

Public Policy is a Voluntary Affair

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Discussions of the appropriate roles of the public and voluntary sector have been one of the long-standing and unresolved debates in social welfare in Canada. Indeed, only topics such as the co-ordination of services and interdisciplinary practice rival this hoary old chestnut for longevity and resistance to final resolution. We would venture to guess that every Canadian Conference in Social Welfare since the inaugural event has featured one panel, interest group or keynote speech on the topic of the developing, emerging or future roles of the public and voluntary sectors. Despite the continuing dispute about the precise roles, there has been general agreement that each is necessary. While the strength of the public sector to provide equitable and essential services emerges from its central authority, this is also the source of its weakness in terms of its ability to respond quickly to local need. In its own relatively haphazard way, the voluntary sector offers a variety of services which shore up those of the public sector and, in addition, provides a unique opportunity for citizens and professionals to contribute to social programs.¹

It should be noted at the outset that we do not intend to join what we regard as a pointless debate about the appropriate division of responsibility between the two sectors. The issue is not subject to empirical investigation, nor is it amenable to rational debate. Opinions are based on firmly held convictions regarding the intrinsic merit of one sector as opposed to the other.

The objective of this paper is to examine forces which are confounding an already confused scene and which, if allowed to proceed unchecked, will jeopardize the continued existence of the voluntary sector. The purpose of this paper is, then, to examine these forces, to suggest some of the effective ways in which voluntary organizations in B.C. are coping with

¹ United Way and SPARC Joint Committee, *An Historical and Contemporary Review of the Financing of Social Services in B.C., Illustrating the Roles of the Private and Public Sectors in Funding and Delivering these Services*. Vancouver, September 1980, pp. 5-7. This section provides a succinct summary of the necessary and complimentary roles of each sector.

an inhospitable environment and to recommend some public policy changes which would assist the voluntary sector.

FORCES AFFECTING VOLUNTARY SERVICES

The current slogan in the public sector is fiscal accountability. It has quickly replaced community accountability as the guiding principle in providing social services. In an era of the devalued dollar and the increasing public concern about the percentage of the budget spent on health, education and social services, it is not at all surprising that public officials are concerned with value for their money. This emphasis is primarily directed at increasing the efficiency of the public sector, but it is also having profound effects on the private sector. Some of these are discussed below.

First, in B.C. and other jurisdictions, government departments have realigned their priorities to focus on crisis services. For example, in this province the Mental Health Act makes provision for preventive services and, in the past, a wide range of counselling services, community-based education programs and consultation services have been offered through the local Mental Health Centres. However, in recent years the policy, not the legislation, has changed, and services are increasingly directed at the chronically mentally ill and those in acute psychiatric crisis. One immediate effect on private agencies is that they are expected to respond to families who have been excluded from services previously available from the public Mental Health Centres.

Another example occurred when the Ministry of Human Resources changed its policy on special needs to include crisis grants only. A local church welfare organization was inundated with requests for furniture, winter clothing and food, stretching their slim resources to the maximum and forcing staff to realign their program priorities. Usually these policy changes are made without any advance warning to the voluntary community and without increasing government funds to these agencies.

A second development is that the public sector is increasingly viewing voluntary agencies as less expensive vehicles for delivering government programs. While fee-for-service is by no means new, the emphasis on this approach has increased markedly in B.C. in recent years.² Most child

² A similar trend was noted by the Task Force on the Role of the Private Sector in Criminal Justice. While approximately 2 percent of the federal justice monies was transferred to non-governmental organizations, only .2 percent were actually earmarked for sustaining grants. The rest was used for purchase of service arrangements. See *Community Involvement in Criminal Justice*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1977), p. 70.

care, homemaker and youth work is contracted to local voluntary agencies and, in fact, many were formed for this very purpose. However, the effects of this arrangement on voluntary organizations are only beginning to surface. These include low salaries, inadequate and unsophisticated management systems, and a competitive environment in which organizations bid against one another for government contracts. These agencies are often uncertain about the actual cost of delivering such services and unaware of or unable to meet professional service standards. In addition, because many organizations receive almost their entire budget from a single government contract, their vulnerability in the face of changing government policy is profound.³ Although the transfer of direct services from the public to the private sector has been welcomed by many, particularly those who favour the reduction in size of large government departments and the development of community-based voluntary agencies, a British scholar cautions against enthusiastic endorsement. J. T. Winkler describes the transfer as "off-loading" and warns that it may presage a reduced commitment to social programs.⁴ In Winkler's view, off-loading may be the first in a two-stage process whereby programs are first transferred and then cancelled.

Third, government funding to voluntary agencies has been increasingly directed to those agencies offering direct service to individual clients. Those with a community development, advocacy or social planning focus have found it more difficult to obtain government funds. For example, the 1980 annual report of the Ministry of Human Resources indicated that the number of organizations receiving funds under the miscellaneous services section, which includes planning agencies, referral services and women's groups, fell from thirteen in 1978 to seven in 1980. As a consequence, we are witnessing the elimination of advocacy, policy analysis and social planning functions which traditionally have been a vital component of the voluntary sector. In addition, as agencies become increasingly involved in delivering direct services their personnel requirements change from a broadly-based community membership which can speak

³ Studies in the United States confirm these findings and, in fact, further suggest that voluntary agencies end up underwriting government services as they are unable to bill for the actual cost of delivering the service. See Hill, William G., "Voluntary and Government Financial Transactions," *Social Work* 52 (June 1971), pp. 356-61; Kramer, Ralph M., "Public Fiscal Policy and Voluntary Agencies in Welfare States," *Social Service Review* 53 (March 1979), pp. 1-14.

⁴ J. T. Winkler, "The Political Economy of Administrative Discretion," in Adler and Asquith, *Discretion and Welfare* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981).

strongly on social issues to a small core of well-trained program volunteers and professional staff. Often a disaffected membership and a reduced capacity to develop policy statements result from this transition.

A fourth force affecting the private sector is the increasing uncertainty of voluntary fund raising. While some United Appeals reach their goals, many do not, and certainly the availability of funds for new services is unlikely. Many targets have been set on a "hold the line" basis. The ambivalence of the public towards donating to voluntary sources is also evident. On the other hand, much is said about decreasing government involvement in social services. Yet, when it comes to donation time, many grumble that the government ought to be providing such services. Moreover, the numbers of foundations offering support to voluntary programs are few and far between in Canada, and are generally unavailable to voluntary groups in B.C.⁵

Voluntary agencies like government services are also facing the problem of mounting costs. Although salary increases in the private sector have been rising modestly in comparison to government, there is increasing pressure to provide adequate salaries to staff, particularly because of inflation. Unions are beginning to find a foothold in voluntary services. Recently the Contract Services workers employed by the YW/YMCA in Victoria won bargaining rights as a group under the Government Employees Union and doubled their hourly pay rate. Funds to the agency from the government remained the same, and half the workers were laid off.⁶

Some observers of the human services scene are of the opinion that distinct advantages will accrue from a policy of restricted and targeted funding to the voluntary sector. Such a policy has potential for limiting the growth of existing agencies and preventing others from developing. While at first glance this is a plausible hypothesis, recent experience in the Victoria area does not provide support. The experience here indicates that where gaps in service exist, self-help groups and other voluntary associations come into being to meet the need even though funding is not immediately available. After a period of struggle some of these agencies do manage to obtain financial support although typically this is

⁵ Notable exceptions are the Vancouver Foundation and the Law Foundation of B.C.

⁶ The delivery of service by increasingly youthful voluntary agencies may well be another emerging trend. These organizations are able to survive at least initially on very modest funds because of their extensive use of volunteer labour and very low salaries.

inadequate and precarious.⁷ And it should not be supposed that only the effective agencies survive. Survival is tied as much to connections and to astute public relations as to the provision of effective service.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR EFFORTS

A number of voluntary agencies have developed some interesting approaches to ensure the continued existence of a variety of functions. The following section identifies four examples of these approaches — increasing organizational resources, emphasizing accountability, gaining strength through federation, and assisting existing organizations to change.

1. *Increasing Organizational Resources*

(a) *Diversifying funding sources — the entrepreneurial approach.* Several organizations have attempted to raise independent funds through the development of small businesses within their operation. The most ambitious example of this approach known to the writers comes from Australia. The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, a religious order founded fifty years ago in Fitzroy, Australia, funds many of its diversified services from sources other than government grants.⁸ In fact, in 1979 only 20 percent of the \$3,993,000 budget was made up of public funds, the rest was generated through the sales of reclaimed clothing and furniture, legacies, accommodation rentals, volunteer fund-raising activities, investment income and donations. Direct services such as day care and home help to the handicapped and elderly form only one aspect of the program; considerable funds are also spent on advocacy services such as unemployment rights and an action centre for low-income families. In addition, the Brotherhood sponsors a poverty education project, funds researchers to prepare material on social issues and assists in the development of self-help organizations through direct grants, accounting and consultancy services.

The Matsqui Sumas Abbotsford community service centre in British Columbia has taken a similar approach by raising funds through sales of handicrafts and reclaimed goods.⁹ A relatively small women's organiza-

⁷ For an account of additional funding problems facing voluntary organizations see United Way of the Lower Mainland and SPARC, *Public Funding Policies and Procedures in B.C.* (Vancouver, September 1980).

⁸ See *The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, An Introduction* (Fitzroy, Australia, 1977).

⁹ Walter Paetkau and Richard C. Nann, *What Happened in Abbotsford: Developing Human Resources in a Semi-Rural Multi-Service Centre — Report of the Matsqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Community Development Project* (Vancouver: SPARC of B.C., 1975).

tion in the U.S. became a highly successful and visible force through sales of the Golda Meir poster (but can she type?), using existing retail and distribution systems.

Although this strategy is not a new one, many voluntary organizations have been reluctant to use the entrepreneurial model to generate funds. Some feel that the amount of energy is too great for the return, particularly in mastering the foreign art of distribution and marketing. There is also the very real concern that business priorities will take precedence over service priorities. Yet it does provide another source of support, and the organization that can diversify its funding base can remain at least partially insulated from the vagaries of government funding policies.

(b) *Utilizing the Resources of Government and Business.* Co-operative ventures between the public and private sector can also add to the resource base of voluntary organizations. Many voluntary organizations are co-sponsoring public education programs with local community colleges or universities that have the staff, funds and expertise to mount courses and conferences. Other organizations are using the research expertise of government ministries for their own evaluation, preparing cases for the provincial Ombudsman for advocacy or undertaking joint studies on social issues with relevant university departments. Many United Ways have developed a unique partnership with government and business in their loaned executive program whereby executives are seconded to the United Way Campaign on a full-time basis for a six-week period each year. Not only do these senior people provide management expertise to the campaign, but they serve as a liaison between their company and the United Way.

The YWCA in Vancouver has approached the problem of providing emergency day care in the downtown area with imagination, utilizing resources from the municipal government and private business as well as the provincial government. In exchange for building a suitable day-care space in his building, a local developer was granted concessions by the city government in the number of parking spaces he was able to build and subsequently lease. The YWCA helped negotiate this arrangement between the two parties and will operate the day care, reducing many of the start up and monthly costs which have threatened the survival of other day-care centres. In essence those who park downtown are helping to defray the costs of day care services. Obviously benefits also accrue to government and business through such co-operative ventures, particularly

in assisting them to remain current with community issues and undertake relevant programs.¹⁰

(c) *Increasing Personnel Resources.* Voluntary organizations, particularly those with minimal staff, need working volunteers and board members in order to deliver a reasonable level of service. This has been the essential tradition of the voluntary sector. Yet many volunteers, particularly those at the board level, have been recruited from the community elite or from a limited roster of community-minded citizens who participate on many different boards. Some organizations are finding that figurehead type board members often required more effort than the results warrant. In building a balanced and working board at least three approaches have proved useful:

(i) developing career ladders for volunteers from program to management responsibilities. Well-informed board members can often be developed from the pool of volunteers or clients served in the organization.

(ii) developing board orientation and development programs. The good intentions of many organizations in this area are often buried in the realities of pressing agency business and limited time available for board meetings. However, the creation of a board development committee whose sole function is to track board progress can perform a very useful function for voluntary boards.

(iii) recruiting talented and influential persons for time-limited tasks. Many skilled and busy community people will be willing to volunteer for very specific tasks and the board which adopts a task force approach to some of its work can often attract such people.

2. *Attention to Accountability*

Program Accountability. As noted at the outset, government ministries are being required to increase their capacity to account for funds spent. However, it is extremely difficult to monitor and evaluate large, complicated programs with a long tradition of service. For example, evaluating the outcomes of family and children's services is a complex task and one which provincial ministries have been unable to resolve.

By contrast, the programs of voluntary agencies are often single-purpose programs which do not serve large numbers of clients. Objectives for these programs can be clearly specified, services can be monitored

¹⁰ Conversation with Sharon Willms, Assistant Co-ordinator, Support Services Dept., YWCA, Vancouver, B.C., October 1980.

and outcomes described. The private sector might then lead the way in program evaluation, providing, of course, that resources are made available.¹¹

Fiscal Accountability. Again, financial accounts of private agencies are usually straightforward and easy to maintain, and accountants are usually represented on the boards of directors of voluntary agencies. Hence it should be possible with respect to both programs and financial accountability for private agencies to provide models for the public sector.

3. *Strength in Federation*

(a) *Dealing with funding policies.* The divide-and-conquer thrust of public funding policies can be partially reduced by federations of voluntary organizations, such as the Private Agency Committee of the B.C. Council of the Family, composed of representatives of many small family service type agencies in the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island. Although it is still a relatively new committee, it has begun to develop a set of standards of service for its members to ensure that there is internal agreement about levels of service and to help members insist on adequate funding levels for proposed programs.

(b) *Influencing social policy.* The strength of the federation also lies in its potential in research and public education and as a lobbying group for social change. The Coalition on Children and Youth, sponsored by SPARC, provides a forum for organizations to debate policy issues concerning children and to take action on such major concerns as the development of child welfare legislation in B.C. To this end, the coalition has produced a booklet, *Children in Focus, a Citizen's Guide to the Royal Commission's 5th report in 1976*, publicized the need for community input during the White Paper process in 1978, and took an active part in preparing submissions on the White Paper proposal and the legislative draft of Bill 45. Recently the Transition Houses in B.C. formed a federation concerned with improving policies towards battered women

¹¹ Two examples of innovative approaches to program evaluation are the preparation of a self-directed evaluation manual for voluntary agencies — see Shera, Wes., *Evaluation for Community Service Organizations* (Victoria Volunteer Bureau, 1981) — and the recommendation made by the National Advisory Council on Voluntary Action that voluntary organizations engage in a process of mutual self-study — one carrying out an evaluation of another and vice versa. The added advantages of this latter approach are that agencies gain a working knowledge of the evaluation process and the various programs offered by another agency. See *People in Action, Report of the National Advisory Council on Voluntary action to the Government of Canada* (Ottawa, September 1977), pp. 80-81.

and their children and developing more public awareness about family violence.

(c) *Sharing management systems.* Members report that a by-product of interest group federations such as the Coalition and the Private Agency Committee is the exchange of management materials: personnel manuals, board kits, staff and volunteer development programs, etc. Other community-based federations of voluntary agencies often come together for very practical reasons such as sharing office space, office materials, equipment and even staff. In rural B.C. a number of Community Service Societies still exist (remnants of the Community Resource Board movement) and provide an umbrella society structure for small organizations to share management systems as well as resources. Although the track record of program co-ordination has been dismal, the prospects of administrative co-ordination may be brighter, particularly as funds for administrative functions are increasingly difficult to obtain and as organizations discover that such co-operation ventures do not necessarily jeopardize organizational identities.

4. *Assisting Existing Organizations to Change*

Rather than struggling to provide services which are the responsibility of public and well-established voluntary organizations, some agencies are putting their energy into creating change in these larger organizations. For example, the members of Prime Time, a three-year demonstration for women in middle years, decided from the outset of the project that the needs of the mid-years were so great (economic, legal, medical, education and social) that no organization, no matter how well funded, could hope to address them successfully. Moreover, there were existing organizations in the community which should be responsive to the issues facing mid-years women. Thus Prime Time spent much of its first year designing and testing new programs for women and involving the more responsive community agencies in the joint offering of the most successful of these programs. As the project members gained experience and knowledge, they developed other approaches to creating change, including forming permanent lobby groups, developing co-ordinating and support networks between organizations, infiltrating more resistant organizations, and encouraging women with leadership skills to assume key positions in the community.¹²

¹² M. Callahan, *Prime Time: A Short Term Project for Long Term Change* (Victoria: Fireweed Press, 1980).

These are a few examples of initiatives that the voluntary sector in B.C. is taking to ensure that its traditional functions are preserved. However, to say that voluntary organizations must simply "try harder" is much like urging the unemployed mother with three children, facing eviction and mounting health bills, to "get in touch with her feelings." Policy changes in the public sector are essential in both cases.

CHANGING PUBLIC POLICIES

Implicit in much of the preceding discussion have been suggestions for policy change, mostly in public sector funding policies. Urging public funders to increase their contribution to private agencies will not be the major thesis of the concluding section of this paper. Not only does this seem like an unlikely prospect, it also seems to us that more money is not all that is needed. Instead we will suggest a range of possible changes which could strengthen performance of both sectors.

Preceding policy changes are attitudinal changes, and it is important to examine some of the attitudes that seem to underlie current funding policies. One of the dominant themes in government agencies in B.C. seems to be a basic distrust of the voluntary sector's involvement in social issues and, in fact, social issues in B.C. have become highly politicized. Voluntary agencies, academics and citizen groups seem to be equated with the political party in opposition; hence their views are dismissed as representing only the views of political opponents. Too often ministries surprise the voluntary sector with a new bill or policy thrust and run for cover to avoid the stinging criticism, often in headline form in the local paper. In turn, ministries react negatively to such criticism and move to cut back funding for such activities ("Why should we pay them to embarrass us" is often the quote). Voluntary groups remain distrustful of government and increasingly feel impotent about their effectiveness in policy development.

This has not always been the case; nor is it so in all jurisdictions. For example, the National Council of Welfare, established by Health and Welfare Canada in 1969 and fully funded by government, was created expressly to advise the minister on matters pertaining to welfare. To that end, the twenty-one member body and its small research staff have turned out numerous publications on such issues as income security, children in poverty, single-parent families, poor people's groups and employment, many of which were sharply critical of government policy. Yet these publications have served to inform and unite many diverse groups

in the country and to raise welfare issues into the public forum for debate.¹³

The reasons for the lack of appreciation of this role of the voluntary sector in B.C. are difficult to determine. One might speculate that many career bureaucrats in government responsible for funding policies have little first-hand knowledge of the voluntary sector or its tradition. With the demise of large private agencies such as Children's Aid Societies, there are few opportunities for well-paid careers in the voluntary sector and most senior policy makers in the social service ministries have never been employed in voluntary agencies at any stage of their career. In addition, they are discouraged from participating as board members of local agencies because of possible conflict of interest. The tradition of a working partnership between the two groups simply does not exist.

It also seems evident that, as government ministries are pressed to be more financially accountable, their willingness to develop the innovative, risky programs which would gain approval from the voluntary sector diminishes and increases the disharmony between the two groups.

And, finally, as many in the voluntary sector freely admit, their inability to respond thoughtfully to government proposals is limited, not only because they have little advance knowledge of policy directions but because their resources are slim. Thus their responses have often been shrill and superficial, contributing to the growing distrust between the two groups.

1. *Towards the Development of Policy Community*¹⁴

It is suggested here that there is a fundamental difference between the public sector's willingness to fund direct services on the one hand and the policy review, research and social planning functions on the other. Direct services must be provided, and it is frequently cheaper and easier for

¹³ Mr. Justice Thomas Berger, in obtaining government funds for the McKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, stated that the large gas and oil companies had the resources to put forward their opinion but that groups representing the environment, the native culture and the traditions of the north did not. It was in the public interest that they be heard, not that their views would necessarily prevail. In decisions of public policy making, all sides should have the resources to speak to ensure that government decisions in public policy reflect knowledge of the intricacies and countervailing opinions in any issue. See Thomas R. Berger, "The McKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry," *Queen's Quarterly* 83 (1) (Spring 1976), pp. 5-6.

¹⁴ The concept of policy communities was just discovered by the writers in Paul Pross, *Duality and Public Policy* (Halifax, 1980). The Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University. See also Jack Walker, "Public vs. Private Policy: Agenda Setting, Decision Making and Power," in Tropman, Dluhy and Lind, *New Strategic Perspectives on Social Policy* (N.Y.: Pergammon Press, 1981).

ministries to provide these through private agencies than it is to mount a new program in the public sector. If the service provided is unsatisfactory, grants can be terminated quickly, far more so than funding new positions for union-protected civil servants. Witness, for example, the marked difference between the fate of the staff of the private Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Society, whose contracts were terminated with three months' notice, and that of the staff of the Heroin Treatment Centre at Brannen Lake, who continued in their positions even though the institution had no clients.

It is difficult to suggest a convincing case for funding private agencies to undertake policy analyses and review. Yet given a long-term perspective some benefits for the public sector can be identified. The consequence of policies which are poorly received is that ministries must spend an inordinate amount of time and energy responding to criticism and defending their case. As Frederick Thayer has argued, participation probably is the most efficient and cost-effective manner of making decisions.

"While conventional wisdom agrees that participation slows down decision processes, adds to the overall cost and design of implementation, participation may do precisely the opposite. Most decision-making studies never examine the costs of overcoming consequences not foreseen in advance. There can be no better way of discovering these unforeseen consequences, than by involving in the decision processes those likely to be affected. Participation, in other words, may be cost effective through cost avoidance."¹⁵

From a purely selfish point of view, then, the public ministries would do well to develop policy communities, and ask these communities to respond to ministry working papers before policies are finalized. By so doing, ministries would develop early warning systems which would be effective by avoiding the costs of responding to criticism.

Policy communities can be developed in many different ways. As suggested above, the working paper strategy can be an effective way of discovering community reactions.¹⁶ In addition, private agencies might undertake the task of developing working papers, thus affording an opportunity for comparison. Other strategies include exchange of personnel between the public and private sector, holding conferences on specific issues of concern to both sectors, and establishing advisory councils such as the National Council of Welfare.

¹⁵ Frederick Thayer, *Participation and Liberal Democratic Government*, unpublished, a paper prepared for the Committee on Government Productivity, Ontario.

¹⁶ We are indebted to Sylvia Ostry, former Deputy Minister of Consumer Affairs, for this suggestion.

Lest it be thought that the above suggestions are totally impractical, recent initiatives of the B.C. Corrections Branch provide a useful example. In the past five years the branch has requested the advice of the private sector and professional associations during the development of its statement on Goals and Objectives and on Standards of Performance. The branch has convened a Futures Conference on the grounds that in the past it has been a reactive problem-solving organization and should develop a long-term perspective. Thirty-five people were invited to the conference, and the total was equally divided between Branch staff and outsiders. Finally, senior staff of the branch have taught a social policy course for the University of Victoria School of Social Work.

2. *Sorting Out the Funding Scene*

From the perspective of community agencies, the shortage of funds is exacerbated by the fact that there are a number of sources of funds. It is ironic that, while funding agencies like the United Way are often distressed by the apparent proliferation of agencies and associations in the community, the latter are equally bewildered by the array of funding sources frequently characterized by a lack of explicit policies and guidelines, and often with little capacity to respond quickly to pressing needs or innovative proposals. Although sorting out the funding scene is an essential priority, it is a major task, given the history and vested interests involved. One proposal would be to assign funding responsibilities on a functional basis. Direct service ministries such as Health and Human Resources would continue to fund the complementary direct services offered by the voluntary sector. In addition, policy units within these ministries should have the capacity to fund outside research and policy papers, and take the initiative in distributing government drafts to its policy community. Social planning services would be more appropriately funded by a ministry with a similar mandate, such as Economic Development. Some advantages of this arrangement are that social planning could be initiated between ministries such as Corrections, Health, Education, and Welfare, the process of integrating social and economic planning would be encouraged, and another relatively powerful ministry could begin to advocate within government on behalf of the voluntary sector.

The development of marriage licence surcharges in the U.S. may provide another source of public funds for voluntary initiatives. Florida was the first state to pass such legislation in 1978, placing a \$5 surcharge on

each marriage licence. As these funds were specifically earmarked for resources and for battered women and their children, the surcharge can be viewed as a form of family insurance. Ohio and Washington have subsequently followed suit.¹⁷ In implementing such a system in B.C. it would be preferable to direct such funds to existing voluntary organizations to carry out research and develop innovative program initiatives in the family service field. This would support two other flagging but historically significant functions of the voluntary sector and prevent the proliferation of insecurely funded short-term organizations. Private sources such as the United Way and Vancouver Foundation could also direct more of their funds to innovative approaches to service and research and advocacy endeavours, although we recognize that United Ways depend upon causes that pluck at community heartstrings and must continue to allocate the majority of their funds to these programs.

Two objectives have determined the thrust of this paper. First is to describe the plight of the voluntary sector and some of the efforts being made by voluntary agencies to ensure their survival. Secondly, we have suggested some ways in which the public sector can strengthen the cause of the human services by supporting the initiatives of the voluntary sector.

As noted at the outset, we have not devoted attention to the usual arid debate about the respective foundations of the two sectors. It seems apparent that the public sector will continue to provide most direct services and, if Winkler is to be believed, this is a necessary safeguard to protect social services from withering away. In our view, which sector provides the existing and well-developed services is less important than a commitment to develop policy communities, and policy communities by definition require people from outside provincial ministries so that the views of community groups and those of professional associations can be heard.

While it is recognized that it is difficult to provide funds in an era of restraint, funding of the policy review function and for the development of policy communities can be defended. The position taken in this paper is that the participation of policy communities is cost effective through cost avoidance. In the last analysis the public sector needs assistance simply because it does not have all the answers to the puzzling and complicated issues it must deal with. To exclude the contribution of the staff

¹⁷ Constance Backhouse, "Marriage Licence Surcharges." A report to the Attorney General's Liaison Committee on the Enforcement of Family Law orders, 6 August 1980. Copy available from the author, Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada N6A 3K7.

and volunteers of the voluntary agencies makes little sense when expertise, wisdom and commitment are inevitably and always in shorter supply than funds. The record of the voluntary sector in developing innovative approaches to the social services is too well known to require documentation here. To deny the contribution of the voluntary sector, which has produced, among other innovations, functional budgeting, the local area approach and numerous refinements in therapeutic techniques, is to deprive the human services of a very significant contribution.