I

HAYE never attended one of the
General Service Conferences, which
are held in New York each spring,
but I have been privileged to observe
how much these Conferences have con-
tributed to our Third Legacy of ser-
vices. I was a member of one of the
first State Committees, and therefore
received all essential information about
the need of such a Conference from
the Alcoholic Foundation, as well as
first-hand reports from our own State
Delegate. Our present Delegate, a very
close friend of mine, has added greatly
to my understanding of the value of
the Conferences. So I know now, as
many of you do, that the Conference
is our democratic way of expressing
our fellowship-opinion on AA matters
so that our Foundation Trustees, our
General Service Headquarters and our
Grapevine staff will always have "grass
roots" guidance on their ever-expanding
efforts to do worldwide Twelfth
Step work.

Perhaps I take it for granted—be-
cause I, too, owe so much to AA—
that these Delegates from all the states
and Canadian provinces would naturally
be willing to devote much time
and effort to Conference matters. How-
ever, I am puzzled as to why we
make it necessary for them, and our
state and provincial Committee- men,
to work so hard to secure funds to pay
the expenses of the very Conferences
which we ask our Delegates to attend.

Surely, as the fourth Conference
will be held in April, we must all
know by now that it is hoped that
each group will contribute $10, or
$5 if the group is a small one and
can afford it, to defray the expenses
of the Conference. Yet, despite the
fact that we are all on notice, I be-
lieve that only about twenty-five per
cent of all U.S. and Canadian groups
contributed to the General Service
Conference in 1953. What is the an-
swer?

Is it because our group secretaries
are failing to bring the need to the at-
tention of their groups? There is a
lot of evidence to suggest that is
one of the sad answers. Most of us
need a little prodding and so, if our
group secretary doesn't pass the hat
our group contribution just doesn't
get sent along. Of course, there's the
ever-ready answer that many of us get
pretty tight with a buck as soon as we
get sober but surely we all have so
much to be grateful for that we'll
gladly ante up the price of a drink to
give our General Service Headquarters
the assistance it seeks from our Dele-
gates-in-Conference.

I wonder, then, if too many of us
are thinking of the Conference as an
end in itself and therefore don't see
any need of helping to pay the bill.
Perhaps many of us who used to
attend various conferences when we
were drinking, have decided that con-
ferences are only for the pleasure of
those who attend and that nothing
worthwhile is ever accomplished. (If
you know your Delegate, ask him or
her if they ever worked harder in their
lives than they did at the Conference.)

Actually, the General Service Confer-
ence is not an end but simply a means
to further the invaluable services which
our service arms in New York perform
on behalf of all of us who have been
blessed with happy sobriety through
AA.

Is one of the answers the grave pos-
sibility that we who are now sober
no longer care too much about what
happens to the millions of alcoholics
who still suffer, especially if they're
only a statistic in some remote place
or prison?

There's only one good answer, so
far as I'm concerned, and that is for
all of us to take the load off our
Delegates and Committeemen and
place it where it belongs—on our own
shoulders. Let each of us, as sober,
grateful members of AA, accept the
responsibility of seeing that our
group's contribution has been sent in
before the Conference begins. And
since, unfortunately, not every member
subscribes to The Grapevine, let's be
sure that we who do accept the chal-
lenge. Let's send our Delegates to our
next Conference with the full knowl-
dge that we are sharing with them
the privilege of serving AA so that
AA may better serve the "millions who
still don't know."

Anonymous, Mass.