

CLOSE-UP OF A COMMUNITY CHEST

By GREGORY J. LISTON

How much of the money that you and I contribute to charitable causes actually reaches its destination? One town — let's call it Central City — decided to find out by engaging five out-of-town social work authorities to investigate its Community Chest. The results of a four-week survey are amazing enough to merit national attention, since conditions revealed undoubtedly hold true for many other towns. To put it bluntly, the investigation revealed that Central City's humanitarian instincts were diverted primarily to support of a group of social workers, and the complicated, wasteful, ineffective social work machinery they had built. It disclosed that of each dollar contributed:

- 58 cents went for salaries;
- 3½ cents paid for administrative supplies;
- 5 cents covered cost of agency quarters;
- 5½ cents went to utility companies;
- 5 cents defrayed costs of conventions, travel and dues to national organizations;
- 2 cents went for insurance premiums, taxes and interest;

- 5 cents bought food for charity cases;
- ¼ cent bought clothing;
- 1 cent paid household expenses;
- ¼ cent provided medical care;
- 4 cents went as direct aid to the needy;
- 2 cents paid for educational and entertainment activities;
- 8 cents covered "miscellaneous" items, among which there was not one strictly chargeable to "charity."

The city has 100,000 people, of whom 20,000 contributed a total of \$450,000 to various "worthy causes" in 1938. In so far as Central City is typical, therefore, you and I contributed \$22.50 on an average, to charity. The largest share of the total collected, one-third or \$150,000 — which is to say, \$7.50 of your contribution and mine — was turned over to the Community Chest. The ultimate beneficiaries, the needy people, actually received 11 per cent — 82½ cents of that \$7.50 — in food, clothing, household expenses, medical care, and direct aid.

From other sources, such as endowments, legacies, etc., the Community Chest obtained an addi-

tional \$30,000. With \$180,000 to spend for "charity," the Chest in fact disbursed \$159,100 to maintain their social workers and their machinery of operation, and \$20,900 for charity. The last fundraising campaign was known as the "Mobilization for Human Needs." But these bookkeeping facts leave considerable doubt as to the aptness of the slogan.

Seventy-four full-time and nine part-time employees are on the payroll of the Chest and member agencies. The Chest director draws \$5000 a year, the salary of the Central City mayor. A professional campaigner is paid a fee of \$4000 for conducting the annual fund drive. This is roughly \$1000 weekly for the time actually devoted to the drive, which is considerably more than any Central City resident earns.

Salaries of member agency employees ranged from \$720 to \$3600 annually, except for a few Negro domestic workers who received as little as \$3 weekly, plus meals, and in some agencies, lodging. Cash salary payments in 1938 totaled \$89,300, but actually \$100,200 must be charged to salaries because many employees receive lodging or meals or both. Salaries in the whole setup are invariably somewhat higher than for com-

parable positions in business. Vacations are much longer. And the only qualification of many, if not most, of these social workers is that they are "highly esteemed or genteel members of the community for whom some method of support had to be found," to use the words of a board member.

You might follow the staff members of the Visiting Nurses Association into homes of indigent sick and feel your money was well spent. The same is true of the nurses of the Tuberculosis Association. If you went into the Catholic orphanage and observed the deeds of the Sisters of Charity, who work without salaries, you would also be well satisfied with the destination of your contribution. But the same can hardly be said for most of the other employees. You would discover that they are simply feeders at the charity trough, and the real objects of your charity.

Administrative expenses dig deeply into the till. In the component agencies these follow fairly closely the expenditures in the Central Chest office, of which the following are typical examples: Campaign expenses totaled \$10,000. Included in the campaign budget was \$1650 for "miscellaneous help," despite the fact that

all campaign workers except the professional campaigner were supposedly volunteers. "Meeting expenses" during the campaign (hotel lunches for the solicitors) totaled \$1043. Other costs included: telephone and telegraph tolls, for a purely local enterprise, \$354; conference and travel, \$250; rent and utilities, \$600; printing and publications, \$650; national dues, \$250; postage, \$450; office supplies, \$750; "other campaign expenses" (this went to a publicity man but for some reason was concealed), \$365. Also there was an item of \$650 for "collection expense," in addition to more than \$1200 paid in commissions to two part-time collectors.

Considering the number of persons Chest agencies must maintain — mainly orphans and aged — expenditures for food, clothing, medical care, and household necessities are pathetically low. Food in most instances is cheap and poorly prepared. Children in orphanages are inadequately clothed. In one the investigating committee found that the children had to go barefooted even into the cold fall months and that their only shoes during the coldest winter months were ill-fitting cast-offs. Half of the buildings are in a bad state of repair, and are inadequately equipped. Floors are bare. Kitchens are

equipped with outmoded facilities. Dining rooms are without linens. The china and silver would be considered unfit for use in the average poor home.

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Charity? Community betterment? Social uplift? These were the objectives, but the committee found that at least half of the agencies were falling far short of their goal. Mainly because of high cost and insignificant value of services rendered, the committee recommended: (1) abandonment of Goodwill Industries; (2) dissolution of Jewish Federated Charities, with their aid to Jewish transients to be administered by the Salvation Army; (3) expulsion from the Chest of a home for unmarried mothers because only three of the eighteen occupants were from Central City; (4) immediate closing of a home for working girls because it was nothing more than a boarding house which received an unjustified subsidy from charitable funds; (5) broadening of the scope of the Boy Scouts because at present they include only boys from homes "of the higher economic levels," and consequently do not merit their large share of charity funds; (6) drastic changes in the Girl Scouts, who also do not

reach into the lower economic strata; (7) discontinuance of free movies and dances at the Boys' Club, which are that agency's most expensive and least necessary activities. The committee also found that generally there was too much overlapping of agency activities, "lack of cooperation" between the agencies, mismanagement, inefficiency, extravagance, and endless squabbling over division of funds.

The self-taxation for worthy causes, of course, is over and above public taxation applied to humanitarian ends. The state Department of Public Welfare had sufficient tax funds — state and federal — to make the following assistance grants in Central City in 1938:

Old age assistance.....	\$76,000
Aid to dependent children..	41,000
Aid to blind.....	3,258
Aid to crippled children....	5,600
Hospitalization of indigent sick.....	6,863
General relief.....	30,000
Surplus commodities distribution.....	210,000
Total	\$372,721

In addition, large sums were spent by the WPA, PWA, NYA, CCC, and smaller sums by county and municipal governments. Careful estimates place the grand total at more than two millions.

Besides this spending from tax funds, besides the \$150,000 con-

tribution to the Community Chest, Central City residents in 1938 gave nearly \$300,000 to various other worthy causes. True, 1938 was an unusually heavy worthy-cause year because of two special campaigns which drew a total of \$100,000. But the \$450,000 collected exceeded the average for the preceding seven years by slightly less than the extra \$100,000. Besides the two special campaigns, fund-raising drives were conducted by an orphanage, the YMCA, the YWCA, the State Tuberculosis Association, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Goodfellows, and other agencies which are not members of the Chest.

No one seriously suggests that the whole private charitable system be junked. The need for a weeding out of the dead wood, however, seems indisputable. That this will ever be done seems most doubtful, to judge from the experience of Central City. Of the committee's recommendations, only one was followed. The home for working girls was closed. Other agencies are continuing as usual. Why? Because the board of each is filled with "influential men and women" who must have something of a charitable nature as a sop to their egos, and who are easily flattered into submission by social

workers with jobs at stake. These board members will fight to the bitter end to save their pet projects from abandonment.

Chest officials should have learned something from the excellent records of such agencies as the Salvation Army, Junior League Milk Fund, Red Cross, and Catholic orphanage. Several years ago, when Central City contributors protested against worthless drains on Chest funds, they were permitted to specify which agencies were to receive their contributions. When collections started coming in, however, it was discovered that the few worthy agencies would have more than enough money, while the majority would have none at all. Consequently the earmarking was quietly ignored.

Not many Central City contributors know the facts about Chest finances. The local press, which "cooperates fully," has revealed few details uncovered by the sur-

vey, and many who know the details "just can't be bothered with figures." Besides, the bulk of the money is obtained by coercion. Employees of many firms are given to understand that they are expected to contribute liberally, and give more than they can afford. This not only lightens the burden of the firm but enables it to display prominently its "Gold Star Award" poster. Though employees contribute practically all of the quota, the firm alone gets the credit in the published lists. These employees never become delinquent in their pledges, since they are deducted from pay checks along with Social Security taxes and other unavoidable deductions.

"Sometimes I wonder," mused the secretary of a Chest agency in the writer's presence as she examined the 1938 report, "if we really are doing anything worth while." Which is a start in the right direction.

WARNING TO DICTATORS

By Thomas Paine

When a man in a long cause attempts to steer his course by anything else than some polar truth or principle, he is sure to be lost. It is beyond his capacity to keep all the parts of an argument together, and make them unite in one issue, by any other means than having this guide always in view. Neither memory nor invention will supply the want of it. The former fails him and the latter betrays him.

QUEJO THE KILLER

BY EDWIN CORLE

CHARLIE Kenyon and Art Schroeder were looking for gold outcroppings. The search for the elusive metal has always carried with it the added element of danger. But the hazard reaches a new high in the particular part of the country where on February 18, 1940, Messrs. Kenyon and Schroeder elected to search. Pyramid Canyon, Eldorado Canyon, and Black Canyon, not even names on a map to most people, are part of the chain of precipitous rocky gorges cut by the age-old flow of the Colorado river. Collectively they determine the course of the river from Boulder Dam south to the lower extremity of Nevada, through a section of some of the roughest terrain in the Southwest.

Kenyon is sixty-three and Schroeder not far from the same age. But they cover the canyon territory with more ease than a kid of twenty. It's second nature now. So on last February 18th, they made their way up a secondary canyon on the Nevada side of the Colorado River about three or four

miles below Willow Beach, where they maintained a camp. Before noon they separated to cover an area as wide as possible, Kenyon edging along one canyon wall, guarding against the sliding detrital rocks, while his partner followed the same technique on the opposite wall.

About noon Kenyon leaned cautiously back against the face of the cliff. Down the canyon a few hundred yards was the ravine head, with a rise of at least a hundred feet straight up. Kenyon let his eyes drop down the sheer face. Near the bottom, where the canyon floor broke up into tumbled boulders, was something that nature never made. Kenyon looked long and hard.

There seemed to be a cave — a cave made by water erosion, no doubt. But guarding its entrance was a six-foot barricade of rocks, a barricade skillfully and strongly made, with the larger rocks at the base and the smaller ones graduating to the top. Now who took the trouble to make that and what was