

Our Changing Economy

Arm-Twisting Seen Possible UGF Need

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LAST year, \$6,850,000 was pledged to the United Givers Fund. About \$340,000 was never paid. Even the amount pledged was \$280,000 less than the announced goal, although the campaign was greatly prolonged. The goal itself was far below the agencies' needs; it was simply a figure that the campaign leaders fixed upon as the most they thought they could achieve.

Once again a "goal" has been set—this year, at \$7.2 million—more on the basis of the public's willingness to give than of actual needs. Daniel W. Beli, Chairman of this year's drive, has said the needs of the 147 member agencies are \$8.5 million.

If the \$7.2 million goal is not reached, despite the efforts of 40,000 volunteers, many people will be dissatisfied. In fact, unless the goal is exceeded by \$500,000, many leaders of member agencies will be most unhappy.



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Can UGF Survive Another Short Fall?

Dissatisfaction may cause some agencies to withdraw from UGF and try to go it alone. A few may fold and others will curtail their activities, leaving certain welfare needs unmet until such time as the public conscience authorizes government agencies to expand to meet them.

Alternatively, the UGF may be persuaded to exert more pressure on all of us in the future. More use might be made of "fair share" guides. Invidious comparisons might be permitted: "pace setter" firms might be recognized; degrees of generosity publicly acknowledged in some way, and less attempt made to shield non-contributors and "token" contributors.

Is a little arm-twisting justified "to persuade" people to give to UGF, or to increase the amount of their "voluntary" giving? Is it wrong to make those who evade social responsibility sweat a bit? Can it be done without hurting those who have extraordinary domestic burdens and others who are generous in other causes?

If such pressures are not acceptable, can private welfare activity on a wide front survive in a large community like Washington, where there is so little feeling of personal responsibility for one's neighbors? Already we have come most of the way toward full transfer of welfare activities to the government. In the Washington area, the government finances over 90 per cent of welfare expenditures.

The welfare load increases, but the burden carried by private agencies has remained about the same in recent years. This year, the 119 agencies of the Health and Welfare Council will get only \$13,000 more than the old federation's 112 agencies got in 1956.

How Can Needs Be Met?

The generous few give generously, of time and money. But last year, well over half of all persons working in the Washington area gave nothing and many who were contributors gave stingily and grudgingly—some only a dollar. A great many businesses gave nothing. Despite occasional complaints about pressures to contribute, it has probably become a lot easier to escape one's tithes than it was years ago when communities were smaller and nothing escaped the attention of one's neighbors.

The problem is to meet proven needs—needs that have been carefully scrutinized and justified by professional social workers and budget-minded businessmen on the Health and Welfare Council and the UGF. But how? Experience shows that even in "good years" these needs won't be met by telling people: "Contribute if you wish but feel no compulsion to do so." Too few of us give because of sheer thankfulness and humanity.

Should we turn to the Government to finance more of these needs be increased taxes? Should we give up the more flexible, more varied and often more progressive programs of private agencies? Should we rely more on paid government workers and less on volunteers?

What is the will of the community? Let's hear from the non-contributors and the niggardly contributors, especially those who decry "creeping socialism." Would they prefer to be pressured by UGF, or taxed a bit more?