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Interview with Mr. Barney Fraser

conducted by J. Charnow at UNICEF Headquarters

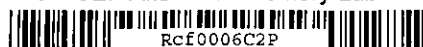
on 10 August 1983

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Interview Bernard H. Fraser by John Charnow: Fundraising;
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Fundraising

Responsibilities within staff

Charnow: Barney, I wonder if we could discuss fund-raising for awhile. In the written material that you have already prepared for the History Project you said that your role was to prepare material for others rather than for yourself. I assume the others were primarily the Executive Director, but there may have been others too - field people and so on. Would you like to say a little bit about the kind of material, who it was for and so on?

Fraser: Yes. The responsibility for fund-raising was not limited to the Executive Director. When I worked out a UNICEF policy for government fund-raising in 1960 (it had not been put on paper before), it said that the responsibility for raising funds is that of the Executive Director and it is not diminished by activities which Executive Board members or bodies of the UN or field staff may undertake in this regard, but the Executive Director had always delegated responsibility for fund-raising to Regional Directors and to each UNICEF Representative. A few of them did not consider it so much a responsibility of theirs to raise funds because they were in poor countries but since the aim was to raise the number of donor governments as much as possible and give a wide universal world-wide participation picture, we coralled them all. So it wasn't just Maurice Pate alone. He, of course, was very conscious of his task, but it was shared with everybody.

Setting goals

Charnow: How did we arrive at overall fund-raising goals? How did we arrive at amounts that we thought appropriate from each country?

Fraser: We would prepare Aide Memoires for particular countries or communicate with the field staff on these goals. In many cases it was just a question of getting token support -- to get them on the contributors list. How did we derive at amounts for the others? For a while we used the UN scale of assessments as a guide. It was a general guide but it had a usefulness. But one could not present it as something that the perspective donors should follow because the assessments were, after all, assessments and not voluntary support. One used the assessment only as a general guide in relation to the overall target. It was useless to set a high target where the support was very low; you had to work the level up by steps. It was a matter of touch and go, feeling your way along. You had to have some kind of target.

Industrial countries

(In the case of the Netherlands, for instance, the government for many years was not inclined to give much support to UNICEF at all. It would have been futile and ridiculous to present a high figure to them. When I went to the Hague in 1956, through an MP it was possible to raise the amount of \$100,000 by \$20,000 for the next year, which was very very modest but it still a 20 percent increase).

Charnow: Where there other countries that also, in your opinion, were giving much less than they should have? Industrial countries?

Fraser: Oh yes. I pointed that out in my dictation. The U.S. used to pay as much as 70 percent of the contributions and if there was anything accomplished in all these years, it was to bring up the support by governments other than the U.S. to a much higher level. And this was absolutely necessary because the U.S., beginning in the early 50s with the Eisenhower Administration, began to cut down the U.S. share by 2-1/2 percent each year and then, I believe, by 2 percent each year until it fell, as you know, to 25 percent.

Charnow: It was my impression that the countries that were relatively good, the European countries, the U.K, and the Scandinavian countries ...

Fraser: Canada, Australia and New Zealand were also good.

Charnow: But that France was not so good.

Fraser: The Scandinavian countries were not so good.

Charnow: They were not good in the early days?

Fraser: Not in the early days. Denmark supported UNICEF in the form of the BCG campaign. Sweden and Norway's support was relatively modest.

Charnow: So that came up only later?

Fraser: Yes, it came up later.

Methods

Charnow: What I would like to get at is the actual methods of fund-raising. I understand a field representative would talk to people in the government - he's there all the time. But let us take the Executive Director here. For instance, how much contact could he have with the Ambassadors here? What about his visits to the country? When he was in the country, was it a soft-sell? Was it general education? What was the difference in the styles between Maurice Pate and Henry Labouisse

Fraser: I wrote a paper once on techniques used by UNICEF in the solicitation of financial support by governments. I think it would be simplest if you were to take a photocopy of it.

Charnow: Yes, we'll have this as an annex.

Fraser: And that would be my answer to that part of the question.

Fraser: Maurice visited missions but I don't think I can recall that he spent so very much time on that. Labouisse didn't either. I remember a staff meeting in 1967 or early '68 when Charles Egger got up and he said he was disturbed, I think that's the word he used, by the lack of contacts that UNICEF had with the missions in New York. I was taken aback by this. But I didn't take it as a criticism of my part because sitting next door to each other he knew I was busy all the time. I was the only one doing fund-raising work. It was, perhaps, a remark aimed at Labouisse, or to plant a seed for an additional fund-raising officer and that seed took hold. Victor Beerman came aboard a year later to help out and his task was to visit the Missions primarily. As you know he went all over hell's half-acre in no time.

Charnow: Do you think it is important to have close contact with the Missions?

Fraser: Yes, definitely. As UNICEF grew and became more diversified in its field, it was necessary to spell out what UNICEF was doing and also to instill greater interest in higher contributions. In the first decade or two the aim was mainly to put other governments on the list of donors, as I mentioned to you. Then the switch was underway gradually to lift the level of support from these governments, and to accomplish this there were more contacts with the Missions.

Soviet Union, Venezuela

Charnow: What would you say about the contributions from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries?

Fraser: Those were handled exclusively by Pate.

Charnow: It's my impression that having decided on the size of their initial contribution they really has not been very much of an increase over the years. What is your feeling about why we have not been successful?

Fraser: Oh, I think the USSR was content with being on the donor list and in their judgment it didn't matter whether it was \$863,000 or \$2 million or \$3 million. It wouldn't make much difference in their opinion as long as they were participating. And, I'm afraid that view was perhaps taken by some other countries too. I see Venezuela is still very low in its support. A couple of other countries could give a lot more. But they are satisfied with being supporters. It is just like the girl who comes home and tells her mother she is slightly pregnant. Slightly or not, you're a supporter.

Uruguay

Charnow: I recall that in the early days Uruguay made a million dollar contribution but never really followed up.

Fraser: That was way back in 1949 and Prof. Fabrequat, the Uruguan delegate to the Board, dwelled on that for years and years. And I made a table once spreading out the contribution of a million dollars over

ten or fifteen years, in order to arrive at a point where we could say, come on now, Professor, your support has been exhausted.

Charnow: Well, do you recall at all what caused this rather extraordinary large contribution at the time it was made?

Fraser: Right after UNICEF was established, I think there was a spark in somebody's soul, maybe Fabrequat's, who said let's get on the bandwagon, this is a wonderful undertaking. Kind of an emotional reaction perhaps. Canada was fantastic then, too. So it was the first reaction by some other governments to the novel idea of an international undertaking for the benefit of children in these poor ravaged countries.

Pate/Labouisse styles

Charnow: Do I take it from what we've said so far that there was not really a substantial difference in the fund-raising style or methods of Mr. Pate and Mr. Labouisse?

Fraser: There was not very much difference. As far as my modest role in the picture was concerned, I continued to work the same way with Mr. Labouisse as with Mr. Pate, and he accepted it. His technique was a little bit different at times, a little more thorough in some respects. For instance, before he saw an Ambassador his secretary would tell me so and I would work up a very quick fact-sheet. That was something we didn't do in Pate's time except sometimes in special cases. As I pointed out in my early dictations, one had to prod Harry Labouisse a little bit. At one staff meeting Harry was a little annoyed and he said "Barney Fraser is one who prods gently with a sharp knife". That I had to do. And that is something that perhaps I didn't have to do with Maurice Pate.

Size of goals

Charnow: Let me ask you now in retrospect, on our overall fund-raising goals - do you think we were too modest, that we could have had higher goals, that we could have pushed more, or was it about right for the temper of the times?

Fraser: Those who are in UNICEF now - who weren't with us in the earlier years - would no doubt think that we were slow, didn't do enough, ask enough. But they forget one thing, that if UNICEF had not been firmly established and had not gained the recognition country-by-country over a period of years, they might not have a UNICEF today. It was necessary to plant the seed, and it takes time for a seed to grow. So you had to put UNICEF in the budget and make sure it was there year after year, and as I said earlier you had to raise the level of most governments. Could we have raised it more? Perhaps, that depended again on the programme activities. You can't raise more money if you don't have a lot of programmes. There again, the spread of programmes in the field was dictated by other considerations about which I had nothing to say. There were times in the late '50s and early '60s when there were many dormant allocations, so if we couldn't spend the money - we couldn't ask

