, in order to bring back the bacon for their particular congressional district. The outcome is that something like seventy or eighty per cent of congressmen are re-elected.

[Unidentified voice]Don't go for the American system, please!

[Laughter]

[First speaker]This doesn't mean ... There is one sense in which it is very [unintelligible], in that we had one visiting academic who said: "Well, I for one am a Democrat, not a Republican, but I always vote for my Republican congressman, because everything I've asked him to do, he's done - straight away. I'll always go on voting for him, because whether I ask him for something for the university or for my own area: a regulation about the zoning of the area, the domestic wage that's in effect, it's always been done". So, in a sense, it is highly representative, but in other ways, if you're looking at whether he's taking care of the national concerns, it's a very bad system.

[Several people talking at once. Unintelligible]

... Voting here, for example, takes place in one day; in some places, it can stretch over five or ten days, a month ... Those people who can vote in South Africa do have ... Any comments on that and the impact of this on democracy?

Well, I think it must, presumably help turnout. Italy votes over two days. There are other countries with different systems ... because there are different ballot systems as well and there are different ... the ... I think the relationship between turnout and the number of days available for voting ... I don't know how strong it is or if there are other factors ... such as, the extent to which the political parties mobilise the votes.

[Unidentified speaker]If you've got a very, very active party to make sure that people do register, then that will maximise the turnout. And this is one of the reasons why, in the United States, the registration is low. Because the political parties haven't found it in their interests to increase registration. This was notoriously so with the Jesse Jackson campaign in the Democratic Party - where Jackson was trying to persuade the Democratic Party that it should actively go out to register the votes of the ethnic minorities, because those ethnic minorities who do vote would be expected to vote Democrat. Now, the powers of the Democratic Party said: "No, because we believe that if we bring out the ethnic minority votes, our centrists might go and vote Republican". And so, they actually prevented Jackson from maintaining [unintelligible]. They refused to allow the Party to participate in the registration process. So, there the political party was doing the reverse of what you might expect a democratic party to do. They were demobilising the electorate, if you like, instead of mobilising.

In our situation the voter mobility is very slow in rural areas. Can that determine the time in one year for political voting[?]?

Can I just ask you, are you talking about a system where the voting is taking place over a period of time and the results are being declared during that period of time?

No. Not necessarily. No.

Because that was the situation in the UK many, many years ago ... when you wouldn't know the results. So, you are talking about a period of five or six days when the election would take place? And the results are not known?

Yes. For example, you look at the transport that is available in these areas. They're spread out, so you're not going to do it in one day.

[G Bartlett]Well, a lot depends on how many polling stations you have and how convenient they are. You see, we, in recent years, extended the special vote period to - what? - three, four weeks before the elections. And that's ... that really is a lot ... it's a sort of perpetual election, because you maybe get a thirty or a forty per cent poll before election day. The campaigns of parties are all just thought power. You know, we used to say in the old days that you should pitch your campaign so that it would peak just at the right time, before polling day. Now you find that you can pitch them too late.

There's more voters ...

[Interposition]That happened in Potchefstroom ...

[Interposition]No, but in terms of what we're talking about - do you think we should do it?

No, but what I'm saying is that was borne out. We thought it would be better for the people and actually it had been a wrong move. Now, we've just had a referendum where we had special votes for three or four days ...

[Interposition]Three days, three.

... for three days before the polling day. And we got an eighty-five per cent national percentage poll. We polled the whole nation ... Eighty-five per cent ...

[Interposition]But the voting form you're talking about is totally different. The whole question of mobility does come in. Your ordinary white voter at home is more mobile, in a sense, he can come, under his own steam, to a polling booth. We're working, for example, on a three-day ...

[Unintelligible]said that we should have special voting for four weeks before the election ... [unintelligible] and it worked.

[Interposition]Do you take into consideration ...?

[Interposition.]But not to announce the results ... I mean, if you think of ... what I have in mind is the Carter/Reagan contest where the results were being announced in the East before they went to vote in the West. They could have said: "There's no point in voting for Democrats in the West, because we've lost". So, that's wrong.

Yes, it affects another question, which is whether or not opinion polls should be allowed ...

Well, we don't.

You don't?

Not from the date of the announcement ... the day they announce ...

[Interposition]Nomination day.

Yes, nomination day ...

[Further interposition]It's what we call nomination day, the day that all the candidates are registered is called nomination day.

[Another CODESA delegate]Just to ask one not very [unintelligible] ... Did you, in Britain, some years ago, prepare a system where illiterate [unintelligible] people could

sort of differentiate the name of the parties or name of the candidates, that there are sometimes symbols or something which an illiterate person can identify?

[First speaker]No. In fact, it's even more remarkable that it's only quite recently that the name of a party has appeared on the ballot paper. The constitutional law is that you vote for a candidate and not for a party and so only the name and address of the candidate appears on the ballot paper.

So, the name of the candidate appears. Now, what would be your comment ...? If you look at the South African situation ... I think you have about seventy-nine or seventy per cent of the people being totally illiterate. Especially with the black populace. Now, what are your comments, if these people perhaps are made to identify their candidate? Are they allowed to make their symbols ... their own person, candidate or party, having a certain type of symbol, so that, you have voted and who you have voted for must have ... That person must look for a symbol. What are your comments there?

I think there's no real objection to this. And, in a sense, our [unintelligible] that we're voting for individuals rather than parties is [unintelligible], so that if one had a symbol for a party, to develop the name of the party, it seems to me to be perfectly reasonable ... I don't know how you react?

[Unidentified speaker]Wouldn't it tend to exclude some of the systems that we have been discussing here? I mean the Selective ... the SDB[?] system where you have to put a choice alongside the name. That would make it really quite difficult, but it would make the regional list system quite workable, where you effectively vote for a party. That's the only objection I could ...

But that's with the assumption that eventually the party is going to be the main point at which decisions are made.

It was practised in Namibia and in Zimbabwe.

Yes. It is in India too.

Now, in the absence of, say ... in the absence of that, having that symbol, whether for the party or the individual, how do you cater for the disenabled community, where eighty per cent, or let's say seventy per cent of your voters are unable to read and write? So that they can identify or read the name of their candidate or party - because they are usually very loyal to the symbols of the party. He can make out certain symbols, even if he cannot read. How do you cater for him? Because when the party comes into power, it will also rule that man - it won't only rule the literate ones. But the standards are very high, and they are actually ruled by ... they are voted for by intelligent men in this respect. Now, how do you cater for that one?

[Unintelligible, fragmented discussion]

I imagine there's a way around it. But I imagine the Zimbabwe experience might be more relevant than anything that we can tell you, because our political culture is democratic. It's

of activity. You'll find, interestingly, that South Africa one might describe as politically unstable, but very politically mature, because the degree of participation in political activity - for whatever reason - is actually of a very high order. We have strikes, stay-aways, in the order of political activity. I think that helps gain another perspective between the South African situation and the British situation. That might be a useful [unintelligible] to gain. The level of politicisation is also, I think, a very important element within a democracy.

It's difficult to say sometimes when people ... you know, the degree of political non-participation within this country is due to lack of political education or this concept of political maturity, because some people think: "Well, why should we vote?" or: "This is a stable system. It's not going to make a lot of difference". If people choose not to vote, it's out of a sense of security, rather than out of a sense of indifference.

[First speaker]The other activities, in a way - because most people do vote - the other activities, like getting more actively involved in the political party or going on demonstrations ... there is a view of politics that the politician is a professional. We elect them every five years, so let them get on with the job. And that is one view of democracy: that really participation is an incidental factor. Yes, if something goes badly wrong, we can always go and demonstrate about the poll tax or something - but it's very exceptional.

[P Gordhan]So, sort of grievance-orientated activity?

Very much so.

[P Gordhan]And not quite the essence of democracy ... but the ideal should be fairly high-level political activity in different forms, separate from the political system ...

Well, I think that that is two conceptions of democracy. I mean, there is one which does regard it as, as it were, more the accountability of the professional politician. And the other, as you say, is the ideal participatory democracy which the citizens ... the mark of citizenship is activity, high-level political interest, and so on. The two ...

[P Gordhan]Well, one could even argue that accountability is directly related to the level of activity in that the extent to which you merge accountability is the extent to which you are aware of your system. You may remember, there was the concept of the [unintelligible] system, for example, [unintelligible]. It was a very important concept in democracy ...

May I just mention ... I know you're going up to Bolton this evening ...

Tomorrow morning.

... tomorrow morning. And Bolton is a marginal constituency and, as a result, they were chosen for what is called the Granada 500. And I've even ... well, I've got documentation, I haven't quite got enough for everybody. What the television company did here ...

It was on last night.

Yes, it was on the television news, a story last night. You saw it? Right. No, it was all three party leaders. What they do is, they get five hundred voters, selected by Gallup, so that they are representative of all the different parties in the country, and different occupational groups, and then they put them in front of a series of politicians. There were four programmes. The first three were based in Bolton - in a Bolton school - and then the final one - last night - they took them all down - all five hundred of them - to the Grosvenor House hotel - a very posh hotel - and they quizzed the three party leaders.

And the interesting thing - at least, that I read from this programme - was that, during this election, this was the first time that the party leaders had actually been made accountable - truly accountable - to the voters. Because they've all been protected in cotton wool. They've had minders, they've been kept sort of away from the public in case they get asked difficult questions - and they were asked, incidentally, some incredibly difficult questions by people in Bolton.

People in Bolton are very independent-minded and maybe there's a tendency to be a little bit, politically, apathetic. But one thing, in Bolton, they really put the politicians on the spot and I thought it was the worst night, for all three politicians, that they've had so far. Particularly poor John Major! I'm afraid he got something of a mauling. He's not able to handle the ... I think that's one of the things that I mentioned to you about Bolton, that, on the whole, they were very noisy, they were very disrespectful to the Prime Minister and to the leader of the Opposition and they were shouting things out, you know, insults: "Speak in English, not in Chinese!". And in a sense, this is perhaps a reflection of our maturity, that people feel sufficiently confident of their system to behave in a slightly rowdy, but still in a restrained way [sic] ...

But also with their own peer group, there was a degree of confidence, I would think ...

Yes, in front of the television cameras probably.

[Unidentified voice]They were the same five hundred every time ...

[Comments obscured by foreground whispering]

[...]hung parliament [unintelligible] this time. Is there not a majority?

Why is it ... Is it an overall majority? If it's an overall majority, it's not a hung parliament. Though it would be difficult to run a country with a majority of only one seat, so in time it might be sensible for whoever did have that majority to try to make an arrangement so that they could survive for a period. So it's only a hung parliament if there isn't a majority, an overall majority, over all the other parties.

Say Labour would have a majority of, say ...

What do you mean by overall majority?

The majority of the seats, fifty per cent of the seats in Parliament. So at the moment there are six-hundred-and-fifty-one seats and an overall majority of three-hundred-and-twenty-six.

But if no party gets three-hundred-and-twenty-six, then you have what is called a hung parliament. It's just a term. It's also called a coalition, an alliance, an agreement or an understanding ...

So you could get [unintelligible]

Yes, you could get ... Yes, I guess so. [Unintelligible.] This is where a full campaign drafts, in a way, what and where ... Each of the leaders has been going over, with his advisers: "What would I do in this situation. What kind of hand would I play?". And this is where Ashdown has been saying: "I shall be waiting on the phone, but don't phone me unless you've got a good deal to offer me".

And whereas - well, you may differ on this - but, in my view, that's the best a party can do, is never try to construct a policy for the first year, which would be extremely difficult for the minor parties to oppose. They wouldn't be happy with it, but ... especially the Liberal Democrats who've got hardly any money left to run other election campaigns in a few months' time. Rather say: "Well, here's the policy, I challenge you to vote me down. And if you do vote me down, [unintelligible], and you must take the risk that the country will blame you - the Liberal Democrats - for forcing another election on us and punish you in the ballot box".

So the British tradition has been to have a minority government for a short period of time. In '74 we had six months ... Wilson formed a minority administration. He went out in February, and we went to the polls in October.

Of course, if you can do it from now on ... We're talking about elections in April. Parliament is in recess throughout the summer. So that's a period when governments can do things without [unintelligible]. Legislation doesn't have to be put through the [unintelligible]. So you can run a minority administration for quite a long time and the Labour Party is committed that its first piece of legislation would be introducing a Scottish Parliament, so it would be very difficult for the Scottish Liberal Democratic MP, assuming that he comes out on election day, to vote against that, because they're all members of the Scottish Convention, which is pushing for its own parliament. And that could split the Liberal Democrats. So, it might mean you could pull a few people over from other parties as well. You might pick up the odd vote from the Northern Irish members and so on.

So you could, if you like, run a minority administration for a reasonable length of time. The odd-ball seats of the [unintelligible] would be elected, wouldn't be [unintelligible] and wouldn't be going against you and so on. And somebody from the [unintelligible] can't vote and so on.

[Portion of recording too faint to be understood]

... political activity [unintelligible] without contributing to the sitution? [Unintelligible]. Might there be a move from the Conservatives to the Liberal Democrats and also the [unintelligible] of the Labour, say, towards the Conservatives?

Well, you're probably going to get three different views of this. I'm not quite sure ...

The ... uh ... well, first of all, it is a remarkable fact that if Labour were to become a majority, it would be the first win in this way since 1945 and when one thinks that some of our respected colleagues and political scientists were writing for the last election about whether Labour could ever win, whether Labour was in terminal expiry ...

I think it was the Labour Party leader who once said: "A week in politics is a long time".

Well, indeed it was, that's right. And sometimes I think that ... one is reminded of Stan Goldwyn's remark: "I never prophesy, especially about the future". I think political scientists had better heed that.

There's an old saying that governments don't win elections, they lose them. My line on this would be to say this was a case where a government were catastrophically lost on an enormously powerful position. I'd say that an extraordinary part of the position was [unintelligible] of London over the poll tax, the failure to provide good record on the economy, such that the - again, it's one area that the political scientists .... the so-called business/political cycle, the way in which Government engineered the economy, so that it was in good shape at the time of the election ... The Government has probably failed to engineer such a cycle.

But can you show me any goverment at this time that has been elected that has been able to commit to - in this political climate - been able to engineer an economy that's favourable to election right now? Isn't there a worldwide recession?

Yes, but because we don't have a fixed term, because the Prime Minister can choose the date ... it has been the case, well, in 1987, in 1983 to some extent, that the Conservative chancellors were able to take the decisions that inflated the economy, gave money away and gave people the feel-good factor and ...

There've always been indications in every British election since 1959, that, if you measure the expansion in the economy during election periods, [obscured by foreground noise] it goes up once [obscured by foreground noise] but it doesn't always work [obscured by foreground noise]. It may not work, but they always do it.

I think you can say some of the reasons why the Conservatives are losing are: the poll tax which was enormously unpopular, the mix-up over Europe - although it was generally [unintelligible], but if the division of Europe were not being considered, [unintelligible] - and the faltering economy has been [unintelligible], together with the widespread belief that the public services are being under-funded - particularly the health service and education.

But the sixth point, which I think was important - not the sixth one, the fifth one - was the style of government of Mrs Thatcher which, in the end, got right up the British people's noses. There's evidence in all the polls that were taken that Mrs Thatcher was extremely unpopular. More than any other Prime Minister since the records began. This was round about the middle of 1990. So, the country was thoroughly fed up with Mrs Thatcher's rather authoritarian style of government.

And I think the final one was the sense that the Conservatives have been there long enough. When Mrs Thatcher went and got John Major, a lot of people thought that we'd actually had the equivalent of a change of government. And I think now there's been a feeling or a realisation that it's still a Conservative government and that John Major is a natural successor. I think that that has finally got through. I mean, thirteen years, no one party in the modern democratic era has governed for more than thirteen years. This is the absolute maximum. And there is a sense of fair play, like: let the other team have a bash now.

[Laughter]

I think too that the Conservatives, as it were, never decided whether [unintelligible] or whether they consider themselves [unintelligible] the party, that they really don't know what account of themselves to give. They've also lost, in a sense, through - as some of their defenders would say - their own policies, one of their strengths which is defence. This is where there's been such a damaging issue to Labour in the past and now it's a matter of detail. People are not really worried about whether they're going to see one more kind of submarine than another. That kind of detail's not what the election's about ...

[Unidentified voice]Although I think a number of ... in the longer term, I notice during what you've been saying that - I don't know whether this is correct in South Africa - in the British case, the underlying blocks that are supporting the party system are changing quite significantly in the sense that the base of party support is much, much more political than it ever was and consequently, I would say, this would mean a bigger swing. It's now quite possible to get that within the electoral system, because there's been a breakdown really in the relationship between class and voting. And it's also showing in the changing structure of our party system, which is also, at times, leaning towards more constitutional change. This is all coming together. It's been a process developing over a long time.

I would just like to take up that point about government structures ... what was that?

[P Gordhan]The first point is levels ... in South Africa we talk about three tiers, here you talk about two tiers. So that's the first thing. The second is ...

[J Love]Devolution of power ...

[P Gordhan]... devolution of power, exactly what powers and how do they operate? And the third, relating to that, is how does central government relate to Scotland, Wales, Ireland, etc, in the context of administration [unintelligible]. Let's start with those three: in other words, the sensitivities around the structures of Parliament, the second house [rest of sentence obscured by foreground noise].

[First speaker]How many have you got?

I've just got ...

I have another half hour?

[Another unidentified voice]You've only another five minutes. Or you may have to take ten.

[First speaker]You'll give us another ten? Okay. Well, do you want to start on that one? Because it's really one of your ...

[Other speaker]Well, yes, all right.

The levels of power very simply are: it's a unitary state so all the sovereign powers are central. And then we have local authorities. We have some administrative power in the countries of Scotland and Wales - and in Northern Ireland - which is [sic] the Scottish and Welsh offices, which are deconcentrated, I wouldn't use the word devolution because they're not elected, so deconcentrated out of the central government which has offices in Edinburgh and Cardiff.

The relationship between the centre and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is through that mechanism. We have a Secretary of State who is Scottish Secretary, who is a member of the Cabinet, then ahead of that, obviously there's an office in London, there's a main office in Edinburgh. The same with Wales.

What is being argued about at the moment is the idea that we should have powers - elected powers - given to Scotland and Wales and to the English regions. This is the policy that's being given by the Liberal Democrats and by the Labour Party. And the argument in the case of Scotland is very, very strong, because it's clear that what's happened in Scotland, what has been happening in the last ten years, is a significant change in the relationship between Scotland and the rest of the UK, which reflects certain changes in the nature of Scottish politics and Scottish [unintelligible]. So, the likelihood is that there is going to be some change at that level - even if the Conservatives are returned, they must support this policy for giving Scotland its own parliament.

Now, that parliament will take on functions, in the Labour Party proposal, of the Scottish Office. It will also take on some of the functions that are administered by the regional councils in the local authority system. I should explain that we have a two-tier local authority system throughout. We have, in the case of England, where we have counties and we have districts - and actually, we have local community councils as well ... But what would happen in the changes at this higher tier of local government - the regional tier - some of those functions might go over to the Scottish Parliament.

The proposal for Wales is not actually a legislative parliament, but an executive parliament. They would frame decisions within a framework laid down by the rest of the Parliament.

For English regions what is being proposed - this is the Labour Party - is initially some kind of development agency, some kind of nominated agency that would have powers in relation to strategic planning in regions like the North West, for example, and transportation. And the commitment is that, in time, that would become some kind of elected authority. But that is not clear when that would happen, whether it would be in the [unintelligible] of Parliament or not. But I think it very likely that this devolution change will take place even under the circumstance that it depends on what's going to take place in Scotland.

[J Love]Sorry, what ...?

[First speaker]I think you need to be more specific about which functions might be devolved ...

[J Love]Thank you.

... because I think that is crucial to the South African State ...

[Other speaker]Right. Well, as far as English regions are concerned, what's being talked about is taking over some of the functions being administered by appointed bodies within the regions - so this would include [unintelligible] or health services, for instance. The other ones being talked about are functions to do with strategic planning in the region, and council plans, council provisions.

Now, it may be that detailed proposals from the Labour Party will not work out, it may be the case that some things will be taken up from the council tier - they're now committed to abolishing one tier of government. Now, those functions could be social services, education, police services.

Now, in the case of Scotland, what you're talking about is simply moving all the things that are already in the Scottish Office to the Scottish Parliament. Which is health, education, transport, regional development, some economic development functions, which would probably be slightly expanded from the proposals. Taxation, things like that.

[First speaker]Well, there would be an allowance for, I think it's thruppence[?] either way, on income tax in the Scottish Parliament. So they could raise their own taxation beyond a certain point. Policing is the function of the Scottish Office, as is prisons, and so on.

Why is this ...?

The Welsh Office as well. The Irish Office.

Why suddenly now? After all these hundreds of years of development, let's say parliamentary or democratic development in the United Kingdom, we would think that in the course of time, the United Kingdom became more the United Kingdom. Now these areas are wanting to have their own powers. What's causing it? Central [unintelligible] of government? And was it always central? Was it always?

It's always been centralised, but it's always been done in kind of a careful and cautious way. I think the Scottish case is a good example. Because what happened over the last thirteen years in relation to Scotland is that, first of all, Scotland returned a Labour majority, and therefore there was a Conservative Government in London which was imposing policies - and what Scotland thought were not good policies - on them. Also, the attitude of the Government towards Scotland was rather dismissive [unintelligible] in that certain policies, which were very unpopular generally, [unintelligible] were originally tried in Scotland. From actually quite good reasons in relation to the Scottish domestic situation. It wasn't really vindictive, but it was seen as such.

So, there's been a resentment in the case of Scotland against their treatment by a London

government. And the London government has been distant - and I find it very interesting that the way in which this country responds to things is very much in the London perspective. Not its government, but as far as the media and everything else is concerned.

And we had a road[?] opinion poll in Scotland in January, I think, which showed the Scot Nats with fifty per cent support. Now, I follow Scottish politics all the time. That was obviously a road[?] poll - fifteen or twenty districts, fifteen or twenty polls [unintelligible]. And yet, immediately the issue of Scotland got on to the national agenda, Panorama went up, I think, and did two programmes. All the media people immediately went up.

But in fact the thing's been building up for a long time. It's a cultural change that's taking place in Scotland. I go up to Scotland a lot ... Are you going up to Scotland?

No.

Oh, that's a shame ... So, it's a cultural change. The young people are singing songs about the country I love, and this sort of thing. Scottish [unintelligible] have developed. It's a very vibrant country, it's alive, it's doing things. So the Scottish case is explained in those terms, in the nature of emergence, as it were.

Also, of course, the oil is in Northern Scottish waters. And there's resentment over that.

[Other speaker]Yes, the economic thing ...

[First speaker]They feel that they've missed out on some [unintelligible] the South has had. The Government has been favouring the South in all kinds of ways. Mrs Thatcher was quintessentially a Southerner, she wasn't Scottish. All kinds of things, I think, together with a kind of an intellectual sea change as well, amongst the [unintelligible] classes, if you like, you know, the intelligentsia, so-called. They're in favour of general constitutional change, a package of constitutional change of which [sic] devolution gives more authority to the regions, to Scotland and Wales as a kind of ethnic regional emphasis. I think that has been going to ... you couldn't just sum it up in a few sentences. It's a complex series of movement. But in a way ...

[Other speaker]It appears that where the European dimension in Scotland ... It's very interesting compared to the previous upsurge of Scottish nationalism in the 1970s[?], that they now constantly talk about an independent Scotland within Europe. And the European dimension allows them to present themselves as not just a little, as it were, region on the edge of Britain, but as a country along with other countries and getting the advantage of co-operating on an economic level of access to markets and so on. I think this is something which one should not neglect.

As I say, we haven't talked about Europe at all yet. It is interesting. I think that, in terms of tiers of government, one of the issues that most [unintelligible] democracy in Europe and in Britain is trying to establish democratic accountability at different layers of government - from Europe, to the nation, to the regions or the provinces. And I think that this is an immense problem. And it's very interesting about the ... to talk about the notion of so-called "subsidiarity" - a [unintelligible] word - which implies that decisions made at the lowest

feasible level - you probably know the exact formula far better than anybody else in this room ... but it's interesting that there are different arguments as to what this means in Europe. From those who say that the lowest feasible levels are the regions or the länder, as the Germans say, to those who - this is sometimes the case in Britain - who say: "Well, the lowest feasible level remains the unitary state". And one certainly finds plenty of political theorists who talk about - rather over-dramatically - the end of the nation state. But the question is as to what is the role of the nation, what is its level of decision making which differentiates it from the European level and the regional level? And I think those questions are being posed, in a sense, by the Scottish Nationals.

What comment would you make on the point of Scottish Nationalism rising to the level of [unintelligible], a comment on Scottish Nationalism rising to the level of secession from the United Kingdom versus power devolving from the United Kingdom down to the regions, and therefore making Scotland [unintelligible] within the United Kingdom?

Well, the Scottish opinion poll was fairly consistent on this. They suggested something like seventy-eight, eighty per cent are in favour of some measure of change at that level.

This is within a union?

No, no, change altogether. Thirty per cent, twenty-five to thirty per cent [...]

[Break in recording]

[...] would there be a relationship between power in the region and stability within the United Kingdom, as opposed to power being moved into the centre and a move towards secession?

Well, that's the argument for devolution. So, it would really ... If you don't do something about Scotland, in terms of devolving to a Scottish Parliament, given what the Scottish people feel about this, then it could in time lead to serious demands for secession. So, to be honest, I don't think the independence argument is being properly argued for Scotland, because the ... The British Exchequer, the UK Exchequer, is actually quite cleverly subsidising, through public expenditure, Scotland, compared to England as a whole. So, the English region has a variation of this as well. So, there would be a loss there. Although in Wales ...

[Other speaker]No, that would be [unintelligible] Hertfordshire [unintelligible]

[Fragmented, unintelligible discussion]

[J Love]Sorry, could I just ask ... you know, the ...

[Another CODESA delegation speaker][[unintelligible] ... in the constitution, are there any specific definitions of these areas - in your constitution ...?

Well, the constitution ...

[unintelligible] ... not a unitary state. You are now at a stage which is a new

[unintelligible] and I don't know whether there are specific definitions of ...

Well, you follow boundaries ...

The boundaries, then. How are these areas treated? Because Scotland, I think is a different part of the island of Britain and, with their rise of nationalism there, I don't know whether ... initially what was the uniting force, whether this uniting force was the constitution or were there any other things?

Well, naturally, yes. The problem is, we don't have a written constitution in that sense, whereas the basis of the system is the Crown and Parliament and the countries of the United Kingdom are brought together in the Parliament and through the monarchy.

Now, the reasons that they came together, the means whereby they came together, were different in each case. In the case of Wales, for example, it was primarily through conflict[?] by the English king. In the case of Scotland, the Scottish king had become, the Scottish monarch had become King James I who was King James IV of Scotland. The thrones were united in 1503, but in 1707 the parliaments were fused, where actually a new parliament was constituted, so the Scottish Parliament, which was a separate parliament, and the English Parliament were actually abolished, and the United Kingdom was formed in 1707.

And if you establish structures [unintelligible], there was either bound to be a great deal of bribery and corruption, or it reflected in various ... sort of ... sentiments within the aristocracy and so on. It just depends though, I mean, it wasn't in terms of a conflict; it was fusing the two. But the problem is, we don't have a written constitution, so these things are not actually set out in written terms. [Unintelligible] ... the modern Parliament, the United Kingdom Parliament.

[J Love]Could I just ask you ... Without going into too much detail or terminology ... You've spoken about different levels of government, and then we've sort of skipped over them without really making it clear what the different levels of government are, and what the powers of those levels are, what their responsibilities are and how that is financed. For the purposes of our party[?], to then be able to take something back, that's quite critical. So, I wonder whether you could just go through that, giving us some clarity there?

Well, let's start with the very first level you've got. You've got a tier ... You've got a national government and then you've got local government. All legal power rests with the national government, so it rests with the nation.

Now, first, let's start at the very bottom level of local government. There are three tiers of local government, because you've got what you call town councils or county councils - in Wales, they're called community councils - which exist in the rural areas and some of the suburban areas. Not in the inner city. Now, they have literally very little function at all in terms of administering things. They might administer parks in the lower county - but, they're mainly there to advise on local planning activity. That's the very bottom tier, it doesn't exist in the urban areas at all.

Above that, you've got district councils which, in the rural areas, will fulfil such functions as, for example, street lighting, cleaning pavements and so on. They're responsible for housing and planning, for roads ... They may construct roads, but this is usually done by the county - or, if they're major roads, by the national government with a regional administration. So, that's the next level.

Now, in urban areas like this, you only have a single tier, which is what we call metropolitan district. Manchester City Council is a metropolitan district. And they have other functions to administer, on top of the ones I've mentioned - for example, the most important one is education and social services. So, in the urban areas, you have this single tier of district authority.

Now, in the rural areas, you have the district authority, and above that you have the county. I'm talking about the rural areas. You have a county level. And, in the counties - take, for example, Derbyshire, administers, in addition to the district authority, [unintelligible] planning and policing, and so on.

Now, those are the local authority levels. So, in the urban areas you've got one tier, which is the district tier, or the metropolitan district, and in the rural and some of the suburban areas, you've got two tiers, the district council ... well, the town council, the community, town council or parish[?] at the very bottom, then the district council, then the county.

I think what's important for South Africans is the news that education ... is an administrative power ...

Yes. It is not a legislative power. It's ...

... delegated ...

... a delegated power. Within various prescribed guidelines. Very much so. And the main sources of finance - because you were asking about that as well - the main source of finance for local government comes from the centre [?]. I think it's ninety per cent of our local spending ...

Comes from the centre?

No, sorry, it's about forty ... no, wait a minute. No, it's about fifty-six per cent of local authority's money. I'll just check on that. I'm not quite sure. But it's the main source of finance ...

It's gone back up because of something like the poll tax?

Yes. Yes. It was down to about forty-something, now it's up to fifty-six or sixty.

Are you saying that the roads in the rural villages and towns are funded by the central government, not by the local rates or tax on them?

Some of them. If they're major roads ...

No, no. I'm not talking ... The local roads.

Some of that will come from local funding, some of it will come from government grants from time to time. I know of many countries' governments which just tie it in to the ...

[J Love]So you don't have anything that's equivalent to a sort of provincial governing structure?

No, we don't have ...

It's just national and local?

... a regional structure.

And you said forty, maybe sixty-forty is the national proportion and the local. And local proportion ... that local content is extracted in the form of rates?

Uh, well. Community charges.

Community charges.

[Unintelligible] in effect are changing either to the Conservative version where they pay debtors now or we're back to the old property-based rates system. But it's going to be anyway ... either way, it moves back towards a more property-based ... from being a per capita local tax which was [unintelligible].

To get some perspective of our South African situation ... The British Isles is slightly larger than the province of Natal in area. Now, what proportion of the total British Isles is Scotland?

Areawise?

Areawise - is it a third or a quarter?

It depends if you're talking about land area or population.

I'm talking about land area.

Land area. According to the COI[?] Official Handbook ...

[Several people talking at once. Unintelligible.]

What I'm trying to get at is that when we talk about South Africa, Scotland would fit into the South Coast region ...

Yes.

... around Amanzimtoti, that coast. And if you superimpose South Africa, the

geographical area over Europe just about covers France, Holland, Denmark and Belgium and it'll take in ...

[J Love]Plus the [unintelligible].

It gives a perspective to ...

[This part of the tape severely distorted: speakers gone "underwater" and therefore largely unintelligible]

Well, I should imagine that that doesn't entirely explain ... that Britain is one of the most unified states in Europe and that every other country doesn't have some sort of provincial government.

Even France, which used to be entirely decentralised ...

[Other speaker]Of course, every state goes on population ...

[First speaker resumes]It depends on population, yes. Look at a country like Belgium which [unintelligible].

[This part of the recording (about one minute in length) is indecipherable]

[P Gordhan]Can we go into the issue of motivations for devolution. I think if we take the Scottish example, we're talking about [unintelligible] co-operating here and the Europeans in Europe as well ...

Yes.

... as opposed to functional reasons.

Right.

And in fact most of these reasons [unintelligible].

[Unintelligible.] Hasn't Scotland been complaining for a long time that they're not getting a fair cut of the cake?

Well, this is indeed one of those wonderful disputes - though the statistics honour[?] them - in which certainly the Scottish Nationalists claim that they've not got their proper share of the cake. But on the other hand, there are actual plans that distribution [unintelligible] by Government which has always claimed that Scotland's expenditure ... the criteria for expenditure actually have a built-in bias towards Scotland - and this has gone on since the 1970s, it's called the [unintelligible] Principle - which allows a certain percentage of expenditure to Scotland which is disproportionate to the population. But when the Scots then start to incorporate transfers of capital wealth in the economy from provincial offices or

companies to the centre, then other considerations come into it. Because then we're not only talking about ... we're talking about actual government expenditure which classifies[?] as Scotland. But, as I say, when you enter into transactions in the economy, there are other ... there are various ...

Where their head offices are?

Where the head offices are, yes.

Yes, we have the same problem in South Africa. [Unintelligible] is head office.

You've got to distinguish ... You've got the national level or tier of government. And you will notice the functions are concentrated and normally [unintelligible]. So we're talking about executive levels of government, rather than, you know, legislation levels.

In the ... This is England and Wales and Scotland is different. In England and Wales, the necessary ground [?] for elected authorities is the county. In the rural, suburban, non-metropolitan areas - it also includes some urban areas. So there are not many grounds from the national level which is exactly why the electoral authority is the county and the people who run that are the county councillors who are elected in electoral divisions for a number of reasons within each county area.

Is there any power to raise income?

Well, yes, basically, they raise money through the community charge which is then collected by district and most of the community charge [unintelligible] the county. Most of the community charge comes from that level, because they have to fill the function. So this level then is the district level - [unintelligible] Derbyshire anyway - and the next level down is actually ... There are a number of district councils in the county and the next level down would be thirty-two [unintelligible] councils, the high [unintelligible] borough councils for that [unintelligible] district council. And that has, as I say, functions like, for example, local development plans, street lighting, street sweeping, removal of rubbish, housing, local housing and so on.

There would be a number of boroughs?

There would be a number of boroughs or local developments. It just depends on the number of towns and ...

It's based on towns?

Towns, yes. And in the rural areas, with the parish level in England and with the community council level in Wales ... Community councils exist in Wales throughout the rural and urban areas. You tend to find the parish level only in the rural and a few suburban areas in Britain.

What does the parish consist of?

It has very few powers ...

But what does it consist of?

Geographically, a parish could be ... it tends to reflect ... Well, one of the ... what they reflect basically is the old unit of government, which was replaced in 1974, which, in this case, would either be a rural district council or an old district council. Strictly speaking, a parish is the area within which the ecclesiastical parish functions ...

The Church ...

... which is the Church. And you will, in fact, find that in a number of villages [unintelligible; rest of sentence obscured by a comment by somebody else.] It generally includes just one village or a couple of villages or maybe a small town. I mean my area parish council is [unintelligible] and that has a population covering five thousand people. So this one covers about forty.

Forty?

And there's one in Derbyshire with a population of five ... It varies a lot. We don't have standard ... If you think of the old ... the shires, our old community ...

How many counties in England and Wales - roughly?

I don't ...

[Other speaker]Fifty-four, I think, in England and Wales.

[First speaker]In England and Wales.

[Other speaker]Well, there's fifty-five now if I'm not mistaken. I think there's a new one?

[First speaker]But there's four-hundred-and-fifty-three district councils and I can't remember the ...

And they're all elected?

They're all elected, yes.

I think we've got a good global picture from you now.

[Unintelligible - several people talking at once]

So, that's the United ...

[Unidentified voice]Sorry to bring this fascinating conversation to an end but we really only have another fifteen minutes.

[First speaker]Right. Before you go away ...

In the metropolitan areas, this includes the big cities, up until I think it was 1986, I'm trying to remember the date here, it was either 1985 or 1986 - there existed a county tier. These were the metropolitan counties. These were abolished by the Government in 1986. And what happened was that some of those functions were taken to appointed bodies - so they were taken out of the elected sphere altogether.

Such as?

Well, the co-ordination of transport, that's just one example, co-ordination of waste disposal, strategic planning.

And they made out of them [unintelligible] bodies that bring together the district, representatives of the district, who in some cases were from the bodies that were taken out the system. So, what we have in their place now are district councils. Some of the functions are devolved out to these district councils. So, these are in a sense what you or I might call unitary authorities. So, in Manchester, for example, the district council of the area you're in at the moment is Manchester City Council - governed by Manchester City Council. And they provide most of the functions which are provided by these three tiers in rural areas. So, it's a single tier below the national level. And you don't have the parish structure at all. There are no metropolitan districts in Wales by the way.

London is slightly different and you have the London boroughs as the main units of administration. Again, the Greater London Council, which was the overriding London authority, was abolished at the same time as the metropolitan council.

Scotland is slightly different in that there is a regional part of Scotland, but not a region in the sense that you were talking about, where they'd have elected powers. Administrative structure. And below that there's the district. So, for example, Strathclyde region covers a large area of Scotland - Lanarkshire, Argyllshire, etc - but it includes Glasgow district and the district council of Glasgow. And it performs quite similar functions to the county but there are some differences in the exact distribution of functions.

That region of Strathclyde - is that an elected body?

Yes. Sorry. All of them are elected bodies. All of them that I have talked about so far are elected bodies. Now, though we have a regional tier, it is not elected. What we have at the regional tier are a number of functions which are carried out by authorities [unintelligible] but they're not elected. They're appointed bodies. Then you have Regional Health Authorities. And that's also at the regional tier, where you have the regional offices of a government department.

Now, one of the proposals is that this ... some of the functions [unintelligible] anyway ... some of the functions of the county should go up to the regional tier, these functions should remain where they are, some strategic planning and some economic policy making ... And then that would be an elected authority. So, [unintelligible] local government and push those functions into the local authority and perhaps add a few more to the national level.

Just to get some perspective - a county council or a district council or a parish council - all elected. How many members are on that council?

Well, it depends on the size of the area's population. Ninety-nine members on the Manchester City Council. Ninety-nine councillors.

Derbyshire county?

I think Derbyshire's got ... It's under a hundred. Derbyshire's probably less than that, I think. I'm not, I'm not too sure on that, but ...

[Unintelligible interposition]

So, it really depends on how many members in the [unintelligible] council.

[Unintelligible interposition]

So, if they represent bigger constituencies, or bigger wards - we call them wards in local government. Elected districts.

[P Gordhan]Manchester City Council - does it have wards or sub-boroughs?

No, Manchester has wards.

[Other speaker]Wards.

That's right. Yes.

[Other speaker]It could be seen as Bolton City Council.

[First speaker]Ah, that could cause some confusion.

[Other speaker]Could you explain perhaps where that, where it fits into the ...?

[First speaker]Okay.

Bolton is part of what used to be the metropolitan county of Greater Manchester, so Bolton is here, it's a metro district. It's right next door to Manchester actually. You'll find that [unintelligible], despite the fact that they are separate, because it doesn't make sense much, does it? The centre of Manchester falls under [unintelligible] between the two and it might be better if they were amalgamated. So, that's where it fits in: the metro district. So it has most of the functions that in rural areas ... which we divided between three levels.

So, what you're saying is that, between Manchester City Council and Parliament, there's no other structure?

[Other speaker]That's right.

[First speaker]Well, there's no other elected structure between them, no. What you will find is that all the district councils that used to be part of the Greater Manchester County Council - the metropolitan council which was abolished in 1986 - are members of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, so there is some liaison between them ... and they do sit on joint Boards, because some of the functions that have been taken from this level have been pushed to these joint Boards [unintelligible]. So, you find that some of the [unintelligible] councils have been sitting with the Manchester City Council on these joint boards.

Do any of these boards below the national level have any legislative power?

No, none. They have executive power, but in legislation they don't ...

... but certain important ...

No. All legislative power is at the national level, in Parliament.

But are they ...?

They're subsidiary to Parliament. They have to do ... theoretically, they have to do what the central Parliament tells them.

And the elections at this level, is it political, on a political basis or non-political?

No, it's political. I mean, there are a few of the urban areas [unintelligible], but mainly political.

[Other speaker]The urban areas are politicised to something like sixty, seventy per cent and the rural areas are officially non-political, but a lot of those that are at pains to be independent are, in fact ... have allegiances to parties.

[First speaker]And, in fact, at the parish level you'll find that as well.

[Other speaker]A lot of that is the result of incremental decisions taken over the years. Whether this would be anything that anybody would end up with if they actually sat down and planned a restructuring[?] of local government is ...

[J Love. Laughs]

[P Gordhan]I might add the system sounds like a disaster!

I actually have, I think, a summary of the structure of local government, which you might like to look at. It might ... It might be very useful.

[P Gordhan]Yes, it would.

[Break in the recording and apparently end of section on Electoral Law and the Electoral Process]

BBC Regional News Speaker

[Consistent background noise during first part of this recording from another speaker, who seems to be conducting a telephone conversation close to the tape recorder and sometimes obscures the main speaker]

[...] there are regional and local networks. The BBC has about forty local area stations. Most parts of Britain are covered by at least one local radio station - BBC station - and indeed, there are other commercial stations. And in television terms, there are regional stations throughout the country, so, covering the north west, for example. So, in our section, we have BBC North West and Granada, which is the ITV company covering the north west.

The country's divided into about eleven regions, in terms of television, and in each of those regions there'd be a BBC station and an ITV station.

The region we cover - the north west - has a population of about six-and-a-half million people. It consists of two large urban conurbations: Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The other counties within our area are Lancashire, Cheshire and parts of Cumbria and parts of Derbyshire. A total of about six-and-a-half million.

And we ... in terms of our output, we have a half-hour nightly news programme, which goes out about six-thirty, which you will be able to see tonight. That's our main output.

That's local news?

That's regional news, yes.

And you're after the national news?

The national news comes on at about six. We follow it at half-past-six. And we also have a series of regional news bulletins through the day. We have a weekly current affairs programme and we have a weekly political programme as well.

So, that's the general sort of [speaker drowned out by the telephone conversation] news output in this building. And you will observe when you [unintelligible] around the building, that the news output is only quite a small part of what is going on here. There are lots of other programmes produced here. Some of which are for local or regional consumption and some of which - a lot of which - are actually national programmes, but they're Manchester-produced in the north west. The BBC has a policy of producing its network programmes all around the country. Roughly a thousand people are working here in this building.

So, that's the sort of context in which we're operating in the news programme. The main thing which we're producing in our news room - which, again, you'll see later on - is that half-hour nightly regional news programme.

Now, during the election campaign, a lot of the sort of normal practices and roles get thrown up in the air and we [unintelligible] what we're doing. So, that's just to put it in a general context.

The BBC's national news output, the nine o'clock news, which is the main evening news, is extended. It's been extended throughout the election campaign. But, normally, it's about twenty-five minutes long. During the election, it's forty-five minutes long. The other two main news programmes - the one o'clock news and the six o'clock news - stay the same length. There are various additional election-time programmes, some of them of a discussion nature, some of them analysis.

Parallel to [?] the output locally, the main evening programmes stay the same length - about twenty-six minutes. But we are devoting, on average, about half of the programme each night to election campaign coverage. Which is much more than we would normally do in terms of general coverage on an evening regional programme. And in addition to that, throughout the ... sort of ... three weeks of the campaign, our weekly current affairs programme, which is on a Thursday night, is being devoted to election debate in front of a studio audience. And I mentioned earlier, we have a weekly political programme, which is on a Sunday, a weekly, regional political programme; that, of course, is devoted to election issues.

So, you have a half-an-hour-programme every night of the week, even out of election time?

Sorry, even ...?

Even out of election time?

A half-hour regional news programme.

Every night? Throughout the year?

Absolutely. And it's from Monday to Friday and [unintelligible] on Saturdays and Sundays.

And you fill it with local news?

Yes. I mean, I would make a distinction between regional news and the local news, in the sense that what we are covering is regional news. Within our area, there are - what? - four local radio stations, with more localised area coverage. Which is [sic] GMR - Greater Manchester Radio, Radio Merseyside, Radio Lancashire, Radio Cumbria. They're all covering their own particular more localised areas.

During the election campaign, what we have been doing here is, as I say, running about - on average - about thirteen or fourteen minutes a night of election coverage within a twenty-six-minute programme.

Now, there's been a great debate as to whether that's right, in terms of whether the audience actually wanted that amount of coverage. I know you're probably not going to be here long enough to pick up that ... But one of the debates that's always happening during elections -

and I'm sure you're up to date on this in other countries as well - the viewing boredom factor and whether people actually want the amount of coverage that is being thrust down their throats. And the BBC view is that the BBC is under an obligation to cover the election in a comprehensive and balanced way (and we'll come back to the word *"balance"* in a minute). I think our view is that there may be a slight risk of alienating parts of the audience. On the other hand, it is, you know, our primary job to report on any very significant events fully and we have to take the risk that we may bore some of the people some of the time.

So, that's the sort of level of coverage we're dealing in. Just to explain what [unintelligible] during the campaign. As you may know, the campaign started about - I've lost track of it - the best part of four weeks ago, about four weeks ago. And the type of our ... the type of coverage we consist of, is about four things.

Every day, throughout the campaign, there are meetings of political figures visiting this region. For example, the Prime Minister, the leader of the Labour Party, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, have all been here at least twice each during the campaign. In fact, Neil Kinnock's coming again tomorrow.

So, when they come, we obviously give an extensive report on their day in the north west. And we have features, an extended interview with each of them, focusing on their policies for this particular region, during the campaign. Obviously not on the same day. It depends on when they've been here. Each of them has had ... When I say "extended", I mean about five minutes long, which, for a news programme, is quite long.

And every day, there have been lesser figures here from all parties, so we would, on each day, on our evening magazine programme, have a report which rounds up the political visits of the day.

And we will make an effort to offer more than that. We will succeed in balancing that, so within each report, there would be a representative of each of those parties. So, for example, tonight, we have - it may not mean much to you - but we have John Smith, who is the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer here for Labour; we have Peter Lilley[?], Trade Minister for the Conservatives; and we have Shirley Williams for the Liberal Democrats. And we will, you know, almost to the second, ensure that that section of the report is two-and-a-half minutes long. And they each get a third of it, in terms of pictures on screen and interviews with them.

The maximum type of coverage that we've had during the campaign is the constituency profiles. We have seventy-seven Parliamentary constituencies in our region, of which roughly a third could be described as marginal seats. So of the seventy-seven, there's about twenty, twenty-five which could, realistically, change hands in the election, and are therefore electorally interesting. And of those twenty-five, we profile about eight or nine which we consider to be the most interesting. So, we've gone to the constituency and we've done a report on, you know, the prospects for that particular constituency. We have one on Rochdale, which is one of the more interesting constituencies. Within those reports, obviously, we would balance almost to the second the amount of coverage given to the three

main parties. I'll come on to how we deal with smaller parties in a minute.

The next type of coverage, the third mode[?] of our coverage, is what we call issue reports. We have, during the campaign, looked at a whole variety of other issues which we consider to be issues which matter to the people in this region. We've looked at what the parties are offering. And so, for example, we've looked at the defuse [sic] of the defence industry, in the light of the ending of the Cold War. We've looked at what the parties offer for older people, retired people. Tonight, we're going to discuss what the parties offer the arts[?] in the north west. We've looked at - oh, it's just escaped my mind - but we've looked at about a dozen issues which ... We looked at the future of the poll tax and community charges, the financing of local government and those sort of things.

And the final sort of strand of our coverage has been the more feature-ish strand. And we have taken ... we have tried to look at the actual business of the election and how it's being conducted. For example, we've done a profile on canvassing: what do canvassers ... do people just knock on doors and try and get ... what do they actually achieve? We've done a profile on agents - candidates' agents and how they operate. We've done a profile of a returning officer: how do they organise an election?

It's really those four main strands: visits of the day, constituency profiles, the issue report and the feature on the way in which the election's being conducted. That's the coverage we've been doing throughout the campaign and we are doing - well, it's concluding tonight.

Are there any questions on that? I haven't gone yet into how we actually cover the results, which is another matter altogether. On the election night and the day after. But that is the sort of nature of our coverage. I can briefly explain something about balance between the parties and what obligations we're under.

Well, I'm interested to hear that, because we understand that the ITN is subject to the Control of the ITC, but the BBC's not.

That's right.

So, the question of who controls you, who [unintelligible] when you make a mistake?

Right. In terms of the election coverage ...

Because I must say, your situation is very similar to the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

I mean, the whole question of the independence of the BBC from the Government is an enormous subject which, you know ... But, by and large, in terms of actual legal restrictions on the BBC and in terms of covering an election, these are actually quite limited. I mean, there aren't that many. I mean, there is something called the Representation of the People Act which means that when we are focusing ... What it really deals with is, when we are focusing on any particular constituency, we cannot interview any of the candidates unless we have all the candidates taking part. The long and the short of it is, that's what actually happens. If we're actually going to hold a discussion between all the candidates, between the

candidates in a specific constituency, then we would ... and they were candidates, representatives of the Greens, the Natural Law Party, the National Front, the Sinn Fein, or whoever it was, we would have to involve all of them or get those who didn't want to get involved to agree not to take part, to sign a waiver.

Now, that ... all of that doesn't come into play really. Because, most of the time, we're not doing that sort of thing. Because what we're doing is holding ... if we're having discussion programmes, they're not allowed in the constituencies. So, there's absolutely no problem in holding a discussion, for example, about education, and having a representative from the Labour Party, from the Lib Dems and the Conservatives. As long as they do not give out or discuss anything about schools in any particular constituency. So, basically, you have to get them to agree beforehand.

We're going to talk about education in the north west of England but, for example, Jack Strachan[?] is the Labour education person and he happens to be an MP from our region and we say to him: "Look, Jack, we'd like you to come on our programme, but please don't mention any schools in Blackburn, because, you know ...". And only that works, basically, but it does relieve us from the obligation of having to, for example, have a Green or a member of the Natural Law Party or ...

And, if we are doing the constituency profiles, which I mentioned earlier, the way to get round it - if that's the way you want to put it - is don't interview any of the candidates. So, we will go and do a profile of, shall we say, Rochdale, as you'll see tonight. We'll film the candidates canvassing in Rochdale - we don't have to interview them. We interview representatives of their parties. So, we don't get ourselves caught out in this need[?] of legislation.

As far as the law's concerned, that's really the end of it, as far as specific rules about how television and radio can cover elections. That's it. Newspapers are not under any of these restrictions.

The rest of what the BBC does ... it's really got its own rules about how we feel we should achieve impartiality. The BBC is obviously under a general obligation to be fair and balanced and between the political parties generally, irrespective of elections. So, even when there's no election on, one of the obligations of the BBC Charter is that it must report political events impartially and in a balanced way. And what we do ... Sorry.

You said that you focus on the election. Can one [unintelligible] things?

Uh, possibly, yes. I mean, certainly what we can do is put a tape across tonight's programme and say: "No way". We can certainly do that.

So, what the BBC does really is lay down its own rules about how it will conduct elections, and broadly speaking, they are these:

First of all, that, obviously, we abide by the rules that are in the Representation of the People Act. We've discussed where it comes into play. But we would achieve a balance between [obscured by foreground noise]. For example, over the period of the whole campaign, with

any particular programme or programme [unintelligible], we will keep a log of every time a politician appears for any party. At the end of the campaign, we ought to be able to say that the number of seconds, or minutes, or hours, a Labour politician was on the screen, a Conservative or a Lib Dem, achieves a certain formula.

Now, the formula that we're operating on for this election is based on how ... the share of the vote the parties got last time round. And we work roughly on about a five/five/four ratio. So, therefore, for every five minutes of Conservatives on, there'll be five minutes of Labour and, in theory, only four minutes of Liberal Democrats. But in practice, the Liberal Democrats tend to be slightly over-represented. In a way, say, for example, Panorama - some of you may well know it: it's one of the BBC's flagship programmes - will have had three editions during the campaign and they will have interviewed the three party leaders. They will not have given Paddy Ashdown forty minutes, Kinnock fifty and Major fifty. They will have given them all the same. So, in a way, the Liberal Democrats will do slightly better than, perhaps they ought to. In terms of national coverage.

How does one aspect of ... how does one, when you talk about impartiality ...? Bu, of course, it's the content of what you've screened during that time is another issue. And then, you say, interviews - and it's your interviewer who can take a different line, a different party leaning and so on. How do you try to achieve impartiality? Or - and I ask the question - is it at all possible for an interviewer or an editor or someone - I don't know how you work your TV - but is it at all possible for them to be totally impartial on something as - in many cases - emotional as politics?

[Unidentified speaker. Not a member of the CODESA delegation]I choose my words carefully, because I'm a Conservative, but ... I heard a Conservative politician say, specifically, yesterday morning ... specifically criticise the objectivity of the BBC and I believe that's the feeling amongst many of the Conservative Party, bearing on the question that you raised. Now, my additional question is: what recourse is available to people like Mr Heseltine and others who wish to make their [unintelligible] known and seek some form of redress? Is there any formal recourse or are there any informal conventions which govern how complaints are dealt with?

[Speaker]Right.

And can I just add to that ... and complicate it even further ... in The Telegraph of this morning, there's a great fuss that Dimbleby was too rough with John Major last night. Now, bearing in mind that The Telegraph is a right-wing paper, supporting the Conservative Party - and they say that many Conservative Party supporters phoned in to complain - now what do you have to do with that?

You need to ... I mean there are a lot of things that need to be answered. To answer your initial question, then. I think that, at the end of the day, that is a matter of judgement, isn't it? I mean, I think that the vast majority of journalists working for the BBC are committed to the idea of being impartial, although, obviously, everybody has their own political views. I mean, irrespective of their actions, people will try to be impartial but, obviously, none of us can be wholly, one hundred per cent objective. But I would believe - I suppose I would, wouldn't I? - that we succeed in doing that most of the time.

As far as the sort of complaints procedure and the monitoring of the relationship between the broadcasters and the parties is concerned, there has been a continuing dialogue, which happens outside of elections as well. There is, I think, a perception among - as you say - among a lot of members of the Conservative Party, for example, and some politicians, that the BBC is biased in favour of the Left against the Right. Equally, years ago, Harold Wilson, the Labour Prime Minister, was convinced that the BBC was full of right-wingers and was biased against the Labour Party. I mean, it's not good enough for us to say: "Well, we get complaints from both sides" - but we do.

I will take calls in our news room after a programme of ours and a member of the Labour Party will ring up and say: "That was totally biased against us" and a few minutes later somebody else will ring up, a member of the Conservative Party, and say exactly the opposite. I mean, I think that is one level of reasonable effect[?]: the beauty is in the eye of the beholder, isn't it? What people see in political coverage above all else.

There's been a lot written in the papers over the last few weeks, about the so-called "spin doctors". These are the media managers of the parties and how - certainly in the run up to the proper campaign - what seemed to be developing was that people from the political parties were ringing the BBC and ITN, almost after every bulletin, saying: "Look, we didn't actually like the way you did that in that particular story about that particular thing. Now, when you do the next part, maybe you'd like to do this and that rather than that".

And I was a bit worried that throughout the campaign this was going to happen and that we, from our point of view, were going to be subjected to an awful lot of pressure from the political parties. In fact, I don't think that happened. Once the campaign started, politicians had more important things to do than ring the BBC every two hours!

Obviously, there will be complaints about us. For example, there was an edition of Panorama, just before the campaign started, which had been scheduled to go out, which was a film about the state of the British economy, which was pulled by a senior BBC executive just before transmission. And the Labour Party felt that this should not have been done, that this was an example of anti-Labour bias, that this film was, you know, going to show the poor state of the economy, and had it gone out, it would have shown the Conservative Government in a bad light. It questioned why it was pulled.

And I think that this argy-bargy will go on before elections, during elections, beyond elections. You know, all I can say is ... as I say, I think most people in the BBC who work as journalists are committed to doing their best to be impartial, without [unintelligible] all the time. You know, it's an imperfect world, but I don't think it's so bad.

You know, when you look at ITN and ITV - and the commercial radios are subject to the same - that they're in a different sort of hierarchy, as you mentioned earlier - the Independent Television Commission. But, I mean, broadly speaking they operate in the same way.

Before the election, ITN made this statement about how they were going to forget about the rules about political balance, and they were just going to treat everything journalistically. And therefore, if Neil Kinnock deserved three minutes' coverage on the night, and John

Major only one, then that's what they would do. I think in practice, they never kept to that. I think it would be a very dangerous thing to do.

[Unidentified speaker]Yes, I think, obviously, even, as you say, time is only half the story. There's always a decision made each night about what is the most important story. You can give Neil Kinnock three minutes, John Major three, Paddy Ashdown three. But, obviously, who you put up at the top influences the perception of viewers of what is important. There's all sorts of factors that go into that and I think that is generally journalistic judgement. Sometimes you may get it right, and sometimes you may get it wrong.

But we ... having worked as a journalist heavily involved in election coverage, I feel as though I'm under pressure of, in a sense, you know, whatever we do, we must be fair. I certainly don't feel as though I've got any pressure coming at me from the government of the day, as opposed to other parties. That's how I see it ...

Who is the final arbiter of the situation. Is it you - the BBC - or is there any recourse to anybody outside the BBC structure?

[First speaker resumes]Well, I suppose, ultimately, you could say there is. I mean ... The BBC Governors, who are the ultimate governing body of the BBC, are appointed by the government. And they are appointed on a Governing Board of external officers [?], but they are there for a lengthy period of time and there is a tradition of appointing people from a variety of political and social backgrounds. So, the idea is that the Governors should in some way represent different strands of society. There are some arguments about whether that is achieved.

But, in day to day terms, if there was any serious complaint from one of the political parties about the coverage, it would ultimately go to the Director General or the Deputy Director General of the BBC, or even the Chairman of the BBC, and in practice, they would meet with the complaining political party, or complaining politician, and there would be an exchange of views. You know, life goes on. I mean, that may sound rather complacent, it's not meant to be.

But, clearly, overhanging this whole election, is the question of what happens to the BBC itself, after the election. And there are a number of different views amongst the parties about what should happen to the BBC. But, I think that I can genuinely say that that is not influencing the way in which the BBC is covering this election. Obviously, [obscured by foreground noise] will decide [obscured by foreground noise]. Obviously, if one party is elected, there will be an outcome for the BBC and if another party is elected ...

Isn't the Charter up for renewal?

Yes, the BBC Charter is up for renewal in 1996. Which, in practice, means it's got to be sorted [?] by about 1994. There is a process going on at the moment within the BBC, working out what the BBC thinks should happen to the BBC. Once the election's out of the way - assuming there's not another one - then the political process of what happens to the BBC will start.

It would be naive to ignore that that is going on. But I think the BBC takes the view ... they sort of take the view that in every general election ... that, you know ... There is still a feeling - I think that it's just an insider's way of looking at it - that when there's a great national event going on, of which the election is clearly one, then the people, you know, sort of turn ... there is still that feeling that makes them turn to the BBC.

For example, when the Falklands War was on, the Gulf War, there is [sic] evidence that people actually switch to the BBC News in greater numbers than they do at other times. Interesting historical fact. But I think that the BBC certainly has that feeling that when there's a big national event going on - a national election, a war, a royal wedding, or whatever it is at that level - it has a sense of an obligation on the BBC - which is there all the time anyway - but it's particularly heightened at the time of election.

And the BBC will judge how well it's done, in terms of coverage of the election, both in terms of whether we covered it better than the opposition - obviously, we're in competition with ITN - but also whether we feel, you know, that we did things impartially.

Dimbleby interviewed all three of the major party leaders. It would be very interesting to watch those three one after each other, to see just how impartial he was.

[P Gordhan]How does it affect you that you have a competitor, ie, in the form of [unintelligible] and b, influence you in any way? What difference would it make if you didn't have?

You mean in terms of election coverage?

Well, in general.

I think it makes a lot of difference. I can remember when I first worked for the BBC, I worked for a local radio station in Brighton, what they call BBC Radio Brighton, and there was no independent competitor. And whilst, I'm sure, we did our best to put out the best news coverage we could for that area, I do know that the fact there was no commercial competition ... Once it's there, it heightens your sense of, you know: "We must be there first. We must be there before the opposition".

My competition, in terms of our regional programme, is Granada, whose evening programme runs at exactly the same time. We pay a lot of attention to that. I think, you know, we cover the same stories and they get an interview we don't get and that either tells us, not having done it as well as we might [sic]. But then, if we get an element or get a story that they didn't get ... I mean, we don't sit and gloat over it. But there is a part of our sort of post-mortem process after a programme that is: "Well, what did Granada do and how well did they do it?". So, it does make a lot of ... you know ... it's fairly high up in people's minds in the news room - how the opposition is doing. And that was even more so the case in terms of the relationship between BBC National News and ITN, the national level.

Do you have a post-mortem after each ... do you find out that the ITV ...?

We have someone who monitors ... For example, tonight someone will monitor Granada's

programme, so we know, obviously, what has been on. He'll probably watch two programmes at once. But we will monitor ... somebody is deputed to monitor it. So, for somebody having to make up a programme the next morning, there may be some reference made to what Granada ... why did they have that?

For example, yesterday - I don't know whether you were in the north west yesterday, or whether you were in London - but we had the new Black Rabbit [?] Transit System opened in Manchester yesterday, a metro which will ultimately involve trams going through the city streets again, which hasn't happened in Britain for many years, and it was obviously a very big news event for us. And Granada covered it in a rather different way to us. We covered it in a very straight, comprehensive way.

What Granada did, was to get ... was to have a race on screen between the new tram going from A to B, somebody in a car going from A to B, and somebody going by bus from A to B. And it was interesting, the rather comical way in which it was presented. I decided it was actually a very good idea - I wish we'd thought of it. So, you know, there is that sort of process going on all the time.

And it's slightly different in terms of that, at the national level, broadly speaking, the BBC news agenda and the ITN news agenda are similar. Although the ITN news agenda is slightly more "tabloid", if you like. And certainly on the regional level, that's probably more marked. So, some days you can watch the two programmes, for example, our programme North West Tonight [?] and you can watch Granada's programme and you can think: "Are we living in the same part of the country?". Occasionally there are certain major stories which we will both cover, but sometimes they could be a million worlds apart.

And that has been accentuated over the last few years, because the BBC has taken a very conscious decision to go for - it's been criticised in some quarters - but we usually go for, you know, fairly sort of hard, serious journalism. Five or six years ago, you would have seen the sort of classic "and finally" stories on BBC. You very rarely see them now, except on national bulletins.

Stories about the royal family ... The BBC will obviously cover the separation of ... the break-up of the Duke and Duchess of York's marriage a few weeks, a couple of weeks ago. But it's not covered in quite the same detail as ITN would ... or the depth of the Princess of Wales' father [sic] last week. I mean, ITN went completely ... you know ... in my view, over the top about that. Absolutely everything, [unintelligible], and satellites from here, and this, that and the other. And the BBC would not, did not, cover that in quite .... It was obviously an important story, we obviously covered it ...

I think if you have time ... if you compared, for example, the nine o'clock news and the news at ten on ITN, they'd be perhaps a bit different during election campaign, but perhaps more similar than other times. You will see, there's a discernible difference between the news agenda of the two.

But the BBC has been criticised. The argument against the BBC way of doing things is that it's all too worthy, it's all too heavy, and people don't want much of it. They actually want a bit of light relief. The BBC view I would broadly agree with, is that the BBC's first duty

is to provide a sort of serious news service, although I suppose that doesn't mean you can't have some lighter stories in there. And we do, but they have to really fight their way in.

Of course, we primarily ... I mean, at CODESA, there is this great concern about a media so powerful, that when it comes to politics, it has got to be as impartial as possible. I think that is what the big debate is going to be about. And the question is can we really do that? Because an interviewer, just by asking certain questions, or persons cutting that film, can show, just for argument's sake, the Prime Minister making a very, very good point, or someone throwing an egg at him, and what is flashed on that screen for twenty seconds gives the viewer a totally different impression of that person or event.

I think one of the interesting things is ... Certainly, some of the newspapers, particularly The Guardian newspaper - which takes a particular interest in the way in which the election is being covered by the media, in terms of media interest - has been doing an analysis during the campaign of who is achieving the setting of the agenda and looking at coverage on the main news bulletins each night and saying: "Well, could you identify that particular item about, say, the Conservatives are being ... sort of ... attacking or defending?". Which is quite an interesting way of looking at it, but, obviously, you know ... there are clearly some issues which Major is strong on and the Conservatives are strong on traditionally. [Unintelligible] see how many, each day ... who succeeds in getting the issue they want to be the main issue. I think the net result of it is that, by and large, it all comes [...]

[Break in recording and apparently the end of the section on BBC Regional]

John Walsh - Agent for the Conservative Party Candidate in a Bolton Constituency (Bolton North East?)

[...] and that is why every piece of paper that goes out will carry on the bottom of it an imprint which says it has been published by me and printed by whoever. In some cases, I've actually printed myself [unintelligible] it's obviously the cheapest way, because of costs. Whereas something like the newspaper [unintelligible].

And I'd be grateful if you didn't show it to my [unintelligible] at this stage, because that has not gone out and in fact it is not going out until midnight tonight. You're quite welcome to have a look at a copy, but I'd be grateful if you didn't show it to anyone until after ... it's embargoed until twelve midnight. But, you can by all means take a copy, I don't mind your taking a copy with you, as long as you don't [unintelligible] it to anyone else. And clearly, I wouldn't expect you to show it to the Labour Party.

Would you mind if the Conservative Party ...?

No, carry on, I don't.

So if [unintelligible] completely responsible, the agent it is who, if the legal maximum expenditure is exceeded, it is the agent who is [unintelligible]. It is the agent who is answerable if any statements that are made are proved to be false and are proved to be libellous. And therefore, we have to be very careful in what we say, to make sure that we do not cause that sort of problem. I'm insured, [unintelligible] take out insurance, so that if the [unintelligible] goes against me, I've got the insurance cover to meet my legal costs.

But the agent is also responsible for anything written. I can't, of course, be held accountable for what the candidate may say. If he says something rather than writes it, he must stand by his own statement. But if it's in writing, it's something that bears my imprint and has been published by me, I am legally responsible.

I am legally responsible for ensuring that none of the rules of election are broken. The principal rules relate to matters of expenditure; they relate to seeking to induce someone to vote.

A candidate cannot, for example, go out and buy a gift, or take someone out for a meal, or a drink, because that would be seen to be an inducement. It must be quite easy on [?] the candidate's pocket, in that he can't really invite anyone for a drink or a meal. But it's obviously intended to prevent any form of bribery. In theory, the candidate should not give a gift of any nature during an election.

The agent is responsible for ensuring, as far as he is able, or she is able, that no-one goes to a polling station as someone else. For example, that you don't turn up and give a false name. Impersonation. Clearly, the agent cannot cover every [unintelligible] ; there may be

examples. And in Northern Ireland, there were many problems at the last general election, earlier this year, of impersonation. It's becoming a problem in Northern Ireland because of the religious sectarian issues. But, the agent is responsible for ensuring that none of the workers get to do that sort of thing.

The agent it is who is responsible for ensuring that any staff, any wages paid to staff are within the legal maximum. That I can't say to you all today: "Well, I will now give you some money [unintelligible] work for it". Because all that would be accountable within my legal maximum. And indeed, it's actually an offence to pay someone to canvass. That, again, is intended to prevent a wealthy individual party from buying workers and buying support.

Clearly, there are organisations who are friendly to a party, a political party, who allow their employees to do work in election time. In particular, the Labour Party have the support of the trade unions, who send employees who are in the full-time pay of trade unions, who are doing work for the Labour Party. And certainly there are some businessmen, we've got some in this constituency, some businessmen who will provide staff who will do, from time to time, some voluntary work - true, they are being paid their normal wage - but they are working for a party. But that is something which is individual. I am not paying anyone other than my normal staff.

We have a situation where the staff in the office are the normal full-time staff. I must meet their wage bill from my legal maximum expenditure. [Unintelligible] so you have to watch that one closely.

So, there is all that intending to ensure that you don't get some fraudulent exercise by a wealthy party or by an individual seeking to, sort of, buy ... For that reason, the organisational side then starts to impact just as greatly. Because, I have views on how I want to run the campaign, I have views on how much [unintelligible] material to put out, but I have to ensure that I've got the best possible quotations for printing the literature and I have to [unintelligible] the literature, because I'm going to ... some of the things I want to do, in order to [unintelligible]. We've done quite a lot and I had some pretty good [unintelligible], but, nonetheless, it's just inhibitive.

Again, it's intended to give the small parties at least a reasonable opportunity to fight in the campaign against the wealthy parties.

Any expense you incurred before the campaign does not count. It only counts from when the campaign actually starts. And the issue of when the campaign starts is an interesting one. It actually starts when the Prime Minister announces that there is going to be a general election. It could be deemed that that was the case. The normal view is it actually begins when you actually adopt a candidate. They adopt a candidate very late - most parties do. About four days before nominations actually close. So that we would be doing preparation before that time. Between the Prime Minister's announcement and adopting the candidate is preparation. Once you adopt a candidate, every penny then turns[?], counts towards expenditure. So all of that is [unintelligible] in preparation. I'm very fortunate in that I'm a candidate by profession, so I've not found it too difficult to balance the books so far.

The agent is actually then accountable to ensure that returns are made. All bills have got to

be received within twenty-one days and anyone who has done any work - printing or any other work - has to present that bill within twenty-one days. It is required that the agent then pays for this work within a further seven days. So, printing done for the election or for polling day - the accounts must be paid. Within a further seven days, the accounts must be submitted to the returning officer at the Town Hall. And thereafter it gets put to public scrutiny. So, I've no doubt that when we win tomorrow, the Labour Party will look very carefully at my direct spending, to make sure that I haven't exceeded my maximum.

I'm required to submit bills for any single item of expenditure. For small items up to twenty pounds, I don't need a bill - I'm not talking about claims[?] - but I do not actually need to foot the bill. For any items of expenditure over twenty pounds, I must foot the bill, which must all be documented and referenced to the full return and there is a standard return which I must swear in front of a Justice of the Peace, that it is correct. And the [unintelligible] will be sworn by the candidate, as far as he - or she - is aware it is correct. The candidate has to believe that the agent is right, otherwise you've got a problem.

But that much is done within that period of five weeks after polling day. Bills received within twenty-one days ... Technically, if a bill is not received within twenty-one days, I don't have to pay it. [Unintelligible] within that period. I'm required to pay within twenty-eight days, and I'm required to submit my return within thirty-five days of the election. So, by that time, it should all be settled. In fact, that's my weekend task. Because we have a slight complication in that, in this part of the world, we have local government council elections four weeks tomorrow. So, if I don't sort out my general election material on expenditure over this next weekend, I've got a problem in that I'm not going to have much time to deal with it in the next three weeks.

How many voters do you have for a councillor?

For a councillor ... we have, in Bolton borough, we have sixty councillors. In Bolton North East constituency ... Sorry, twenty wards, sixty councillors. Twenty wards each of three councillors [apparently referring back to Bolton borough]. In Bolton North East constituency, we have six wards, each of about ten thousand electors. Each with three councillors.

You elect all sixty councillors next month?

No, we ...

You retain them?

We retain ... we have a one-third election.

You don't come up for election?

No, I'm not up for election this year. Fortunately. I was up for election last year. I've got my year off this year, but ... One-third of the council is up for election each year. That's not true of every area, because there are some local authorities where they have a full council re-election every four years. So they have an election this year. But that's one of the things that they're currently reviewing, because of the strange mixture of one-third in terms of the

whole council, re-election is undertaken [unintelligible]. So, it's a bit of a mish-mash and that is being addressed at the moment. But there's a slight consolation that we don't ... in terms of this campaign, so much is happening on Friday afternoon, then on Saturday, Sunday, we prepare for the meeting on Monday for the local council elections - that gives just over three weeks after that.

You've still got to qualify as an agent?

Yes, the Conservative Party, and the Labour Party and the Liberal Party train agents, they train them in organisational skills, they train them in the legal requirements that I referred to. They [unintelligible] all these issues. The Conservatives qualify ... they are qualified as Conservative Party Qualified Agents. It does mean that they've got pretty good organisational skills. They know what is involved in an election.

And we have a structure in the party. We have agents in the constituency; we have various organisations - in the northwestern areas, covering Carlisle then to Crewe - that's eighty-six constituencies; and we have at various levels a [unintelligible] agent and three deputies who have four area agents, covering the whole eighty-six northwestern constituencies. And then we have a central office organisation based in London which is at the top of the area. So, you've got that structure in the party.

And the law of progression with the constituency agent, who will become a deputy area agent, who will become an area agent locally - someone who's part of the organisation.

Are these normally paid ...?

These are all full-time officials ...

Of the party?

... of the party.

And a constituency agent - is he or she paid for by the constituency?

By the constituency.

And the constituency raises funds ...

Yes.

... from its people?

We do sometimes spend more time raising funds to pay salaries than we do actually in elections.

I know. That's quite familiar.

Another problem that we're looking at ... Sorry?

[P Hendrickse]The constituency agent - is he or she full-time throughout the year or just for the election period?

In an ideal state, we would have a full-time agent permanently. We had one until August of last year when the person ... she resigned. Hence my appearance. But, no, particularly when you have a marginal constituency, where your defending majority's under a thousand, the organisation and preparation can't just begin with three-and-a-half, four weeks in election [sic]. You need to actually lay the foundations prior to that. We've campaigned for five years virtually.

Another thing is, as to the campaign expenditure? What is the limit for your constituency?

Six-thousand-two-hundred-and-fifty-nine pounds and seventy-three pence.

You've got to use it![?]

[Unintelligible background comment, which apparently has to do with the expenditure limit for another constituency - Bolton West?]

[P Hendrickse]Six-thousand-three-hundred ...?

Six-thousand-five-hundred-and-twenty pounds.

It's worked out. There are two types of constituency. This is what's called a borough constituency. It's a very urban, specific ... it goes from the town centre, spreading out. The adjoining seat of Bolton West is actually a county constituency, because it actually covers over half the borough. Geographically, its much bigger, the electorate's not that much bigger, but geographically it's much bigger and therefore it's even more costly to run a county seat.

So you have a set amount, a fixed amount per constituency, which is common to all constituencies. You then have an amount per elector you can spend. And the amount per elector is 3.7 pence in a borough constituency and 4.4 pence in a county constituency. You get a flat rate: four-thousand-four-hundred-and-forty pounds for every constituency and then a variable amount which depends a, whether it's borough or county and b, how many electors you've got.

To follow up from that, it's difficult to judge the value of that, if you don't know the prices here ...

Right.

... but, do you see that as a sufficient sum, or ridiculously ...?

I personally find it sufficient, in that, if you start to increase that figure very much, or substantially so... If you increase that figure, you would preclude minor parties. Because you would then get the big parties spending to the limit and having a very lavish campaign and

it would make it far more difficult for the small parties to actually fight an election. And I think to have control on expenditure is a good thing.

[G Bartlett or P Soal?]Ja, I agree.

It does actually make you think about your campaign. It does make you think about what you're going to do, how you're going to spend the money.

[P Hendrickse]Just at this point, do you get any assistance from your head office or whatever, and what kind of things do you spend your money on?

We have some support from central office, but I've got to say, this time we've raised all our money locally, from individuals and from [unintelligible] here, in the consituency.

What do we spend our money on? The principal share of the money has gone on printing. The principal cost is printing. The second largest in the light of ... was the staff. Wages. My staff. If I were a qualified agent, I would ask an agent's fee for it, but because I'm not a qualified agent, I don't get to claim that fee.

And that would also be paid out of ...?

That all has to be paid out of, out of the ...

Even though the full-time agent is paid annually, the period of the campaign is debited to the campaign?

Right. I mean normally a qualified agent would have to take ten per cent of the maximum. That is the normal ... there's obviously ... give or take a small amount. So, I'm fortunate, I can spend quite a bit more on printing because I don't claim my agent's fee.

But ... uh ... For example, one leaflet in front of you, that I think you saw earlier ... That colour leaflet of John Major, that isn't my leaflet. That one I bought from central office, it belongs to central office. I just put a copy of that through. The fact that I got that one from central office doesn't mean that it's given to me, it doesn't mean that I didn't have to pay for it. That must appear as part of my direct expenditure.

Now, couldn't you, for example, have known that the election is coming from long before the Parliament sets the date? I mean, you've known from last year that in March, April ... Now, couldn't you have bought a lot of paper, a lot of stationery in advance, which is not going to cost ...?

It is costly, because I had to buy ... I bought that paper, I bought it in the name of the constituency, but I then have to sell it from the constituency to my election expenses account. I have to charge it at its proper value. I bought - and there's a lot of paper packed down there. That's about a quarter of the paper that I purchased. I used the rest. I can't say: "That paper cost me two hundred pounds" and then quote and charge only ten pounds for it. I must charge it to the value.

And you bought that from the Labour office ... I mean ...

Conservative.

... the Conservative Party office?

Yes. I did.

[Unintelligible question]

Yes, but it must still appear in election expenses ...

What other complications ...?

I can't buy it and not charge it. I can't buy it and use it in advance. If I buy it, I have got to show it as an expense during the campaign.

Even though you bought it before?

Even though I bought it before.

Now, I can see that a good, honest man would do that. But what about a dishonest man? Could he not buy this a year in advance, stock it up there and when counting expenses up at the end, actually get to that limit of six thousand ...?

I'm sure there are those who are dishonest about it. I'm sure that my party will look at my expenses to see that I have put through an equal amount for the amount of paper that I have put out through the doors. Equally, if we were to lose - I don't think we are [sic] - I would be scrutinising the Labour Party candidates to make sure that what they put out is reasonable for the amount that they've charged.

I mean, I can't, for example ... You can see this piece of paper in front of you. There are, I guess, about ten thousand sheets of paper in front of you. I couldn't put through five hundred or a thousand. I would put through the ten thousand that I ... the real figures that I've actually used.

But you can spend as much as you like up to the calling of an election?

Before an election is called? Before an election, it is not an expense. For example, you see a stack of newspapers which are going out tomorrow morning - they are an election expense. Before the campaign started, which was in the first ten weeks of this year, we put out six newspapers. They were not an election expense, because I did not in this newspaper say: "Vote for Peter Furnham[?] [this agent's Conservative Party candidate]".

No.

If I had said in every one of those other newspapers: "Vote for Peter Furnham[?]" or put up a Peter Furnham[?] poster, it would have been an election expense. And every penny I spent

from that point would have been election expense. All I could do in the other newspapers - and I've got copies of them for you to see examples - all I could do in that newspaper was to put stories in of what a good Member of Parliament Peter Furnham[?] was. To show Peter Furnham[?] working, to show him [obscured by foreground noise]. But at no point could I say: "Vote for him". Because, as soon as I say "Vote for Peter Furnham[?]", the election is seen to have started. And if we said that a week before the campaign, or a month or a year before the campaign, it would have been election expense.

And there is a little needle [sic] position - [unintelligible] of the right - in that, when we adopt a candidate, he is not the candidate until the actual adoption, which is three weeks before the election. He is the *prospective* candidate. And we call him the prospective candidate, very carefully, at all stages. Although he is a Member of Parliament, he is a prospective, not the candidate. He becomes the candidate only at the adoption meeting three weeks before polling day.

Is that the nomination day? Or is that before?

That's before nomination day. The procedure in the Conservative Party is that you select the candidate - who is a prospective candidate - you then adopt him, and you nominate him. And nominations close three weeks before polling day. The adoption meeting is a few days just prior to that.

And Peter is the [unintelligible] candidate. We actually adopted Peter ... re-adopted him as a candidate two years ago. We did that ... that was done to prevent any uncertainty. Not go to [?] the poll and say: "He's not been adopted properly. You've got to get rid of him. He's not going to [unintelligible] election". So, to ensure that he has credibility, so that he is seen to be a serious candidate, you adopt him as a prospective candidate ... he remains the prospective candidate while he's still the MP.

If we were in opposition, we would have adopted a prospective candidate - it would have been a different prospective candidate - until the adoption meeting when he became the candidate and legally became the candidate at the date of nomination.

[J Love]Could you just give some insight here? Firstly, could you tell us where the rules governing election - ruling the people [?] - are to be found? And if you have copies of those, we'd like them. And secondly, could you give us some insight as to ... From the time that you were in the [unintelligible] service - because you haven't been there all along - so, you are, I imagine a rare case ... So, from the time you were starting to carry out the function, how did you plan, consolidate and devise your forces, so that various things were covered? I imagine, for example, that the press here is something that you constantly have to manage, and somebody has to be there and door-to-door and ...

Right. Okay.

In terms of the rules, they're laid down by an Act of Parliament that's called Representation of the Peoples Act. That's a fairly weighty document. It's a fairly complex document. There is a huge volume, which is produced at [unintelligible] two hundred [?] years, by the name

of Parker's. Parker's is a book that records the conduct of parliamentary elections and that is supposed to be the bible by which all of the points are checked. A very stout volume - but you can usually turn to [?] Parker's to tell you what systems exist traditionally [?] and the very theatrical [?] past of the Representation of the Peoples Act. So, the rules are completely given in that. I don't have a spare copy, but I have the Representation of the Peoples Act if you need to read it [?].

Parker's, which is a very weighty tome - as I say, it's in two volumes, and I guess it [unintelligible] - is the absolute bible. Even down to giving case law on what kind of ballot papers are valid and invalid and whether a mark on a ballot paper is ... And I shall be reading that tonight as my bedtime reading to make sure that when we go to count tomorrow, and we've got some contested ballot papers, I know which ones are legal within case law and which ones are not. If they have any doubts about that, I'll have a copy in my pocket [unintelligible]. But that's the base on which the rules are set.

And in terms of the organisation of this operation ... When I became acting agent, it looked as though we might be having an election in November. So, I planned the strategies - which I talked through with the candidate, talked through in association with our members - about what we were going to do, what we aim to do.

I estimated the strengths of the candidate - he'd been a Member of Parliament then for eight-and-a-half[?] years, so I looked at what he's done in that time. I looked at his strengths. I looked at the issues I thought might be relevant.

Because I'm a councillor, because I'm involved in politics, I've got a pretty good feel for what are issues in Bolton. Because I'm involved in the Conservative Party, I have a very strong view about what the Conservative Party is about and what our policies are about. As one part of my research [?], we tried to look - and we have done for the last seven, eight months - at where the national policies were working in Bolton - examples of where policies were actually having an impact in [unintelligible] to Bolton. Where a Member of Parliament was doing something which benefited Bolton, where legislation in which he was seeking to influence legislation [sic] was benefiting Bolton. And I brought all those things together.

We did the campaign strategy - and I'd not actually printed the literature. I only printed the literature when the campaign started. But I knew in my own mind after about five months what I wanted to do. I had some rough sketches and some rough notes. I got some artwork produced, ready for printing. I got the preparation ready. It didn't mean that, because we didn't have a November election ... I changed it slightly, but the broad context of the strategy was the one that I had mapped out in September of last year.

And I started ... I think it was ... there's a joke in the association [?] that many election campaigns are done with D-minus days. So, today is D-minus-one - tomorrow's D-Day - today is D-minus-one and you look forward. But if I started in September, it's the fact that we were moving on to a [unintelligible date: sounds like seventeenth, but this was a Sunday] November election - on about D-minus- ... so ... sixty-three, I think it was at that time. And that changed then so many times, because if it wasn't November, it might have been February. So, then start on the D-minus date from February, then it might be in March, and here it was [sic] in April. So, we had a series of key dates for each eventuality.

And I expected, as I told you, that there'd be polling day up to July, because it has happened that a general election's in July. The rule in Britain is ... the law in Great Britain is that there must be an election every five years. If the Prime Minister doesn't call one, it is automatically called. The ninth [?] of July was the last possible day. So for every single Thursday between November and July, I worked out a key date for [unintelligible] .

Could you tell us: how does the Conservative Party select its candidate?

There are two ways candidates can be selected. One is that we have a panel of candidates who are approved by the Conservative Party as being suitable candidates.

For the whole of the country, or ...?

Well, there's a national list ...

A national list.

... of candidates who are principal candidates.

Including sitting Members who want to be re-elected?

Well, a sitting Member is automatically an approved candidate. [Short unintelligible sentence]. I don't think there are any examples in the Conservative Party. And ...

Winchester.

Sorry?

Winchester.

Well, he was ... I think ... The decision was made by his own association. It wasn't the national Conservative Party that decided that. It was his own association that decided to [unintelligible] him. But the Conservative Party run the national list. So that when you need a candidate, central office will provide you with a list of all approved candidates. They will also advise all approved candidates that a constituency needs a candidate and invite a response. If you've got a twenty thousand majority, you might get three or four hundred applicants. If you've got a tight majority - or it's a Labour seat - you might only get a few. But nonetheless, you get applicants from that national list.

You also, as a constituency, are entitled to advise, or to let it be known that you are seeking a candidate and you may even get a local - a councillor or someone who's known in your area, who decides that they wish to apply. And they then are also considered. They put the two lists together and the North East [?] Constituency Association sets up a small meeting and a small panel who will go through all the paper applications - all the written applications ...

They have an association?

It's associated with the constituency. The constituency. The Constituency Association. The constituency will sit down and say: "Right. We've got a hundred and thirty odd applicants", and we go through them, we look at the papers, the written applications, and say: "Yes, he's a good chap. We'll see her. We're not sure about this person ..." and draw up a list of perhaps fifteen or twenty who we invite for interviews.

It's got pitfalls. It may mean you neglect a good candidate. It may mean that someone who has a poor written application is an excellent candidate, but [unintelligible] among two or three hundred candidates. But, you've got to make some judgements.

From that written list, you get down to fifteen or twenty, who you invite to interviews. Who are subjected to a pretty thorough - and I've been through it twice myself. I fought one election in 1983. And it's so traumatic being subjected to a barrage of questions, that from that you know then that your choice is [?] three or four, who are put before the whole membership of the constituency of the party, which might be several hundred. And from those three or four, you then select the one. That's the prospective candidate.

If you have a sitting Member of Parliament, as we have in this constituency, the Conservative Party rules that they can be subjected to re-selection and you can [unintelligible]. But that is not normal. Winchester was one where the Conservative Party of Winchester decided that they were not going to re-select their sitting Member. He is actually fighting an independent Conservative in an internal [unintelligible] Winchester at the present time. And I should take [unintelligible] in Winchester. I've got enough problems here.

But, that's the normal procedure for selection. But certainly it's most usual where you have a sitting Member of Parliament, that that person is then re-selected at ...

[Unintelligible question]

Unless it is something that is totally [unintelligible].

About the campaign ...

Sorry?

About the campaign ... In this constituency, it's marginal ...

Yes.

... have you contacted every voter that you possibly can find - personally. Somebody has knocked on his door and spoken to him ...

We ...

... and have got you got cards that you write on and that, so that you know who your supporters are?

We have a computer in the constituency. We have records and we build up canvass records

over a long time. We try to canvass every voter, every election. I say try ...

Ja, sure, sometimes you can't find them.

Because we have council elections every year, we're able to do some work ...

Are they the same voters?

They're the same electors.

Very few people are entitled to vote at general elections who are not entitled to vote at council elections. There are one or two who can vote at the one but not at the other. So, the majority of people are the same. And I say very few, it's perhaps two or three in the constituency. So you're talking about virtually everybody being entitled to vote on those council elections.

So, it's on your records? You know those who are supporters?

Yes. You have ... That's right. And we actually do a [unintelligible] when you then move to the next stage to see who [unintelligible] will actually vote.

Yes.

Because it's all well and good somebody when you're canvassing saying: "Yes, I'm one of your supporters", but if in the end they don't vote, that's of no value.

[J Love]Where do you get that sort of information from? I mean you're entitled to it, but ...

Well, if I go to the Party, and draw a copy of the Electoral Register, which is compiled every year. The Electoral Register is compiled ... the qualifying date is the tenth of October. So, everyone who is registered at an address on the tenth of October ... it's a total, complete form, giving their address and update, people registered in that house ... [Unintelligible] on the sixteenth of February. Between the tenth of October to the February date, there is time to challenge. To say: "I've been left off" or "That person shouldn't be on because they have moved". You've got a period of challenge. So there's a draft list that's produced and then a final list. Once you get to the sixteenth of February, that is basically the Register. If, after that, you can prove, at a later stage, that someone's been left off in error you can, by giving their details, include them as a late inclusion. But, clearly, once you're into the election, it's too late for that, because you've not got the eight weeks' clearance. But the Register, then, is available. We put that on our computer, and we update the previous year's record. So, we can delete the records of all those who have moved out, put in updates of newcomers.

So, then, after each elections, you also then have access to who voted off that list ...

You can obtain ...

... or not?

Yes, you can obtain from the returning officer what is called the Marked Copy of the Register. That is the list of those who have actually voted. You don't know how they voted ...

No.

You don't know how they voted, but you know they've actually voted.

Now, I did an exercise, last year, at my election, to see how good our records actually were. I looked at the number of votes I'd got, I looked at the number of people who had voted, against those who claimed to be our supporters and I'm pleased to say that our records were pretty accurate, because I had a very close link between the number of people who said they would vote for me, who actually voted and the number of votes I polled. So, I'm reasonably happy that in this constituency our records are accurate.

And since then, we've done a lot of work in contacting voters ...

I take it that's for this campaign?

.... and we've updated the record throughout the campaign and throughout the last twelve months. We have telephoned voters, particularly in [unintelligible] their voting intention. We've knocked on a lot on doors. Not to say we've [unintelligible], because, as I said, that would be illegal - but to answer the burning issues, any problems that they have, to find out if they actually know who is the Member of Parliament in their county. We've had contact with them.

We also put out quite a lot of survey questionnaires: that was a two-page letter from the Member of Parliament, with a series of questions about national issues, about local issues. To find out the opinions of the voters. And the three final questions they asked is [sic]:

+ Which party did you vote for in the last general election?

+ If there's a general election tomorrow, which party would you be likely to vote for?

and - most important of all, from my point of view -

+ Would you like to join the Conservative Party?

And we got quite a good response from that last question, I'm pleased to say,

Do you also have a check/cheque[?] [unintelligible]?

We don't.

[Laughter]

We don't, but if they say they want to know about the Conservative Party or they say they're Conservative, they'll [unintelligible].

[Unidentified voice]I'm not clear about one thing. Are you not allowed to encourage a voter to vote for a particular candidate?

No. You can't encourage them until the campaign itself. Once I say to you - whether it's today or ...

A year ago ...

... a year ago - "Vote for Peter Furnham[?]", the election is on. The only time ...

[Unintelligible interposition]

... I must start running election expenses from that day.

[P Gordhan]Can you say: "Vote for the Conservative Party"?

No. It's a bit marginal. It's a bit tight. Particularly when there's a Labour [?] majority. Somebody may say: "Well, it's a very narrow line between saying 'Vote for the Conservative Party' and 'Vote for the Lib Dems'". I can say: "Vote for the Conservative Party" if there's a local election on, for example. But I can't say Peter Furnham[?] at that stage, because he's not the candidate. I could say last May, when I was a candidate: "Vote for John Walsh. Vote for John Walsh Conservative" but I couldn't bring Peter Furnham[?]'s name into it.

[J Love]So, if you had, in this area, just had to fight some council elections, having an idea that you might also then have to fight a general election, you would have done well to have started in time, not only with the specific candidates' names for the ... you know ... for the council, but with the fact that it's for the Conservative Party that you're filling [?], if you like?

Well, I'm a great believer in saying the two should be closer linked, in that, I've a piece of literature that I'm going to put out ...

And you have "Conservative Party" ...

That has both the candidate and the words "Conservative Party".

But you might [unintelligible]?

For the national campaign, you'll see, if you drive around the town, there are posters, with John Major's photograph on them, with "Conservative" on them, which don't actually say: "Peter Furnham[?]", because that's the national campaign run by the Conservative Party, on the basis that people who drive through Bolton, may be going to vote at another constituency at Bury or at [unintelligible] or somewhere else. And because [unintelligible] my election expenses. It is not part of my election expenses. It is the Conservative Party promoting the Conservative Party and the Labour Party on behalf of the Labour Party.

Is there any limit on what they may spend?

There is no limit to what the national party may spend, because central office - the Labour Office centrally - are not promoting particular candidates. That is actually quite an interesting situation, in that if there'd been a Minister or an Opposition ...

John Major himself?

John Major came to Bolton, yes. We've had in the last few days in Bolton John Major, Tom King, who's the Defence Secretary, and myself - I actually came on Monday this week. When they came to Bolton, when they appeared in the local paper, their photograph, or on television, they had to - at least on television - they had to have a "Vote Conservative" sticker and not Peter Furnham[?] or a Tom [unintelligible] or any particular candidate.

Because the rules of the election say - and again it's Representation of the People Act, with regard to broadcasting - if you appear on television, and say: "I am Peter Furnham[?] on behalf of the Conservative Party", they have got to give equal coverage to his opponent. If he appeared on television and said: "I am here on behalf of the Conservative Party", not: "I am Peter Furnham[?]", then fine, they don't have to stick to an opponent from this seat. They must give equal coverage to the Liberal Party [sic] and the Labour Party, but it can be candidates from another constituency. But once you actually have anybody promoting a particular candidate - you give as much coverage to the other two.

And for example, one of the television companies came to me six months ago now, and because this seat has always been such an interesting one ... Historically, this seat has always been held by the Government party. Whichever party has been in government has held Bolton, east of the [unintelligible], north [unintelligible]. And therefore, it's one of the key seats that everybody wants to look at.

One of the television companies wanted to do a behind-the-scenes look at the election, to see how the election was run, how it was conducted, what happened in terms of the organisation, look at the printing and getting people out on the streets, knocking on doors. And I declined for them to come here, because we have a very well-known Member of Parliament, he's an MP now for nine years, has a lot of publicity, he's well-known. He has two opponents who are both newcomers.

If I'd given the television company the opportunity to follow my campaign, see what I was doing, talk to me about the literature, come to meetings, they would have had to talk to the Labour candidate and the Liberal candidate, because they'd be talking about a specific candidate in his constituency. And I didn't want to give an unknown candidate that [rest of sentence obscured by an unintelligible remark by G Bartlett].

You know, if it's a matter of promoting my candidate, I'll promote him to the maximum. But I'm not going to promote somebody else.

So, I took a conscious decision that I was not going to do that television programme. They actually got somebody else - they got Trevor [unintelligible]. But I declined the offer, not because I'm afraid of television, I love television, I might have performed an interview. But I didn't see any merit in promoting two unknown candidates against a well-known sitting Member of Parliament.

[J Love] What about talking to the print media?

We have in Bolton an evening newspaper which comes out six days a week. We have two - three - three newspapers we get once a week. And we feed them publicity. We feed them with stories. They are pretty good in that they follow stories up, they know when there's a story.

Clearly, a Member of Parliament has opportunities because he is in the House and he raises constituency issues and therefore he gets a lot of publicity, a lot of coverage that way. But again, it is media coverage of the Member of Parliament or the prospective candidate and, clearly, if you're not the Member of Parliament, you look for stories, you look where you might be able to find a news story and say: "I think that the Council's made a dreadful mistake. I think it is disgusting that this has happened". They try and manufacture stories in that way. A sitting MP does have an advantage, in that he can actually give out stories of things he's done.

There are a number of other rules that govern sitting Members of Parliament and just briefly, I'll mention some points.

For example, Members of Parliament are entitled to free stationery to carry out their duties. And that includes the postage - that they can write to constituents. They are not allowed to write to constituents and say: "I'm a good chap. Don't forget to vote for me!" when the election comes. They can write in response to a letter or an approach from a constituency, but they cannot write unsolicited mail, as it were, and just write a general letter and think: "Oh, well, I'll just sit down and write to five thousand constituents and tell them what I'm doing". He can't do that.

If it is on his constituency letterhead.

Even on constituency paper. He can actually buy the stationery from the House of Commons and then he puts the stamp on or he pays the postage on it, but he cannot use the House of Commons freepost system. And that prevents, again, Members of Parliament abusing a position to the detriment of other candidates. It does actually control that.

I would just like to ask a question ... if you would just go back with what you were saying. The questionnaire which you present to voters, even before election time, includes enquiries such as: for which party did you vote in the last or previous election and for whose side would you like to vote in the next one? Is voting perhaps not a secret to be divulged? For whose party did you vote?

No, there are some people who respond to that by saying: "I'm not going to tell you who!". There are some people who, when I knock on the door, say: "Well, my vote is secret". And they're entitled. There is nothing that says they've got to tell me. Ninety per cent of people will actually say yes or no. There are some people who are not very certain, who can make a difference, whether they're saying yes because they mean it or yes because they're ...

[P Gordhan]But you said most of them answer the question?

Yes. Some of them answer the question. But if you want to say: "I'm sorry, I'm not going to answer it" ...

[Another CODESA delegate, starting to laugh]I hear my colleagues here ... In South Africa, it would be one of the most silly questions to ask in certain places ...

[Laughter]

No doubt, there are areas in this town where it might be a silly question to ask. I mean, for example, I do know of Conservative supporters who are afraid to say they are Conservative supporters, because they see it as ... somehow, it might get out. And they'd be subjected to abuse by the Labour ... Not physical abuse, perhaps, but verbal use and ...

In South Africa ...

[More laughter, which obscures some further comments which are made]

You have a question?

Yes, talking about campaign strategy. Looking at the role of small parties ... From what you have said, we are talking about a very advanced type of infrastructure, where you use the media and you use TV and all that. What would you recommend as the, you know, the basic campaign strategies for a small party and it doesn't have the infrastructure we are talking about?

I think [unintelligible] and that was a leaflet we put out - a coloured leaflet - and you must take copies of these, by all means, before we go - I think that leaflet does actually influence people. They do think about it. They see that leaflet and they think about the candidate. I think it has by far the biggest impact in terms of what it can lead to - particularly if you're a decent chap. If you're somebody who can talk to people. You believe. You've got some kind of personality. You come across when you talk to people ...

I would love the candidate to knock on all thirty-two thousand doors in the constituency, to visit all fifty-nine thousand voters. It's not possible. But one of the things I do with the candidate is to get him as widely around the constituency as possible. To be seen by as many people as possible. To chat to as many people as possible. So that they actually say: "Peter's got a petition to make. People must vote for him. Yes, he's a nice fellow", or: "She was a nice lady".

Can you go into details? How would you ...?

How do I do it?

[Unintelligible] into different groupings [?]?

Well, we do it in a number of ways. We do it by taking them into an area and - we're not going to be doing it this morning, but - if, for example, we were doing it this morning, yesterday we would have put a leaflet out to about two-hundred-and-fifty or three hundred

houses, saying: "Peter Furnham[?] will be in your area tomorrow morning between 10h00 and 12h00", or whatever time of the day he's going to be there. We would then take him to that area this morning with four or five helpers, who will actually knock on doors and say: "Peter Furnham[?]'s here. Would you like to meet him?". And many people will say no. They don't want to meet the candidate. They're happy not to meet him, they'll vote for him. Or whatever. Some people do.

And you'll take him into hostile territory as well?

I'll take him anywhere.

Yes.

I'll take him anywhere. On the basis that, if there ... With eight-hundred majority, in hostile territory, if you get one vote in three ...

Yes.

... that's the difference between a majority and not. And if somebody in hostile territory says: "Well, he's a brave fellow for coming. I'm going to vote for him. He's made an effort to come to me, then I'll go and vote for him", then that's fine.

It is impossible in the three-and-a-half weeks of the campaign to get to every house in the constituency, but by doing that, what I sought to do was to put him all around the constituency, in different areas, on different days of the week ... For two purposes: One, so that when people went to work, or went shopping or went to the pub for a drink at night, somebody would say: "Peter Furnham[?] was around here the other day", and they talked about it.

And the other reason is that I wanted our opponents to feel: "He's everywhere!". That he won't look on one part of his constituency as being his power base, and forgetting the rest [sic]. He was going everywhere. Into hostile territory as well as into good territory.

And it's actually better to spend more time in hostile territory, because you might convert one or two people there. And those who would vote for him in the natural course, would vote for him anyway. So, we did that as a campaign technique.

Today, for example, this morning - as soon actually as I've finished talking to you, I shall catch up with him - he's doing two things. He's over at an area where we've got a planning problem, a derelict shopping area, which he's been working on, trying to get redevelopment for four or five years. He's got a good record as far as that's concerned. Leading people and reminding them, not actually saying to them: "I've been fighting to get this redeveloped", but by people actually seeing him and saying: "Oh, yes, there's Peter Furnham[?]. He's been working on it". And also, they've told him [unintelligible] and he does remember it - and they'll not forget it before tomorrow.

He's then going to meet some older people at an older people's home. A bit of a coffee morning. Dropping in, chatting to them, having coffee with them and, again, generally

passing the time of day.

No hard canvassing. Because I think one of the things that I find is that if the candidate goes around saying: "Will you vote for me?", that person, that voter finds it difficult sometimes to say no. Sometimes he might insult him. He might say no clearly and very strongly as well!

[Laughter]

But sometimes, people are embarrassed. They don't like to say no to the candidate. He'll say no to me if I say: "Will you vote for Peter Furnham[?]?", but if I'm Peter Furnham[?] he might not be able to say no to me. Instead of Peter Furnham[?] saying: "Will you vote for me?", I've got Peter Furnham[?] going round this time saying: "I'm Peter Furnham[?], nice to meet you". Somebody else might come round to see you a few minutes later - or perhaps a day later - to say: "Will you vote Peter Furnham[?]?", but if you want to say no, you can say no to me and I won't be too insulted. I might be upset, but I won't be insulted. And at least that way, it gets around the problem of ...

[P Soal?]But, now, you know where you hard-core support is?

Yes.

You know who your traditional Labour supporters are? Now, in between, you've got what we call the doubtful ...

The doubtful. Yes.

The doubtful.

We call them the same.

Now, you are very confident today. You say you're going to win. We heard John Major saying that this morning on television. Now, either your computer is telling you that you're going to win or ... On the other hand, you've got a large batch of doubtfuls there ... I'd like you to tell us what you're doing to swing those doubtfuls?

Well, the whole of this campaign ...

[Interposition]You're worried about the next election are you, Peter?

No, no, I'm not. Not me!

[Laughter which obscures some further comments which are made]

[Unidentified speaker]On Friday morning, I'm going to work the results!

[Unintelligible response from the main speaker]

Yes, now, I want to know, if you tried your best, and you did a lot of hard work and, yes, if the job that you told us you're doing now on the doubtfuls paid off or didn't or whatever ...

Yes. Right. Well. We started off this campaign with a large number of apparent pledges, people who said in previous canvassing - whether it was telephone, or a survey, or a questionnaire, or an actual canvass - that they would vote for us. We had a list of these people. And we had just about enough, just about enough to have won the election if they'd all [unintelligible]. We also have - because the Register is made up every year - we also get a number of newcomers who are people we've not made contact with. We also get some of those people who go away from us, because they're disillusioned about national policies, or ...

So, one of the things we did was to promote in Bolton, Peter Furnham[?] the man. Not national policy, but Peter Furnham[?] the man. That is highlighted, when we're canvassing a Doubtful category. It's highlighted for a Firm Pledge category. And we have targeted both of those groups. We target both of those groups with, in some cases, letters, saying how vital it is that you vote Peter Furnham[?] on Thursday. And that's obviously a letter that goes to someone for Firm Pledge. Where we have a Doubtful category, we target them quite differently, saying: "Yes, life may have not been wonderful, but we think problems: inflation, economy, recession have been difficult the last three or four years, so we believe John Major and Peter Furnham[?] is the right combination".

We've promoted Peter Furnham[?] in all literature with John Major, because John Major is perceived to be the best Prime Minister - if you actually read all the opinion polls that there've been, they'll tell you that John Major is perceived to be the outstanding choice for Prime Minister. So, therefore we ...

Which of the three leaders?

Of the three leaders. Of Neil Kinnock, Paddy Ashdown and John Major, John Major is perceived to be the most likely Prime Minister.

So, it's right that we promote Peter with the Prime Minister. We've promoted Peter's strengths.

Where we have contact with people on particular issues ...

[Unidentified voice]Can I ... can I just ...

[Main speaker]Sorry.

[Unidentified voice concludes sentence. Unintelligible]

[Break in the recording]

[Main speaker][...] to fit the facts. Okay.

Where we have had someone who might vote for the Liberal Party, for example - who are nowhere near in this consituency. The Liberal vote is pretty small. And what would happen if we had a high Liberal vote is that Peter would be more likely to lose, the Labour Party more likely to win.

We have put literature out - we'll be targeting literature today and tomorrow, advising and reminding them of the consequences. They may not want Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party, but if they vote Liberal, they might actually get him, because ...

And we have targeted groups, we have categorised, and we are aiming to hit those people pretty hard.

Are you sending your armies of canvassers out there every day and ...?

We have put ... They were bombarded pretty heavily with pieces of paper over the last four days of the campaign. That ... Every candidate, as I say ... Every candidate is entitled, over and above their legal maximum, to one free delivery by post. And that leaflet was sent out to every household.

Can you only put one leaflet in?

You can only put one leaflet in. It has to be approved by the Post Office before it goes out. There are rules that, you know ... I can't, for example, ask for money. You can ask for support for a candidate, but you can't say how to, by sending a donation. You've got to pay if you're inviting someone to [unintelligible] ... But that leaflet went in the freepost to every household [rest of sentence obscured by foreground noise].

We targeted last weekend our pledges and the doubtfuls. We targeted the pledges by sending them a card, which again promoted Peter Furnham[?] and John Major as the right pair for Bolton, right combination for Bolton. And we put on that card an address label which also gave the registration number of each voter. So, you would get that card and the card said: "Please bring it to the [unintelligible] and give it to the Conservative number taker [?] at the polling station". But I'll talk about that in a minute.

So that card went to every single Conservative pledge. But with that card I also put out a larger thing, which was actually that size, folded at the back - saying again what a good chap Peter Furnham[?] was and highlighting four strengths of his, since he's been in the constituency: One was bringing new jobs to the constituency; one was dealing with a particular problem; one was dealing with a housing issue; and the fourth one was opening a new hospital. So four important policy matters, telling them of Peter Furnham[?]'s work in Bolton and how government policy and Peter Furnham[?] working within the policy have benefited Bolton. So that is four cases, four policies. That one went - not to everybody, because I couldn't afford to send to every voter - to those people who were most likely to vote for him. So they were targeted specifically last weekend.

We are targeting some of our voters - in categories, doubtfuls are one category - with a personal letter, which is going out today.

On polling day itself - and this is one of the reasons why we have the records - we print a list of all our potential voters. All those who are likely to vote for us on polling day. We then have, at each polling station, someone taking numbers on to this list. And as you go into the polling station, we actually give you a registration number. You can decline to give it, there's nothing in law that says you've got to tell us what your number is. You only have to tell the clerk at the polling booth. You don't have to tell us anything. But a lot of people do.

So, our number taker takes a note of your registration number. That slip then goes back to our committee room and we cross you off as having voted. And if you've not voted by [...]

[Break in the recording and apparently end of the section on the candidate's agent]

Editor of a regional newspaper in Manchester: Manchester Evening News

[...] political parties. They don't like it, of course, if it doesn't support them; but do love it if it's very objective and very fair, if they do support them.

Mr [unintelligible] was on television last night, saying that the Mail and the Sunday Express were absolutely scurrilous during this campaign, and that the Mirror was the model of objectivity.

I'm sure.

That's right.

The readers, the electorate aren't conned by any of this. They know that the papers are partisan. It either ... It generally supports their own prejudices. They take that for granted when they go to the ballot box. If there is a swing to the Labour of eight per cent, then the chances have been psychologically studied in as much that the readers of the Express or the Mail will also swing eight per cent. It doesn't make one bit of difference.

That is proof, if you like, that as the national press are predominantly Tory, that the chances are higher of the Labour Party getting in tomorrow. You know, it follows.

The regional press have a different role. We are deliberately apolitical in this. Our job is to report fairly within our constituency - or constituencies - what goes on, absolutely equally, over the course of the campaign. We don't profess to be equal on any one day, because there are obviously news values.

Equally, over the course of the campaign, all the major parties - three, in this part of the country - four, say in North Wales, in Wales, or Scotland, the [unintelligible] or Scottish National Party - will be treated fairly and equally. And certainly, when Ray does his Spotlights on constituencies, it is from a non-partisan point of view, absolutely.

Where we do comment is, either in my editorials, or in Andrew's columns - they've been doing a daily campaign diary. It's either Andrew's point of view, or [unintelligible]'s point of view - not necessarily my point of view - in the actual columns, and that is right and proper for people to expect.

I have had letters from readers who claim that I am pro-Labour and pro-Tory and pro-Liberal Democrat. And that's fine. Or anti all those. And that's fine. If I'm annoying everybody, then I think I'm doing my job! So, equally.

We have, during the course of the campaign ... we have had two thousand, nearly two thousand readers letters in, of which about two-hundred-and-fifty have been about the election. So, the election did not dominate, despite what you may think from watching other media, it did not dominate people's thoughts. Life goes on. You know, it is a game played

somewhere down South, or in the back streets or somewhere ... But if you walk, go down in the streets and suburbs, you do not see a lot of posters. The election's quite low key, in real terms.

Of course, it's one of these things in a democracy, you feel that you have to report on these things fairly properly, on pure news values. I don't think that half of what we've reported has got those.

What is your percent[age] ... average percentage poll? I remember seeing some figures the other day about seventy-two per cent [unintelligible] in the next elections. Is that right?

Yes, I think that's about right.

But that's pretty high, then, for a country where, as you say, the people are ...

Well, people will go out. But during the course of a campaign, they're not sufficiently motivated to go up to [unintelligible] ... You heard the news last night ...

Yes, yes.

... with Neil Kinnock. In Bolton.

In Blackburn.

In Blackburn. Not that many people turned up, really.

How many would have been there, do you think?

[Another speaker, who is later identified as the "Andrew" referred to above]No, well, I think, there were about two thousand, which is a lot. But not in relation to the population of the north west of England, from which people were invited. I mean, every part of the north west of England - [unintelligible] the people round - and he only managed to muster about two thousand people in the King George Hall in Blackburn. Now, it was interesting that it was someone from the ...

Committee.

... committee. [Rest of his words obscured by foreground noise.]

Or the workers?

Well, yes. Yes.

I mean the average councillor, whatever he's doing, whether he's Conservative or Labour or whatever, he's not going to spread himself out very thin. I mean, [unintelligible] on the day. There's only a small number of people - on all sides - who really put themselves out.

But, to go back to your point in terms of a seventy-two per cent turn-out - which is high. When we go to a bi-election, we get a much lower percentage of turn-out - fifty per cent or whatever, which is quite low. So that's ...

[Fragmented, unintelligible comments]

The point that I wanted to make is that, you say that the papers, the regional papers, at any rate, don't make a really big thing of the ...

[Editor]No. I said that from a political standpoint, we don't make as big a thing of it as the national press. But neither does the ... none of the printed press, no newspaper makes as much of it as electronic media, particulary television. They feel that they have to. I mean, BBC nine o'clock news will put twenty minutes in or thirty minutes in on their broadcast or their bulletin - with actually nothing to say. They just do it for the sake of it. No newspaper would do it as they do it.

Electioneering has changed to a large degree over the last twenty years. Political parties certainly learned to fight elections on television. And visits to the ... A visit to this part of the world, say, by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, or, in fact, the Liberal Democrat leader, will be then highlighted on the ... what is then going to turn out to be perhaps ten seconds of a late news programme. And the amount of effort that the news media put into that is quite incredible.

And that's one of the reasons why there's perhaps not such a great emphasis these days on the old-fashioned hustings and the public meetings. Because people get their fix, if you like, on television. And it does save you going to ...

Do you think that television gives as much information to the voter ... the elector, as you people call them, as, let's say, the printed media? Or, the old-style election campaigns and meetings?

Television is far more inclined to do ... or to fall into line with the arrangements that the political parties make. And therefore, you are going to get vivid snatches, tiny snatches of Mr Major wearing this hat, or Mr Kinnock laying a brick here, or whatever. So, there are comment elements from the political specialists injected into the television programme. From the print media point of view, it is not so special to see someone in a funny hat, it's not particularly original. It made one picture, but it really doesn't matter.

Where a regional newspaper differs from the national press is that, yes, I think we do take a political standpoint - not particularly partisan. But we will have a standpoint on an issue, or another issue, which may not fall directly in line with a political party. But the main difference between what most of the national press do and what we do, is that we don't get or allow a comment on a news story.

[Unintelligible] to a certain degree. Mr Kinnock, for instance, has been criticised throughout the campaign as running a very slick campaign, but - and the criticisms come to this - that he is not availing himself, if you like, for the printed media. It's all sound-bites. It's all pretty pictures for the television. And the reason for that, in my view, is that perhaps eighty

per cent of the journalists who are following him around on the campaign trail, are waiting fatally, for him to say something that they can use in their partisan way in a news story. You know, so that ... His managers are being very, very careful, because they think they know what the score is.

They are waiting for the bananas!

They are waiting for the bananas.

[Andrew]They've been more than waiting, actually. There are newspapers who have hired ... who find one man to do nothing else but bait Neil Kinnock. His job is to rile him, so that Kinnock ...

[Editor]It's not very common ...

[Andrew]Yes, but sometimes ...

[Editor]We don't get involved with that in any way, shape or form.

[Andrew]No.

[Editor]So that's really the difference between our approach and the approach of perhaps the Daily Mirror, who do exactly the same thing. They have their men on Mr Major's plane, but, shall we say, pay for it ... Five thousand pounds?

[Another voice]They usually ask them to pay five thousand pounds to be on it.

When you talk of regional newspapers, are you talking of all regional newspapers?

Yes. Most of them.

Not just your own paper?

[Andrew]With due respect, Mike, I would slightly differ here.

[Laughter]

I think the Manchester Evening News here is indeed ... I think that Manchester's is one of few regional newspapers which is as neutral on rating its news[?] as it should be. Most ... In my view, most of the regional press, as well as the national press, is pretty [unintelligible]. This really is from the large-circulation ... the large-circulation morning newspapers and media to the smallest regional newspapers. By and large, Conservatives here are presented as heroes and Liberals - or any Liberals - are described as rather [unintelligible]. And this area, Manchester is not like that and never has been. And its journalists are extremely fair. But if you go to other parts of the country, I think you'll find a great difference.

For example, if you were to go up to the north east of England and have a look at the

[unintelligible: name of newspaper] in Newcastle-on-Tyne where the population is very largely Labour voting, the staff is hard-line Tory.

[Editor]Look, what Andrew is doing here is, with respect, getting you thoroughly confused.

A good regional newspaper reflects the community it serves. And you'll find that in papers like the [unintelligible] in Newcastle, and, in Birmingham, the Evening ... the Birmingham Post and in regional morning newspapers - while they are specifically linked to a city, for example, Birmingham or Liverpool, they don't actually service city populations.

I edited one in Liverpool - a morning newspaper in Liverpool - and it actually served the rural communities. Rural communities are Conservative. So what those papers are doing, is reflecting the community that they serve. Whereas, The Liverpool Echo, for the sake of argument, is in a very strong socialist region, and will reflect a socialist area - and they're owned by the same people. They're within the same stable.

Can I ask you ... In terms of your column, do you take a dig at all the parties, or ...?

[Andrew]Yes, I do.

[Editor]Apart from when there's an election!

[Laughter]

[Andrew]Yes, that's actually true. I do. I take a dig at all of them. I find all political parties absurd, personally. I think they're all ... The people in them are all rather horrible people. But, on the other hand, I am, I daresay, as well, you know.

[Laughter]

But, during a general election, we do have to decide, you know, who we want to win. I'm actually very dedicated to this Government's destruction. I think it should have been ousted ten years ago. And I would do anything to get it out.

[Laughter]

But I shall not tell any lies to get it out. I shall not fabricate any ... I shall not destroy any facts to get it out. I shall respect my opinion and record what I see.

[Editor]But the other day, you had a real go at Kinnock in your column!

[Andrew]Well, if the leader of a certain party - the only possible party to displace the Conservatives - makes a bad job of, in my opinion, a crucial meeting, it's my job to say that they've done so. Even on the eve of a general election. But that is the difference between myself and someone who might be working for the Daily Mail or the Daily Express, where that would go ...

[Editor]Well, yes, that's right. That would go on to the news stories, pretending to be the

truth.

We make a very clear distinction between Andrew's comments and our reporting the truth, as we see it. In the national press, a lot of what Andrew says would be reported as the truth. And that's a significant difference.

There seems to be a difference between the electronic media on the one hand, and the print media on the other. Where the electronic media makes such a fuss about being impartial, balanced, etc ...

Well, they have to be, by law.

Why is there no law similar in respect of the other media?

Because we are not subject to airwaves. There's only a law there because of control of airwaves. You can't set up a radio station or a television station, you have to, in effect, buy the airwaves. On the other hand, you could set up a newspaper tomorrow, if you want to.

So, there are no laws providing for newspapers?

No.

Apart from the law, is there no ... should there be no requirements, in terms of ...?

No. No, I don't think so. It's actually quite right and proper in a democracy for partisan papers to be there. [Unintelligible], a wise man, who runs our Press Complaints Commission said: "The price of a free press is irresponsibility". And I think that's absolutely right.

I choose to be apolitical and pro-Manchester, in its broad sense, because later, my successor may not choose to do it. He may choose to be pro-Labour or a pro-Tory paper. That's fine. That's his decision.

As a journalist ... Andrew is it?

Yes.

What party do you support?

[Andrew]Well, I do in terms of a candidate: and I support the Labour Party. But I don't [unintelligible] support the Labour Party. I don't regard myself as a Socialist. I don't think the Labour Party regard themselves as Socialists either. I'm not in favour of running a race against [unintelligible]. It would be running a race against myself!

[Laughter]

But one has to make a choice, you see. And I think that in spite of the problems of the leader, the Labour Party is by far ... is far more likely to satisfy my social beliefs than the present Conservative administration. Although, I must say, in 1979, so that's eleven [sic]

years ago, I supported the Conservative Party for a due time, because I thought it was time to get rid of the Labour Party, which is why ...

So, it's all your fault.

[Laughter]

Well, I thought it was only going to be in for five years. I think a Government should not survive for longer than five years, whether they're Labour or Conservative ... They should be turned out as often as possible.

May I ask, do you subscribe to the power of the press, the mighty power ... ? Your view?

I think that ... my views are not important. But I mean, I think that ... I do submit that a headline is more memorable than a television image. A quotation is more potent than a television ... than a picture.

Michael Heseltine, who is one of the Conservative speakers who leads[?] in this contest, said something which I don't agree with - but he said brilliantly, in that everybody can cite it - and he said that: "[Unintelligible: a name] knows, [unintelligible: another name] knew, John Smith knows: You've got to pick a pocket or two". It's ... I mean, it's doggerel to do with ... It mixes up Dickens ... But everybody, everyone reading remembers the saying, you see. Whereas, when you watch television, it is a kind of visual wallpaper. It is gone. And I think the written ... the printed word - by whoever - is more powerful than we give ourselves credit for sometimes.

Yes, sometimes.

I really think so.

[Editor]But I think that [unintelligible] will tell you what is going on.

Could I ... ? I just wanted to ask again, about this issue of neutrality. I don't know if that's the best word. There must be such things as editorial control, advertising that are issues that do ... you know, they're brought to bear on making decisions about how you conduct things in your paper. Does that not impact at all?

Not at all. Advertising control. Well, in many, many elections covered - being an editor in this country and two years in Australia, I have never had any interest or comment about any advertising, ever, in the party line.

In terms of editing, I can only speak for Manchester Evening News, where we have a unique situation in that we don't have any proprietors, as such. We are owned by a Trust, who did recently also own The Guardian, who really believe in the independence of the editor. They would not dream of telling me what to do. It helps that I'm a member of the Trust, but I wasn't when I first became editor and they wouldn't ... It appalled them to actually say that the paper must take this line or that line. I mean, in my nearly eight-and-a-half years here,

as editor, I have never had one discussion with anybody ever about the paper.

And in terms of the ... sort of ... content ...? I mean, we've made a distinction between the national print media and the regional/local print media. But the ... I haven't read this paper this morning, I haven't read it really now, I've just looked at it ... There seems to be more content that is [analytical] - I don't know whether it is really more analytical, or just tries to give that appearance - in some of the national print media, such as the Guardian, Times, Telegraph, Independent - irrespective of what one thinks of what is being said. It might be a question of putting the truth, so-called ... an opinion of the truth, I don't know. But, then, in this paper, there are much shorter, crisper stories, more news stories without contextualisation. I don't know, is that also part of the tradition, the difference between the two?

Well, that's a deliberate policy, because, obviously, because we are producing papers for different markets. The quality nationals that you refer to are aiming a paper at a specific segment of society. The Independent sells about three-hundred thousand nationwide, whereas we sell two-hundred-and-fifty thousand in Manchester. They go specifically at ABs in socio-economic terms. We have to appeal to all sections of society, from the most highly-paid managing director to the most lowly unemployed person in the backstreets of our poorer suburbs.

And we also have a rather different reading schedule. Because we are an evening newspaper, they have to go in and dip in and dip out [sic]. It has to fight with television viewing or going out door-knocking for the election campaign or going to the gym for a workout - or whatever. So, we have different requirements.

And the other interesting thing is that, in our paper, the biggest group of readers that we have are the young readers. There are one-hundred-and-forty-six thousand readers between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. And that is a very significant factor which is going to impact on one's editing.

It's a fabulous profile.

And the next biggest group is in between twenty-four and thirty-four. So we have a very young reader ... readership. So, we deliberately try to produce a paper like that, a design like that, a content like that, by having small bits - it's what we call the "bit culture" or the "bit society". People want briefer and briefer ... They want a combination: it's complicated juggling tricks. They want more and more news in. They want smaller and smaller items, and yet they want the analysis of how it affects them. So, you have to do the two things simultaneously. So, we do that. For instance, in this paper. We put the same questions to the three party leaders about the north west and Manchester specifically, [unintelligible] and all the other domestic things that we are very concerned with here. And we have just reported ... can I just get a copy of yesterday's paper? Sorry.

[Break in recording. Some comments obscured by foreground noise]

Parties do not attract votes in the press and that means that ... and in fact, it's quite nice to

me that the largest newspaper in the United Kingdom should be able to publish news that contradicts their own ... Now that is the whole point of the exercise. I mean, it redresses ... it's part of the redressing of the imbalance. [Obscured by foreground noise] because I had the temerity to put his views in. [Unintelligible] concerned with the letter writers.

What is your circulation like?

Two hundred ... well, last week was two-hundred-and-fifty-three thousand, which is eight-hundred thousand readers.

You say that the editorial may be partisan, as you call it ... Now, supposing then that the party that you're ... that you talk good about Party A and your readers, or most of your readers happen not to favour that party? One day, perhaps, when they read your paper, they are affected, in a way, by the mere fact that you yourself would support that party and not be neutral in the election. So that you reach all your readers of various political ideologies.

That wouldn't bother the readers too much. It would bother a minority of readers, who think I've got no right to do that at all ... But, provided the viewpoint is argued constructively, I think that the majority of readers would not mind. And provided these views did not infiltrate into the news columns. Provided they are argued constructively within the parameters of the comment, then that's okay.

[Unidentified voice]It comes down to why people buy newspapers, basically. Some people buy newspapers because they want it to reinforce their prejudices. But the classic case in the UK - and it's the biggest-selling tabloid of all the newspapers - and that's the Sun. Now, that's ... its news stories, on a day-to-day basis, particularly during this election campaign - but, anyway - its news stories are absolutely shot through with Conservative bias. And yet, the readership is, probably ... What is it? It's readership is - what? - eight million?

[Editor]Oh, more, yes.

[Unidentified voice]Maybe more than that. Now, probably, seventy-five per cent of them are Labour.

Why?

Well, that's not why they buy that particular paper!

[Laughter]

[Editor]It's part of this bit culture that I was mentioning earlier ...

[Unidentified voice]It's a very cleverly-produced newspaper.

[Editor]It's a comic. It's an adult comic. And the readers, the people who buy it know that. They want to laugh, they want to look - and if page three is part of that, then fine. They want a little bit of light relief. They don't really care. I think they couldn't care less!

[Andrew]I think, occasionally, they have the right to be annoyed, gently annoyed. I mean, people like to read something. My own personal way of reading is right-wing commentators in the Daily Telegraph and indeed in the Times.

I actually enjoy ... I mean, you don't want to read your own pitch. You want to find out what somebody else thinks. The more outrageous it is, the more I enjoy it. The more entertaining it is. The Sun, in every department, is an outrageous newspaper. It's a brilliant newspaper, in my opinion, it's an absolutely brilliant newspaper. It's not my cup of tea, but you cannot fault it as a ...

[Editor]As a product.

... product. It's a well-marketed paper.

[Editor][Unintelligible] that printed all the visual newspapers to bluff the British voter. But you can't.

[Andrew]You can't.

[Editor]Full stop.

If we all got together today and said that the monarchy should be abolished and we will run a campaign for the next six months, saying the monarchy should be abolished, it would have no impact at all on the people of Great Britain.

What do you put that down to?

Because they're not stupid!

[Laughter]

The thing about man is that he is born intelligent and it takes an education to make him stupid.

[Laughter which obscures some further comments that are made]

[...] British are sharp as a nation, particularly as they're not overtly political either. They don't ... sometimes you can't bluff them. Well ... No, you can't bluff them.

[Interposition by Andrew]I think the [unintelligible] is trying to!

[Editor continues]But they are not ... they don't ... Maybe they take politics for granted, but sometimes they don't get very excited by it. They really don't. They rarely take to the streets on issues ... On single issues, they may, but they don't ... A lot of them float, as well, between one party and another. It is now thirty ... thirty-three per cent ...

[Andrew]Thirty-three per cent, yes.

... still haven't made their minds up. And although we get a big, heavy turnout at a general election, by and large, British are not overtly political. If they were, well, there would be no such thing as a one-nation Tory, for instance, because, really: what does it mean? But they don't really think as a Frenchman would think, in political terms.

What you're saying is, they're not overtly partisan or active, but they are probably one of the highest of the politically-aware people in the ...

Well, I'm not sure that that's ...

[Andrew, answers question simultaneously]Well, I don't know. I don't know whether the Germans ... I would say that they are pretty ...

[Editor]I would say that they are ... they have a good gut reaction, a good culling instinct - for the pools!

[Laughter]

[Unidentified voice]I mean, the partisan Conservative tabloid press have rigidly maintained ... in this particular election, it has become so obvious that it's a cause for the Conservatives. And everybody knows basically what they're up to. There may well be a Labour victory tomorrow, in spite of what they're doing. It may, in fact, have got some people's dander up. But they still buy the paper ...

[Andrew]You see, the fact is, you see, that if Labour gets in on Thursday, there will be nothing new about it. The Labour Party was in office until 1979 and for most of the previous fifteen years. I mean, there's been quite a number of Labour Governments have got in. And they've all got in in spite of masses of propaganda against them from the popular newspapers. And I don't believe that the Labour Party can complain too much ...

They will!

They will, of course, but I don't think they can complain too much of the press. People know, they know when they're being sold a load of rubbish. They know when it's hype, too. You know, they can spot the [unintelligible] and the lie.

I also think that people are far more interested, though, than they're given credit for. They're not interested in the ideology of party politics - that bores them to death ... They're not interested in long speeches - but ... they're not interested in creeds and so on ... But, what does interest them is contest. Just as they're interested in football contests or cricket scores.

And it is a contest. And it's this time an interesting contest because a victory is not apparent. I mean, it's very much a cliff hanger. So, the people - it seems to me this time - are far more interested than they would normally be, because the outcome is uncertain. And people are going to bookies and laying money down, for example. There we are: they can make themselves rich. They hope, they hope to make themselves rich.

[Unidentified voice]The other thing is that, although the thrust of a lot of the national press

may be pro-Conservative, it seems to me - both being a general reporter, as well as a political one - it seems to me that day in, day out, over the years, when issues arise on specifics - particularly the health services - where there is a general story about so and so not getting the treatment he needs ... Day, after day, after day, that's always the story - when someone is left on a stretcher and dies - that, that's plugged away, that is not taken in a political context. Outside an election campaign, day, after day, after day, when those stories come along, they are more potent in a way than a Government Minister getting up and saying: "We spent x number of pounds ... of millions of pounds more on health services", or ...

And the Conservatives often complain that it's very difficult to counter the day-to-day stories of people who find difficulty with any number of public services. Whether it's health service, whether it's transport or whatever. They are specific problems that people have reported day, after day, after day, after day, and they aren't particularly sympathetic - ever - in that kind of story - to the government of the day. And who knows how much, you know, still grievance there is ...?

And that won't happen once the Labour Party's in power?

Very much so. We know that.

Would you say that the public would be more receptive, and therefore more reactive to day-to-day short, punchy problems being put on the table, as opposed to day-to-day punchy policy things done?

Yes. Well. How do you, how do you ...? It's like you say [unintelligible], isn't it? ... If you're actually ... If you're playing golf on a golf course and you happen to be unfortunate enough to be struck by lightning, the story is the man who gets struck by lightning, not the other four hundred golfers who weren't. That's always ... that's the basis of every newspaper story.

[Editor]If you go home and your wife says: "The next-door neighbours are still happily married after eighteen years", you say: "So?". Then you go home and they say they've got divorced today: Great!

[Unidentified voice]Well, that's a story!

[Laughter]

That's always the way.

[P Gordhan]You were talking about newspaper ownership and that has something to do with all the things that we have been talking about. What is the whole issue of that here? In South Africa, for example, I think there are about four companies that own most of the newspapers ...

[Another CODESA delegate]One. Anglo American.

[J Love]Yes. One.

[P Gordhan]Well, at the end of the day ...

[P Soal]You're missing your trick there ...

[P Gordhan]Hmm?

[P Soal]I said you're missing your trick.

[J Love]Just one.

[P Gordhan]Well, what's the position here?

[P Hendrickse?]Is it individuals?

[Editor]Well. It's more diverse than four. There's Murdoch, the Australian-American owns one quality, one popular daily ...

[Unidentified voice]Two popular dailies, if you count the [unintelligible].

[Editor]Well, yes, I wasn't going to, but ...

[Laughter]

All right, two popular dailies. I'm ignoring one. And two Sundays.

Maxwell - God rest him - did own a lot of papers, but it's been diverted and it's a whole pile of really different owners. Ownership, in all honesty, I don't think is a major problem. I don't think the parties would see it as such.

We're completely independent. The Independent is independent, the Financial Times is independent in terms of monopolistic ...

[J Love]Are there laws governing that?

No.

[Andrew]Yes, I think that ownership might be [unintelligible] image. I think that's probably the problem here. I'm not quite sure what could be done about it in a free country ...

[Unidentified voice]That's right.

[Andrew]I mean, in a free country, people want to buy a newspaper. I do think that they provide [unintelligible].

[Editor]There was a problem on television the other day with another editor, and he said that some newspapers have a right to be partisan and others don't. And that's nonsense. You

either have the right or you don't. You know, you can't have one law for one newspaper and another law for another newspaper. But that's what happens.

And my own personal worry is that, if laws were brought in - either by the Conservatives or the Labour Party - controlling the press, in relation to what they can and cannot do, or what they should or should not own, then that would obviously have to affect regional newspapers as well as national newspapers. Because you can't have one law for regional newspapers and one law for national newspapers ...

Well, you might admit that you don't have the right, if your paper's owned by Murdoch.

No, I don't think ... There's no such thing as secret ...

[P Gordhan]Just to put it in context. We've heard a lot over the last two days about laws and conventions which ensure that parties are equal in the election. Among ...

Only on television and radio. Yes.

No, no, no. Even in the conduct of the election itself.

Ah, yes, but not in the newspapers.

Yes, not in the newspapers.

So, on the one hand, there's a great import placed on levelling the field, to ensure that all parties are treated equally - no matter how big their financiers might be. On the other hand, we say that anyone can run a newspaper which means that anybody with money ...

Yes.

... can set up a regional newspaper ...

Well, no, not necessarily. We have small ... We've had newspapers in Manchester set up by people with no money at all. If they grow and develop and then obviously make money - because the only way you can keep in being a newspaper is if you are a profitable newspaper - enough to make yourself some money, then you can expand. [Obscured by foreground noise] that South Africa's a good example of that.

[Unidentified voice]I believe that newspaper ownership in this country is something that developed from bygone days when certainly there was a dichotomy or a fairly cosy arrangement between - if you like - rich people, and maybe even eccentric rich people. They were the only people basically who could afford to pay the trade unions [?]. And it was a very cosy relationship. It was a very expensive business to run a newspaper. Well, it still is to a large degree. But that now has changed to a certain degree, but the ownership of a newspaper hasn't [sic].

Because, first of all, what you've got to do ... If anybody wants to set up a newspaper - and the playing field is far more level than it used to be - the first thing you've got to do with a new newspaper is to make it saleable. You've got to make sure that people want to buy it. And there've been various attempts at setting up newspapers in the last five years - left-wing newspapers. If you like, there's one in this very city. And it failed within a few weeks[?] - because people didn't buy it. That's the point.

[Editor]It failed because it was run by a committee body which [unintelligible]. It tried to run a left-wing newspaper by committee, which you cannot ever do. You cannot run a newspaper by committee.

[Unidentified voice]Yes, that's true.

[Editor]It failed [unintelligible] clap-trap.

[Laughter. Several people talking at once. Unintelligible]

[Andrew]On the other hand, we've got ... we need ... I'm not complaining about this. We are the only country in Western Europe where ninety per cent of the national newspapers support one party. It's not happening in France, it's doesn't happen in West Germany - in Germany, rather - it's not happened in Italy. Papers of all persuasions compete commercially with each other profitably ... and make a big profit of doing so.

[Editor]It could be ... The reason being, we have a rare national press, whereas Germany, France, [obscured by Andrew who resumes].

[Andrew]Yes, yes, yes. And, of course, historically, there are all sorts of reasons for this. But I don't see why there should not be a few philanthropic ... like [unintelligible] or the Italian [unintelligible].

[Editor]We are philanthropic. We support The Guardian which loses twelve million pounds a year ...

[Andrew]Yes.

[Editor]Well, I think that's philanthropic.

[Laughter which obscures further comments that are made]

[Editor]What we cannot have are laws which say you've got to produce a certain kind of local newspaper.

Right.

[Fragmented, unintelligible comments]

[Break in recording and end of section on regional newspaper media]

Labour Party campaign workers in Bolton constituencies, and European Parliament Member

[Vera: agent]Originally, Bolton was controlled by Conservatives and Liberals and they had a pact whereby they didn't stand against each other. But that was broken in the 1960s and the Labour Party started making inroads into the vote.

We are going to win tomorrow three Labour seats in Bolton. We feel very confident about it. We have had Labour seats in Bolton before, but our boundaries were changed in - I think it was about 1979 ...? In 1983.

And as the town grows, you get more of the country area brought into it. And unfortunately, the houses that are built in the countryside tend to be larger. And the people seem to feel they don't have to vote Labour if they live in a large house all week.

I don't think that's the trend this year. But it has been.

So, in Bolton we ended up with three seats. One which you could say was solid Labour - to the south. And two - at the top - which were marginals.

Uhm ... stop me if you want to ask questions.

Tell me, the two marginal seats ... Who holds them at the moment?

They're both held by Conservatives.

By Conservatives.

Yes. One with a majority of eight-hundred-and-thirteen and the other with a majority of four-thousand-five-hundred.

[Another voice]The other seat ...

[First speaker resumes]The other seat is a Labour majority of about twelve thousand.

So, it's a safe one ...

It's safe. Yes.

Geographically ... Well, not geographically ... Practically, both the marginal seats have a great variety of housing, from inner city to farms. Both of them have a lot of rural countryside.

Bolton North East is the smallest in area - geographically. And Bolton West is the largest. That has seventy-two-thousand electorate. We have fifty-nine thousand electorate.

People who work in our area either work in the dwindling factories, or commute to

Manchester, and the growth industry at the moment is within the service industry. Tourism is starting to grow: hotels, catering. But, unfortunately, it's not fast enough. Because there are still a lot of people - particularly young people - who are unemployed; and who have been for a long time.

That's just Bolton. Now, is there anything else you'ld like me to ...? Would anybody like to know any more about Bolton, before we go on to what we do about elections?

[J Love]Enough for now. Maybe, if you could ...

Right. What do you want ...? Can you tell me what you want to know about elections?

Do you know what we're about?

Yes.

We think we know roughly how elections are run. We'd like you to tell us how you're going to win these two marginal seats. What are you doing?

Well, we're trying to ...

With these two marginals? I'd like to know. I don't know if the others want to know?

[J Love]I would - in addition to that - like to know how you run your election campaign, how you organise it, what sort of voluntary work you have and how many and how you organise those? In a fairly concrete way. Just to get some idea from you.

[Another CODESA delegate]The infrastructure for running the constituency?

Well, Iain and I can probably do bits each on that. What was the first one? I've forgotten the first one.

All right. Well, let's start with the campaign. I mean, how do you run a campaign? But I'm interested in how you're going ... what are you doing to win the marginal seats? It's easy to hold a safe seat.

Right.

We started about eighteen months ago. Well, two years ago, we selected the candidate. This is my constituency. A similar thing happened in Bolton West.

If the candidate's local, then you have an advantage in that most people know them. Dave is what we call semi-local. He lives about four miles away - and for some Boltonians, they would consider him a stranger. So, what we had to do was get his face known. And we started doing this by using a series of newsletters that were delivered by hand to every house in the constituency. We chose a mixture of national and local issues to go into that. And we also had on the back of that, a Labour Party membership form, any enquiries, so that people could come to us if they'd any problems. For our area, that meant a delivery of thirty-two

thousand letters or newspapers four times a year.

On top of that - I should have brought it with me - we planned a series of engagements for Dave, where he would meet different people. He would go to events that were on in the schools, churches - anywhere we could get him so that people would recognise him.

We then started looking at issues that Conservatives were bringing up, or issues that we thought were important to the local people. Not necessarily knocking the Conservatives. And we did a series of special leaflets to try and get our point of view over to them.

That's built up until, after Christmas, we had a direct mail drop - that means, to every person, not every household - of a New Year message from Neil Kinnock. And it was sent out with a little card from Dave with useful telephone numbers on. And this we did ... There are six wards in our area and each one has its local library, its local councillors, its emergency services. We made it like a little card that people could put in their pocket - with "Happy New Year from Labour", or something - of useful telephone numbers, so that people could, you know, keep it there on the mantelpiece. Again, it had Dave's picture on the front. Because that is what we were pushing.

Can you think of anything else, Iain?

[Iain: agent]Well, I think basically, traditionally, what British politics has been about is to find out where your support is and who exactly is supporting you in elections. And that's built around a kind of canvassing exercise where party workers go and knock on doors and ask people if they will be voting Labour; if not, whom they will be voting for? It's a basic canvassing method of finding out who your supporters are.

So, you have the literature side, but you also have that personal contact where people from a political party go knocking on doors or use the telephone to contact people and find out whom they're voting for.

Now, once you know who's voting for you in the election, the idea is to target people who perhaps are doubtful which way to vote. And to make sure that your vote is pretty strong. And on election day, there's a separate exercise where you go and knock on doors of people who've said they're going to vote for your political party, to make sure that they've actually gone to the polling stations and voted. And a lot of effort of the political parties in election campaigns is still on that exercise: Find out who your supporters are; on election day, go around and make sure that they've voted ...

And how you do that is, you have people on all polling stations who take the numbers of the polling cards - each elector has a polling card. You take down their number from the polling card and you ... Well, in fact, there's one here: a polling [unintelligible] card. You take down the number of their card and you cross it off your list. And then you go and knock on the doors of the people who haven't voted and you say: "Come on, you haven't voted yet. Go and vote Labour ... for the Labour Party on this one". And it's a way of making your vote turn out on the day. A lot of effort in the election campaign is devoted to that exercise.

But there's also, there's also the whole campaigning exercise on that. There's the newspapers

... We have a press office that does press releases to the local newspapers, to, you know, to put the Labour Party's point of view, to promote the candidate.

There's the freepost. In Britain, we have a freepost where you can put one piece of literature in an envelope and send it to the electorate. And the Post Office delivers that envelope. You've got to produce a leaflet - these are the leaflets, the glossy ones, that we did for this general election campaign. We use computer labels. We put the labels on the envelopes and the Post Office come and deliver them. So, we have one piece of literature that's delivered free. The rest we have to deliver.

And, normally, you deliver an introductory leaflet at the beginning of a campaign, explaining who the candidate is - Vera is holding up an introductory leaflet for David Crawford, which has gone. That's the first leaflet we delivered, saying: "This is our candidate, this is the Labour Party candidate. Here's a bit about him".

And then, after that, we do particular leaflet drops. We've done one on the economy, for example. And there are also local leaflets that we do.

In Bolton West, for example, there's a problem with the defence industry in this country, which has lost a lot of jobs with the ending of the Cold War. And we did a leaflet to the workers in British Aerospace, to set out what a future Labour Government would do in their industry.

There's also a coal mining exercise in Bolton West, where they're mining coal on the ground - not deep mining, open-cast mining, on the ground - which is causing a lot of pollution problems. The local residents don't like it. So, we did a leaflet on those particular issues, that people are very concerned about.

We've also done something for the Asian community in Bolton. Bolton has a large Asian community. So, we've done a piece of literature for the Asians, which is in English, Gujarati and Urdu, to get our message across there.

So ... The other thing we do is things like this: people interested in animal rights and animal welfare. And we targeted young people who we thought were quite interested in animal welfare. So, we got a list of young people. The way we did that was, we worked through the Electoral Register. And there's a date next to young people, who are not always ... The Electoral Register is a register of electors, but lasts something like twelve months. And, obviously, if you're eighteen in the middle of that, you can only vote once you're eighteen, so there's a date next to your name. So, we know that these people are young voters. By going back a number of years, you build up a list of young people. And we did a direct mail letter with one of these, and tried to relate it to young people. So, that's the kind of thing that we do.

We also have our poster campaigns. I'm sure you've seen posters, big billboard things that are all over the place. We have a problem with that. Because there's not fixed terms of Parliament in this country, we have a suspicion that the Conservatives - they knew the date of the election before we did - actually built more of them than we could and there's more Tory billboards than ours. But we built them and we use that.

Of course, there's no television commercials in this country for political parties. We don't have that.

We also go on the precinct, markets, balloons, stickers, that kind of razzamatazz. There's also public meetings - a few public meetings. Those are dying out now in Britain, as it's more TV-based. But, at one time, public meetings used to be the bread-and-butter of general election campaigns. That's not the case anymore. But there are one or two of those that still go on, with the local candidates putting their own point of view to a local audience. So, that's the kind of thing we do.

[Vera]Thanks. Well, Gary, do you want to add anything?

[Gary: European Parliament MP]Just one or two points to make. As I say, I'm the Euro MP for this area. I think one of the most important points that I think it's useful for you to go away with, is the realisation that this election campaign is only, as it were, the icing on the cake. That the work has been put in for two years. The mistake that has been made in the past - most obviously by the Labour Party, particularly in 1983 - was to assume that you run an election campaign over three weeks. In fact, it has to be run over a long period of time. And therefore, we've been involved in campaigning activities more or less as soon as candidates were selected. The party nationally has been involved in campaigning more or less since the last election, in fact. And I think it's important to bear that in mind.

In my Euro constituency, I have eight Parliamentary seats - four of which are safe Labour seats, four of which are Conservative marginal seats. And one of the tasks I set myself when I was elected in 1989 was to have eight Labour seats by the time the next general election was finished. And hopefully we are one day away from achieving that task.

But what I have tried to do is use my facilities as a campaigning base for the Party. Labour Party has always had a problem of lack of money in order to have its facilities. Fortunately, Labour Party here in Bolton has always had this office. It's had this office base for some time. But elsewhere in the Euro constituency, we didn't have any of those sort of facilities. So, I established an office in the adjoining constituency of Bury South, which is a marginal seat. And we then got Iain along as an agent, who's here as a temporary agent. And I've contributed to his salary. But also he's used the facilities of my office in order to go out and start running the campaign. We've also been able to co-ordinate by having regular meetings with candidates and agents. So, a lot of work identifying where our vote is has been done over two years. It's been a lot of work for him.

In addition, why we also use my office, is as a sort of organising point for getting visits in from outside, from important members of the First Bench: the deputy leader, the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Smith. Because those visits are used as an opportunity to get photographs of the visiting person with the candidates. And it's important to get their picture in the paper on a regular basis, so that within two years, there's very good recognition of your candidate. And so, these visits are meant as part of that campaigning technique and it's a very important part.

Also, we've always had a problem of lack of financial resources, compared to Conservatives. And you can see that now in relation to poster sites. They've got far more poster sites. In

fact, one of the scandals that hopefully will come to the surface at the end of the campaign is how those poster sites have been obtained. Because, if Conservative advertising agencies put those poster sites in the name of companies, claiming they were going to have advertising campaigns, companies have started to deny that they ever intended to have advertising campaigns. So, all the Conservative advertising agencies were able to do was switch who was going to use those poster sites. And therefore, they were able to book the very best poster sites with other clients. Without necessarily knowing precisely the time of the election, they simply book blanket campaigns - and hopefully this will come out post-election.

But I think the important thing to bear in mind is, that what you see here is just the icing on the cake. But, it is also by far the best-organised campaign that I have ever been associated with in my time with the Labour Party - both nationally and locally. The amount of work that has been put in - particularly having Iain here as full-time agent - is far greater than any other election campaign that I have ever been involved in.

So, we know a lot more about our voters, we are able to target things. There's less of simply pushing leaflets through doors, there's more targeted mail than ever before. I think that's a very important point to bear in mind about elections. You don't really win or lose elections over the three weeks of the campaign. What it is is to fulfill the promise that you have shown up until that election campaign has started.

[Vera]As well as identifying where the people are who are going to vote Labour, we also pick up information of complaints.

And we have a system where you can vote by post under certain circumstances. And there are now, I think, about six categories of circumstance that you can have a postal vote for. If you're sick; if you're unable to get to a polling station - say, you're very frail; if you are working away full-time; if you are called away temporarily; if you're abroad; if you're on holiday - almost any occurrence where you can't get to the polling station. If you apply in time, you can have a postal vote, or a proxy vote. That means, you can get someone to vote for you.

What is the period of that?

Well, we shouldn't ... You can pick them up at any time during the year, but it's a very short time ...

But when do postal votes open ...? When is it open?

Well, it's open now, it's open now. But they won't have a postal vote for tomorrow. We can pick postal votes up today and they can vote in the local elections at the beginning of May. What we have a problem with is that, when the elections come, people suddenly realise that they need a postal vote and we have about a week to get them in.

Now, with the medical ones, they have to be signed by a doctor or a nurse. And it's chasing around, trying to get these filled in. And you have to get them in by twelve o'clock on that Monday - and that's a fortnight ago - a fortnight ago last Monday was the closing date for postal votes.

And how long was it open for?

[Iain]Well, there are certain proper times ...

[Vera]Proper times ...

[Iain]... applied to when they're valid from. If you, for example, if you've got a medical case, once you've registered once for a postal vote, you permanently have that postal vote - for disability, for example.

Oh, yes, I see.

For people going on holiday, and so on, they can register any time for postal votes, but obviously, in relation to holidays, you don't know when the elections are going to be, so you have a period after the election's announced to apply for postal votes, which closes ... As I say, it's about two weeks before the election day.

But if you ... for example, if you have a job where you know you're going permanently to be away, you can apply any time at all in the year for a postal vote. What you ... It's simply a matter of looking at the Register, to make sure you're on the Register.

What percentage of your polls come from postal votes?

[Vera]I think that this time Bolton West have got two thousand out of seventy-two thousand electorate. We've got over a thousand [referring to Bolton North East]. It's increasing all the time.

This year, they've made an improvement. They've got a form - I think they're all called RPF 9 or RPF 7. There's a form now that you can apply on for one election and it will cover almost anything: illness, holidays, working away. And whereas the other forms you have to get signed by an employer, if it's working away, or a medical officer if it's sickness, this one, if it's one election, you can certify yourself. But you're fined two-hundred-and-fifty pounds if you've put down false information.

Now, we've found that particularly useful in the last minute, when people have come to us and said: "Somebody phoned. Can you get a postal vote filled in in two hours?". We can get it filled in, we can get them to sign it and get it to the Town Hall.

Now, there's a lot of work to be done on that, because our phones have been constantly ringing with people who can't get to the polling station because of illness, or things that have happened ... There's still a lot of work to be done.

Now it's too late ... too late? So, now you have to get them to the polls?

Yes.

So, how does a postal vote work? I apply for a postal vote, is the ballot paper then posted to me and I have to return it?

Yes.

[Iain]If you apply for a postal vote, you can only vote by post. You can't decide tomorrow to go to a polling station ...

You post it to me?

I post it to you, and you can only vote by post.

You can also vote by proxy, you see. You can also get someone to vote on your behalf, which is called a proxy vote. I mean, it's the same principle.

But you don't have someone, some official or a postal vote agent there to observe the actual ... not the crossing, but to make sure it's all done correctly?

Yes.

[Vera]It has to be witnessed.

[Iain]Somebody signs a form that is placed inside ... There's two envelopes that you have - one with the postal vote inside and one with this form which goes in the outer envelope. So, it has been witnessed.

And who is the witness?

Anybody. You can choose the witness yourself for a postal vote.

As for opening the postal votes, it is scrutinised by members of each party who attend the opening.

Does each party get a list of postal votes lodged?

Yes.

[Vera]I can give you forms. I've got forms in the office. I can give you samples of all these forms.

Still on this question of campaigning and of infrastructure - the question of the source of funding? You said that preparations should be long. Where do you go to get your source of funding, before and during elections? And the question of money for staff. How many people are involved in the campaign?

[Iain]It ... I mean, the funds, etc ... Britain doesn't have state funding of political parties. I think that that will probably change in the near future. But at this moment in time, there is no state funding of political parties. There is some state funding available to help Members of Parliament and the Opposition Front Bench. But there's no actual money, public money for political parties in this country, as such, to help with their campaigning. So, political parties use various means to finance themselves and different parties raise funds in different

ways.

The Conservatives get a lot ... get a great deal of money from business [...]

[Break in recording]

Cassette 5

[Gary speaking][...] in the candidate's name, without the express authorisation of the agent ...

Even the outside organisation?

Even the outside organisation. The agent must put it out.

[Vera]If you look at this leaflet, it doesn't say: "Vote Labour". This is a rare one. It says: "Vote for the candidate who wants better [unintelligible] with improvements and not private [unintelligible]". It doesn't say: "Vote Labour" on it.

[Gary]I think the limit, the six-thousand-pound limit, is increasingly becoming nonsensical, in the sense that there's no limit on national campaigns and therefore, we don't pay for posters, for example, in the constituency. And what the Government ... the Conservatives have done, is put up large numbers of posters in constituencies like these, because they are seeing marginal seats. Increasingly, people feel that the division is becoming very blurred in the British electoral system. But it's something we've still got.

And it does ... in a sense, it is advantageous to parties, small parties - and including parties like the Labour Party, who don't have a lot of money - in that we don't end up in a position that we can be outspent locally, even though we are outspent about ten times nationally.

You say that you've got a staff. Does this ... did you provide yourself?

This is my own personal staff. It's manned by the European Parliament.

And that's provided by the European Parliament?

Well, they provide the funding for me to employ staff.

Yes, so you can have the staff. And then you ... obviously, during the campaign, you direct their energies towards the Labour campaign?

Oh, yes.

And that's not included in your return?

No. Don't forget that trade unions, this year, who are seconded to the campaign - sometimes for the day, sometimes for the entire campaign - don't ...We don't actually include those costs. But that's, in a sense, technically, I think. There was never a great deal of pressure

on justifying expenditure. You have to fill in an amount to cover .. a nominal amount to cover those. But, especially people working as volunteers, you don't have to account for them, because they're not being paid.

[J Love]How many volunteers do you have involved in the campaign?

[Vera]Well, Gary is talking about the Bury side, where he has his office. On this side in Bolton, it's staffed purely with volunteers, apart from me.

And how many ... so, how many people are they?

Well, there's two agents, [unintelligible] and myself ...

Voluntary?

Voluntary. We then rely on Party members. That depends on who can turn out that night. So, it's a fluctuating amount, Janet.

[P Hendrickse]Are we talking about a hundred people or a thousand people?

A couple of hundred, about two hundred.

[P Gordhan]But what is the structure? Do you have a constituency committee and then do you have sub-divisions to that?

Well, there are ward parties. In my area, there are six ward parties, six branches. They have their own membership, which can be as low as thirty, or it can be as high as a hundred and twenty. Depends on how good they are at recruiting them. It doesn't mean that because you've a hundred and twenty people that you've a lot of workers. You might get ten core people who will work. Normally. In a general election, they tend to get a bit more enthusiasm.

And also that depends. We approach people, when we first look at a campaign, to do different jobs. We've got what we call a campaign committee and [unintelligible] look all the voters up, and we'll say to somebody: "Right, that is your job. To put the whole list together for the constituency". And only then they can get people to help them to do it. Either computer operators - we went computerised last year. Just for keeping the records. Like Iain talked about, when we knock on doors and we keep Labour names. In the past, it's all been written up by hand. But now, we can feed them into a computer and - it's exactly the same as we did before, it just makes it a bit faster.

[Iain]But these are actually the people who said they were going to vote Labour, which we are going to use on the day. When they've voted, we're going to cross them off, so we know they've voted. But they will go to the addresses of the other people and say: "Come on, you haven't voted yet. Come and vote".

[Vera]Yes. [Unintelligible] through the day, take a sheet off and it's gone through. You see, where the numbers are taken at the polling station, it's this number at this side. Cross them

off there. So, your people go knocking on the doors and hopefully by ten o'clock you get down to a yellow sheet. And those are the last of the people to get out. But you're not knocking on people's doors who've already voted.

[J Love]The ... Let's say you have a particular job to do, how do you reach your potential volunteers? You said you put somebody responsible ...

You would get on the telephone.

Right. Okay.

I'm not ... The best way is personal contact. We have some letters out asking for people to do various jobs. And you do get a small response. But the best response is personal contact, either from my level, passing it down to my ward agent and asking them to do it.

At the moment in the elections, that's what's happening. I have sub-agents in each ward. They are the link between me and their people who are working for them. And each week, we have a meeting where information's passed to them, or equipment or whatever. So, they're in their own area which is about ten thousand for each one. They organise themselves in each area, giving their people different jobs to do - [unintelligible] or canvassing.

[G Bartlett?]Can I make a suggestion to you, that we have, in our electoral system ... Whereas you have those little forms where you take down the numbers of people who have voted, as they go into the polling station, we have a sheet of paper that wide, which the officials inside who are recording the voters who have voted ... They write down - and it's carbon paper, for the number of parties ...

[Iain]That sounds well organised [unintelligible].

... and they write down the numbers of all the voters who have voted and they place them on the table. And the indoor agents of the various parties then go and collect them up and take them through to their ... So, you do away with this trying to take your own count. Because a lot of voters won't ...

[Gary]No, that we know [...]

[Fragmented, unintelligible comments]

... Everybody benefits from it and it makes it a lot easier.

[P Gordhan]Do you know a Government that helps the parties?

[Laughter]

I beg your pardon?

[J Love]Do you know of a Government ...

[P Gordhan]... that helps the parties ...?

[G Bartlett]But it helps every party.

[J Love]Ja, every party that can vote!

[P Gordhan]Ja ...

[J Love]Every party.

[Laughter which obscures the beginning of next sentence]

[Vera][...] at the polling stations, because if the Conservative number-taker just has to go somewhere or other quickly, I will just take numbers for them and just swop them over. At that level there is co-operation.

[G Bartlett]But that was the point that I'm making. [Obscured by foreground noise] in recent years, because of the scramble to get the numbers, it has been agreed that that is the way the parties want it.

[J Love]But may I just say, do you still think other parties will be wanting carbonised copies in the future?

[Some other indistinguishable remarks]

[P Gordhan]Can you give us a distinction between volunteers who will be working virtually throughout the two-year period that you spoke of, on the one hand, and the additional numbers that would come in during an election, on the second hand? And then on the third hand, how many signed-up members does the Labour Party have in your consituency?

About five hundred, to your last question.

So five hundred out of a popu[lation] ... an electorate of seventy-two thousand?

Not even. Sixty-thousand.

Sixty-thousand.

Yes.

The people who normally work ... We have ... In the six wards, I have Labour councillors in three, three of them. So, there's nine Labour councillors, one Labour councillor in a marginal one. So, they're working on the council. And I've got an advice bureau during the week for people who have problems.

Clinics.

Each branch then has the chairman, secretary, treasurer - and it depends on each branch what activities they want to do. If they want to campaign locally on - say, their bypass or keeping the fields green and not having a road going through it - each branch has its own localised campaigns.

[Unintelligible] there's a constituency level, where you have delegates from the branches, and the unions, and the core Party. They meet monthly, and we organise some events on a constituency level. We sometimes use the precinct, not necessarily in election time. We do have a petition - like last October. We were very concerned about - I think it was - about education. Some changes were being proposed which we felt were wrong and we said we'd have a petition. And the three constituencies came together - this is what we planned to do - and the precinct. They had petition forms, balloons. We made it a kind of a high-profile thing. We collected names against the Government proposals and sent the petition off. I think we got a photograph out of it as well.

But, things like that, we tend to latch on to, if we think it's worthwhile.

Now, different people act in different ways. If you're on the precinct, you might get people coming to help who wouldn't normally set foot out for a boring meeting. So, not everybody goes to all the meetings. But, we have a source that we can ring up and say: "Can you help us on this?" or whatever.

[S Ripinga]The question of timing. You said that preparations ... You know, you said that preparations for a good election should be perhaps in two years. We are sitting in a situation at the moment where we are talking of a transition and when one talks of two years - that period is very long. I don't know, what would you suggest? Because we are in a crisis. We must move to a democracy and taking two years for moving to a democracy might be too long and there might be a lot of anxiety. What is your advice?

For example, in Working Group Five of CODESA, we have set time limits, you know, and I don't know what you ...

[Gary]I think you've got a different system ... or, rather, it's different to ours. For example, the experience of Spain in the transition to democracy - basically, the Socialist Party was organised there with no money and no organisation. It's a rather different transition, I know. But the motivation for people to vote is, of course, very, very high in a new democracy. Far higher than in a country like ours, where a lot of the population rather take it for granted. They don't appreciate it as much as would be the case in a country with a newly developing democracy.

So, I don't think, in your situation, you have to necessarily [unintelligible]. You will have to in the future. Once democracy is established. But in the short term, from what I know of South Africa, most people are sufficiently aware of the positions taken by different political groupings. You will have a very high motivation for voting. So, what we're talking about is the system you need to establish, once you have got a democracy established and people have gotten used to it and rather take it for granted.

[Iain]I mean, I'll just add to that. I mean, we're talking about two years. I mean, it just

worked out that the general election was called. One of the things is that we don't know when a general election is going to be called. We thought it would have been called last May. So we made our preparations, obviously, about six months before that. It's turned out that it was a year later. I mean, part of this two-year time-span is a consequence of not knowing when the general election is going to be called. Because, in the previous general elections, it was only about four years before they called one. This time, they've gone right out to five years.

But also, it's no use pretending that ... party workers <u>are</u> thin on the ground when it comes to a general election, when it's far away. And we make slow progress. When we come up to the general election period, people ... party members get interested. They know you are bound to ask them and you get more people coming in and during the general election campaign, there's a lot of people coming in. Whereas before, you have a small number of people.

So, take that two years with the big qualifications that Gary and myself have made.

[Gary]But also, of course, we get a lot of people coming down, so that if you have done the work previously - I think that twelve months ago we were ... some of us were worried that we weren't quite as ready as we should have been. If you've done that work, then you can use people effectively. If you've done no work previously, then you get lots of people turning up and you can't use them as effectively as [obscured by foreground noise] preparation. But, I think, in a situation where you've got high motivation to vote, you don't need as many levels of organisation as we have. [...]

[Portion of discussion obscured by foreground noise]

[...] so well organised?

Well, in terms of the things we've identified before. In terms of having done the work to identify our vote, having done the work ...

Your canvassers have been on a personal contact campaign?

Yes. The canvassing has been done before. But also, we have done a lot of targeting, working out what people are in which target groups. And that is basically very hard grind. And there's also been a lot of telephone canvassing done in the past. In the last six months, in fact.

Has there been, in recent years, a swing away from physical canvassing towards telephone canvassing?

Not really.

[Vera]You see, one of the problems with that is that, when you bring something new in, like computers, it's very strange. They've all been used to doing it their way. And you've got to introduce it slowly, make it work. Otherwise, [unintelligible] and they don't want to know. Now, they've accepted from the beginning of last year, that we didn't write things up.

They've accepted that. All the old people who used to sit for hours, writing all these names out, no longer have that job to do. And the canvass cards. We didn't have to paste canvass sheets up, because we could run them off. In the past, somebody sat there, pasting them up. And that was their job and they liked doing it. So, they've accepted these things.

When you start talking about telephone canvassing and opinion polling, they think that is very strange. And most people think: "How big is the phone bill?". In fact, one of them was going around yesterday, saying: "How much would a telephone call cost?". And that ... They don't see the wider implications of it. All they can see is the narrow: "If I make a phone call, it's going to cost that much". Not the fact that you can easily communicate with somebody in thirty seconds. Now, it is growing. They are latching on to it. But I wouldn't say it has really taken off yet.

[Gary]But it's still fairly important, I would say - I don't know if Vera and Iain agree with me - for Labour supporters to be seen face to face. They place a great deal of value on having Labour Party come around and knock on their door. And it is an important factor in their behaviour.

But telephone canvassing has really started to develop this time. The Conservatives have used it for a number of years. It's started with us this time, because there was a feeling that people would give, perhaps, a more honest response on the telephone. And you know, it does help to save labour costs. Particularly when you're trying to get to people who may not be in on the times when we may be canvassing. So, it is part of it. But I don't think that we envisage it taking over from face-to-face canvassing. It's just part of a number of tools that we use.

[Vera]And also, a lot of our people don't have telephones.

What percentage canvass do you do?

We've had ... Depending on how many workers you've got, it depends on how many callers can canvass. We could cover wards. We could knock on every door. And yet, some people might not be in, and if they're not in, they get a card like that.

But actually spoken to ...?

One ward's done seventy per cent contact.

Seventy?

[Iain]Which is incredible.

How many voters do you have?

[Vera]In total, fifty-nine thousand.

Total. And of that, how many would you contact?

We've contacted well over fifty per cent.

Fifty per cent?

Yes. Fifty-five now.

[P Soal]Now, I'm going to come back to what I started off when I was deflected here. Can I ask my question now?

Now, you've identified people who've got doubts about you. And you know who are your hard supporters and who are against you. What are you doing to make ...? You're confident of winning tomorrow?

Yes.

Well, Kinnock's gotten to you. They all say they're going to win! We'll find out on Friday.

[Iain]You'll find out soon enough.

[Gary]You will find out.

What are you doing here to make sure? I mean, you lost last time by eight hundred votes. What are you making ... what are you doing about the doubtfuls?

[Vera]I would go back to the doubtfuls. What we have been doing is knocking on the doors ... In some of the areas, we have done a second canvass.

You've gone back to the doubtfuls?

We've been back to the doubtfuls and we've been back to the [people who were] out. But I can't say that it's happened throughout the whole constituency.

Ja.

[P Gordhan]How many of them [unintelligible]?

Twenty per cent doubtfuls last week. And twenty per cent of your canvass is a lot.

[P Hendrickse]I want to know, as regards your transport ... Those people who are on the list ... Suppose that tomorrow you find out certain people haven't come to vote. Do you call them? Do you actually arrange transport for them? Do you go and pick them up?

We do arrange to pick them up ...

And what percentage of your voters do you actually have to pick up and bring to the polls?

Small. A small percentage, where if they haven't voted, we go knocking on the doors, reminding them they've got to go and vote.

How many polling stations do you have for fifty-nine thousand voters?

Thirty-six.

Thirty-six?

[Gary]One of the strange things is that many people refuse to have a postal vote. They actually like the ceremony of going to vote and getting a lift from the Labour Party or whatever party. People often ... you will find, in the evening, will go off - if it's a nice day, as promised tomorrow - will go off to start to the polling station and then off to the pub or something. It's part of a sort of ceremony. So, we often find that people want to go - unless they truly can't get there - want to walk to the polling station, rather than ...

[Iain]Can I just add something ... There's thirty-six polling stations. You must remember that Vera here is talking about Bolton North East which is a fairly compact constituency compared with Bolton West. For Bolton West it's about sixty.

For how many voters?

For seventy-two thousand.

Seventy-two thousand.

And obviously, it's not just the number of voters. The geography comes into it as well.

You see, that's twelve hundred to sixteen hundred voters per constit[uency] ... per polling station. We get polling stations for five thousand, ten thousand.

[Gary]You can have polling stations for only twenty-eight voters ...

[Iain]We've got one for three hundred voters ...

[Gary]It really just depends on the area and how far people have to walk to get to the polling station ...

I think that answers your question, Pieter. You said the other day ... was it you? You asked about in the rural areas ... And, you see, this is something that we are going to have to look at, in so far as getting people to the polling stations. We have polling stations ... I had one of three hundred and only about a hundred and ten vote, because they move, they're railways workers. They get a lot of transfers ...

[Gary]I think one of the things we do, also, is to make sure that polling stations are where they are beneficial to our supporters. If we're not happy with a polling station, we get in touch by letter with our registration officer and ask for it to be moved. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose ...

And that's done by the various parties in Bolton? You agree, you come to an agreement?

Well, as I say, we will write off ourselves. There may be a dispute or discussion. Normally, parties are in agreement, because where there's a real need ... It's a trade-off basically, because often everybody recognises that a polling station is in a very inconvenient place and ought to be somewhere else.

Now, to set up that polling station, is it the Department of Home Affairs who looks after it - who looks after your elections?

[Iain & Gary]No, local government, local government.

So they put officials in there?

Yes. Polling stations can sometimes [another conversation in the foreground obscures the rest of this sentence]. [...] mobile stations.

And every voter is registered with a polling station?

[Gary]Yes. And it's from that polling station that they have to vote.

That's different.

[Several conflicting discussions. Unintelligible]

[J Love]Yes, that's a big difference.

Everybody is registered to vote at a place ...

[Break in recording which seems to coincide with introduction of two new speakers - representatives of the Trades Union Council]

[Unidentified speaker is speaking][...] We're changing the system really. We've changed it last time from the time before. And we'll probably change it next time as well, because there does seem to be some kind of dissatisfaction.

Really, a candidate is selected by way of membership of the Labour Party. He was originally selected by some representatives of members of the Labour Party. And what we've now started to do is open that up to all our members of the Labour Party. And we expect that next time, it will just simply be by way of individual members voting - a one-on-one vote, all our branch members ... All members of the constituency will meet and vote for the individual candidate. This ... Certain selection has been partly on that basis and partly on the basis of affiliated organisations - the trade unions, the [unintelligible] Society, women's section, all the affiliated organisations in various constituencies - [unintelligible], for example, in some constituencies, and so on.

[Unintelligible interposition]

The core ... the core would have a ... in this last selection process, did have a percentage selection of the vote, but in the next one, it's looking very much like we will end up with one member of the Party, one vote. Just a simple percentage system. We'll see that that goes considerably further, although obviously, we still have to establish that.

[Gary]I wonder if you'd excuse me. I have another engagement.

Thanks a lot.

[Break in recording]

[Another unidentified speaker: a trade-union-sponsored Labour MP][...] one in the country, which was the old Bolton East. And that swung rapidly and I held that against the swing in 1979 and then got one that is allegedly a safe seat, in 1983. In fact, when you get a safe seat, just your enemies change. You know, this is the point. There's always someone in a safe seat wants to replace you.

[Laughter]

You fight the Tories actually in a marginal seat, but you survive against your colleagues in safety! But that's been done on party policy [?].

What I think hasn't been said - and what is relevant to your question - is that a problem that I think we are finding, is that all four parties are having problems with membership, but the whole constitution of the Labour Party was based on a large membership. Now, it is not so many years ago, when parties had a membership of over a thousand, two thousand and so on. Now, in recent years, the average membership has dropped considerably. In my case, it's about four hundred.

Now, quite obviously, this is one reason for the changing situation. Because, obviously, in that situation, a small group of people could have quite an effect in dealing with this. And it is one of the reasons why we are moving much more to a membership vote, rather than from an affiliated vote. And also the point is, that in these parts, very often the union members were also active members of the Party.

Now, if we talk of change that has come about, it's not simply in politics. I'm a sponsored Member [unintelligible]. I've been in politics for a long, long time and it's only recently that I've become a sponsored Member of a trade union. In fact, I left one sponsor panel, because, in fact, I found it confining. But I would actually say that never have I found any sponsor panel placing any pressure on a Member of Parliament of how he has to vote in government.

In fact, in the House of Commons, one of the privileges of a Member is, in fact, to be independent. And there was a case some time ago where a trade union secretary-general - I think it was NUR - indicated that he would expect his Members, his sponsored Members, to follow a certain line. And he was [unintelligible] before the Privileges Committee and it was made quite clear that if any pressure was brought, he would be held responsible. And I think that it is very important that independence is maintained. I have never had any pressure on me how to vote.

What, in fact, we do do with sponsored Members, is that we have areas of responsibility, in which the union is itself interested. I'm quite interested, for example, in aircraft and that [unintelligible]. And we are simply expected on that, not to vote in a certain way, but to take a particular interest in that area, so that if issues come up, we are able to talk on the industry basis. But again, there is no compulsion. Whether we talk or not is a matter for ourselves.

Your membership? If you want to become a member of the Party, what do you have to do?

If you wish to become a member of a party, all you need to do is go along, pay your subscription fee and join. That is basically ...

What is your fee?

It's now gone up to fifteen pounds, which is very, very little ...

A year?

Yes.

[Iain]Fifteen for waged people who have a job.

[MP]But there's unwaged people, which is ...

[Iain]Five pounds.

[MP]Five pounds.

[Iain]Obviously, if you haven't got a job, or you're a pensioner, it's five pounds. A student, five pounds.

[Unintelligible question]

[Unidentified voice]But you'd be very lucky to get away with it only costing you fifteen pounds in a year. There are other ways that the Labour Party finds to get money out of you.

[MP]But I mean, that's basically ... and I think that's quite ... that's the ...

[P Gordhan]I have two questions. The first one is in relation to the relationship between the Party and the trade unions, and whether the ... Well, let's put it this way. Which of these units finds the relationship more useful? In the past, I think the trade unions were quite effective and provided quite a backing for the Party itself. Does the Party actually provide a service to the trade union? And where does the mutual interest lie?

[MP]Well, the mutual interest is actually implied. Can I deal with your question in this way?

Yes.

The Labour Party actually sprung from the trade unions. We are actually backed by the [unintelligible]. The trade unions were our mother, so there was a very close relationship between us.

Particularly in recent years ... Particularly in recent years, without the trade unions, we would not have had [unintelligible] finance. You know, they provide the [unintelligible]. My own position, as a sponsored candidate of the trade unions, is that what we would be looking towards is a freedom from dependence of members on any group - which includes big business. And I would like to see - and our Party will be pushing for that - that national resources are made available to all parties, so that there is not need of dependence on one group or the other.

That doesn't stop groups from, you know, coming in, but I think you've then got to look at the level ... We keep a very close look on levels of expenditure. The feeling in the modern society is, it is now very important in the case of democracy that resources should be available to all parties. So that a Member does not need to be either dependent on big business or on trade unions per se, in order to represent ...

[Iain]I think the other thing to add on this is that, as businesses have kind of amalgamated ... I mean, a lot of trade unions, for various other reasons: financial problems, the recession, and for various other reasons, have also amalgamated. And I think a lot of big changes here in the last twenty, thirty years within the Labour Party ... Because there was before, twenty years ago, a hell of a lot of unions in the Labour Party. Now we have mergers; so that, really, you've got three trade unions that can probably alone control a hell of a lot of votes, whereas before, it wasn't quite like that. There were a lot of other unions around which had sizeable memberships.

The NUM in the past has had a sizeable membership. From there, the AU - which is a [unintelligible] union - that has just merged with another quite sizeable union. The GMB - the General Municipal Boilerworkers' Union - has merged with a hell of a lot of smaller unions - Apex, and other unions in the past. And the Transport and General Workers' Union - the biggest union in this country - has also merged.

And then you have got real, you know, members in the Labour Party - not so many of the smaller unions. You've got big giant unions coming up. And that is causing - obviously - a few problems for us in the Labour Party, as such.

[Unidentified voice]I don't think either that you should see the unions as one group and the Labour Party as another, and they [unintelligible] off each other. There's an immense crossover of membership there, there's a lot - within the Labour Party - are members of the unions anyway. And some of us come by way of a union. I mean, I'm a very active trade unionist and that's the route really that I came into the Labour Party by. I don't see it that ... I didn't join the Labour Party [unintelligible] the unions or anything, or, as a trade unionist, I don't know where the Party comes in. I think it's more that we've got a common view and a common interest and that we will support each other in that sort of way.

[P Gordhan]My second question is in relation to the contribution, the involvement in local politics, that is local government politics, made to the position of the Party at a

national level in this sort of election. In South Africa, for example, there was a time when local government politics was on a non-partisan basis. You would stand as an individual, etc. It's becoming more party-political now. Here it seems clearly party-political. How do you actually build up this relationship and what exactly is the benefit of being involved both at the local level and at the national level?

[Continuous loud background noise - as of machinery - makes this portion of the recording very unclear]

Well, there's a difference in the thinking of local politics and national politics, in that there are different interests. And there is still this question of being a local politician, whereby you may well have common interests with the other major political parties in the area, if it's something that's local, it's of local interest. That might be ... You might well be joining in conflict with London, if you like. But it's still [unintelligible] and, I think, in this country, it worked that way more in the past, that independent individuals did go into politics and got elected on the basis that [unintelligible] locally. I think that that's becoming less and less of the situation, because - maybe TV or whatever - I think that people are becoming more national individuals these days and more concerned with national politics and that really is putting a real imprint on the local situation. We are very much divided up, very clearly into local groupings. That's government as well.

There's been something of a conflict between central government and local democracy. Now, the Conservative Party do seem to feel that more and more decisions really ought to be near the centre. And many local politicians, of all political parties, are not happy with that. And the Labour Party's view is - and as I say the Labour Party's view is, as well - that there are, we need [...]

[Break in the recording]

[MP is speaking][...] local government and when funds are allocated by Government, that, in fact, those funds are used as determined within the law, by local authorities. Therefore, that's why you get them party-political, because obviously people who want to see that policy at national government, want to see one follow it in local government. And I was also a councillor in Oldham and I remember when, I mean, you did actually not only have a local economy, but you had also resources, and the two go together. And no parliamentarian would ever interfere with local government [unintelligible] didn't do it himself. [Unintelligible.]

Now, the one problem is that, over the years, the resourcing, planning, all that, has meant that there has been more and more central input, rather than local input. I think in a democratic state, you have got to allow much more autonomy, again, to the local politicians, because they are dealing with, really, the community, and the resourcing of that community.

[P Gordhan]But does it include the image of the party? If your local Labour Party politicians [unintelligible]?

Yes, this is a fact. We suffer from this. As you have seen in places like Liverpool, for

example, where in fact the local Party was - or appeared to be - going in conflict in certain areas with national policy [?]. But, I think, again, it should be emphasised that the very ... the ones who receive the most [unintelligible] are exceptions rather than the rule. I mean, I think if one were to [unintelligible] one year, you wouldn't really see that as an extremist, you know, party-machine, you know, dogma-based thing. And I think that's the important thing. You should bear that in mind.

[Unintelligible] is predicting at the moment a hung parliament, if that is going to be true? What would be your attitude to this kind of consequence?

[Unidentified voice]Well, we don't expect a hung parliament and the media are predicting a hung parliament on the basis of national opinion polls. And we would take the view that the national opinion polls is something very different from the poll that takes place tomorrow. It's a different thing to be questioned in the street as to what you intend to vote and actually going out and doing that. If you're questioned in the street by a pollster, I think most people tend to say one of the political parties. Very few people actually abstain in the street when they're opinion-polled. Very few people say: "I'm not bothering tomorrow" or "I haven't made my mind up".

I've always held the view that most elections are not won by the people who vote for you, but are often won by the people who stay at home. And that really is certainly going to be the case, in my view, in the constituencies like mine and Chris's [apparently the trade-union-sponsored MP]. We are very firmly of the view that because the Conservatives are now thirteen years in power - and not doing too well in recent years - the recession has taken an effect ... And we're finding a lot of disillusioned Conservative Party voters. And we expect we'll still round in [unintelligible]. I mean, I think that's fair; it's not [unintelligible]. We've had exactly the same situation with our Labour Government in power for a long time and it was as unpopular as this one.

So, we don't really accept the national opinion polls as a real guide. And very often, the national opinion polls have been proved to be wrong. So, we do expect that we'll get a lot more in than is predicted by the polls. [Unintelligible] originally gave a three-point lead to Labour, but when they added the question asking: "Do you intend to vote or not?", then it became a six-point lead. Now, that's ... that's asking the question whether they intend to vote or not. Actually voting or not, I would suggest, would actually increase that lead even further. So, we don't expect a hung parliament. We expect to have a majority. We don't expect to have an enormous majority, but we do expect to have a majority.

[MP]If I could just come in and comment, because I think that's interesting ...

We do not expect to have a hung parliament, we expect to have a majority, because of what [unintelligible] in the streets, and so on. But, I think it begs what is behind your question is why [unintelligible] based on proportional representation. Now, basically, the Party is examining this, and I have no objection to their examining it. My position has been against it - my personal position - but, I think it is wise to look at this.

What I would not be happy with is any deal on which there was ... any deal with the Liberal Party at which the proportional representation was the one that would be party-effective to

the Liberal Party [?].

Now, I was in when the [unintelligible] came in in 1974 - and we were in a hung parliament. Now, though the fact that it is virtually a hung parliament is always tough, there is no reason why you cannot go on for a considerable period of time. In fact, you will recall, that we did a full five-year parliament in a virtual minority government. But, however, in the latter stages of that, we had an agreement with the Liberals. And what, in effect, happened was that we were completely castrated, because any party ... any policy that we were ...that the Liberals didn't, in fact, want, could be voted down so effectively, that a minority became the government of the country. And I'm expressing a personal point of view. I would still [unintelligible] the country again, than try and make deals that did not allow us to fulfill the basis of our manifesto.

Now, I'm not in a position to advise Mr Kinnock, or say what ... or speculate on the situation. But, I think that those of us who experienced the situation know that it's not a yes or no answer and that an accurate answer can only come on Friday ...

But surely, if the polls indicate that you have a majority of twenty, say, or thirty, or forty, or whatever it is, you're going to be a minority government? You're going to represent forty per cent of the people of this country. As the previous government represented forty per cent of the people. And they imposed ... because of working from a position of that minority status, they imposed a tax on the country which is going to cost them the election. It was an un- ... That's the consequence. It was an unpopular measure that they imposed on the country. Do you think it is right that a minority should impose its will on the majority?

[Another CODESA delegate?]You're talking proportional ...

[MP]Can I answer the question ...?

That's why I asked.

Yes, that's why you asked me. Uhm ...

Do you believe yes?

The question is this: [unintelligible]. In democratic terms, in academic terms, you're absolutely right - first-past-the-post is not actually a democratic system. My concern is that where there has been proporational representation ... two things.

One, because you are going to be in coalition government, you cannot offer to the electorate a clear manifesto. Because once you are going to bargain after the election, you cannot commit yourself. And at the present time, you put forward a manifesto, and you live or die by that manifesto.

The second point is that in some countries, a coalition government has led to an unstable government. For example - Italy. That's when you constantly change your government ...

What about Germany?

Germany seems to have worked. So that's why I don't think you can be dogmatic on this question. But it's otherwise important. It's important. I mean, I think that the situation is changing, so that one can put an input into it, without going on the academic level. I think one of the problems that we find in the inter-city is ... The inter-cities, though our massive areas of support, tend to be fragmented - and that's why you tend to long periods of Conservative government.

I am quite happy that we look at that. But what I think is important, is that we've got to be sure that if we go to a proportional representation system, that is for the best interests of everybody and not simply for the Liberal Party. And as you know, we're doing this ...

[Unidentified voice][Unintelligible] define the question that is being asked here. Because we're not all agreed in the Labour Party on the question of proportional representation. But where I think we are together is, that whether we're pro-proportional representation or not, we will not be used by the Liberals as a tool to give them power or to give them [unintelligible]. We will make the decisions within the Party - on the basis of our own time - what the right solution is. I take the view ... I'm in favour of proportional representation, but I think it is such an important issue ... It's one that belongs to the people and not to the Liberal Party or to the Labour Party to decide. It's an issue of all the people and must be endorsed by all the people in the final analysis.

Have some sort of referendum.

Yes, absolutely. [Unintelligible] it's PR [proportional representation] they really want. There are many [obscured by unintelligible foreground comments] talking about minorities. So, we are saying, the minority is probably twenty per cent. The rest - eighty per cent has voted against PR - should govern the country. Again, taking that argument to it's conclusion. Our argument, if you look at the different forms of PR, is that [you need to] look at which one is right for the country.

Then you must have a debate on it.

Mr Young, you've been a member of Parliament since 1974?

Yes.

The recent revelations that the Liberal Democrats would ask for four ministerial posts, which has burst in the last few days ... Do you believe that it was wise of them to go public on a thing like that? Do you think that this will tend to scare away a lot of people who are not ideologically Liberal? The Liberal Democrats had moved away perhaps from the Conservative Party towards them [sic] because of the circumstances that ...

[MP]I have been going around supporting the Liberal Party and saying: "Here you are. This is the policy and here's the tail trying to wag the dog!". And I think that's basically it from the Party point of view - mind you, we're all [unintelligible] here and there along the line ... But, I mean, I think that this was a mistake. Because I think that so much of what I'm

picking up is - from people who aren't basically political ... Their concern simply is, that with the massive problems that face this country, the Liberals appear - from what they are saying - to be giving the impression that it's their power base and themselves are at the [unintelligible] of any co-operation with [unintelligible]. And I think that people would accept the [unintelligible] margin of co-operation, but not on the system of saying: "If you don't play my game of football, I'm going to take my ball away!".

[Vera]Are there any more questions?

One thing that hasn't been mentioned - I'll just mention it briefly - is the system of registration we have.

Because, at the moment, people are ringing up continually saying: "We're not on the Electoral Register. Can we vote tomorrow?". Now, there's nothing we can do for them. That is one thing that ... I suppose it affects all people, if you have movement between one place and another, people forget. The [unintelligible] is responsible for collating these registers. But, we're getting disappointed people at the moment, who are unable to vote tomorrow ... And I don't know what the solution is. I'd like someone to come up with a perfect solution where everybody can vote ...

[P Soal?]That looks quite bulky. Can I have a look at one, please? We have a very ... just a simple ...

These people ... That's just for one consituency. That's all of one constituency ...

I thought that this was the application form to register. Sorry.

No, no, no. That's the actual Electoral Register.

That's the Register.

Yes.

[G Bartlett?]Is that for a polling station?

That's for a polling station.

[P Soal]I see that you don't have address or occupation, though. I mean ...

Just the address and the name.

Oh, I see.

These are the postal vote forms I told you about. So, if you'd like to pass them round. The different colours are for different ...

Reasons.

... reasons.

[Another CODESA delegate]This is not arranged alphabetically.

[Iain]Sorry?

This is not even arranged in alphabetical order.

I think it's arranged by order of streets.

Street number?

[Unidentified voice]Street order.

[Vera]Street.

[Unidentified voice]Street order. It's not alphabetical, it's street order.

Street order.

[Another CODESA speaker]What sort of a mind factor do you use in your canvassing? We say we have a mind factor. You know what I mean?

[Vera]I look in their eyes and if they don't look in mine, I put them down as doubtful!

[Laughter]

I know what you mean.

[Unintelligible] telephone canvassing? We do a lot of telephone canvassing. But ... It's important for them to think it's ...

You can usually tell, if you're experienced, whether people are trying to get rid of you. Our [unintelligible] percentage is not that great if you're experienced.

[Iain][Unintelligible] the telephone. It's more impersonal.

If you get a very experienced canvasser ... During the election campaign, there's a lot of people who come and volunteer and we have to train them and give them a life of a happy canvasser [unintelligible]. But they aren't really experienced. All they want to know is: "Will you be supporting the party?". Now, we wouldn't [...]

[Break in recording and apparently end of section by Labour Party Campaign Workers]

Local Authority Electoral Officers in Salford

[...]working commission or delegation.

You haven't [unintelligible]?

No, no. We're all ... we're [unintelligible] officers.

Rather than attempt introductions at the moment, perhaps we can introduce ourselves, you know, formally, as the discussion carries on. Because then I can perhaps identify you.

What we've done quite deliberately is to treat this as an exercise where we are at your disposal, as officers, to assist you in answering questions, rather than come out with any specific list of dos and don'ts. Because, clearly, I and my colleages' understanding, being quite unfamiliar with the situation in South Africa, is to approach it on the basis that you will put questions to us on what you are interested in; what aspects of election law and ... It could be the actual mechanics of an election that interest you, where you think our experience can assist you, or - if it is totally irrelevant - well, at that stage, it will be totally irrelevant.

So, will that be an agreed approach?

[P Gordhan]What you might have to first do is perhaps inform us of the legal obligations of the local authority in respect of a general election. And secondly, what are some of the arrangements that you need to make in order to facilitate an election? Say, in your town? And then, around that, perhaps, we can raise questions which would help us to unwind[?] things better.

Yes.

Well, the position in England is that the conduct of an election, by law, is ... The responsibility lies with a person called an acting returning officer. There is also a returning officer - this is true, isn't it, Geoffrey?

[Geoffrey]That's right. Yes. That's it.

[First speaker]And the Mayor of the city is the returning officer. But, in practice, his duties are limited to the formal part of the proceedings. For example, the Mayor, normally, would declare the result of the election tonight [sic] and say: "Mr X is elected a Member of Parliament". It so happens ... it's very peculiar this year, because [unintelligible] is not in the country today[?], so he cannot do that. So, his role falls back on myself, for one of the counts, and another of my officer colleagues in another ... There are three Members of Parliament for the city area.

But what I think you ought ... The first part - and I think it's a very material part - is that the conduct of the election, the count of the election is carried out in our town by a local

authority. I am a local authority officer. I am not an employee of the central state. So, if the central state says anything to me - well, it's interesting, I will listen to what they say. But the actual ... My responsibilities are not to the central state. My responsibility is to the law of the land, which is a very different position. But I am, in fact, employed by a local authority. By a City Council. Salford City Council. And there, of course, is the Mayor.

And this is actually a fundamental part to grasp, because, in many countries, the situation is very, very different. We hold no allegiance, whatsoever, to central government. But we are ... our actions are totally controlled by the law of the land. And basically, as you will see from all the information that will come your way about the English system, our principal duty is to run a fair election, free from corrupt practices, free from illegal practices, and free from political influence. Not always easy.

Now, in order to have such a system, you clearly need strong local authorities. Local authorities which are, in many ways, independent of the central government. Although, in reality, because of the financial controls, there is always a tendency that - well, not a tendency ... It is quite clear that local authorities carry out central government policy.

That is always a situation of tension. Because, I'm sure, gentlemen, you are all familiar with matters of political power. There's always a tension, within a country, between local areas and national areas. You can't see it, if you wish, but the tension tends to be there. And we have had ... And our Mayor - I think I can [unintelligible] about this. We have had a very interesting situation in this country ... And I speak now as a non-political officer ...

And that, incidentally, is another point that should be made: All officers, all senior officers have to be non-political in our country. I am not allowed, by law, to be a member of a political party. That has only been recently coded, I think - hasn't it, Geoffrey ...?

[Geoffrey]Yes. That's right.

[First speaker]By an Act of Parliament. [Unintelligible] but, I would be appalled at senior officers who are members of the political parties. They would not last very long. Because that is not their role. There are politicians: the Mayor and his colleagues, they are political ... politicians. They are elected members. They are part of a government machine ... an administrative machine.

[Geoffrey]The Mayor is independent for his year.

[First speaker]Yes, that's probably what I should have said. The Mayor ... It is the custom in England - it is unusual, but in Western Europe - that the Mayor is politically independent. For example, he does not attend - and I'm sure he can speak for himself - he does not attend his own group meetings, political group meetings during his year of office.

[Mayor]During that particular year, we have to be completely independent of political parties. And in running the council business, we have to be even-handed with all sectors. So, for that year, we're independent of political ...

And were you elected on a party ticket?

I'm on a party ticket, yes. On leaving the mayoralty, I'll resume my duties for that political party. But for that particular year, we are completely impartial. We don't go to any engagements, we don't show any favour to any group.

[First speaker]It's like Mr Speaker, in Parliament.

[Mayor]Right. Right. Like the speaker, yes.

Is there any reason ...? I agree that all returning officers and officials working in elections should be public servants and are impartial. Is it just for convenience's sake that it was done in Britain at the local government level? I mean, there wouldn't be any objection, for argument's sake, on ... for a magistrate to be a returning officer in a constituency?

[First speaker]No, I don't think ...

I mean, in a rural area?

No, I don't see any objection in principle there. All I'm saying is that the system - and you tend to be a prisoner of your own system - the system that has developed in England is that the old town clerks, or the county clerks, in the towns and counties, in actual fact, act as returning officers.

What happens when there is a constituency that spreads over a number of local authorities? Does that happen?

Uhm. Let me enlist Geoffrey ...

[Geoffrey]Well, for example, the local authority would do ... It would do the European elections.

[First speaker]Yes, that's right. That's a good point.

[Geoffrey]Well, in the European terms of election, which ... We cover our own area and the other local authority will cover its area. Then the votes, the ballot papers all come together.

[First speaker]For example, the European constituency here of five-hundred-thousand voters - approximately half of them vote, because that is the way the European Parliament works - and ... So, three major local authorities - a big city: the city of Salford; the borough of Bolton, which we're going to divide; and the borough of Bury, form one constituency. And in practice, because there are three town clerks - chief executives - for the last election - Salford - I have been the returning officer for the European elections.

[Mayor]But these are all complications. You might ignore them, really. Because they are complications. There's nothing very ... On the general issue of a general election, well, you know what I mean ...

Well, I'm thinking in terms, possibly, of our country, where we have vast rural areas

which make, [unintelligible], a number of very small towns and villages in one constituency. If the situation arises where you cannot have the town clerk, or a senior government [unintelligible]. Would you rotate them, or ...?

[First speaker]That's right. Well, here, you would normally choose the largest ...

The largest?

... the most populous town. Or ... Do you have a county or regional organisation?

We have a [unintelligible], but it's not structured.

No. I see.

[Geoffrey?]Sorry to interrupt, Mr [unintelligible]. Time to get a bite, Mr Mayor [...]

[Break in recording]

[First speaker][...] The practice here is to enquire of the neighbour and then - it all depends, doesn't it Geoffrey? Sometimes we leave it, sometimes we don't. But, it is not very satisfactory. I think I prefer, personally, to send them by ... to leave them at the house on the day. So that, if they do not return the form, then, of course, their name does not go on the Register. Now, the part that is ...

Over the last few days, a great number of persons have telephoned in, complaining that they have not received the poll card and that they're not going to be able to vote. And, of course, it's too late now. It's just too late. But they get very angry. They're not pleased with us, at all. And the official response is: "Well, there was a period where you were entitled to look at the Register" - before about February ...?

[Geoffrey]That's right.

[First speaker]And it can be amended. But, I reckon, [unintelligible]. Have you ever looked at the Register?

[Geoffrey]No, never.

[First speaker]There you are. If I asked everybody in the United Kingdom that question, they would all say: "Never".

How do you distinguish between a citizen and a non-citizen in these circumstances? Say you knock at this particular place, at number twelve ... I'm just taking the name of a street ... Normandy Street. And there are eight people living there. Let's say it's a bit of a boarding house. Now, how do you determine ... and if you hand out those forms ...? How is it determined whether they're a citizen or not?

You have to sign a declaration that you are a citizen of the United Kingdom ...

[Geoffrey]That's right. Yes.

[First speaker] ... if you sign that form. Now, if you sign, and you are not, and it is subsequently found out, then you can be prosecuted and punished. So, the responsibility, in a sense, is upon the person who fills in the form. And if he fills it in incorrectly, well, he will be punished.

[Break in recording]

[Fragmented unintelligible comments]

[J Love]Could I add on to that question ...? The thing is that both of you have emphasised that your role as electoral officers and within the council authority ... The function which you perform is an apolitical role. Now, frankly speaking, in South Africa - and there may even be people at this table who would argue that the civil service in South Africa plays the same role - they have served, with dedication, a minority government for more than forty years. So the [unintelligible] reach [?] those who - well, I would say, the majority of people - view the civil service as an impartial structure, or an impartial body. Or, I mean, the majority of people don't, at all. That might be unfair, but it's a reality. And so, as a result of that, how do you then look at the whole question of party participation? Unless it has to be every party, participating at every level? How do you see that fair play is ensured?

The cruel answer is, it is your problem!

[Laughter]

[Another CODESA delegate?]The problem is, what is the correct answer?

You're insulted now, because this is obviously very frustrating, isn't it? That is the point.

Yes.

This is why, with respect, you are very wise to take these discussions at different levels - officers and members. You'll get a different set of answers from us than from the politicians. That is quite nice, because you can then go away and compare them. You may not like us, you may not like certain politicians. We all have a turn so that nobody will be offended. In many quarters, you get these different points of view. They are points of view.

[P Soal]Of course, there's a very good check on what Janet has said. Because, as a person who fought in the Opposition for ten years, and making sure that my voters were on the Roll, it's very, very simple. Because every month, in South Africa, come the deletions and additions to the Voters' Roll and every political party - if they're on the ball - has them in their computers, or on their cards. And every month that you've registered voters, you've got a list of the people who have registered. And when the Voters' Roll comes out, the addition or deletion, or person who has moved out of your constituency, for instance - you check against those you have submitted, or had them submit to the authorities. So, there's no difficulty there. The ...

The parties, the political parties get the Register ...

All they have to do, if they're available, is check them. It's a public document.

The public can buy them, as well. The parties get them.

[Much clattering of plates, glasses etc and many simultaneous comments make this section difficult to follow]

[J Love]Selby.

[S Ripinga]May I?

Do you have a question? May I just say, because this is very, very important ...

I suppose, in a sense, we have an advantage in the tradition that - and please don't take any comments I make [unintelligible], I gather from what I read in the newspapers, which may or may not be true. But, we have the tradition of having local authority officers who are independent, who are non-political. Now, the reason why ... You know, I would be in retreat now, and say that over the last twenty-five years in the United Kingdom, there has been a tendency ... The fact is, there's always been the centralised and the local people - whether it's [unintelligible], whether it's [unintelligible], or whether it's anywhere else. Sometimes one group of people win. Sometimes the others win. But it's very, very important ... I mean, I'm now ending my career. In my view, it's extemely important that you have independence at local level, or, as much independence as you can. Because, if you have a highly centralised system, you will have a corrupt system ultimately. Because there's no proper balance.

We agree with you.

No, but it is very difficult. If you have an existing administration in whom - please don't take any offence at what I say - I am told a large proportion of the population don't have any confidence, you have to find, I think, a group of persons in whom the total population does have confidence. That may be very difficult. But the obvious one, I suppose, is the officers of the judiciary. That would be one, if you would agree with me?

[Laughter and some unintelligible comments]

[...] they don't have credibility where they are.

Sorry?

In our situation, we don't agree that they have credibility.

They don't have it?

No.

[F Mdlalose?]Because we are a divided society. Nobody trusts the other. I don't trust him. He doesn't trust me. I don't trust her. She doesn't trust me. All over are independent, different cultures. We are a very confusing society, fragmented into different ... The good ones being the whites - and among them the Afrikaners think they are better than the English. And the Coloureds being a little lower and the Indians lower. And, of course, the blacks much lower down. This is ... I don't know that one can transfer that across here.

No. I understand that.

[Laughter]

How can you know what we have been used to[?] and what they are doing ...?

I understand your problem.

... and then we can [unintelligible]. This is irrelevant to us. [Unintelligible]

That is not [unintelligible].

I don't think so. I don't think so.

That's right, though. That's right. Because we have got the same problem in Northern Ireland. If you've got people in a community who do not like each other and do not trust each other, the only possible way to [next two sentences unintelligible].

[P Soal]I think the system ... If you have a system where everybody is directly involved, you'll eliminate some of that distrust. That is to say, you have a Roll. Everybody can register and the parties have access to it. Parties know their supporters. Parties are busy trying to get their supporters to register. Then that is the way that you check it - whether people are on the Roll.

Okay. Now, can we ...? Yes, well, I mean, yes, we mustn't get involved in South Africa. You've answered that one.

[P Gordhan]I think if I can also just clarify that ... While there might be a history of distrust, we are also beginning to develop a history of co-operation. And that is why this delegation is here. So, let's try to understand that point as well.

Yes.

Can we go on to other obligations of the local authority in respect of the election? You've covered one. That's the registration.

Yes. Well, the actual mechanics of running the ... There are ... We conduct, as officers, acting returning officer and [unintelligible], three kinds of election. [Unintelligible] city

council. And they have elections - they are municipal elections - three years out of every four. [Unintelligible], and, therefore, we keep the machine going, of local government, in May, three years out of four. There's also the European elections which we run for the European Parliament, so that keeps the machinery oiled. And then the main election, which interests most people, which is the national election, the general election, which is the one that is taking place today.

The same Register is used for all elections, so that is why registration is so important and why it must be independent.

Just one thing. To what extent does the competition with political parties affect registration? By that, I mean, you may send out the forms and have this once a year. But to what extent do the two major parties - the Labour Party and the Conservative Party - actively make sure that their Roll is up to date?

I find it a difficult question to answer, because I am hide-bound by tradition. So far as we, as officers, are concerned, the political parties are irrelevant to the compilation of the Register. Absolutely irrelevant. What they do for themselves, for their own party organisation, is a matter for them. It's certainly nothing to do with myself and my staff. They have the Register, I know for a fact, in our wards sometimes, which are small sections of the city. There's twenty in the city. I can think of local members who have the most fantastic list of this document. They annotate it, they check it.

[Unintelligible remark]

I beg your pardon?

And if they're not registered, they will tell them to register, so they <u>are</u> registered.

Yes, but being England - and I don't know about South Africa - some people are likely to tell them to mind their own business, you know ...

[P Hendrickse]Can you tell me ...? This particular Register of Electors, is it for this particular ward in the constituency?

Yes. It's one.

It says here Barton Ward.

Oh, yes, that's right. We've all got different ...

So, Barton - is that one of a number of wards in a particular constituency?

Yes. Yes. They are based ... All the Electoral Registers are based on the local authority position ...

Okay, now I ...

... There are twenty wards within the city - one of which is Barton, I think ...

[Geoffrey]Yes. Barton. Yes, that's right.

[First speaker]Yes. It's a north ward. It's a local ward.

For the City Council, there are three elected members from each ward, so there's sixty members of the City Council. But it's nothing to do with the Parliamentary elections. We merely use the same Register.

[P Hendrickse][Unintelligible]. So you use this list for this particular ward?

That's right.

You use the same list for the municipal election, the general election and also for the European election?

Yes. Correct. We use them for all the elections, yes.

And how often is the European election?

[Another CODESA delegate]What is the European election?

[Another CODESA delegate]What is the relationship between these three other elections?

Well ...

Municipal, national and European. How do you differentiate?

Well, we don't actually differentiate at all. Not as officers. I have ... Mine is a statutory task. The Act of Parliament says ... You see, my name is on the bottom, as electoral registration officer. [Unintelligible] must compile an Electoral Register. If I don't, I'll go to the Tower of London and my head will be chopped off - because I have to do that, right?

[Unidentified voice]Whether there are elections or not, it doesn't matter. The Register is prepared every year.

No. What I'm trying to find out is, what is the difference between the two methods of election?

[First speaker]Well, the City Council ....

City Council, national and European?

Yes. The national one is England's one ...

[Geoffrey]Well, I think, really ... the United Kingdom.

[First speaker]The United Kingdom.

And then the European ...?

We joined an organisation called the European Community which was established in - oh, when? - 1956 round about. We took about twenty years to decide ...

[Geoffrey]Whether we were in or out.

[First speaker]Whether we were in or out. But the idea, really, was that we would become a kind of United States of Europe. And a lot of people are for it. But, Mr [unintelligible] is right, I don't think [unintelligible] United States of Europe?

[Unidentified voice]No. Definitely not.

[First speaker]There's no time for that election. All right.

I notice from this that the actual polling districts vary in number from five-hundred-and-eighty-six to fourteen-hundred odd. And that, by South African standards, is very low. At the moment, I think, we have several thousand voters in a polling district. But this would be more ideal, I think, in any situation in any country.

But can you get down to: how do you manage a polling district on an election date? Who runs the show? You are the returning officer, but you are handling polling districts - we're led to believe it's up to sixty in some constituencies. Now, who's in charge in those - well, what do they call the person [obscured by other unintelligible comments]?

For every polling station - that's one of the features ... And again, I'm sure this will be very different in your country where the scale is totally different, I understand. We always, as officers - and there's always this great distinction between officers and members ... We always laugh as officers, because all members want to have a polling station at their front door.

[Laughter]

Hence, we have very small polling distance. And you will find that a great number of them have some hundred and twenty ballot boxes going out. I would think about a hundred and twenty in a city of a population of about two-hundred-and-twenty-thousand. And so you will, at the maximum, get - what? - about a thousand votes or two thousand votes ...

[Geoffrey]Yes. Two thousand.

... at a poll stop.

Now, unfortunately, you see, you've come here on the day of a general election. The men who are in the throes of doing the work, as opposed to people who [unintelligible] - they are working today. I cannot call them in, because, although there are too many bureaucrats, we are very tight on the ground. At the moment - we can go and look at the office, if you like,

but - there will be people ringing in, all day long today, grumbling at the staff and saying: "I haven't got a vote". We will have calls from the agents of the candidates, who will complain that there is political bias being shown to one party or the other. And it's all a lot of nonsense, because ... I say that, as an officer, because we get sucked into all that ...

[Laughter]

The only thing that is sad about England now is that, as compared with forty years ago, people became ... were really [unintelligible] at election time with each other. It's become very grey, now, drab - despite what is happening on the television. Do you agree with me?

[Unidentified voice]Yes.

[First speaker]It's gone now. And that is one of the difficulties of a democracy, that it's very difficult to maintain the interest.

[P Gordhan]What are the criteria defining a polling district - the population, or geography, or ...?

[First speaker]We ... I'm sorry, I'm back down to basics, because I'm back to tradition. [Unintelligible] these polling districts for fifteen-hundred years now. This is the problem.

Now, the people manning the polls, are they members of your borough?

Of the town council, the City Council. Most of them.

Are they sworn to secrecy or sworn to ...? Before they become involved, do they have to swear ...?

[Interruption as telephone rings. Speaker indicates he will answer it]

And then they must have helpers in the polling station?

Yes, there are two people, normally.

[Geoffrey?]There are two people responsible for each polling station. The presiding officer is the person who holds the ultimate responsibility to see that the poll is conducted properly. And he or she is assisted by a poll clerk. And they have different functions in the polling station.

When the voter comes in, the voter would have what we call a poll card. But they don't need to bring them with them. This is mine, because I am going to vote later on today.

This is sent out by the authorities?

This is sent out by the returning officer who says: "This is your poll card", and who tells people that there is a general election. And it tells them their number on the register and where they are going to vote.

Now, while the political parties tell us that they send out to every voter this one with their number on ...

Their election literature? Yes.

By the state sending out one like this, it means that if people don't like a political party, they can go and tell them to jump in the lake.

Yes.

They can walk in with that one.

Yes. But you don't need to take this with you to vote. This is merely to notify people that there is to be a general election - as if they didn't know. But this informs them of the election date, the time of the poll, what their number on the register is, and where they are going to vote. Where the polling station is that they can vote.

How does the [unintelligible] identify the voter?

Now, the voter comes in and the voter would normally be asked by the presiding officer: "Could I have your name please?". And I would say: "Geoffrey Bannister, 27 Acacia Crescent". The poll clerk, who's looking at the Register, turns up to Acacia Crescent, looks down to number twenty-three and says: "Bannister, Geoffrey Frame". And I say: "That's right". And she says: "Can you mark the Register with a little Y?". I say: "Yes", that Geoffrey Frame Bannister has come in today, has come in to vote.

How does he know that he is talking to Geoffrey and not to [unintelligible]?

Well, he doesn't. But, it is an offence - a criminal offence - to impersonate someone else at the polls.

What is the penalty on that?

Well, there are various penalties. I mean, if it's a very, very serious offence, it could be as much as imprisonment.

When you do these Registers ... You said you did them at a local level? Let's say somebody's moved a couple of times and they want to check - given that they forgot, in October, to change - they want to check if they are still registered at one of their old addresses. Is there a central place for the country that one does that?

No.

There's no centralisation at all?

No. If they lived in Salford when they were first registered and registered on the Register in October, then they would need to check here, with the office here, to check whether they were registered still for October.

So, if they had lived in Birmingham, they would have to phone Birmingham ...

Yes.

... to check?

A good way of doing it is they can contact a political party, of course, in the neighbourhood and say: "Look, I used to be there. Can you check?". And they'll do it for you. They'll just get on the phone to their people there who will check the Register.

It's the same with the office here. They can ask: "Am I on the Register?" - and we would check the Register and tell them whether their name was on it or not.

[Another CODESA delegate]I would like to follow up on that question.

Yes.

Here you have poll cards. Some of the voters carry poll cards.

Yes.

From what you have said, you are not able to verify whether or not ...

Yes. Because we don't have identity cards, you see.

Now, that person votes ... Let's say, for argument's sake, the wrong person comes first and the right person comes later. If this should happen, what would you do?

You do ... The presiding officer asks the second person certain - we call them - statutory questions, because it appears from the Register that Geoffrey Bannister has already voted. So, if the first person was Geoffrey Bannister, this person isn't. So, if you ask the second Geoffrey Bannister the statutory questions - you read them from a card in a statutory form. And the person who is then asked: "Are you Geoffrey Bannister?" - now, he can say yes or no. If he says yes, he knows that if he is not, then he is committing an offence. If he says: "Yes, I am", he is then issued with a pink ballot paper - a pink ballot paper - not a white one.

[First speaker]I think you may look ... Sorry to interrupt. Have you all got ...?

[Geoffrey]Yes. And they go ...

[First speaker]It's page thirteen. This is [unintelligible] at the back of the book. That's page thirteen.

[Geoffrey]Yes.

Statutory questions?

[Geoffrey]So, he is not denied a vote. He is issued a pink, tendered[?] ballot paper, which he can mark. But he then hands that back to the presiding officer. He does not put it in the ballot box. And it is then kept by the presiding officer in a separate envelope, which the presiding officer hands in separately at the count.

[P Soal]Yes, we have the same system ...

[CODESA speaker who first asked about procedures regarding impersonation]Can you just continue, please, about the system, because I think if we continue the line, then we can follow ... Because he is on a point. Because the thing is now: how to get back to the impostor, the impersonator?

Yes. Well, that is a very, very difficult question. If there is impersonation, then it is a very, very difficult thing ...

In other words, there are two persons who have voted then?

Yes.

The other person has voted fraudulently, the other one is correct [sic]. Now which one ...?

[First speaker]You see, this is where upbringing tells. I'm a born and bred local government man. I don't believe in national government, you know. I'm a real, old-fashioned Englishman from that point of view. You control this if you have local voting with local people who know what is going on. Where you cannot control it is if you are living in a large city like Manchester or London. Because nobody knows each other. But, you know, you must have aspects of the rural community in parts of South Africa, I would have thought - despite Johannesburg and places - everybody knows each other there. And you can control it, provided you've got a person of integrity running the polls. This is the vital thing.

And in our city, which is a parochial city, it is difficult to carry out impersonation. Because our local people know who you are.

If the count is very, very close and then you open the tendered votes, it could influence the ...

The vote? You don't have to count them in as well.

You don't?

No.

But what happens ...?

[J Love]So what's the point of having them?

They are shown on the return ... The return that the returning officer has to make to central

control in London ... He has to indicate on this form how many tendered ballots there were pledged, if there were.

Right.

[Geoffrey]Now, if somebody wishes to challenge the result, it has to be done through the courts. The challenge is through the court or [word obscured by foreground noise] and it is done by bringing what is called - it's a technicality, but - an election petition, where you petition the court to annul the election.

So, in other words, you don't know what the person has voted on the tendered ballot paper?

[First speaker]Oh, yes, you do. Usually, the returning officer would. They count the votes separately.

[J Love]And they don't count the ...?

[P Hendrickse]So, you can have two or three tendered ballot papers there and the difference is, say, two or three votes. It would obviously affect it, if these votes were added on ...

Yes. Very much so. It would.

So, the losing candidate then has to ask to have the election declared nul and void?

Yes. That's right.

[Geoffrey]So, there would be an election petition to the court to say: "Look, there was a lot of corruption going on in this election. Look at the number of tendered ballot papers that there were. There was a lot of impersonation at the polls. Therefore this election was not free and fair".

[First speaker]We don't get involved ...

There would be an election, then?

Yes. If the court decides, if the court decides.

[Geoffrey]It would then be re-run.

[First speaker]But we don't normally get - what? - more than two?

[Geoffrey]Two or three, possibly.

[First speaker]And they're usually mistakes.

[Geoffrey]Yes.

People who [unintelligible]: the infirm, blind? How do you cater for that? Do you ensure that they register themselves for a postal vote?

It's done by the presiding officer, or, even, for a blind person, they can bring a companion with them to vote on their behalf.

[First speaker]This little ... I'm not cutting short the discussion ... But this little document headed "Instructions to the Presiding Officer and the Poll Clerk" ... Those are the - and we'll see them in a minute - the actual persons who are sitting there, holding the ballot boxes. That is meant to be foolproof. But, as you know, very many people are fools, so I'm afraid we get an error every now and again!

[Laughter]

Point number nineteen, [unintelligible] ...?

We've been known to, yes.

[Geoffrey]If a person is so drunk that they're incapable of properly voting, the presiding officer refuses to issue them with a ballot paper and orders them out of the polling station.

[J Love]So, sorry. It's actually easier to impersonate a voter than it is to open a bank account in a false name? I mean, that's what you're saying. You can vote more easily, because you don't have to, when you register, indicate any number, any identity at all?

No.

And you don't even, at the point of voting, have to indicate that you received a card, even?

No.

We should all go and vote!

Well, yes, you could. But the [unintelligible] would be declared invalid. So, it would be a pointless exercise. And ultimately a society has to be run on trust.

Another question.

Sorry. Yes?

You said that there would be two officers?

Yes.

Now, police? Anyone for personal security?

One policeman, maybe. One policeman.

[First speaker]Yes, who will cover a few polling districts. It's a very interesting relationship with the police. The Chief Constable's duty is to keep law and order. Policemen are entitled to enter polling stations. But they're under the control of the presiding officer. Usually it's a very happy relationship, because, usually, there is very little trouble.

And you say the policeman is under the instruction of the presiding officer?

Well, only within the polling station.

The polling station, yes.

[Another CODESA delegate]Are there any limitations in terms of police stations, relating to the polls, polling stations? Are they supposed to be around polling stations and then by you [?] ?

Well the Chief Constable has an overall duty, responsibility for maintaining law and order. And I haven't - for example, in this election - I haven't spoken to anyone in the police force. But I know that the local Chief Superintendent will have assessed the situation and there will be a group of police officers - if they need to - just keeping a friendly eye on the polling station.

[P Hendrickse]And [unintelligible] police vehicles necessary at polling stations? Is there any limit or prohibition on this?

No. No. But, I mean, they would never have more than one, you know, wherever there's a driver.

Sorry, two other questions. You referred to the rural situation, where people know each other. And on average, you have about two thousand people per polling district. What would be the largest number of voters per district, say, in a city like London?

And then, secondly, [unintelligible]?

Much the same, I think is the answer to the first part.

But, you don't have a polling station where five thousand, ten thousand people have to go during the day?

We think there are dangers in that. I'm now speculating and trying to rationalise after the event, but I can see dangers in having a too large polling station.

And the other thing is, if I, as an agent, come to you and request a polling station in a particular area because, obviously, it would suit my candidate, can you refuse that?

That's an interesting one, Pieter. It's the City Council which decides where the polling stations are. So, we're back to the political machine, in a way. But we tend to use schools, normally. I have a right to requisition a school for the polling station. I think that's right, Geoffrey, isn't it?

[Geoffrey]That's right, yes.

[First speaker]I think it is. We don't go through all the formalities. We just say we'd like to use the school on such and such a date.

[Geoffrey]No, the school is closed.

[First speaker]Yes, well ... Is it?

[Geoffrey]Yes. Some are, some are not.

[First speaker]If it can be relatively [unintelligible], then okay, you carry on without interrupting their education. This is where you get the argument between the education lobby and the election lobby.

What positions do the political parties have at the polling stations? Do they have agents or polling agents?

Well, do you want the informal record of an officer? Which, don't [unintelligible] ... They're a bloody nuisance around us - that's my view!

You don't let them in? [?]

Yes, yes, of course.

Having said that, these things are [unintelligible]. But the political parties do hold a certain clout[?]! So, they do tend to ... They normally have their own representatives outside the polling stations. Now, you may not think it, but we do not always have weather like this in England! You know, there is very often rain on polling day and they then want to come into the polling station. And they're not allowed in, are they, Geoffrey?

[Geoffrey]No. No, they're not.

What happens if your officials - I mean, they are not in Britain - but what happens if you do have a stage where the officials are corrupt? Don't you think it's in the interests of democracy that the political parties who are contesting the election should then have a right to have someone there to make sure that the officials are doing it properly?

[First speaker]Posted outside ...?

[Geoffrey]Yes.

[First speaker]... or inside?

[Geoffrey]No, not inside.

[First speaker]Yes. Inside as well. [Long pause. Sighs] You seem very surprised at that?

[Geoffrey]Yes.

Yes.

[First speaker]No, but I think it's very fair. Because life is all about trust. I mean, it's not at all about dramatic ideology. That's just a personal viewpoint. It's about trust and about co-operating with each other. If you can't do that, then you've got problems, you know. So, it's up to my staff to form a reasonable relationship. And I ... If a politician wants to look in occasionally at a polling station, he can slip in [unintelligible].

[Geoffrey]But normally, we don't let them in.

[First speaker]No.

[Geoffrey]And I think, at a general election, particularly so. The only people who are entitled to step in are our returning officer, any member of staff who has a duty to go there, a police officer, of course - in uniform, he must be in uniform - the candidates and their agents.

Ah. That's the person I'm talking about. The candidate's agents are in the polling stations.

Yes. The candidate's agent can go in. But a candidate can't have a thousand agents ...

But can he have a sub-agent or ...?

[Laughing]... But the candidate's election agent is entitled to go into the polling station.

[First speaker]But we would say that the corruption came with the political parties and not with the officers. I mean, we use these people and [unintelligible] the politicians. And that's why ...

[P Gordhan]What forms of corruption? In terms of the political parties?

Well, every political party - and I speak now as an officer ...

[Geoffrey]That's right.

... - takes political advantage. I mean, it's all about power at the end of the day. And therefore, unless men are noble and full of integrity, they will always want to bend the rules slightly. They distort the proper ... That has got to be stopped. So, there will always be clashes. I have no doubt that, before the end of the day, various inmates will be complaining to me about the foul practices of their opponents ...

Do you have an idea of some of those?

Well, they will say that someone outside is trying to influence the votes, won't they?

[Geoffrey]Yes, its ... Its ...

[First speaker]I say ... well, it's not all right. I try to just say: "Well, it's a free country, you know". Provided they don't ... If they terrorise people ... sorry, then there would be trouble ... or attempt to blackmail, something like that ... But, if they're ...

How far does the canvassing go? Even today, can the parties canvass in the neighbourhood of the polling station?

Oh, yes.

And the second question. You say, if I understand well, there is a lot of independence placed on the local authority regarding the election?

Yes.

Now, is it so that, say the party you have agreed in [unintelligible] - by your decision as a returning officer, they happen to come into power ... What if ...? Now, that's at national level and you are at local level ... Is there any pressure that can be exerted on you down at local level? Or are going to stay independent financially? How does it work at local level, that no interference can be given by the party which is now in power, which is the government of the day?

Now, I mean, this is an interesting question, because, you see, the last time that sort of question was raised was around about 1688.

[Geoffrey]I would agree.

[First speaker]You see, this is the problem. There was never constitutional settlement. I mean, albeit that we have got the mechanics of a modern state. But all I can venture is an opinion, you see.

There is - underpinning the concept of our unwritten constitution - the idea that voting has to be free and free from intimidation. And there are any number of cases, from the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century ...

[Geoffrey]Yes.

[First speaker]... of intimidation, where it was knocked down every time by the courts and by the government of the day. Now, it becomes part of your sort of unwritten understanding and if, in fact, a central, a modern central government attempted to interfere with the election processes against the concepts of fair play, I remain under the illusion that there would be a very strong reaction from the mass of the people. Now, if you're wrong, you've got a totalitarian state. But I hope I'm right.

But there's also ...

But that doesn't answer your question.

But [unintelligible] I understand.

Very, very possible.

Another question. What else would disqualify a registered voter from voting? You mentioned drunkenness, for example. What other things would disqualify a registered voter?

If his name is on the Register and he says that he is that person, he gets a vote.

[Geoffrey]He gets a vote, yes.

Insolvent?

[First speaker]Sorry?

What about if he's insolvent? Can he vote?

[Geoffrey]No.

[First speaker]Uhm ...

Now, how will you know if he doesn't bring any credentials for himself ...?

No, well, the test is whether you occupy a residence - not whether you have any money in the bank. That's nothing to do with it.

So, if you've been declared bankrupt, you can still vote?

Ah, if you've been declared bankrupt, then you can't stand, can you?

[Geoffrey]You can't stand as a candidate, but you can vote.

[First speaker]But you can still vote. That's right.

[Geoffrey]You can vote.

[P Gordhan]You can still vote, yes.

Similar to my question on the kinds of complaints that you receive from political parties. We've been receiving a bit of a rosy picture here, that everything is very hunky-dory and that things are very mature. But I think you are beginning to give us indications that, below the surface, so to speak, there are a number of practices that do occur, suggestible of competition for power and so on.

[First speaker]Yes.

The one that you said is trying to swing voters outside the polling booth. What other kinds of things that you receive complaints about?

Well, I would say ... I'm not ... Peter Daniels[?] may be at lunch with us. He is the man who actually runs the election and he's run previous elections and he would be able to [unintelligible].

I would say, as an officer, that most of the complaints are fiddled[?]. And, in fact, they will say now, today: "I will take action about this. I will go to the House of Lords. I will go to [unintelligible]". But tomorrow, when they actually have to do that, they forget about it, you know. It just [unintelligible].

[P Hendrickse]When was the last time that you had results contested in court?

I don't think I've ever had any. No.

[Geoffrey]Oh. Well, there was a case a few years ago, a local case, wasn't there? Over in the country?

[First speaker]Yes. But in the country.

[Geoffrey]Well, yes. There's an election petition been going very recently through the courts - an election from a few years back.

[First speaker]They're very seldom.

[Geoffrey]The one that I was thinking of was one where a number of ballot papers hadn't on them the secret mark. And therefore, the presiding officer - sorry, the returning officer - refused to allow them at the count. Quite properly. And it altered, of course, the candidate that was elected. So, the unsuccessful candidate then challenged that by election petition.

What would happen in that case, then? Would they have a re-election?

No. The court ... The court, in fact, would have to decide. Because there was no argument about the numbers. It wasn't a question of the numbers. The numbers were satisfactory. The numbers were accepted by both parties. You know, there were numbers for each candidate. What was at issue was - I think there was a block of some twenty odd ballot papers that were not stamped. And they were normally for the losing candidate.

Would it have ...?

It would have altered the results.

It <u>would</u> have altered the results.

Yes. And the court said: "No. They can't be included". This is what it was all about.

Okay.

[First speaker]Which shows the importance of the presiding officer in the polling station putting the official stamp on each ballot paper. He uses this instrument ...

Yes. To mark the papers.

Yes. Uses this instrument here. And he has the book of ballot papers, and when he issues a ballot paper, he puts the ballot paper [sound of instrument being clamped down] ... and puts a little mark on it. Now, you can have ... We would have the same mark for all stamping instruments throughout the whole of the constituency. But you could have, you could have a different perforation for each polling station, if you wish.

[Geoffrey]And here ... You could have as many as you could arrange to put ... You just alter a number of pins inside ... in the ... where you put the perforation in. So, of course, nobody knows what the perforation is on the ballot paper ...

For that polling station?

So, that polling station queries them, you see. So that it must have that mark on it. If it hasn't, then it isn't a valid paper. This is to stop someone printing ballot papers and coming in to vote and putting a handful in the box as they put their own in.

And immediately that would be picked up by your balancing with the ballot papers, by the ...?

Yes.

Now, that balancing, is that done in the presence of the agents of the political parties?

The ballot paper account or return is done by the presiding officer and the polling staff.

In the presence of ...?

No.

... the agents of the various parties?

Not always. Just he and the polling staff. And he completes his account which he puts in a sealed envelope and he hands in at the count with his ballot paper and the ballot paper account. Which is the number of ballot papers issued to him, number in ballot box and number of counter[?] points. And those numbers must tally and be correct.

So, now, each station does its own counting, before it gets to a central ...

No, no. They just ...

[First speaker]They count ... they count - I'll tell you - how many papers, how many ballot papers have been issued, how many tendered ballot papers have been issued to people, how many you have left and count the balance. So, it's a very simple account.

One of the problems for me is how many people can't fill in the thing correctly.

But, the first thing we do when we ... At the actual count, when the ballot boxes come to the counting place, which is the hall across the road, the first thing you have to do is you open a ballot paper account and then you check - that is absolutely vital, to check the number of ballot boxes, the papers in the ballot box for that particular ballot box ...

And that's got to balance with that count you had of who actually voted, am I not correct?

No, no, you don't count them.

[Geoffrey]No, you don't use the Register again.

But we were told that they can get from you, the political parties can get from you a copy ...

A copy of the marked register, yes.

... a copy of the people who actually voted.

The marked register. This is afterwards.

So, that number that you have marked as having gone through must ...

Yes.

It must balance with your ballot [unintelligible]?

Correct.

[First speaker]You're right.

I have another question.

Yes.

The polling time. How do you regulate that? Let's say you have closing time eleven o'clock. You know, and you've got a long queue at nine o'clock. What do you do?

Right. Sure.

[Geoffrey]Anybody that's at the station can vote, but if there's a mile-long queue outside, you close the door and that's it.

Do you tell them [obscured by other comments] ...

They must be in to vote at ten.

... come early and then ...?

You say: "At ten o'clock tonight, anyone that's not in the polling station by ten o'clock ..."

Can then give up.

"... can then give up". And come earlier next year.

What happens if it's your fault?

[Laughter, apparently in response to another inaudible comment]

[First speaker]One of the troubles with modern society, is that there is no sort of punishment for foolishness, you know. I'm sorry to be cruel ...

[Laughter]

But what happens if you're at fault?

Hmm?

What happens if you're at fault in ... you know ... that you haven't ...?

But we have to be perfect.

Ah!

[G Bartlett?]But we had a situation in the Referendum [of 18 March 1992] that, in certain polling stations, we ran out of ballot papers. There was such a massive turnout. And it was a problem around the country. What happened was that immediately, the chief electoral officer said that anybody in the precinct[?] who - by nine o'clock - came, could vote. And then the wardens ...

[Geoffrey]I suppose if you haven't got any more ballot papers, then you ... or something like that, then, I think, probably what you'd have to do, as returning officer, would be to suspend the vote and carry on the next day.

[First speaker]That is one that worries me, because in these economy days, we do not prepare one hundred per cent, but we see ...

[J Love]Sorry ...

[G Bartlett]What happened there with the Referendum was that people could vote at any polling station and, of course, [unintelligible] regional polling stations, and it created in some cases a one-hundred-and-ninety per cent poll. What can you do?

But taking ... I'm sorry. You'll forgive me if I don't remember your names always, won't you? Taking into account what this gentleman has said about our being rather smug - if that's the correct word - about our system, the fact is, the penalties are [unintelligible]. If I make a mistake, you know, nobody's going to forgive me or my colleagues. They just don't suffer

fools. But, it's really our job to get it right. Now ... So, it's a day with a certain amount of tension built into it, because, you know [obscured by foreground noise] local voters [obscured by foreground noise], the political machine out there will surely not forgive you.

[Geoffrey]And therefore, if it's a criminal offence, or something like that, it would probably be a matter of [obscured by loud foreground noise and several people starting to talk at once].

[First speaker]Well, you'll see it tonight. And actually seeing ... I understand you're going to see a count in [unintelligible]. I think the actual seeing will be much better to you than any amount of theory now. And one pity is that, in a sense, you almost need a debriefing session tomorrow. You know, why did you do that; why did you not do that?

But it's a very simple exercise, basically. We still count on the basis of a manual count, with each person counting the first quarter. But, of course, in the days of modern technology, it would be very simple to do away with it, to an electronic system. It's done in America and I've no doubt it will [...]

[Break in recording]

[...] I think, that is probably what is happening. I'm not wholly sure whether people trust electronic machines, but that might be one situation.

[Unidentified voice]Can I just ask one question? This stamp, this little grid. Do they look at each card, do they hold it up to the light and make sure that each one's got a pin through it?

[Geoffrey]Well, there's a number of pins. It's a perforation.

[Unidentified voice]Yes. And does each person counting the vote stop and look ...?

[Geoffrey]The counters will look at this. The counters are asked to check that each ballot paper's got a perforation on the top right-hand corner.

[First speaker]And, of course, the political parties are scrutineers. And they look at those papers and if they have not been stamped ...

[Unidentified voice]Ah. Because I've watched them counting like demented bank clerks and I thought, well, really, if they have to check whether each one's got a little hole, a poor little tiny hole ...

[Geoffrey]Well, it's quite ... You and I can see it. It's sort of a regular ...

[Unidentified voice]And in a case where it was just the returning officer who had failed to stamp them?

[Geoffrey]Yes. It does happen.

[Unidentified voice]I mean, if it was just a mistake?

[Geoffrey]Yes. It was just an error ... it wasn't a con.

[First speaker]It's very easily done. It's very easy to miss something like that - very easy.

[Unidentified voice]Thank you.

[First speaker]This form ... This is a very important form, actually. This is about how to register electors [...]

[Break in recording and apparently end of section by local authority electoral officers]

British Army Officers

[...] knowing South Africa, of course, it is slightly different than it is in the army. Very much closer together, etc.

[Laughter]

I think the general requirement is to describe the British Army - where it stands vis-a-vis a civil power, etc, in the UK. Apart from the Iranian Embassy.

[Laughter]

Well, ladies and gentlemen, in a nutshell, we ... The British Army swears its allegiance to the Crown, ie, the Queen, and we work through the Crown's Ministers. Whichever party's in power at the time, they provide the Ministers to the government and we react in response to them.

In respect of our actual role, most of our role, of course, has been a NATO-based role, looking towards the defence of central Europe. We very rarely get involved in what I call a policing role in this country, except in times of civil emergency. And usually ... to give you some examples of those. When they had a fireman's strike, we manned the fire engines. When the dustmen went on strike, we cleared the rubbish. And two years ago - in fact [unintelligible], I'm Commander Medical [?] of a district - I looked after the medical cover for the civilian population in eleven counties and ran emergency ambulance services, getting them to the hospitals.

I don't think we've actually been called out on the mainland here, in support of the police in an incident, for years. Apart from - as I think you said - the SAS, which is a special force, in the Iranian Embassy.

[Another voice]Yes. There was a time when Winston Churchill was besieged in Sidney Street [London E1; close to the municipal offices. Or perhaps Sydney Street, London SW3], I believe.

[First speaker]Sidney Street.

[Other speaker]I'm not sure of the date? [19]'09?

[First speaker]'09. So, I think that's the last time that the British Army was actually on the streets in the mainland.

What happened there?

The Siege of Sidney Street, was it?

[Other speaker]Yes, it was. It was the Irish again.

[First speaker]Yes. It was an Irish problem [unintelligible] to London and they blockaded themselves in and refused to budge for the civilian police. So, Winston Churchill, who was Home Office Minister at the time - Home Secretary - ordered troops on to the street. And they then came out.

What year was that?

Sorry?

What year was that?

I'm not sure. 1908 or 1909. A long time ago.

Now, in Ireland, of course, we have a different situation. We have the IRA, whose first aim is to reunite Ireland as an independent country. You'll remember that it was split and basically, it was split ... really, on religion. The bulk of the actual territory of Ireland became Eire, which was Catholic dominated and six counties in the North tend to be the Protestant havens, and they wanted to remain within the British Empire, as part of the United Kingdom. And twenty ... about twenty-two years ago, the trouble broke out again. It's always been bubbling under the surface. And troops were committed to keep the peace.

Now, initially, when we went into Ireland, I suppose we were the dominant force to keep the peace. To keep the peace. But, as here in the past, we've reverted to our normal role of being in support of the civilian police. And we don't do any operations, now, in Northern Ireland, unless the police request it to a Combined Headquarters. And, invariably, they lead and we support them. We may support them with road blocks, we may support them with troops. But there's very little action which we initiate unless it's put through the police. So, the role of the Constabulary ... Clearly, they are responsible for the peace-keeping in the province and we help them.

Can you only do that as the result of a proclamation or is it under some Act of Parliament that the army should come in?

The Chief Constable of a county can request the Ministry of Defence for anything called matter - military aid has a specific meaning: Matter A, Matter B and Matter C, as far as I can remember. There are different categories. But the request has to be initiated by the police, the Chief Constable of a county, to the Ministry of Defence. And the Minister decides whether he will support the Constable's request or not.

Or, in a thing like an ambulance strike, then the Secretary of State for Health made a formal request to the Secretary of State for Defence to deploy troops, to man ambulances, to [unintelligible] ...

Is it the Chief Constable's prerogative to call upon the army or is it the Minister's?

The Minister's.

That would be the Minister of Home Affairs.

Oh, yes. I mean, the Chief Constable would regard his chain of command as through the command of the Home Office, and the Home Secretary would then cross ...

To the Minister of Defence.

... to the Minister of Defence. Yes.

[J Love]Once that happens, as was done ... as has been the case in Ireland, who are the army personnel responsible to? Because we understand that the Chief Constable is the basic authority within his area. So, would the army be responsible to the chain of command which is linked nationally under the Crown, or would they be responsible for their actions in support of the police to the Chief Constable?

Well, in Ireland, you've got - I think at the moment you've got a - what I would call a [unintelligible]-type headquarters, a three-[unintelligible] headquarters. The Chief Constable REC[?] still, obviously, is the head executive, but the general officer commanding the troops would work together with, obviously, staff officers at each level, to co-ordinate operations.

Sometimes the Minister for - I think it's Security, isn't it, in Northern Ireland? In Northern Ireland, there's a minister designated for internal security, who's the political master over there. So, the Chief Constable, presumably, works through him and the army general officer commanding is in parallel, but it's still got to be a police-initiated action or operation.

In an emergency situation, where the army is called - let's say, in the case of a strike - who would be in charge? What would be the rank of the commander in that situation?

It ... It works ... I'm sure we have the same set-up. In the United Kingdom, we have district headquarters. We just reformed on the first of April, as it happens, and we now have four headquarters: Headquarters Scotland, Headquarters Wales and Western, Headquarters Eastern and Headquarters Southern. The general officer commanding of that district is responsible for all military assistance tasks that are performed within his boundaries. He then obviously delegates to commanders on the ground: he has a lance-corporal section commander, a planning commander, looking after, probably two counties.

The forces you use, in general, in Ireland? Is it the normal forces or special forces?

No. They're normal forces. We have two types of troops on the ground in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland, before the troubles, always had a set garrison strength of two or three battalions, plus supporting units, an ordinance depot, a small military hospital, a transport squadron. People who serve in those units are on a normal two-year or three-year tour. It's now two years in Northern Ireland.

The rest of the troops that are out there are on what we know as operational roulement [?] tours and they stay four to six months. In other words, they don't move with their families. Their families stay in Germany or on the mainland here and the troops, the regiment or the battalion, moves across and provides cover on the streets for four to six months.

That's one part. Then you have, in Northern Ireland, their own particular force, which is the

Royal Ulster Regiment, which is formed from Irish people living in Northern Ireland. And this force is either full-time people or part-time soldiers and servicewomen whose terms of service restrict them to serve in Northern Ireland. They don't participate in other activities of the British Army.

The other question is: what is your experience of the process of decolonisation in an army, say in Africa, where the British were extensively involved? What kind of role did you play, particularly during the transitional periods?

Well, I'll let David answer that. Because David has just come back a year ago from Zimbabwe where he was a member of the British Army training team for the Mozambique freedom fighters. So, perhaps David can come in and have a word with you. He's more up-to-date than I am on that.

[David]Well, our role in what was Rhodesia - it's now Zimbabwe ... We manned a certain amount of camps dotted around the country, and what happened - after a certain period of time, after peace was declared - the camps called in all the freedom fighters to basically disarm them. And we monitored these camps and basically kept ... acted like a barrier between the freedom fighters and what were the Rhodesian forces, until they were completely disarmed and then integrated into what is now the Zimbabwean National Army.

So, first, they were disarmed completely?

Yes.

And then taken in - into what positions? Were they taken into certain ranks, according to their own previous agreements [?] ?

Yes. Yes, they were. Where a man had held a certain rank, if he was a freedom fighter or if he'd been a part of the Rhodesian forces, they still maintained that rank and were taken in and they were mixed, totally integrated.

Now, what was the line of command? At the time when you were a peace-keeping force? Did you have the elements of the guerilla army and the elements of the Smith Goverment in joint control? What was the arrangement?

I wasn't there at the time, but I believe that there was joint control.

A joint command structure from top to bottom?

Yes.

What difficulties are you aware of in that integrating process?

There are still difficulties over there. Obviously, you still get a lot of arguments between the two halves. You've got a system over there whereby, if somebody who was on the opposing side has been promoted or something like that, the other side will say that it was favouritism. There's still very much the two halves.

However, that is slowly dying out, because ... Well, after ten years, you've got a certain number of soldiers who have now become civilians. And it will die out even more in the next ten years, when the majority of the army become civilians or too old to serve. Some things will get better. But there are still problems. That's what I can see.

And what are the difficulties in the process itself of integration - despite the external factors - in the process itself?

Well, you've got to bear in mind that what were the Rhodesian forces were a properly structured armed force, whereas the freedom fighters were a guerilla organisation which, as such, really didn't have a rank structure like they had. One of the problems, of course, was actually deciding at what level people would come into this combined army.

The ... I'm sure there must have been an attempt to democratise certain general staff at the top. What would have been the problems there? You see, particularly that General Walls. We understand that politically ... power ... he held other strategic positions there, like ...

Well, I can only speak from a neutral level, because, at the time, I wasn't an officer and you would have to have somebody who was there, I think, at the time, to be able to answer that question.

But would you say that it was a good idea to leave certain people, staff? Because it was the organisation of the previous Government? You need staff to communicate, and those type of things?

[First speaker]Well, I think you've got to ... If I can ... I think you've got to leave some form of structure. I mean [...]

[Break in recording]

Cassette 6

[...] a long period of stability. And then, a little further, an internal self government, and then full independence.

But, you did get this problem of linking the two. The irregular forces, they didn't ... They were used to operating in small cells and didn't have the same command structure as the other. And, I think, to integrate them, you've either got to ... I think you've got to keep a certain basic there of people who know what they're doing and people who know what the government of the day wants. And they've got to [break in recording] that government of the day.

The other way is to import a neu[tral] ... You know, they used British officers to hold posts with African understudies, until they were ready to assume the responsibility. And the British officer - or any country; I use British officer for my own sphere, but - withdraws and the African officer then took over that responsible position. And again, that's got to be done at all levels, I think.

The main thing is, you've got to maintain, straight from the beginning, neutrality, integrity, and you've got to have every safeguard going against corruption. Because this is the big factor I have witnessed. Where you put parties, unknown parties together ...

And it happened in Ireland. If you go back in history, the Irish ... When Ireland got its independence, the IRA, who were the heroes of the day, were still carrying out mass murders, in Southern Ireland, against people who hadn't helped it. And they were into all the rackets. And I don't want to talk about capital punishment, but the way they stopped the IRA in 1927 ... They hanged fifty convicted murderers in one morning, from nine o'clock ... from six o'clock to nine o'clock. And that chopped the IRA's feet off in 1927. But until then, they were running rackets, because they suddenly got the power. Their main aim was to get independence, which they'd achieved. What did they do? They had all these people running around with weapons, and they turned into racketeers.

Which brings one to another question, in terms of training. You will have the freedom fighters trained on one side. You have a normal army of a kind on the other side, trained. Are these two trainings comparable, are they the same?

No, they're not the same. But both have very definite skills, which a modern force, if it works correctly, can get the best out of those two skills. You know, in other words, you can have an army trained - whether you are living in urban or [unintelligible] - in guerilla fighting, and at the same time, it can stay in a camp [?] and be trained in normal tactics. So, there's a lot to gain from both sides, but it's how you get it to weld together. To get the best out of both.

I was asking that in terms of integration. If the two are trained differently, as you indicate, the integration would - I'm not an army man ...

No.

... not at all. But I'm just thinking that, logically, if one were then to compare and contrast what training tools are there ... and that even their ranks then might be affected. Because one rank on one side might be that high or that low and on the other side ... It would be different standards really for the armies.

That's true. But, first of all, you've got to have a clear aim and objective. And the government of the day has got to lay down what it expects of its army and set it its tasks. Then you can match the training to tasks. And then that's the stage when you decide whether you want the guerilla skills, whether you want the logistical skills, whether you want the formation skills. And you set those ... The tasks that the ruling government of the day sets you - or, in other words, your head of state has set you.

[J Love]In your experience in Zimbabwe, you had the question of integration of the armed forces. And some of those ... Well, part of that force, the Rhodesian section, had also played a role in policing, particularly towards the end of the Rhodesian term, so to speak. Was the new army to play a policing role? And did you have any contact with the non-army police?

[David]They still play a policing role in that country, most certainly. Especially when there is [unintelligible]. You'll see army road blocks dotted up and down the country, as well as police road blocks. And they tend to do what we do in Northern Ireland, which is operate together.

Very often, in Northern Ireland, you'll see police and the British Army working together. And if there is a civil arrest that is made, it will be the policeman that does it. So that the police can actually be seen to be doing the job. And it's the same in Zimbabwe as well. They adopt that principle.

Do you think that there is going to be a shrinkage of policing in the army in the near future? Do you think, in other words, that the army ...?

In Northern Ireland or Zimbabwe?

In Zimbabwe.

Yes. I would think so.

In Northern Ireland?

[First speaker]Well, the British Army would love to come back. I mean, the army in Northern Ireland, it shrinks and increases as tension rises. So, if there was no tension, then, obviously, they would reduce numbers a great deal.

Well, how long have they been there?

Twenty-two years, now.

Permanent?

Well ...

I mean, shrinking and expanding.

Always shrinking and expanding.

Working in close collaboration with the police.

Twenty-two years, now.

Twenty-two years.

[Unidentified voice]September '69.

[First speaker]September '69.

[Another CODESA delegate]You said that ...

But the Irish problem's been with us three hundred years. [Laughs] That's the problem. It's ingrained. If I can illustrate it ...

When the troubles first started, I was running an army [unintelligible] college. And I had a lot of contact with Hampshire Education Authority. We had a superb site in the New Forest, which is a particularly beautiful part of the country. And Hampshire Education Authority, with my unit's assistance, said we would take two hundred children from Northern Ireland, out of the [unintelligible] of Belfast - they were at the time, it was 1972, '73 - and give them a holiday. And we had this beautiful camp site and the children arrived - they were aged between eight and twelve - and they arrived quite late one evening, about eight o'clock.

So, we had them camped in a hundred-and-sixty-pound ridge tent - the old-style ridge tent - which we didn't put up that easily. It's not like the modern frame tent. And we segregated girls in that corner, the boys in that corner, gave them their evening meal and went to bed.

The next morning, when I got up - bright and early, about five-thirty - the tent had been ... They'd moved themselves. In a hundred-and-sixty-pound tent, these kids. They'd moved themselves. They weren't re-erecting it. But they were up, just about. They'd moved themselves into four quarters: Protestant boys, Catholic boys, Protestant girls, Catholic girls. These are kids, eight to twelve. That's how ingrained the struggle was.

After about a week of ... you know ... walking, bird watching, all the things you do with kids, we actually had them as a composite group. They were working together. At the end of two weeks, they were damn good friends. But I reckon, the minute they got off the plane in Belfast and reintegrated into their community, they were split up again.

Now, I use that as analogy. That's with children. I'm not teaching you to suck eggs, but, probably, you're going to have the same pattern for a while. You know, it takes time.

[David]If I could add ... One of the things I noticed while I was in Zimbabwe was that there are also tribal problems between Shona and Ndebele, as well. Which also added to the problems of the integration of the armies.

Your first perception [?] must have been seriously affected by the developments in Eastern Europe?

[First speaker]Yes. And that's why we end up seeing - as you've probably read in the paper - options for change. With the Soviet bloc crumbling, the government of the day has decided, over the next three years, to reduce the armed forces by about a third. Some of us say that might be premature, because now you've got all these independent states. They're having problems of their own, but ... As a force to be reckoned with, the Soviet bloc has disintegrated and, therefore, we are reducing our forces accordingly.

[J Love]But not necessarily police?

No, but you see, even in this country, police is a national force. I'm sure the Chief Constable ... I think we've got fifty-three police forces, just about ...?

[David?]Forty-three.

[First speaker]Forty-three. And every one is completely autonomous.

Which isn't the case though really in Zimbabwe, is it?

[David]They've got national police.

They've got national police.

Yes.

Do you think that that's preferable in those circumstances? Because you've obviously had to have dealings with them.

I think you've got to have ... Where you've got a fairly stable country, like England, I think between all the police forces, you've got a fairly set standard. But, I think if you start off like that in somewhere like Zimbabwe, you could have very different standards throughout. So, I think it's probably better that they've got a national police force, with one person sort of saying: "Well, this is what will happen", rather than a lot of people saying: "This is what will happen in our particular area".

And in terms of ... I mean, what I'm interested in is why the role of the army in policing in times of struggle is clear. Because the threat, as perceived by the Rhodesians, came from the population themselves ... the majority of the population itself. Whereas, now that there is independence, surely the external threat could be measured separately from the need for internal policing? In which case, the army role in policing, as well as the army numbers, could go down. Would you agree with that?

Yes, but ... I don't think I'm really in a position to answer that. I think it's the President that probably maintains those forces at that level.

[First speaker]Well, that's what I said earlier. You've got to define your aims, objectives of your armed forces. That's the first step. You formulate [?] first and then you build and develop your armed forces to meet that role.

[P Gordhan]Was there any integrating role in respect of freedom fighters and the police? And if so, what were your experiences?

[David]Again, I couldn't really answer that, because I wasn't there for that whole period. I don't know actually what went on with the police. Only with the army, I'm afraid.

To what extent does your army, at the level of information and intelligence, get involved in activities on the mainland?

[First speaker]We don't basically. I mean, when I say that, actually ... Yes, we have a check on the mainland, on extremist parties - IRA being one. And then, you know, the animal rights people go mad, occasionally, and put out the [unintelligible]. So, yes, we have an

intelligence assessment against those forces. But otherwise, no.

I mean, the bulk of the army that is stationed in the United Kingdom is a training organisation. We have very few regular army units that are for home defence. That's because we've practised, since the war, a period of forward defence, with our front-line troops based on the border in Germany. That's our first line of defence under the NATO-type agreement, you see. It's forward defence.

It's now shifted to the Soviet border?

Well ... To be quite honest, I don't think we've got a new NATO policy yet. It's still evolving.

[J Love]In places like Ireland and Zimbabwe, what then was the role of the army there at the time of elections? I mean, aside from the fact that they're here ...?

We have no role in elections. Directly a parliament is dissolved, MPs cease to be MPs. Chief Ministers are allowed to continue governing as a caretaker government. And normal protocol rules that they make no major decisions in the period from the time the Parliament is dissolved until the time the new Parliament is in. Equally, the British Army - or the British armed forces, that's army, navy and airforce - take no part ... We cancel virtually all public engagements.

For instance, in Manchester last week, we had a very high-powered demonstration, called the Army Presentation Team, which is aimed at big businessmen. And we had planned for them to be in Manchester last week. We had invited two-hundred-and-fifty senior executives, captains of industry, to an evening presentation with a champagne buffet. And we had invited about three hundred training managers - that level - for a lunchtime presentation. And a lot of work went into that. Directly Parliament was dissolved, I had to cancel it. Because we're not allowed to conduct any public function while there is no official government, really. Because we could then be construed to be supporting the previous Government, which is no longer in power, but whose members are standing for re-election.

And ... I mean, I've got a new office opened last week, in Stockport, which is about twelve miles from here. And I tentatively arranged for the Mayor of Stockport to come and open it. I had to withdraw that invitation and I will reissue the invitation to the Mayor of Stockport tomorrow morning, after the election's finished. Well, with that, we ... We take note [?].

If there's problems at polling stations on the mainland, the civil police are there. Now, I don't know ... You went to a polling station. Did you see a policeman on duty?

No.

Some polling stations have them, others don't. It really depends ...

There were two policemen about a hundred and fifty metres away, walking up ...

Right. In Northern Ireland, it's slightly different, in that, today, there will be policemen at

the polling stations. And there'll be army units on standby, to act as a rapid reaction force. Not in the election area. Two reasons. One, we mustn't be seen there. Secondly, the army mustn't be seen looking at people going into polling stations. Because we've got to maintain this neutrality.

And again, we would only ever be called out if there was a terrorist explosion or an attempt to sabotage and the police felt they couldn't handle it. Then they would be on the [unintelligible] and one of our rapid reaction forces would go in.

Now, in that situation, is the army active because the police is not having sufficient force for activity? Or is it just participating because you have been called upon to do so?

In other words, the local commander, police commander, weighed up the situation and decided he needs heavier forces to support him. The police in Northern Ireland are armed, as you know. The police on the mainland - the majority - are not armed.

They're not?

No, they do not carry arms. The only thing they carry is a baton. A small baton, about eleven inches long.

I was wondering why there's so many unarmed police in [unintelligible]?

No. We don't arm our police. They are ... Yes, they're becoming, of course, in London, armed. I mean, the close protection squads, for Ministers and that. And ... Police can be armed, but it's a bit of a rigmarole. You know, a senior officer - I think at least a Chief Superintendent - has to make the decision and then he has to justify ... And many issues are only half a dozen pistols and about six rounds each. It's very minimal.

[David]In the police force in England, every time a policeman draws what he calls his staff [ie, baton], he immediately must make a note of it in his notebook. For any reason at all. That's how controlled it is. Firearms is more controlled.

[J Love]Zimbabwe?

[David]I wouldn't like to answer that one.

[Laughter]

[First speaker]In Kenya, they had a mixture. They had - well, I've forgotten the name of it now; it's some time ago - but, they had a paramilitary-type police section. In addition to normal, comfortable police stations, they had this - what I would call a SWAT squad in American terms - police - dressed like soldiers, in blue - who were armed. And they used to, again, act as rapid reaction squads in troubled areas. Now, they were special forces within the police. I suppose you could call them the SAS - the British Army kind of thing, you know.

Have either of you had any actual experience, on-the-spot experience, of trying to

conduct a democratic election, while some of the contestants are actively engaged in destroying each other, in a form of war?

[David]No, I haven't. No.

[First speaker]In fact, today - I've been in the army forty years this year - and today is the first time ever I've been to an electoral polling station. Because every other election, I've been overseas somewhere and had to vote by post. So, today's the first day I've actually put a cross on a piece of paper and dropped it in the box, and so on. And its a ...

Even today, officers and soldiers who wish to go and vote, must do so in civilian clothes. They're not allowed to go to a polling station in uniform. We're not allowed to get up on any electoral platforms or even support a candidate. And if we wish to stand for election as a candidate, we have to resign from the army. We have quite [unintelligible] rules in terms of our participation.

Do public servants, if they want to stand for Parliament, have to resign their position? Let's say, a teacher, or a headmaster or ...?

No. Certain levels. Certain senior officials are prohibited.

Unintelligible question

[Unidentified speaker]I think so. I don't know, quite honestly.

[First speaker]Industrial grades I don't think are affected and, if I can sort of take the clerical grades, down to about E and below, are. I think once you're a Grade Seven - or something like that - above, in the civil service, you are restricted to what you can do. Not as much as we are.

But as anybody in the armed forces, you actually - in Britain anyway - you actually surrender some of your civil rights the moment you swear the Oath of Allegiance. You do not have the same civilian rights ... You have the same protection, but you don't have the same position to exercise the same rights as a normal civilian.

Do the candidates - or, perhaps, let's say, the party - during the campaign, do they have access to go and canvass the members of the force somewhere, perhaps to ...?

They cannot enter the barracks.

They can enter barracks?

No. They cannot. They cannot enter military establishments.

But they can mail literature to them?

They can mail literature to them, and they can hold a meeting outside the barracks. They are, however, permitted to go around married quarters, provided they're not inside a barracks.

In other words, if this was a barracks compound here and we had a block of married quarters on the other side of the street, with normal public access, yes, they can mail and they can canvass and they can knock on doors there. But they cannot enter military barracks.

Have you set the guidelines - could we find them anywhere?

Oh, yes. Certainly, as far as we are concerned, they are all written down in a thing we call Queen's Regulations. But they are all part of the statute law of Great Britain.

[P Gordhan]It would be useful to get a copy of that.

[J Love]Yes. Very.

[Unidentified voice]It's all written down in the Conduct of Parliamentary Elections. That is the bible. But extracts of that are in Queen's Regs. We have a Guidance of Armed Forces.

[First speaker]Armed forces.

We do have our privileges. Because we move around so much, as I explained, we are privileged in that we are called service voters. And as a civilian, you've got to be on an electoral registration register, which they normally ... They redo the Register every November [sic]. If you fail to get on that, and you move somewhere else, you could have lost your vote for the ensuing year. As a service voter - there's myself and my wife and, if I had any children of electoral age - they can register in one place and they can vote at that place, either in person or by proxy, wherever they are in the world. That's a special concession. Because we found ... This has only been in about fifteen years. Prior to that, we were losing out on our vote, as we were moving around the world. Which I quite enjoy, by the way!

Let me just make a comment there. In other words, say, okay, the voting might be due in October, all right? Now, you move away, say, in March, just prior ... and then there are elections in May, of the same year. In other words, while you are registered here as a voter, say, in ...

Manchester. That's right. And I've moved to London.

That's right. Are you able now to vote in London?

There is a cut-off date, in which I can apply ... I'm talking of being a civilian now. I can apply for a postal vote back at the Register I was last on. Okay? But even then, there is a little ... There's a period in time where, if you've been transferred between Rolls [?], you lose your vote that year. You're just on no Register that election.

So, there is also that provision for the army, just to check [obscured as speaker starts to comment] on the cut-off date?

No, once we've registered, irrespective of where we are serving, we remain on that one Register.

[G Bartlett]Actually, that is the note in the book, pamphlet we got this morning at the Town Clerk's. You'll see there is a special paragraph concerning the registration of voters, and concerning the armed forces. Anything that's in that pamphlet does not apply to the armed forces. In fact, they take care of the voting of the military ...

[Another CODESA speaker]But that is what he said, I think. He said it is controlled by ... As long as you are registered at Manchester, for instance, and you have shifted in the interim ... In other words, between ... Say, in February, you shift to another place, then, in May, you must still vote at your original place. There where you were.

Yes. Are we talking about as a soldier or ...?

As a soldier.

As a soldier, I can move wherever I like, and my vote is always at the place where I've registered.

That's what I mean, yes.

As a soldier. As a civilian, I could lose my vote, because I could fall in that gap. So, in other words, whereas we lose certain rights as a soldier, a vote is a right we gain over ... We have a preference over civilians. Our vote is always protected, because of the way we can move around.

[G Bartlett]If you use the word "registered" as a soldier ... If I read that clause correctly, it is that the army ensures that, if it moves its people around, then when an election is called, you have a right to vote where the army has posted you to?

Yes. It is incumbent on you, ie, the individual, to register at a constituency as a service voter. We have a special form, which is different to a civilian one.

I ... My wife's home town is Chester, forty miles from here, and, until this time, I've been a service voter. And I've always been registered in Chester. This is going to be my last posting. I've actually bought a house down the road in Poynton[?], so I have taken myself off being a service voter. I'm a civilian voter, to all intents and purposes. So, I'm registered in the constituency of [obscured by foreground noise]. Before that, I always sent a proxy vote - or, my father [obscured by foreground noise] - a postal vote to Chester. Irrespective of where I was. And I only had to register once, whereas a civilian has to re-register each year. That was my protection.

[P Gordhan]How does ...? Sorry, you go first.

[Another CODESA delegate]Yes. You see, we in South Africa have a particular history. And we've got to be concerned with trying to resolve some of the problems of the past. I'm not saying that you should make a judgement call, but I just wanted to hear how you would react to that type of situation.

One of the things which are urgent on that agenda is to create an atmosphere, a climate

conducive to free and fair elections - you know, levelling of the playing field. Now, against a background of an army and a police force which was pitted against other liberation components ... They are trying to find [?] one another, but the perceptions about one another are still hostile sometimes. Now, what is the ideal situation to try and ensure that everyone feels happy about the army in that type of election? Should it be deployed all over? Should it be in barracks? You know? I mean, in an emergency situation?

You also need [?] a job as chief of European general staff!

[Laughter]

Well, I think, as David said, you've got to have an integration. So, disarming everybody, as a first clause, I think, is essential. Obviously, you've got to keep, possibly, some units [unintelligible]. But I think you've got to disarm everybody. You then ...

You mean, including regular force?

I think so, to a degree. It really depends ... Trying to split the role between police and army and ... My reading of the South African situation is that it is much closer than we have here. How I understood that, I don't know. I'm no expert on your country.

[G Bartlett]I don't think it is that close.

No? Is it not?

I think there may be a perception that it is close, but it is as close as the British Army and the police are in Northern Ireland. That when a situation arises, they come in close. But, before the army - and I'm sure that I asked the question - before the army can be deployed in support of the civilian police forces - and I say the civilian, rather than the military police forces - you have to go according to an Act of Parliament ... There are certain things you've got to do. Now ... Except that the circumstances have been such that there is this closeness there, but ... Perhaps one way to solve what my friend here ... my colleague has said, is for the Transitional Executive that will be talked about coming in, to come to an agreement as to how the military should be deployed during this election.

That's right.

Because, especially in a situation where there are such things as hidden arms caches, and you've suddenly disarmed your police force - or, at least - and your military, and then, suddenly, at a crucial moment, you've got a problem on your hands ... So, I think that, probably, the idea would be a joint decision by all the participants, as to how the military will be deployed in that circumstance.

I mean, you ... Let's ... I don't know the size of the forces concerned, but, quite clearly, if you bring your freedom fighters and your established forces together, you're going to have far more soldiers than you require. And that's why I say you've got to disarm. Obviously,

you've got to keep a percentage, probably, for ... to maintain law and order, or act as a reaction force. I think some other countries that have done this, have probably solved their unemployment problems by keeping large military forces. I don't know if that's the way your government will want to go. But, I mean, at the end of the day, you've got to cut your cloth according to your finances.

[David]Would your police not control things ...?

The police do. We had a referendum recently and it was purely amongst whites. But there was a fear that the extreme right wing - white parties - would disrupt that referendum. And, as with your - from what I've gathered already yesterday - from even your police forces. I mean, the bobbies on the beat told me this morning - told us - that just around the corner somewhere, there were very large forces available, should there be ... He just had to get on to his radio ... And he said that, even in a period when there's not an election, there are these forces deployed.

But, during that referendum, because of that possible fear of extreme right-wing, near-fascist type of element which we have - fortunately, it did not arise - but, there were military forces deployed. Way away from the polling stations. But they were on standby, in the event of this happening, and they would immediately have been brought into being.

[First speaker]I mean, we have the same thing every Saturday, when we have football crowds. You've probably heard about our football crowds. It's getting better, thank goodness. But, when there's a major football match, especially a local Derby, [unintelligible]. That day, the police forces and [unintelligible] are around the corner somewhere, for when the trouble starts.

To go back to the question posed, I think, probably, the other method you've got of ensuring a good atmosphere is to have international observers. But in a country your size, that would have to be a very large force. So, you see, it's again the ...

[P Gordhan]I understand the majority of this one [?]. But can we just run through your responsibilities?

[Laughter]

[J Love, laughing]Not [unintelligible] the state.

[P Gordhan]Sorry?

[J Love]Not [unintelligible] the state.

[P Gordhan]You've got a responsibility to defend government, but you don't have to do it here.

[Laughter]

If you can just run through this, then perhaps you can just follow ...

You mean, I don't have the opportunity to put a point of view?

No, no. If you're trying to get it across, go ahead. Go ahead.

[Pause]

You mentioned the international observers.

Yes, I mean, it's been done elsewhere. How successful it is, I don't know. I mean, you'd have to ask the people who've conducted elections in your situation with international observers. But it seems a method of at least putting people's minds ... and building up that period of confidence, that you can then.

Did you do any of that in the Hong Kong situation? I mean, you ...

Hong Kong? No ...

You were there during a particular transitionary phase ...

No. Not Hong Kong. I was in Kenya.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Hong Kong doesn't have a [unintelligible] It has a repre[sentative] ... legislative council and ...

So, sorry. What experience did you have in ...?

In Kenya? Yes.

I was in Kenya for the elections that led to internal self government. And I think we had internal self government for about a period of eleven months to a year. And then there was full independence. We didn't have any major cases of intimidation.

The Mau Mau had more or less rehabilitated themselves by then - or were on the way to rehabilitation. Jomo Kenyatta had come out of, or been released from detention and - as I see has Nelson Mandela - had actually proved to be a statesman, instead of the thug that we had thought him to be a few years earlier. And he, you know ... I mean, he changed. And he was a very able statesman. Because there were a lot of hotheads there.

I can remember a very nice African gentleman coming and knocking on my door - and I lived in a very nice apartment, I might add, which I rented - and telling me, on

independence, they'd been allocated my house.

[Laughter]

So, there were, you know, there were a lot of expectations that independence would change their lives overnight. They were ... There was a misconception that you just printed money. Because it was paper money, you just printed more. This was not in the intelligent people. I'm talking about the tribes in the Reserves, who still lived very simple lives. You know, they tended their shambas [crop fields], they looked after their goats, and that. And they had a total misconception about what independence was actually going to mean to them.

But, in fact, as I say, the Mau Mau had receded, it had rehabilitated itself to a very great degree. The two main parties - KANU [Kenya African National Union] and KADU[?] - both had vigorous elections, election campaigning. There was very much - from my perception - tribal voting. KANU was very much supported by the Kikuyu, whereas KADU [obscured by foreground noise] the smaller tribes. And even the politicians, or the candidates for the two parties, tended to lure the tribal groupings.

But, I mean, Kenya remained very stable. It still is. It's probably one of the most successful countries that ... It's certainly more successful than Tanganyika and Uganda. You know, the three of them, you remember, were the East African Federation.

But what was the role of the army during those elections?

The army? Well, we've still got a fair-sized British army there and we ... The King's African Rifles had been a federation army between Uganda, Tanganyika and Kenya. Tanganyika split away. Couldn't afford the King's African Rifles. The two battalions, the one in Jinja and one down in - oh, I can't think of the place ... Now, they couldn't afford it, so, in fact, the British government picked up the bill still for those, for a while. Eventually, they took over. And, if you remember, just after independence, in Kenya, the Kenyan army mutinied. And the British forces had to go back in and put them down and re-establish them. But I'd left by then, so I don't really know too much about that.

But, during elections, the army just went about its normal work. They adopted the method that we posed, because they were still under ... Although independence was come on, the general officer commanding, at the time, was still the general officer commanding the East African Command, the British command. And they only gradually withdrew, in the next year, following independence - we didn't have our forces out before independence.

But when you withdrew, you left and the new command started?

Yes, but, by that time ... We had built up ... We'd been commissioning African officers for a number of years before that. And by the time we left, very quickly, battalion commanders were African officers. But there were still a lot of British officers - on secondment still - in the headquarters. And they gradually faded over the years and, as African officers reached the right seniority and experience, they took over.

So, apart from this one time when one of the ... I think it was the Eleventh Battalion

mutinied in barracks - I really don't know what the problem was, because I was out. I was in [unintelligible] then, serving in a psychiatric hospital. I had different problems! But at the time of the two elections I witnessed - the internal self government and the independence - they went just as smoothly as the one I've seen so far today.

[P Gordhan]Do you have factors that you'd like to mention in terms of creating that climate?

[David]If I could just describe what went on in Zimbabwe. The Rhodesian forces, when peace was declared, were confined to barracks for quite a long period, during which time the disarmament took place and the British Army sent out a thing called B-MATT [?], which is the British Military Advisory and Training Team, in quite a large number, to take on the retraining of these freedom fighters. That retraining took place, I believe, whilst the Rhodesian forces were confined to barracks. Then, later, the integration took place. And the British presence was then reduced a great deal. There are currently still British forces in Zimbabwe in an advisory role, helping out the Zimbabwe National Army.

[First speaker]I don't actually say create a good atmosphere. As I said before, you mustn't create an atmosphere of high expectation. Nothing's going to change radically overnight. If it does, you've probably got a recipe for disaster. Let it evolve slowly. Cultures have to be brought together. You can't push them too quickly. And, I think, if you don't give them too high expectations, then things will go well. If they suddenly think, one night everything's going to change - you know, close the blinds; next morning, you open them and there's a different scene out there - they're going to be very disappointed. And then you're not going to get that faith on which to build.

As I say, I'm merely an administrator, not a combat soldier at all, so ...

[J Love]Could I just find out one thing about Zimbabwe? What you're saying about the army going for retraining and all those sorts of things. At that time, it was the time of elections and, presumably, the army was, as you say, in barracks and there was a policing role of some description as well as the international observer role. But, on the question of the policing role. Who fulfilled that function? Was that a purely ... a function fulfilled purely by existing ex-Rhodesian police?

[David]It was fulfilled by the existing police force, the crime police, along with the observers - who were there not really in a policing role. They were just there to watch the process of the election.

[P Gordhan]And the command structures of the police? Did they remain what they were, or were there people from ZANU and ZAPU added on?

I don't know.

How do you ensure the neutrality of the army? Tomorrow, you might ...

[First speaker]Discipline. Discipline. As simple as that.

Tomorrow, you might have a freak situation where a government comes into power, or a party comes into power, that might instruct you to act in a partisan way. What is there, in British Army culture - or whatever the case might be - to prevent you from doing so?

[Unidentified voice]Illegal command.

[First speaker]Yes, that's right.

Sorry?

[First speaker]Illegal command.

[Unidentified voice]Illegal command.

Tomorrow night, if the chief in ... the Assistant Chief Constable [unintelligible] was told to do something which went against the laws of the land said: "Sorry. Forget it".

The law ... But is there a particular army culture?

[First speaker]Well, we have an army [unintelligible], yes. As I said before, you're responsible to the Crown. We have a code of conduct toward military law - which is slightly different from civil law. And we just ... The British Army just doesn't think partywise. I suppose it is in the breeding. You know. It's tradition.

[David]We have a thing called the Manual of Military Law, which was an Act of Parliament passed, I think, in 1965, which the British Army still use, which are things that are peculiar to the army. Where a man can be charged and court-martialled. And it's the basis of all discipline within the British Army.

So, you don't risk any chances of military coups and whatever?

[First speaker]There's never been any, no.

[Unidentified speaker]Not in the British Army. No.

But how do you get anybody to move? To be involved in any particular combat situation? Take Iraq. Did it require the Queen's permission, or the ...?

[First speaker]Well. The Ministers ... The government of the day, either the Ministry of Defence ...

Gave the order for the army to move there and get engaged ...?

That's right. And, in fact, we actually called up a few reservists. Medical reservists, because we were short of medics, I think, [unintelligible]. And the Secretary of State for Defence invoked a special act to allow it, to make a selective call-up of his own. It's a rather unique thing. We sent a force out there of forty thousand - thirty to forty thousand - and twenty per

cent of them were medical personnel. Because we thought, at that time, they were going to use chemical warfare against us. We didn't have that number of medics in the army. So, we actually got power to do selective call-up. But it was an Act of Parliament ... well, it was a law, I suppose, a rule of council ... The Secretary of State said that we would support ...

The Queen was not involved?

No. The Queen is constitutional head, you know. She would have been consulted. She would have been briefed.

But, supposing the Queen said, now, that there was no fight. What would have happened?

In a constitutional monarchy, she can express that but, in fact, her Ministers would have to redebate it again.

What I'm saying is ... I want to know, whose final word will be followed?

[J Love, interposes]The Ministers.

... The Ministers' word, or the Parliament's word, or the Queen's word - in that particular example?

That's interesting.

If you don't reach a ...? Supposing you don't reach ...

[J Love]The Government.

The Government. The government in power.

[Unintelligible comment, followed by laughter]

Who is Commander-in-Chief?

Commander-in-Chief? Commander-in-Chief, technically, is the Queen.

Oh, that's where I was going to, then!

[Laughter]

In fact, I was driving you to that! Here is the Commander-in-Chief who says; "No!". Who else then must move in, while she ...?

The Crown doesn't exercise that kind of power nowadays. It doesn't exercise that power.

It's more a symbolic Commander-in-Chief?

The Crown, as I say, is very useful, because it's neutral, totally neutral. So, that's why we don't swear allegiance to the government. We swear allegiance to this neutral Crown.

But the person who can give [unintelligible] instructions to the army is the ...?

Is the Ministers.

[Unidentified voice]Prime Minister.

[David]Prime Minister.

[First speaker]Who has been put in power by the people. Not by the army. Not by the Queen. All right, she gives her blessing. But, it is the people today who are putting in ... who are giving the power to those Ministers.

[P Gordhan]Yes. I think we should round up, unless we have any ...?

Yes.

George?

Oh, I like the way ...

[Laughter]

[J Love]Come on, George! In defence. You've got a [unintelligible].

[P Gordhan]We are the Opposition. You've got a right to summarise.

[Laughter]

Are you happy, or will it ...?

[G Bartlett?]May I just ask a question? In the case of Britain, you've got the Queen who is the constitutional head. And in circumstances like you've mentioned now, you swear allegiance to the Queen. Not to the political ... not to Parliament?

No.

In a republican democracy, then, the army should swear allegiance to the constitution and not to the Parliament?

Yes.

And the army defends the constitution, not Parliament?

That's correct.

Because Parliament could actually act unconstitutionally?

In the German army ... The current German army has many restrictions placed on it, really to avoid the re-emergence of Nazism. And I had a twin[?] with a German medical battalion. And I used to be invited down to their swearing-in ceremony, and they used to do this at the end of their basic training. And this was very nicely done. It was done as a sort of torchlight[?] ceremony. The drill is atrocious[?], because again, they're not allowed to stamp, because that's ... The constitution says they mustn't stamp their feet, because that was ... gives ... They would object that that is Nazism. But there, at the end of the ceremony, the soldiers took the Oath of Allegiance to the constitution.

To the constitution?

[J Love]South Africa?

That's what I think we should do.

[J Love]But we don't yet? We don't yet.

I think we do actually.

[Unintelligible] constitution.

[Vote of Thanks]Then I will [unintelligible]. Ladies and gentlemen. We would first thank you for agreeing to see us. We are representing the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, which is a coming together of parties themselves, parties, organisations, trying to usher in a new democratic order in South Africa.

I want to assure you that most of the things you have said, we will carry home with us. We are dealing with a very complicated situation [...]

[Break in recording and end of section on British Army]

A meeting between the CODESA delegation and others

[...] and last night they were up very late, actually watching the count in the North West. One of the Bolton constituencies. So, without further delay, I will ask Mr Gordhan to introduce you to his colleagues.

[P Gordhan]Thank you. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your presence.

Before I go any further, I'd like to introduce the members of the delegation. And perhaps you can give us some idea of who is here, so we know who we're speaking to, as well. We would like to be as informal as possible in the way we conduct this particular event.

On my extreme right - and that's not suggestive of being right-wing, is Mr Pieter Hendrickse. He is a member of the Daily Management Committee and the Management Committee of CODESA. Next to him is Mr Johannes Mahlangu. Mr Mahlangu is a member of the Management Committee of CODESA. To my right, is Professor Selby Ripinga ...

Sorry, [unintelligible] the affiliations, the party or the affiliation?

Well, they're not here on a party-political basis ...

I know.

Mr Hendrickse is from the Labour Party. Mr Mahlangu is from Intando Yesizwe. Professor Ripinga is a member of the Daily Management Committee and the Management Committee and he is a representative of the Inyandza [National] Movement. I am in CODESA as a representative of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congress.

On my left - and that doesn't mean he's left-wing either - is Doctor Frank Mdlalose, a member of the Daily Management Committee and the Management Committee. He is a representative of the Inkatha Freedom Party. On his left is Ms Janet Love, a member of the Secretariat of CODESA - a non-party-political affiliation, if there is such a thing. And to her left is Mr Matthew Phosa. He is a member of this delegation as a representative of the African National Congress. And on his left is Mr George Bartlett. Mr Bartlett is also a member of this delegation. He is a member of Working Group Five of CODESA and his affiliation is to the ... Which was it again, George?

[G Bartlett]Hmm? Oh, I'm on the extreme left. From the National Party!

[P Gordhan]So, these are the people who have been in Britain. But, before I go any further, it would be very useful for all of us to know who's sitting on the other side of the table. We haven't had the opportunity to meet you before the meeting. So, if you don't mind introducing yourselves, it would be very useful for us.

[Introductions mainly too faint to be heard]

We've met Mr Christopher and Mr Metcalfe.

My name's Colin [unintelligible].

[P Gordhan]We've read your stuff.

[J Love]Yes.

David Coetzee, [unintelligible].

Michael Terry from [unintelligible].

Andrew [unintelligible] from the ANC.

[Unintelligible] Pillay [?] from [unintelligible].

[Unintelligible] Skosana, [unintelligible].

Victoria Gordon of the Foreign Office.

Charles we know.

Christopher [unintelligible]. And Foreign Office.

Okay. So, we actually don't have, except for the [unintelligible], any pressmen?

[J Love]And Colin [unintelligible].

[P Gordhan]And Colin [unintelligible], yes.

What we're going to do, ladies and gentlemen, is give you a brief overview of two things. One is an idea of what we have seen and secondly, what lessons we might have drawn for ourselves in South Africa - with a view to sharing our own perceptions of what has been going on here over the past five days.

I will first clarify the manner in which this visit took place. And that is that an invitation was extended to CODESA by the British Government, asking CODESA to send a representative delegation to observe the British elections and draw whatever lessons we could from this visit, for our own situation in South Africa.

In respect of that, we have wanted to publicly thank the British Government for this initiative. Because, retrospectively, we can now say that this visit has been an extremely useful one and in many ways.

We would also like to thank all those - and there's a number of people - who in these five days have made our visit eventful and meaningful. And we owe a deep gratitude to them for that.

In sending this delegation here, CODESA identified ... The CODESA Management Committee identified certain purposes for us. The first of which was to establish what would be the elements of a climate for free and fair political activity. And as you know, CODESA Working Group One is looking at this particular aspect, with a view to establishing a climate in South Africa whereby free elections can actually take place.

The second purpose was to look at the level of organistion in the elections. Both in respect of the political parties and the various authorities who have to establish the infrastructure for the elections themselves.

And then, from these two elements, to extract certain lessons for our own situation, with a view to reporting back to CODESA.

I think most of you will be familiar with CODESA, its objectives and where it is now. So, I'm not going to elaborate on that too much. Perhaps, if you have questions later, we could certainly help you to understand that better.

During the course of our visit, we met a range of different categories of people.

We met the head of the civil service, for example, who gave us an insight into how the civil service operates, within the British context.

We met senior police officers in Manchester, who gave us an indication of the role of the police; army officers who indicated the role of the army in the elections, and generally in British society.

Two representatives of the Trade Unions Council, who explained to us the role of trade unions in the election process and in the political process.

We met various representatives of political parties: their agents, volunteers and candidates.

We met some academics of Manchester University and we're due to meet one later this afternoon, who have been able to share certain background information with us, in respect of British politics and the governmental structure.

We have met representatives of television, both ITN and BBC. And one newspaper. Again, to understand their role in the course of the elections.

And, finally, we have spent a very useful day with the Salford City Council. We've met their mayor, chief executive, a councillor, the people involved at the actual polling booths and, later on, counters themselves, and even voters. So, those are the range of people that we've seen.

Our perceptions cover all these categories. And I'll run through them very quickly.

What we found very effective, in respect of the role of the media, with particular reference to television, was the attempt, very clearly, at being impartial and neutral. Of course, we understand that these things mean different things to different people. But, certainly, our perception was that there was an effort towards this, in the current context. There was both a written Code and a set of conventions which guided the involvement of TV within elections and there were formulae to ensure their neutrality within this context. We have realised that the role of the media is a crucial element within the South African situation, with a view to establishing a fair climate for all. And one of the working groups of CODESA is actually focusing on this particular aspect, with a view to identifying how the media can play a role - in particular, TV - in creating a fair political climate.

We can't say the same about the print media, here, where there seem to be a range of different approaches. Not much of a convention in terms of how they operate. And some observation about the differences between [obscured by foreground noise] and the one regional newspaper we had access to. However, we're not in any position to make sweeping statements about the print media in Britain. Save to say that they do not have, interestingly, the same code of impartiality as have the electronic media.

The civil service was a very interesting [unintelligible], if one can call it that, for us. The extreme professionalism that we saw, both at the central level and at the local level, was very impressive. Their attempt also at impartiality, we thought was very useful in the electoral process. Particularly in ensuring that those who conduct the election are not infected by political motives, which can, of course, lead to all sorts of other problems. There again, the written Code and the convention, in respect of the involvement of the civil service, has certain very useful lessons for us in the South African situation, where, as we know, the civil service has a particular origin and faces tremendous challenges, in respect of establishing credibility and neutrality in any future situation. The difference between the national civil services and the local civil service was also a very useful distinction for us, in that the independence of the local people does afford them the opportunity to ensure that the electoral process is as neutral as possible.

The police officers were able, certainly, to give us insight into the structure of the police force in Britain and the manner in which they operate generally, but, specifically, in the context of elections. The passive role that the police generally play - and, again, we are no experts on the British situation, so we can't speak with any sweeping authority on this particular subject, but, from what we were told - what seemed to be the passive role of the police was very interesting for us, because of the contrast that this has with the South African situation. Their determination not to become involved in political interference or intervention, is a lesson that we could take back. And their independence from political figures, structures and processes was also very useful in ensuring that they play an even-handed role in the electoral process.

The army also had very useful lessons. Their accountability to the Crown and the concept of refusing to take an illegal order, particularly in respect of intervention within the political setting, we felt was a very useful mechanism to ensure the neutrality of the

army and to ensure that there was no unnecessary political interference on their part, as well. We were also impressed with the fact that they - with one or two exceptions - do not have a role in internal politics, save as a backup to the police force. And we thought that the lessons that they had to offer in that regard were quite useful. These officers were also able to share experiences with us from Kenya and Mozambique, in respect ... And Zimbabwe, in particular, the integrating, so to speak, or reconstituting the police force and defence force in the Zimbabwean situation. An experience we ourselves are going to go through in the near future, in respect of the various defence forces or armed forces that operate within the South African situation. And we felt that there were some very useful indicators for this.

Apart from the one egg that we saw being thrown during the elections, there seemed to be a remarkable level of political tolerance during the course of the election. The different parties seemed to have complete freedom of movement and expression, notwithstanding what might be very tense moments in the run-up to the elections and on polling day itself. But the degree of freedom that the parties enjoy here and their right to express their points of view was an important lesson for us in South Africa and one which has immediate implications for us in trying to create a climate where free elections can, in fact, take place. Even those interviews with men and wife ... or wives, over TV, indicating that the man [...]

[Break in recording]

[...] the local authority is able actually to stay away from political influences at that level. The relationship between the national electoral law, on the one hand, and the role of the local authority as an implementing agency, on the other hand, was also a very useful relationship that we had an insight into.

In respect of the trade unions, we can't say too much. The relationship between the TUC and the Labour Party was one which interested us and the discussion with two gentlemen that represented the TUC at the meeting with us was a very useful one, providing us with insights into the role of the trade unions in this context.

Plus, above all, what impressed us was the nature of the political campaigns and the level of political organisation amongst the parties themselves. Some of the candidates we've seen have been campaigning on a low-key note for the past two years in the leading-up process to the election itself. The co-ordination between national, regional and local was also quite impressive - both in an organisational sense, and in the sense of issues that they needed to connect with. In that sense, we found a very useful articulation between national issues, on the one hand, and local issues. Although the emphasis seemed to be on local issues in many of the areas that we had exposure to. On TV, I think that you have exposure to the national issues and, on the ground, you have an emphasis on the local issues.

The level of organisation of the parties at a local level is the role of the electoral agent, which many of us were not actually familiar with. They gave us some very useful insights into party political organisation, generally, and into how elections are organised at the level of the parties, in the second instance.

And, finally, we had exposure to the electoral process itself. The organisational efforts of the local authorities, their ability to man ... or, to supply human resources to the polling booths. The small number of electors per polling booth was also very useful. It seemed that, at the maximum, it would be about fifteen hundred persons. And that, we believed, was a very useful way of ensuring maximum participation in the electoral process itself.

We actually witnessed the fact that people weren't asked for IDs. They were just asked for their names and addresses, and they were ticked off on the Electoral Register. And that was ... It's quite an amazing observation to undertake.

The financial limits that are placed on political parties at a local level, in respect of the local candidates, with a view to levelling the playing field - as we would call it, back home ... And I am sure that there are other provisions as well, at this level, to ensure equality amongst the parties - was for us a very useful method in ensuring that no one party, at a local level, has any major superiority over the other. However, we believe that at the national level, there's no limit in terms of [obscured by foreground noise] of the national party.

The manner in which the Electoral Register is updated here was also of interest to us. The yearly update in October seems to have developed into a very useful method to ensure that this Register is updated virtually annually. And the use of the same Register for Euro elections, national elections and local elections, seemed a very noteworthy way of managing this particular process.

I think, lastly, we want to say two things. One is, to repeat our thanks to those who made this visit possible and meaningful.

And secondly, that we are very conscious of the fact that in five days we are not able to comment on the validity of any of these observations, or the kind of information that has been shared with us. We are also aware of the fact that the South African situation is a very different one from the one here. Nonetheless, we believe that there are very important lessons that we could share with people back home. And we will do that on our return.

And we thank you also for your presence here today. We are now available for your interrogation.

This whole thing seems to have impressed you. Did you have a few things that didn't impress you?

Well, I think that would be the role of the print media. Not that it didn't impress us, but there is a question mark, in terms of the kind of influence that the print media can have on the electorate. And you had an odd situation, where there was extreme effort being put into ensuring that the electronic media was impartial, but not so with the print media. We can understand the concept of freedom of the press, but we would have some questions in relation to what that means, in respect of different inputs having influence over the electoral process. So, that would be one question.

The second question is the level of participation of the people themselves, within the political process. Not just elections. Having the limited exposure that we had, in our discussion with one of the academics in Manchester University, seemed to suggest that while people participate at an eighty-per-cent level - plus/minus - in an election, the national election, the same didn't apply to other forms of political activity. And, maybe in that sense, South Africans are far more politically aware and highly participatory, unlike the British population.

I'm not sure if my colleagues have anything else to ...? But those are two of them that come to mind.

Electoral opinion polls ... I don't know what current legislation in South Africa is. Is there any ... currently any restriction on opinion polls? Is this something that CODESA's looked at?

Not directly. But, the current restriction, I think, is - George, subject to your information - that opinion polls don't take place once an election has been declared.

[G Bartlett]Once nomination ... After nomination day, no opinion polls are allowed.

Did you discuss the impact of opinion polls here at all? Whether they had a negative or ...?

[P Gordhan]They seem to have gone off pretty badly, whatever ...

Would you go into CODESA itself?

Sure.

What's your time table now for the interim executive?

Well, there's no [unintelligible] time table. The only time table or target dates that we can speak of, at this point in time, is the date for CODESA 2, which is May fifteenth and sixteenth. I think it is the hope of all the participants that, by CODESA 2, we would be able to put forward meaningful agreements to the nation, to reflect the fact that we are now ready to move a step ahead in the whole constitutional process.

The debate about interim government, or interim arrangements, and all the other related matters are still being pursued within the CODESA working groups and there is no agreement of any substance that we can talk about. Except for certain agreements on certain constitutional principles; and certain agreements in respect of the need for an interim arrangement; and the need for an interim executive; and that that interim executive would initially be appointed. But, apart from that, there isn't ... Other aspects of this debate are still very much under discussion.

Just to follow to that ... Two current problems ... Has there been any progress about the presence of the King of the Zulus and other possible Paramount Chiefs? And secondly is, what progress has been made about the Government's demand for the dissolution of Umkhonto we Sizwe?

In respect of the first matter, that is, as you know, the subject of discussion of a sub-committee of the Management Committee. Recently, the sub-committee has received recommendations from a range of people, both traditional leaders themselves and various experts. That information is now being processed by the sub-committee and, it is hoped that, within a short while, the sub-committee would be able to make some firm recommendations to the Management Committee, where it will be finally considered. So, that's where that lies.

In respect of the second question, that is a matter that is being discussed at two levels. You'll appreciate that the discussions around that issue started long before CODESA came into being, on a bilateral level within the South African Government and ANC. We believe that it is still being pursued at that level. And it is a matter that could be raised in Working Group One of CODESA, as well. And I believe, as an aside, that it has been raised. But this isn't the basis of any substantial discussion, at this point in time.

You said that in your discussions with army officers here, you found there were perhaps a number of lessons that could be learned for South Africa. Does that mean that you would perhaps go back with a recommendation that the British could be involved in some of the process of uniting different armed forces?

No, that really isn't within the mandate of this group. I think all we can say is that there are lessons maybe in [unintelligible]. And I think that's for the various parties at the CODESA table to decide, ultimately, in terms of what mechanism and what agencies they wish to utilise in respect of that particular issue.

But you found that there were lessons ... this group found lessons to be learnt from the British ...?

Yes. Sure. We appreciate that, in a half-an-hour, forty-five minute discussion, one can't properly reckon with such an issue. It's very complex.

Has there been any discussion yet about the possible involvement of the international community in the electoral process, in terms of observing or playing a role such as took place in Namibia or Zimbabwe?

No. That's again a subject for Working Group One. But that hasn't been canvassed yet.

Backtracking, I wonder if we could hear, directly from Inkatha, [unintelligible] the importance they attach to the question of the King, with reference to CODESA, and the impact of that on other paramount chiefs in the country?

[F Mdlalose]Well, really, I think it's an unfair question to start with, because we are here on a CODESA ... a joint CODESA ... you know ... fact-finding-out ... fact-finding mission here, in Britain. But, perhaps one might just say that we think it is important that the King is admitted - whether with his delegation - into CODESA, on the stance that ... particularly on the stance that he was, in fact, the ruler and the monarch before the British conquered us. Colonialism upset him and upset all that the King had

represented to us. Now that we are trying to rectify things, he surely has a role to play in that process of ratification. That is our feeling. I'm talking, of course, from an Inkatha Freedom Party point of view. Not only that, but I'm talking generally, from many people's approach . But there is another member in the committee who perhaps might be a little better informed. Mr Mahlangu is a member ... He's not a member of Inkatha Freedom Party, but he is a member of the committee in which I have been participating, with regard to this point. I don't know if you'd like to say a word ...?

[P Gordhan]Johannes?

[N Mahlangu]Thank you. Mr Chairman, it is so that this matter is still *sub judice* at this time. The sub-committee has not yet formally made any recommendation in this regard to the Management Committee. But the feeling is that some kind of mechanism should be found to involve all the traditional leaders in the country in the negotiating process. As to what mechanism should be applied, this is a matter of debate and it has not been agreed yet. But one can expect the matter to be resolved very soon, in a very cordial manner. It is approached very sensibly by the [unintelligible]. Thank you.

Could I ask a question, please? Having witnessed the elections last night, do you return with any particular views on the question of the advisability of proportional representation in South Africa?

[P Gordhan]I was about to say that we seem to be one step ahead of the British, for a change, in that proportional representation is already a kind of entrenched principle - although the precise formula has not been decided upon. But there is a lawyer amongst us who might want to address that issue. Matthew?

[M Phosa]No, I think that, generally, all the parties that participate in CODESA have accepted the principle of proportional representation. And there are good reasons for that. There are a lot of parties of different sizes and, in order to ensure that some of the parties - small ones - do not disappear, we have to introduce that sort of thing. To ensure that there is maximum participation in all processes and that the process is strengthened by that participation. So, there's no ... it's not a form of dispute. It's just our view of it and that has been discussed at CODESA.

Did you have any discussions, when meeting with local authorities, about the role of the electoral Regis[trar] ... I'm not sure of the right title, really, but ... the person responsible for producing the Electoral Roll and the work that's involved in actually ensuring that people register? And has there been any discussion in CODESA about the time-span or the viability of achieving a national unified register?

[P Gordhan]We did get some insight into that process. The group that's dealing with that is George Bartlett's group. I would like to give him the first opportunity to respond to you on that. He's quite committed to getting something going when we go back. George?

[G Bartlett]Yes, Working Group Five ... One of the terms of reference is the ... any legislation that is required, in order to implement decisions of CODESA. Already the

question of the Electoral Act has come up. And there is a task group of our working group that is looking into that. As a result of this visit, it has been considered by my fellow delegates to this visit, that perhaps we should take a good look at the registration of voters. Of course, I think it goes without saying, that if voters should be registered, you have to have a Voters' List. The question is, how fast can we get such a list into place in South Africa for an election in the near future. But I believe that we will probably address this problem as a matter of urgency.

[P Gordhan]I think it's better we are aware of the complexities of such a thing. Particularly in a context where forty per cent, odd, of the people of South Africa live in rural areas and long distances from each other. We are mindful of the fact that, on the one hand, we need maximum participation in any electoral process that takes place in South Africa; and, on the other hand, we might have to have some form of identification. It might not, at this point in time, be a document. It might be something else. We're not sure. Maybe that's going to test our creativity, when we return.

In the long to medium term, certainly what we have seen here has important lessons for us.

Did the question come up at all about the fears that some people have about registering for the Electoral Roll, because of the Poll Tax issue? And are there any implications for South Africa, namely that people might be unwilling to register for an Electoral Roll, for whatever reason? I don't know if you are aware, but there is a fair amount of evidence that people in some ... in our urban areas, didn't register for electoral reasons, because they felt that that would be used to identify them for tax purposes. And, I mean ... Is that something that you were briefed on at all or that you ...?

[P Gordhan]I think we had some exposure to that, but it doesn't really have too much relevance in our situation, at this point in time.

No. But there could be implications for other reasons, where people are ... might even be reluctant to register ... The problems of registering?

Sure.

I don't know what ... which of your committees deals with the question of preparing a climate or opinion suitable for etc, etc ... Wouldn't this relate to the question of violence, intimidation?

That's Working Group One.

Working Group One. Quite clearly, you can't have free elections in South Africa at this moment in time. And quite clearly, the Peace Accord has not brought a diminution of vio[lence] ... political violence. So, where do we go from here? Where do you go?

[P Gordhan]Well, I think the CODESA participants are quite anxious to make the Peace Accord work. In fact, I just heard today that Working Group One, having had discussions with the chairperson of the National Peace Committee, Mr Hall, and the

chairperson of the National Peace Secretariat, Dr Geldenhuys, has, in fact, made a number of recommendations to strengthen the Peace Accord, with a view to ensuring that the essential spirit of the Peace Accord has some level of application, better than what we've had until now.

Secondly, I think there's also anxiety - amongst all the participants - that violence will not help us in the long term, whatever short-term benefits it might bring to anyone.

And thirdly, we've got to find a formula where you seek out a balance between ... And this is what the British do in the Northern Ireland situation - where there isn't complete peace, but there's still elections. And we'll have to work out the formula that will allow us to have elections, as a process towards eliminating violence totally. And, of course, different participants in CODESA have different views on how to address that particular issue.

But the level of commitment is there, at a fairly high level, among all participants, that the violence will not be very useful for us in the medium term. And, certainly, will be destructive in respect of the kind of CODESA process that we are trying to get off the ground.

Well, I've been hearing this kind of talk for the last two years and seen no beneficial outcome. If what one ... The question one asks is, you know ... If you can't even arrest and bring to trial the people who are throwing the cat among the pigeons [?] in the state, where people are identified, held and handed over to the police and there's not even a single trial arising out of that ... Or - what? - there were forty-four cases in March. So, if you can't even deal with a clear-cut issue of that kind, how much more so with these complexities - violence issues? This is the one question.

And the other is, we recently heard Dr Mandela's proposal that the United Nations, or some other external agency, should take control of security. This really sounds like the counsel of despair, because, clearly, no government can go to ... agree to handing over the supervision of security forces. Is CODESA considering the question of one of its committees discussing the issue? Is it projected that that committee will get effective supervisory control, overall supervisory control [unintelligible]?

[P Gordhan]Your initial criticism - or your initial remarks which reflected criticism of us on this particular issue - is an understandable one. And, as you know, different political organisations within CODESA have different attitudes and perspectives on this particular matter. And, that's for the record. I don't think, from here, that I need to tell you about that.

In respect of the second ... Both Working Groups One and Three are still looking at that issue, in that control ... joint control of the security forces, during the interim government, stroke interim arrangements, period is, in fact, a matter that most parties seem to agree with. The formula might differ from organisation to organisation. I would imagine that, by CODESA 2, there would have to be some agreement, at a sort of broad-principle level, in respect of an issue like that. I suppose we are all hoping that we will get to that point.

Have you looked at other countries at all? I mean, you've been to Britain ...?

If you can arrange a few more invitations for us, we'll be looking at other countries! But no, we've just been here. I'm sure there are members of the political organisations that have in fact been to other countries and looked at the situation. I'm not sure if my colleagues are aware of any other information in this regard?

[M Phosa?]Well, we have had discussions with the new Zambian Government on their elections and how they ran them. And we do have continued contact and discussions with some overseas ... They have offered to lend assistance in some respects.

What was the paper that you visited?

[P Gordhan]Manchester Evening News.

What's the current state of play, within CODESA, about the media? A lot of it's focused on electronic media, I'm told. But is it likely that the ownership and also the [obscured by foreground noise] of the South African printed media will also be picked up in CODESA?

It hasn't come up yet, in that form, to the best of my knowledge. The focus has been on the electronic media. Janet?

[J Love]Well, except that the media, in general, including written media ... It needs to come within a framework, some sort of multi-party structure, in terms of a process of constant evaluation, during the electoral period. We're at something that is ... We're in the course of a discussion where, at this stage, the electronic media is kind of the first item. But that is because of the fact that you're talking about a scarce resource, much scarcer ... Even though written media is not as available there as it is here ... You're talking about a scarce resource, in the name of electronic media.

[Someone who is leaving]Excuse me, I've got a train to catch ...

Thank you.

[P Gordhan]Sure. Thank you.

Perhaps we could end the formal part - if that is what we can call this - of this discussion and you're free to then speak to us off the record for a few minutes. And, may I say once again, from all of us, thank you for your presence. We hope that this has been [...]

[Break in recording and end of section covering this meeting]

Speaker on British Constitutional History and the Constitutional Process (An academic - institution and faculty unknown)

[A great deal of loud background noise and conversation which sometimes obscures the speaker and occasionally drowns out questions from the floor altogether]

[...] they define our constitution. And we've written it down in statutes from time to time, but it's really the historic constitution modified. And so, what you have, going right back to the Middle Ages, is the House of Lords, which really consisted of the people who owed military service to the Crown - who were called into counsel, by the King. And that's the origin of the House of Lords.

Now, they, of course, developed into being major owners of land and they built up huge estates. And the aristocracy dominated English politics from the late seventeenth century through to the late nineteenth century. For about two centuries. The House of Lords was enormously important in what gradually became known as the balanced constitution.

The notion was that you had these three elements. The Crown was the executive[?] element. The House of Lords representing quality[?] and the Lower House really representing other interests in the kingdom. And the notion was really that of a three-legged stool: the three parts in agreement[?] really represented the different ...

How equal were they?

The House of Lords was really the dominant element. The King's power was being eroded steadily through the eighteenth century, though he didn't finally lose it until 1832. The first [unintelligible]. The House of Lords went on being a powerful element in the constitution until 1911. But, increasingly, they became conscious that, having created an electorate [unintelligible] which appeared to embody something which, I suppose, we would loosely call democracy, that they actually ought to defer to the democracy. And that gradually evolved in the second half of the nineteenth century.

There was a notion that the people's power mattered most. That, because you had a long Parliament - you had a seven-year Parliament -the parliamentarians might get out of touch with the people. And, therefore, the House of Lords felt that they had the right to say to the House of Commons: "That piece of legislation will not go through, that piece of law will not go through, till you have taken it back to a further election".

The interesting thing is that, when the House of Lords clashed with the House of Commons over the Budget in 1909, what Asquith did - he was the Liberal Prime Minister who abolished the veto power of the House of Lords - what he did was to put into legal form that convention as it has developed. So, the House of Lords was given a delaying power to cover the second half of the Parliament. And, at the same time, Parliament was shortened down to five years.

The only veto power that remained to the House of Lords was the ability to prevent the House of Commons from perpetuating its own ...

[Some unintelligible comments / a question from a CODESA delegate]

[P Gordhan]Almost the guardians of democracy?

They are, in a sense, the long stop, I think - if you understand a cricketing analogy - of democracy. That's the only case where the House of Lords can still veto.

In 1948, the Conservative Government then shortened that delaying power, effectively to ... Well, it varies, because it's stated in terms of parliamentary sessions. But they effectively shortened it down to about a year, at most. In fact, in practice, rather less than a year. But there's still a chance for the House of Lords to say: "Think again" to the House of Commons. But there isn't the power to force them to take an issue to the election.

What are the consequences in Parliament?

It remains quite an interesting sanction, because, of course, it does create delay. And, of course, parliamentary time is valuable. So, one of the sanctions, in a sense, which still is in existence, is the ability, in fact, to cause a government to lose time on its legislation. So, it's perhaps a more effective sanction than simply delaying the legislation for six weeks. You can get closer to give-and-take between the two Houses - in which, really, rather than impose delays on your legislation, you compromise on it with the House of Lords.

Now, I've just said the House of Lords was really the hereditary peerage. The people who inherited these great estates were summoned and formed part of the House of Lords. But, then, in 1958, the Conservative Government added to that the notion of life peers. Life peerages. These are people who have distinguished themselves in life - either as politicians or trade-unionists or industrialists - and they are therefore given a peerage which cannot be passed on to their children. So, it's unlike the hereditary peerage. But which is there while they are alive.

And now, those life peers are probably more important than the hereditary peerage. They tend to make a far larger proportion of what we call the working peers. In other words, the people who actually turn up at the House of Commons. You are, these days, paid to turn up at the House of Lords - an attendance allowance, not a salary - but a lot of the hereditary peerage don't bother. They prefer to be looking after their estates, entertaining the tourists, which is necessary to upkeep their stately homes. And so, a lot of the work of the House now falls on the life peers.

You said the hereditary peerage does not get salaries?

Yes, they do. Everybody that turns up. They have to state, at the start of a parliamentary session ... They have to say whether they're going to turn up. If they're going to turn up, then they can draw an attendance allowance for attending.

Per diem?

By day. Yes.

A per diem payment?

Yes.

Now, this would be mainly [unintelligible]?

Quite a number do. It's their choice. But quite a large number of the hereditary peers don't bother. They actually think they would rather be doing something else than sitting for hours in the House of Lords, listening to debates. Whereas the life peers, who are nearly all distinguished people in retirement, have nothing else to do with their time except sit at the House of Lords. I don't want to be cynical about that point. They may have other jobs to do, but they think the House of Lords is very important. Whereas the hereditary peers, who are very often younger, who have to go out to earn money to keep going - their estates going; they have to manage those estates - don't put quite as much emphasis on the House of Lords as the life peers.

It now means that while the hereditary peerage was dominant, the Conservatives had an absolutely in-built majority. They still do, if all the hereditary peers decide to turn up. But normally, the life peers now have created almost a cross-party atmosphere in the House of Lords. And it regards itself as very much a revising chamber, to make sure that the House of Commons legislation is in good shape; that is does actually say what it means to say; and that it is sensible. So, you suddenly find that the House of Lords is now taken much more seriously.

They gained in stature by actually having their proceedings televised before the House of Commons. And, so, they added to their prestige, because they were seen to be operating by the public. And they were seen to be operating quite well. They made good speeches, they knew what they were talking about and they seemed to be doing serviceable[?] things. So, their stature suddenly improved.

Now, obviously it's a very curious system. One jokes occasionally and says that it's now the only route by which the ordinary working man can reach the legislature. As the House of Commons has become more middle-class, you occasionally get a jobbing gardener or a Canadian lumberjack as an hereditary peer. So ... But most of them are, in fact, either very distinguished elderly gentlemen; a few ladies - they're getting more; and the hereditary peerage.

And you wouldn't normally have created a chamber like that. So, efforts have been made to reform it. But the major effort, that was actually agreed between the Conservative Party front bench and the Labour Party front bench, broke down on opposition from back benches on both sides.

A lot of people in the House of Commons don't want to give more power to the House of Lords and they think that if you had them elected, the House of Lords would have to be given more power, because it would have equal status to the House of Commons. So, there is a tacit agreement in the House of Commons, among a lot of people, that they don't really

want to reform the House of Lords. They'd rather it stayed slightly anomalous, useful but, in the end, acquiescent in what the House of Commons does. So, the reform package that was put together in 1968, '69, was filibustered into oblivion. They just talked it out in the House of Commons. They refused to let Government guillotine the Bill and they just went on talking. And so, the Government gave up in despair.

What does it mean, this power of review? What is it in practice?

In practice ...

What can they do to legislation before they pass it?

... they can amend it. The convention is that, if it's a Bill for which the Government has a mandate - in other words, if it was in the manifesto for the election - they will normally pass it on the second reading. In other words, they will agree the principle of the Bill, but they will then amend it in detail.

And there are two sorts of amendments. There are those which are genuine improvements to the Bill. There is usually very little trouble about that. But there are also amendments if they dislike the Bill. And usually there is a row about that. The House of Commons then debates the House of Lords members, rejects them and then sends the Bill back up to the House of Lords, which then has to pass it, eventually. But not until a [unintelligible]. In fact, the House of Lords usually do pass it, without delaying it further.

But is the House of Commons bound by the ... dependent on the House of Lords?

Only if it agrees them.

It doesn't overrule them?

The House of Lords cannot overrule the Commons, because, in the end, the House of Commons can always insist on it.

But does the House of Lords have the power to reshape the details?

Yes. And it's used very often as a ... by the Government. On the whole, most legislation is initiated by the Government. But individual Members of Parliament, whether in the Lords or the Commons, can initiate legislation, but it has a limited chance of getting through.

In other words, they initiate legislation ... It must still get a blessing ...?

Oh, yes. All legislation initiated must go through both Houses of Parliament. So, if a Bill starts its life in Lords, it must go to the Commons in order to get their blessing as well.

And then go back to the House of Lords?

Well, if there are amendments, yes. The House of Lords would see it again. Because a Bill has to be in a shape that is agreed by both chambers. But always, in the end, the House of

Commons can insist on its own amendments. The House of Lords has no longer a veto power. Whereas the House of Commons has. So, the House of Commons can say: "Right. This is what we want. [Unintelligible] to hell [?] with your amendments. We're going to shove this through". And then it can be delayed about six months to eight months. But no more than that. And then it becomes law.

If one summarises the role of the House of Lords in legislation, is it purely advisory to the House of Commons? In other words, the House of Lords' role in legislation - if you would like to correct me ... I would say, from what you are saying, is purely advisory to the House of Commons.

It's ... It's a bit more than advice, because it is a formal amendment. It has to be debated by the House of Commons and either accepted or overruled. So, I think I would use "advisory" ... It carries too light a meaning.

It's heavier, but it can influence the debate and you either accept it or reject it?

That's right. So, it's a bit more than advisory ...

It has a persuasive power?

It's not only a persuasive power, but, of course, if you're going to reject it, then that may take up time. Because the House of Lords may then debate your rejection and send it back to the House of Commons. So, the delaying power can cost a Government time. And, in a very tight parliamentary session, they may decide that discretion really is better. And although that's not a perfect amendment from the Government's point of view, it may be worth accepting.

There was a classic example, just before the general election, where the House of Lords had amended one of the education Bills to say that, although the Government Inspectorate of Schools was to be privatised, nevertheless, the particular inspectors for each school to be inspected were to be chosen by the Government's Chief Inspector. And Kenneth Clark [?], at the end, had the choice of either accepting that amendment or losing the Bill, because the general election was fast approaching and he was running out of time. And he chose to accept the amendment because he didn't want to lose the Bill.

So, the delaying power can still have a limited impact.

Is this an attempt to ...? I mean, the creation of the House of Lords may be seen, because of the [obscured by noise] because, you see, it's not democratically elected ...

It's not democratically elected at all.

You couldn't say it was [obscured by noise] democratically elected?

But it was not, in a sense, created to do that. It has simply evolved from something that was originally created to allow the King to take counsel about whether he went to war or not, with the people who would have to supply the troops. And it evolved, through being the

voice of property, to being something that is still that, but is rather more than that. It really has become, in a sense, a House that is, in large part, made up of people who have distinguished themselves by their contribution to national life and who are, therefore, thought still to have something to say that is useful to the House of Commons. So, it has a considerably greater moral authority than if it was simply the property owners.

I have noticed [obscured by noise] election, [unintelligible], that one of the roles of the House of Commons is that they are the highest [unintelligible] in the land ...

Yes.

Now, could you perhaps explain ... Because, from what you say [unintelligible], obviously they don't need necessarily to have particular qualifications, although they [unintelligible].

Yes. But what has happened with that is that both Houses of Parliament are in fact courts. Their real origin ... of the House of Commons, was as a court. And both Houses are still courts.

Even now?

Yes. But they don't ever sit as courts. Except the House of Commons occasionally sits as a court as the judge of its own members and their privileges. And it can penalise them.

The House of Lords never, these days, sits as a court. What the House of Lords has done is, in effect, to delegate its powers to a number of law lords. They are judges of very senior standing, who have been created peers to be the Supreme Court within Britain. They are the topmost court. So, the ordinary peers never now sit as a court. They leave all their judicial functions to this special body. And those law lords, as they are called, are appointed until retirement by the Lord Chancellor. And they are selected ...

[J Love]Who is an elected person?

Hmm?

Who is an elected ...?

No. The Lord Chancellor is ... [Laughs].

The Lord Chancellor is another supremely anachronistic relic ...

[Unintelligible remark]

No, you're absolutely right. The Lord Chancellor is always a lawyer ...

You said he's a lawyer?

He's always a lawyer. He's always created a peer. He's never a commoner, these days.

It's not written down in law anywhere?

No. It's not written down in law anywhere.

So, the Lord Chancellor is another one of these type of ...?

Yes. The Lord Chancellor is a fascinating anachronism, because he sits in the Cabinet ...

Where do you find him? Is he hereditary?

No, he's not hereditary.

Who appoints him?

The Prime Minister.

Who is elected?

Who is elected.

But the new Prime Minister can only appoint a new Lord Chancellor when the old Lord Chancellor dies?

No. No, no, no. The Lord Chancellor is a political appointment and can be sacked just like any other political appointment.

Callaghan was the Lord Chancellor ...?

Hmm? No, Callaghan was the Prime Minister. It's a political appointment ...

He has to be renewed every change of Prime Minister?

John Major, if he forms a new Cabinet, will probably drop the present Lord Chancellor and will create a new Lord Chancellor.

If he wants?

He doesn't have to do it, but if he wants to.

The Lord Chancellor is usually a distinguished lawyer ...

And a peer?

He sometimes is not a very distinguished lawyer, but he is a good political lawyer.

He is a lawyer and a peer?

He's made a peer. Yes.

But he needn't be ...?

He's made a peer.

A life peer?

Usually a life peerage, though not inevitably. You could make him a hereditary peer if you wanted to.

Historically, related to the position of the monarchy, we heard very strong views about it from [obscured by noise]. They would like to have [obscured by noise]. Some of them would like [obscured by noise]. Now, are you not expecting them - particularly with the youth here - to query this arrangement?

Yes. Indeed, there are obvious ... There are obvious problems with the arrangement ...

Yes.

... because it has simply grown. It has simply evolved. Now, there are all kinds of conventions that surround it. Now, conventions have only a persuasive force. They are not enforceable in law. But, nevertheless, it's thought bad form to break a convention. You put yourself at a disadvantage with the electorate. The electorate is really the ultimate arbiter.

And what you would not do is to try to be too slick with the Lord Chancellor. You would always go for a man of some distinction, who was respected by his fellow lawyers. You would always take great care that you listened to him on matters of the law. Because he is the man who is really advising you.

There are three law officers. There's the Lord Chancellor, who can sit as a judge, but he sits in Cabinet as your most senior legal adviser. And then you have two other legal advisers who, again, are treated rather differently: the Attorney General and Solicitor General, who are the man who pleads your case in court and the man who actually advises you on the law. And they actually don't sit in Cabinet and, by convention, if they give you advice, you accept it.

So, there's this public censure if you were to disobey a convention [unintelligible]?

The only arbiter, in the end, would be what the electorate thought of that. But the press would make an enormous storm and you would suddenly ... You would be felt to have damaged your credibility.

Is that so?

[J Love]But isn't that ...?

Yes. Indeed, the ... In 1924, the Government fell because it interfered. It interfered with the exercise of judicial discretion. And Parliament ...

What year?

In 1924. And Parliament elected to set up a Select Committee of Enquiry. And the Government treated that as a vote of censure and it was defeated. Now, it was a minority Government. But the House of Commons is quite sensitive to how people should behave. Party loyalty goes so far. But it does, actually, in the end, run up against something which is really the House of Commons' sense about what is proper.

[J Love]How many law lords are there?

There are seven law lords.

Always?

Always, I think, at the moment, yes.

Seven?

Of which five ... Seven, plus the Lord Chancellor. Of whom five sit as the Supreme Court.

What happens to the other two?

Well, it's a sort of ... You pick five out of the seven. It means that ... Well, you ... You don't want to be working the whole time. So, you always pick five. And the Lord Chancellor can choose whether to sit or not. Some Lord Chancellors have sat a great deal. Those who are really interested in creating law by judgements. Lord Horsham[?] was an invariable sitter - and a very, very good lawyer. Others have been much less interested than that. They've really, in a sense, been more interested in the political side of the job: in advising the Government.

Is there any document that [obscured by noise]? There is a statement that some trade unions [obscured by noise] included in the House of Lords.

No. The trade ... Individual trade-unionists may become lords. But they will never become involved as law lords. What the Labour Party were proposing to do, in industrial relations, was to create a new industrial court, in which a judge would sit, flanked by what are called assessors - expert advisers: one lord from the trade unions; one lord from the employers. But this was for a very specific purpose. It was to arbitrate in industrial disputes. And that is why you drew on that process of assessing ... assessment. But that's very different from the Supreme Court. That was to be a special court, [unintelligible] ambiguity.

Come to think about what you say. It is just different from some of the things we are used to. But it is not like we don't have conven[tions] ... We may not have codes and conventions ... I mean, there are a lot of things that I [unintelligible] overseas ...

Yes.

... which I don't [unintelligible] which I know.

That's right.

And you can't ... Well, you don't flaunt them.

That's right.

If you had flaunted them, you would get a type of public censure ...

That's right.

... in very many situations.

But one of the difficulties, it seems to me, is ... And this is a body which has evolved and changed over something like nine centuries now, and therefore, it is not easy to make it sound rational, because it is ... The English constitution is constantly changing. I mean, life peers have only been in since '58, and yet, they already, in some sense, are the most important part of this body. Although they are the most junior part of this body. And that's a sign of the flexibility of the English constitution. It does adapt quite considerably.

Now, those people shift lightly[?] to their party allegiance. They may have been put there, in part, because they were party men. But once they get there, they tend to develop a degree of independence and they use their best judgement. They regard themselves, if you like, as candid friends to the people who are actually in the same party ...

Candid friends?

Candid friends, yes.

Just one thing ... [Unintelligible]. Does the Queen constitute a member of the House of Lords?

No, no. The Queen is a separate chamber of the legislature in her own right.

Is she above ...?

There are three elements to the constitution. There is the House of Lords, there is the House of Commons and there is the Crown.

And what?

[J Love]The Crown.

The Crown.

And the Queen is, in fact, the present embodiment of the Crown. Now, by convention, again - I have to say - the Queen has delegated most of her powers to the Cabinet. The Cabinet, really, is the Queen in commission, as we say. It is a committee which exercises the powers of the Crown. And, indeed, in practice, some of them are exercised by the Prime Minister

on his own. The only powers the Queen has retained are the power to choose a Prime Minister - when it is not obvious who the Prime Minister should be ...

What is the Queen's speech, which ...?

Ah, the Queen's speech is ... Well, let me just finish on the Queen and I'll come to the Queen's speech.

The other power the Queen has, is to refuse a dissolution of the House of Commons, if the Prime Minister recommends it in circumstances which the Queen thinks are unconstitutional.

But, beyond that, the Queen has either given up her powers or has delegated them. And that's because the Queen, in a sense, wants to remain as the neutral long stop of the constitution - even beyond the House of Lords. And it's a bit like dropping the nuclear bomb. If you dropped it too often, you'd destroy the whole system. So, you don't drop it.

I was led to understand that one of her functions is to assent to legislation passed by the ...

She always has ... But, she ... Her assent is necessary, but it is always given. The last Queen to veto a Bill was Queen Anne, about three centuries ago.

So, she can veto the legislation, if she likes?

Yes, but she, by convention ...

[J Love]She doesn't.

[Other CODESA delegate]Does not.

... does not do it. That one has gone. Because you regard the will of the Lower House as being the will of the people. And the Queen will abide by the will of the people.

In a sense, the only functions that she has retained are the functions that actually assist the working of the constitutional process. In other words, if ... Say, we had arrived with a hung parliament and it had not been obvious who should be Prime Minister. Say, the ... John Major had three hundred seats and Neil Kinnock had three hundred seats. The Queen, through her advisers, would take sounding. She would find out from people who was more acceptable, who was more likely to command a majority in the House of Commons. And then, she would invite that person to become the Prime Minister. But, normally, it's obvious. Normally, it's the leader of the largest party.

You said, just now: "Through her advisers". Now, would those advisers be chiefly selected by her, at her own discretion? Or, are there certain formalities about such people ... about such advisers?

No, there are no formalities. They will be people selected by her. And the people she normally turns to first are her own Private Secretary, who is a very senior, usually very

experienced man - often an ex-civil servant. She would turn to the Cabinet Secretary who, in some sense, is the guardian of the rules of the game, as well. She might well turn, in certain circumstances, to the Clerk of the House of Commons, who is the most senior civil servant in Parliament. She might turn to constitutional lawyers and constitutional historians. She might turn to elder statesmen - people who have retired from active politics, but who know a great deal about it. But she would use those chaps ... The most important man, in the end, would be her Private Secretary. He would tend to draw that advice together and advise her. But, in the end, it would be her choice, her decision.

These advisers, are they full-time?

The Queen's Private Secretary is full-time, yes. And it's usually a very long-term appointment. You tend to hold it, usually, for a couple of decades. The present one is relatively new in office and, I think, was an ex-Foreign Office man, wasn't he?

[Unidentified voice]Yes. He was, yes.

Outside of the Private Secretary, are there other people who are known as the Queen's advisers?

No. No. It's all done very privately.

So, it's not a post?

No, it's not a post that you ... The Queen's Private Secretary is a post. That is a public post. And the Cabinet Secretary, clearly, is a public post. But, nobody would know who the Queen is talking to. It would all be done with great confiden[tiality] ... Because, in the end, it would be the Queen's decision that would be announced. But she does it now on very limited occasions and, invariably, she tries to avoid it, if at all possible.

And she let it be known, in 1974, that she would prefer the Prime Minister not to ask for a dissolution. Because she would have been bound to give him a dissolution, if he'd asked for it. But she thought a second election, immediately after the first, would be wrong. And the Prime Minister took the hint and didn't ask for it.

And, you know, a lot of it is [...]

[Break in recording and apparently end of section on British constitutional history and the constitutional process]

[End of transcript of proceedings of CODESA delegation visit to the United Kingdom]

scribe1-28/07/92.admin-ashley to scribe6-04/11/92.admin-ashley
codesa uk visit/transcript/april 1992