# FOCUS

## The Taxman Cometh

At the same time as the People's Petition against the poll tax was being launched in London, the 'Return To Sender' campaign got off the mark in Scotland.

The tax is massively unpopular in Scotland. The most recent opinion poll revealed that 7J% were opposed to the poll tax and 42% of normally law-abiding Scots sufficiently so to support a non-payment campaign. Equally there is little agonising over alternatives. The Labour Party remains clearly committed to the rating system and continues to average 10% in the opinion polls.

In the next few weeks one million leaflets will be delivered to the overwhelming majority of households in urban Scotland.

This 'STOP-IT' campaign also continues to gather signatures for their petition, with a realistic target of over half of Scotland's adult population.

In practical terms STOP-IT aims to prevent the establishment of the poll tax register by October I, by encouraging individuals to send back their registration forms uncompleted. To avoid a fine, people simply have to find a legitimate query - and many have already been suggested.

Whether this tactic will be successful, given the other sources of information available to registration officers, is far from clear and partly underlies the continuing political debate in Scotland as to the advisibility and practicality of a non-payment campaign.

No matter what happens however, no-one can refuse to pay the tax until April '89, and a lot of discussion and assessment must take place before then.

Not least the level of opposition in Scotland and the government's inevitable humiliation at forthcoming district elections may force it to consider delaying implementation until the same date as England and Wales. •

*Ian Smart*