

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Denny (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Mrs. H. A. — He lives at home and doesn't contribute any money.

Myron A. — My father has a good business and doesn't need my help.

Mrs. H. A. — Our son is 30, has a responsible job with an electronics firm which pays him a good salary, and also receives a government pension check for a disability incurred during the Korean War. He lives at home and there's

where my problem lies. He refuses to contribute one single dime towards his room and board, not to mention the maintenance of the household itself. What's more, he even "touches" me for a loan when he's broke. And it's a struggle to get my money back. He squanders his funds on an elaborate wardrobe, and on entertaining his friends.

Instead of things getting easier for us, we're winding up supporting a fancy Beau

Drummel. Since he probably won't marry or move out, things won't change for us unless we fight this out with him.

Myron A. — If my parents needed my money, I'd gladly give them some. But my father has a good business and an excellent income. My contribution wouldn't make any difference. It would just be more money to lug to the bank.

What's really eating my folks is the amount I spend on clothes. But this item is vital for me. I'm the "outside" man in my office. That means I'm in Washington a lot, and I must meet visiting scientists, inventors and designers

every day. Besides, I lead an active social life which is both enjoyable and an important factor in my business progress. I'm always dressed appropriately whether the occasion calls for a yacht trip, a bachelor dinner or a Harvard seminar.

I like living at home and I'm no special trouble or expense to my parents. Mom's just picking on me.

The Council — No one, not even a son, can decide whether someone else "needs" money. Certain government officials, dispensing welfare funds are given norms to follow when they must determine need, but everyone understands that the computa-

tion is merely a necessary expedient and not definitive. Therefore when Mrs. A. asks that Myron chip in to pay his way at home, his answer that his parents don't need the money is cocky, presumptuous and evasive.

Regardless of the size of his dad's income, Myron should be wracking his brain for ways to make life less burdensome for his parents — financially and emotionally. Granted that their concern over his free-loading is prompted more by emotion than by financial strain, most normal parents would speak up and have it out with an able-bodied, solvent (potentially) son long before he's 30. Something was left out

in the course of Myron's upbringing — a sense of responsibility — which may explain why he behaves still like a little boy with a Mama and a Papa taking care of him.

It isn't the clothes, Myron. It's what's in them — you — that worries your mother. How about a new budget in which room, board, laundry, maid service, gas, electric, telephone, nursing — and other items which you've been entering in your ledger under "no charge" — all take precedence over clothes? You might have to give up a smoking jacket or two, but you'd be paying your way (or some part of it) like a man. Unquestionably, your ma would put

a good-sized check from you to good use each month, possibly for more household help. And your realization that every adult must either provide his own home or "pay in" towards whatever home he occupies would hearten your parents. They'd feel freer to revise their own living arrangements. Maybe your mother dreams of a small hotel by a wishing well for herself and your dad — with maid service for her, not you, for

a change. It's wise, Mrs. A., to have this (not fight it) out now, rather than to coddle Myron indefinitely, and shortchange yourself on the new freedoms that come after children grow up.

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