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"KEEPING OUR GOOD GIRLS GOOD":
THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
OF CANADA, 1870-1920

by

C Diana L. Pedersen, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
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Abstract

Local branches of the Young Women's Christian Association (founded in England in 1855) first appeared in Canada in the early 1870's as a response to increasing numbers of young rural women migrating to Canadian cities in search of employment, and to a large influx of immigrants from the British Isles and Europe. A national coordinating body was established in 1893. Apprehensive about the transformation of Canadian society taking place as a result of rapid urbanization, industrialization, and massive immigration, YWCA leaders--Protestant evangelical church members drawn from Canada's prosperous urban middle class--attempted to minimize disruption and control the direction of social change by attacking the problem of the Modern Girl. Services to young working women, university students and high school girls were offered in the form of boarding homes, educational classes, summer camps, employment bureaux, cafeterias, libraries, Travellers' Aid, and religious instruction. The object of these services was to protect the moral standards and physical purity of the young woman and to preserve her traditional close ties to home, family and church in the face of vastly changed conditions. YWCA programs also, however, reflected the Association's fundamental sympathy with the young woman who wished to support herself and improve her standing in the world. These programs, supplemented by a never-ending campaign to increase public awareness of the problems of the working woman, did result in concrete benefits to many young women who may or may not have shared the YWCA's concern for their moral and spiritual welfare.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In 1920, the single most widely known and respected organization providing social services to the young Canadian woman was the Young Women's Christian Association. The first local branches of the YWCA were organized in Canadian cities in the early 1870's as a response to increasing numbers of young women from the rural districts migrating to the cities in search of employment, and to a large influx of immigrants from the British Isles and Europe. YWCA leaders--Protestant women of Canada's prosperous, urban middle class--initiated a wide variety of programs and services, including boarding homes, Travellers' Aid, employment bureaux, libraries, educational classes, and cafeterias, designed to attract the young woman, particularly the young working woman or girl¹, and bring her under the influence of the Association.

The motivation for YWCA programs was a desire to assist the working woman in her struggle for survival in an often hostile urban environment and to rescue the "girl of leisure" from a selfish, idle existence by involving her in philanthropic efforts on behalf of the young working woman. On a larger level, the Association also hoped to combat a wide variety of perceived social ills, including the decline of the family and the rural way of life, the weakening hold of organized religion, the impact of massive immigration, and the evils attendant upon rapid industrialization. While other reform organizations attempted to resolve

1. The YWCA's working definition of a "young woman" or "girl" (the two terms were used interchangeably) was an unmarried female person between the ages of approximately fourteen and twenty-five. By the War years, the term "girl" was also being used to refer to adolescents, aged thirteen to seventeen. YWCA usage will be followed here.

these problems through child welfare programs, new labour legislation, or demands for prohibition and woman suffrage, leaders of the YWCA held that the cure for Canada's ills lay in the preservation of the purity, religious faith, and love of home and family of the young unmarried woman--mother of its future generations.

The girl is the hope of the world. As we keep her pure, we protect the race of the future; as we keep her bright and keen for the better things of life, we raise the standard of our nation; as we draw her closer to the verities of life, we help to lift up the Christ so that our children's children may know Him, 'whom to know is life'.

This sentiment constituted the primary motivation for all YWCA work with young women during the fifty years following the Association's first appearance in Canada in 1870.

The women who organized branches of the YWCA were generally middle-aged, married to prominent business or professional men, and were active members of their local Protestant evangelical churches.³ Freed from household responsibilities by the affluence of their husbands and the labour of domestic servants, they were motivated both by their desire to extend the scope of their activities outside the domestic sphere and by

2. Public Archives of Canada (P.A.C.), YWCA of Canada Papers; MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 10.
3. YWCA leaders generally belonged to the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Congregational, or Episcopalian churches. They accepted the following definition of an evangelical church:
 We hold those churches to be evangelical, which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Who was made sin for us though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, as the only Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment.
 P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 21, "Constitution of the Young Women's Christian Associations in Cities and Towns of the Dominion of Canada", c. 1902.

new developments in Christian theology which prompted social involvement. Many were active in charitable and missionary programs conducted by their local churches and served on behalf of other popular causes, such as orphaned children, the aged, the working poor, temperance, and public health. They were drawn to the YWCA because of its close ties to the church--still considered the most appropriate outlet for women's aspirations outside the home--and because it promised to remedy many of the social ills which concerned them.

YWCA leaders were deeply disturbed by the changes which they saw taking place in turn-of-the-century Canada as a result of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Poverty, widespread unemployment, disease, inadequate housing and sanitation, and inhuman working conditions in many factories prompted both compassion for the urban working class and anxiety over what appeared to be a growing cleavage between capital and the increasingly organized labour movement. Traditional charity, which could offer little more than soup kitchens and blankets to relieve some of the most acute suffering, had never attempted to effect real changes in conditions or structures and was increasingly regarded as inadequate to deal with large-scale social problems. The YWCA was part of a larger movement, in which a prominent part was played by women's organizations, which rejected the approach of traditional charity in favour of a new emphasis on social reform. This approach stressed that the only genuine solution to social problems lay in determining their root cause, which was then to be eradicated in the fashion of a noxious weed. YWCA leaders were typical of female reformers who believed that by virtue of their superior moral standards and their training and experience in homemaking, women were particularly suited to undertake this kind of "social housekeeping".

Furthermore, it appeared to be in their interest to do so, since their families and sheltered homes were being threatened by crime and disease to the point where no wife or mother could afford to ignore conditions in the outside world. Self-preservation now demanded social involvement.

The entry of middle-class women into the field of social reform was further encouraged by new currents of thought within the Protestant evangelical churches which demanded increasingly practical applications of Christian teachings and stressed the possibility of the imminent establishment of God's kingdom on earth. The late-nineteenth-century crusade to evangelize the world gradually merged with a new movement to improve social conditions which were believed to spawn vice and hence militate against the coming of God's kingdom. In this context, leaders of the Canadian YWCA saw their task as two-fold. First, their social services for the young working woman formed part of a larger attempt--which included campaigns to enact woman suffrage and temperance legislation, to abolish child labour, and to halt the spread of infectious disease--to refashion Canadian society in the image of God's kingdom on earth. Second, through their efforts to recruit young women and save their souls, YWCA leaders hoped to strengthen the churches, whose membership seemed to be in a sad state of decline.

YWCA leaders were pioneers in the methods of interdenominational cooperation, a new trend among Protestant workers willing to overlook theological disagreements in the interests of a more effective approach to social reform. They saw their organization as a vehicle through which the church and the community together could "fulfil part of their functions as regards women" and "carry on certain co-operative work, which it would

cost too highly for each separate denomination to plan and execute".⁴ The YWCA also saw itself in the role of "handmaiden" to the church in that it could recruit young women outside the church's sphere of influence.

Ideally, every young woman enrolled in Association programs would ultimately be led to full church membership. In fact, YWCA leaders believed that they offered the only solution to the problem of the young woman and the church.

If the Kingdom of God as Christ pictured it were firmly established on earth, the need for the Young Women's Christian Association would vanish, but with a divided Church and present conditions, only an interdenominational Association can hope to bridge many of the gulfs which separate young women from the Church.⁵

In this way, the energy of church workers, which was being dissipated by denominational squabbles at the local level, could be harnessed to resolve social problems of national dimensions.

For a variety of reasons, YWCA leaders believed that their strategy of concentrating efforts on the young woman would ultimately prove a highly effective means of bringing about social transformation. Since they shared the prevailing belief that women were responsible for determining the moral standards of those around them--

A nation's greatness depends upon social conditions, health and home life, all of which are absolutely in the hands of women. Women set the social standards throughout the world, and on the enlightenment and high ideals of the women the moral standards of the nation depend.⁶

--it seemed reasonable to assume that once young women were "uplifted",

4. YWCA of Canada Archives, "The Work of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada", Una Saunders, c. 1920.

5. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16

6. Ibid., v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work 1918-1921, "A Girl's Value to Her Country", c. 1919.

other problems would take care of themselves."

It is essential to solve the girl problem because that ultimately means the solution of the boy problem, the home problem and finally, that of the nation.⁷

As wives and mothers-to-be, these young women would be responsible for determining the values and moral standards of future Canadians. Efforts directed toward winning the mothers promised to prevent untold damage to children who would otherwise be raised in improper home environments. Furthermore, young working women were becomingly an increasingly important social force through their participation in business life where they were entrusted with "great opportunities for wielding a wholesome influence, and of helping to turn the current of the world's affairs into the right channels".⁸ Finally, Association leaders hoped that by bringing together young women of different social classes, their organization would ultimately contribute to the resolution of the larger problems of labour unrest and class conflict which menaced their vision of a Canada refashioned according to Christ's teachings.

YWCA efforts were focused mainly on the young working woman--a social phenomenon attracting increasing attention in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as large numbers of young Canadian women abandoned domestic service or unpaid labour on the farm for more lucrative positions in the industrial labour force, and as young middle-class women entered the higher-status occupations in the expanding service sector. While YWCA leaders did not share the hostility expressed by many critics toward the employment of young unmarried women, their attitude was,

7. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1917, p. 7.

8. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, October 1909, p. 124.

nonetheless, fundamentally ambivalent. On the one hand, they feared that female employment could have certain negative consequences which would ultimately affect all Canadians. Poor health, resulting from long hours, sedentary employment, and inadequate nutrition, would leave the young woman physically unfit to assume her primary task of producing the next generation of Canadian citizens and workers. Equally disturbing was the possibility that she would have little or no opportunity to acquire the traditional female skills necessary to prepare her for her future role. Worst of all was the prospect of the physical and moral corruption of Canada's future mothers through exposure to the baneful influences of the workplace (especially the factory), the temptations of commercial entertainments, and the absence of parental supervision.

On the other hand, YWCA leaders were deeply sympathetic to young women's struggle to gain economic independence. In 1886, the Montreal YWCA awarded first prize in an essay competition to a schoolgirl who argued that every young woman was entitled to an education which would prepare her to earn a living in the event that, through reverses of fortune, she was forced to support herself.

She calls for a vocation. She wishes to 'maintain herself with due dignity and self-respect'. This can only be done by independence, by being capable of providing for one's self...Well trained, [young women] are free from fear and dependency. They seek favours from none. They run no chance of being ground down and made slaves, until all individuality has ceased within them. They are responsible beings, not nonentities.⁹

While the situation described in this case was that of the "young lady of

9. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1886, pp. 27-28.

leisure", YWCA sympathies also extended to working women who were driven by necessity to support themselves or whose ambition motivated them to leave the limited opportunities of their native land or the rural districts of Canada for an opportunity to improve their situation by seeking employment in the city. Despite their anxiety, YWCA leaders felt a grudging admiration for the courage of the young woman who set out on her own to establish a new life, abandoning the security of the home for the cut-throat world of the workplace.

There are two opposing tendencies at work today which no thoughtful eye can miss: First, the growing intensity and fierceness of the "struggle for life", the stress, the rush, and the cruel competition that makes life a terrible thing to so many. While in the old days, women stood outside this warfare, now they are in the thick of the fight and every little clerk as she goes to the heart of the city, every business girl behind her counter, every stenographer behind her desk, and every college graduate facing the world with her degree has to take her own part in the fight for existence.¹⁰

YWCA leaders were prompted by their own sense of justice to provide the young working woman with the same assistance that was available to young men attempting to make their way in the world. In particular, they wished to help the upwardly mobile young woman struggling to maintain the appearance of middle-class respectability on a minimal income, and were convinced that they were duty-bound to remove at least some of the obstacles in her path.

Nevertheless, despite their supportive feelings for the working woman, YWCA leaders would never take a public stand in support of female employment. Perhaps because their own reservations were too strong, or

10. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16; "The Work of the Y.W.C.A." from The Toronto Globe, August 7, 1915.

because they were convinced that endorsement of female employment before marriage would jeopardize financial support for their organization, they limited themselves to arguing repeatedly that, whatever one's feelings about it, the reality of women's participation in the labour force had to be faced.

A large proportion of the toilers at the present time are women. Whether of choice, or of necessity, women are found in almost all professions, and business places. Whatever the cause, be it a growing spirit of independence, or a growing distaste for home duties, or merely the outcome of the fierce fever of unrest that is characteristic of the age; it is a living fact that large numbers of young women are outside the sacred influence of Christian homes with little or no time to develop what nature with infinite pains has given her a peculiar fitness for--the ability to be home-maker.¹¹

The YWCA would never claim that its programs aimed to make it easier for young women to leave their homes to seek employment (although they must have had this effect in many cases), but simply took the position that, like it or not, this development had already occurred--"whether or no the onward march of the sex in this particular line is to be deprecated, the facts remain and must be coped with".¹²

"Coping" with the reality of female employment consisted of developing specific programs to counter its possible negative effects. During the fifty-year period from 1870 to 1920, the Canadian YWCA initiated a wide variety of programs--including Travellers' Aid, cafeterias, Bible study, educational classes, boarding homes, summer camps and social clubs--all aimed at building up the physical strength of the young woman, compensating for her lack of domestic training, and providing her with wholesome

11. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women's Gazette; February 1900, p. 6.

12. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, June 1902, p. 41.

recreation and a suitable living environment. In particular, the YWCA aimed to provide a substitute for "the old corporate family life, with its beautiful dignity and with the home as its setting, and the father and mother as the chief actors".¹³ The assumption behind all these programs was, of course, that employment was but a temporary condition in a woman's life and that, following it, she would assume her rightful duties in the home. The best that could be hoped for, then, was that she be shepherded through this dangerous period of her life and preserved more or less intact for marriage and motherhood. This view would, however, be modified during and after the War as leaders of the YWCA and other women's organizations increasingly argued that employment could provide discipline and excellent training for future wives and mothers.

Several groups of young Canadian women would, for various reasons, be designated by the YWCA as most in need of its attentions. The first and probably the most important of these, was the young woman from the rural districts newly arrived in the city. To the YWCA, the country girl represented all those values in Canadian society most worth preserving--honesty, simplicity, trust, industriousness, self-dependence, religious faith, and strong family ties. The city, on the other hand, was symbolic of all the evils of the new industrial order--crime, corruption, immorality, godlessness, disease, and destitution. Even worse, it was home to that most heinous conspiracy to traffic in young women for the purposes of prostitution--the White Slave Trade. One prominent American activist in the crusade against the White Slavers explained the particular vulnerability of the young rural woman in the following terms:

13. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1918, p. 90.

...there is a definite but undefined danger in the very atmosphere of the city for the girl or the young woman which demands a constant and protective alertness.

The training is almost wholly absent in the case of the country girl; she is not educated in suspicion until the protective instinct acts almost unconsciously; her intercourse with her world is almost comparatively free and untrained; she is so unlearned in the moral and social geography of the city that she is quite as likely, if left to her own devices, to select her boarding house in an undesirable as in a safe and desirable part of the city; and, in a word, when she comes into the city her innocence, her trusting faith in humanity in general, her ignorance of the underworld and her loneliness and perhaps homesickness, conspire to make her a ready and easy victim of the "white slaver".¹⁴

In the case of the country girl, even parental supervision was considered inadequate, since the parents were likely to be as inexperienced in city ways as the daughter. An important object of YWCA work was thus to provide supervision and to make up for the deficiencies in training of the young rural woman.

The second type of young woman who attracted the attention of the Canadian YWCA was the recent immigrant who, like her rural counterpart, found herself alone in unfamiliar surroundings and was therefore equally vulnerable to the designs of the unscrupulous. The young immigrant woman was, however, viewed by the YWCA as perhaps slightly less ignorant and slightly more irresponsible than the country girl, and hence more likely to play an active part in bringing about her own downfall, should she be left unsupervised. The Superintendent of The Haven and Prison Gate Mission in Toronto (originally founded by the Toronto YWCA) explained the particular weakness of the new immigrant.

Take girls of normal intelligence, but homeless, untrained, in the case of emigrants, unaccustomed to the freedom of a new country, it goes like wine to their heads,

14. Edwin W. Sims, "Menace of the White Slave Trade", War on the White Slave Trade, Ernest A. Bell, ed., Coles Publishing Company Limited, Toronto, 1980 (originally published c. 1912), p. 70.

and they lose all sense of propriety or safety. Therefore, we frequently see girls, who, in the old country, have lived virtuous and respected lives, often bringing over with them the best of references, coming out here and falling during the first few months. All alone and unprotected, unarmed and unarmed, with no idea of the dangers in the way, they become an easy prey, often to some one "from home".¹⁵

These fears for the fate of the young immigrant woman coincided with a growing concern on the part of reformers about the possible impact of massive foreign immigration into Canada. Under these circumstances, it became imperative that action be taken on behalf of these future mothers of Canadian citizens, and YWCA programs for young immigrant women were soon incorporated into the nationwide campaign to assimilate the New Canadians.

Having left the familiarity and security of the parental home for the "principal manufacturing and distributing centres", the new immigrant and the country girl were "at once confronted with problems and conditions of which, in their simple lives, they never dreamed".¹⁶ Turn-of-the-century Canadian cities offered them, according to YWCA records, an acute shortage of clean, affordable housing, a lack of recreational facilities, and a complete absence of social services of any kind. The difficulties of attempting to cope with this situation soon led, YWCA leaders believed, to problems of an even worse sort.

The pathetic loneliness of the situation may be imagined, the new work is trying, comfortable boarding-houses at the rate which they can afford to pay are difficult to find, old associates are missed, and, it may be, the lack of wholesome restraint is also felt. It is easy to trace the steps which

15. Miss Lucy Brooking, "Conditions in Toronto", War on the White Slave Trade, p. 374.

16. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16, clipping from The Presbyterian, 1915.

lead a tired, lonely and discouraged girl to think "nobody cares", and then comes the inevitable attitude, "What does it matter anyway?". How is an inexperienced girl to know the ways by which sharks in human form are watching and ready under the guise of friendship to prey upon her guilelessness.¹⁷

Given that a young woman without friends or family in the city had virtually nowhere to turn for assistance, the YWCA saw itself as the only friendly hand reaching out to prevent the "shipwreck...through sheer loneliness" of the lives of "hundreds of young women who might have been valued and honored members of any community".¹⁸

Another young woman, in very different circumstances, attracted the attention of the YWCA for very different reasons; this was the young female student who was entering Canada's universities, colleges and normal schools in ever-increasing numbers. She, too, had left the security of the family home to embark alone upon a critical and formative period of her life.

Up to the time of entering college, a young woman generally lives a sheltered, protected life, so that the breaking away from home surroundings brings a great shock to her. She is likely to be confused at first by the new college life, so that she needs the strength that comes from Christian fellowship with the older students.¹⁹

However, YWCA motives in developing programs for college students were not at all similar to those which led to its work with young rural and immigrant women. Preserving the physical purity of the middle-class college student did not appear to be a major issue--perhaps her environment was not considered to be so dangerous or, more likely, she was considered

17. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16, clipping from The Presbyterian, 1915.

18. Ibid., "The Constructive Work of the Y.W.C.A.", November 18, 1915.

19. Ibid., Membership Committee leaflet, n.d.

better, able to protect herself because of her superior upbringing.

Instead, the emphasis in YWCA student work was placed on recruiting the young woman to the cause of Christianity and social reform.

The YWCA recognized in the young college student--a future professional--a potentially powerful ally in its quest to "win" the working woman. In their future capacities as teachers, social workers, and health professionals, these young woman would one day exert an enormous moral influence, for good or evil, over large numbers of children and other women. However, their formative student years were spent at college "where the temptation is towards intellectual and social selfishness, and the only contra-influence is the Y.W.C.A."²⁰ Hence YWCA student programs stressed social activities and Bible study, aimed at inspiring these future professionals with a sense of their responsibility to serve others and to devote their lives, not to mere personal fulfilment, but to the struggle to establish God's kingdom on earth.

The desire of YWCA leaders to recruit more young women to the cause of Christian social reform and to service in their own organization also led to Association programs for the adolescent girl, who was, after all, on the edge of young womanhood. During the nineteenth century, some local associations offered classes to prepare working-class girls under sixteen for employment in domestic service and, by the turn of the century, clubs for middle-class girls of the same age were being organized. These efforts, however, constituted only a minor part of local work in the early years. The rapid expansion of the high school population, caused by the introduction of compulsory school-attendance legislation after the turn of the century,

20. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 11.

created another body of young women whose numbers and relative accessibility attracted the interest of the YWCA. Here was an opportunity to reach many young women, soon to have homes and families of their own, who would never attend a university or who might never be reached by the chronically understaffed and underfinanced programs of the city YWCA. New theories of adolescent psychology, which the YWCA helped to popularize, stressed the vulnerable and impressionable character of the adolescent years, and the consequent importance of exposing the girl to wholesome Christian influences during this period of her life. At a time when reformers were reflecting gloomily on Canada's prospects for the future, the youth, vitality, and optimism of the adolescent seemed to offer a refreshing antidote to the evils of twentieth-century industrial society.

Another young woman who figured prominently in YWCA thinking, but who was the direct recipient of few services, was the "fallen" woman. Although some local associations developed programs to rehabilitate the fallen woman in the 1870's and 1880's, by the turn of the century, she had been largely excluded from the sphere of YWCA activities on the grounds that the aim of the Association was "preventive work".

The girls who come under our influence are, for the most part, in the formative period of their lives. Our work is to so lead and guide and form that no reform will be necessary.²¹

The YWCA's emphasis on preventive work was consistent with the efforts of other Canadian reformers to eradicate prostitution, or the Social Evil. The reformers' actions were motivated in part by middle-class fears of "racial degeneration" and of a swelling of the ranks of the criminal classes, the poor and unemployed, and the feeble-minded, resulting from

21. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 273.

large numbers of illegitimate births. A more direct threat to middle-class women was the spectre of venereal disease--contracted through husbands who frequented the brothels--resulting in possible gynecological surgery, infection of their newborn children, paralysis, and even death. Yet, because of their dependence on these men, and because they believed that women were ultimately responsible for the moral standards of men, female reformers preferred to attack prostitution by reforming the prostitutes rather than the men who paid for their services. YWCA leaders were optimistic that their strategy of preventive work would prove more effective in the long run than would the rehabilitation of prostitutes. It was also a more practical option for the YWCA in their view.

To win a young girl just entering business life, to train her as a Christian woman, counts a thousand times more than the redemption of a young woman who has lost influence over others, if not hope for herself. Further, this latter work is not a suitable occupation for the young unmarried women who form the body of our working force, but is more fitting for matrons.²²

Their fear of prostitution, however, remained such that it coloured their attitude toward even the "respectable" young women in their charge. Every young woman, particularly if she were of the working class, was regarded as potentially a fallen woman.

By "raising" the moral standards of the working-class woman, or, more accurately perhaps, by imposing their own standards upon her, YWCA leaders hoped to remedy many of the worst abuses produced by Canada's capitalist industrial economy. Poverty, disease, crime, unemployment, labour unrest--all these, it was expected, could be alleviated, or perhaps even eradicated, through programs for the young woman. The fact that the

22. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Fundamental Principles of the Young Women's Christian Association", American Committee pamphlet, 1902.

YWCA elected to adopt this indirect approach, rather than a more direct attack on living and working conditions, reflects two important characteristics of this organization: first, the control of YWCA policy and decision-making by older, middle-class women, rather than the young working women who made use of its services, and second, the dominance within this controlling group of a strongly evangelical faction.

Middle-class control of the YWCA resulted in an emphasis on resolving class conflict, not by changing social and economic structures, but by promoting better "understanding" between classes and "cooperation" in the interests of the larger goals of the Association.

...the purpose is that every girl shall stand for loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Master. This lifts all above the class lines we have drawn and gives a vision of the kingdom of God which is coming in this world.²³

It also resulted in a singular reluctance on the part of many YWCA leaders, particularly at the more conservative local level, to attack the larger "social sins" of profiteering, speculation, and monopolistic control of wages and prices. Social Gospel thought did have an important impact on YWCA attitudes, particularly those of its national leaders and staff of university-trained secretaries, leading to a new willingness to address the questions of low wages and poor working conditions by the War years; however, these more progressive thinkers within the Association experienced difficulty in prying the more evangelical element away from its preoccupation with sex, smoking, dancing, card-playing, and theatre-going. All YWCA leaders, however, did share a conviction that the teachings of Jesus Christ, by filling the modern young woman with "love, joy and peace, patience .

23. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1918, "The Y.W.C.A. Question".

towards others, kindness and benevolence, good faith, meekness and self-restraint", were capable of resolving "every girl problem"--

...the problem of the hardest business woman as readily as that of the most undisciplined flapper, and that of the most restless college student no less surely than that of the most discontented society girl.²⁴

The concerns of the Association's middle-class evangelical leadership were also reflected in the vision of God's kingdom which inspired YWCA efforts to uplift the young working woman. In a Canada transformed by the teachings of Jesus Christ, YWCA leaders envisioned harmony between social classes, the acceptance of the single moral standard for men and women, the adoption by New Canadians of superior Anglo-Saxon values, and the conformity of all Canadians to the strict moral code of the Protestant evangelical churches (implying a rejection of the brothel, the dance hall, the movie theatre, and the saloon). In this new society, women, although more active in the labour force and in public life, although more educated and economically independent, would naturally retain their traditional love of home and church, as well as the moral superiority to men which they had acquired in their formerly sheltered lives. In addition, the worth of women's social contribution to the nation made in the home and in public life, and their economic contribution in the labour force, would be fully recognized by governments, business, and the public as equal in value to any made by men. The YWCA, of course, would be widely acknowledged and generously funded as leader in the field of work with young women.

During the fifty years from 1870 to 1920, Canadian YWCA leaders worked long and hard to uplift Canada's young women and thereby make their vision

24. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1918, p. 93.

of God's kingdom on earth a reality. As a result of their efforts, branches of the YWCA were established in cities and universities across Canada, whose work was closely linked to the efforts of urban reformers, the Protestant churches, and a host of reform organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the National Council of Women. Diverse programs were organized for white-collar and factory workers, college students, high school girls, British and "foreign" immigrants, and even for young women in China, India, and Japan. All these programs were expanded at an unprecedented rate during the First World War. This progression was overseen by a Dominion Council, organized in 1893. This body, with close ties to the Association in Britain and the United States and to the World's YWCA, undertook for the next several decades, to integrate the Canadian local associations' "regular...work of keeping our good girls good"²⁵ into an international attempt to deal with the problem of the Modern Girl.

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 10.

Chapter 2. Origins and Growth of the Dominion Council

The YWCA's efforts to protect and uplift the young Canadian working woman took place in the context of an international attempt by Protestant middle-class reformers to control the direction of social change arising out of industrialization. In both Europe and North America, the middle classes shared a conviction that Christianity (at least, the Protestant variety) was menaced globally by materialism, Socialism, other aggressive religions such as Roman Catholicism and Islam, and by social disruption, which tended to undermine family ties and traditional structures and values. Many were also convinced that the Church itself was incapable of responding to these developments, preoccupied as it was with theological questions and denominational rivalries. The YWCA was one of a number of international Protestant lay organizations created by church members willing to put aside denominational differences in the interests of defending their religion, their institutions and "civilization" itself from this larger danger. Reformers attracted to the YWCA were those who shared the belief that the Modern Girl--a phenomenon appearing wherever the need for an industrial labour force drew large numbers of young women to the cities--held the key to stemming the tide of social upheaval and revitalizing the Protestant churches on a worldwide basis.

Within the larger international context, the YWCA of Canada emerged with its own national structures and objectives in response to perceived national problems. Modelled after similar branches in Great Britain and the United States, the first local branches of the YWCA appeared in Canada in the early 1870's. Of greater significance, however, was the organization of a national coordinating body--the Dominion Council of YWCA's--

which, beginning in 1893, attempted to forge from the autonomous and dissimilar locals a strong and unified Canadian movement with international ties. This body essentially determined the shape and character of the Canadian YWCA between 1893 and 1920.

The YWCA originated in mid-nineteenth-century Great Britain and was, from its inception, both a religious organization and a dispenser of social services for young women.¹ The British YWCA was actually a fusion of two movements, both initiated in 1855. The first was an informal network of Prayer Unions composed of educated girls of leisure, whose activities included the visiting of prisons and workhouses, the holding of scripture classes for working women, and Saturday night prayer for young women of all social classes. The second movement was a chain of boarding homes originally established to provide accommodation in London for nurses on their way to join Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, and later for young rural women seeking work in the city. The latter homes also featured religious and educational classes, social activities, employment agencies and clubs. As a result of the merger of the two original movements in 1877, this dual concern with the spiritual and the secular was incorporated into the new Young Women's Christian Association.

The other outstanding trait of the British YWCA which shaped the development of the Association in Canada and elsewhere was the character of its leadership, drawn

...from those within the Church of England or in the Free Churches who were known as 'Evangelicals'.²

1. Background material on the origins of the British and American YWCA's is drawn largely from Anna V. Rice, A History of the World's YWCA, The Woman's Press, New York; 1947, Chapters 1 and 3.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

This evangelistic orientation was manifested in an emphasis on winning souls through the holding of Bible classes and evangelistic meetings. Other distinguishing features of the early British YWCA were its interdenominational methods, its reliance on devoutly Christian, but unsalaried, leaders and teachers, and its strong missionary interest. The latter was such that it prompted the British YWCA to oversee the spread of the Association both to the Continent and the British Colonies for, from its earliest years, the YWCA existed in the minds of its British founders as a movement destined to spread throughout the globe, winning for Christianity the young women of all nations.

Even before the union of the two British movements in 1877, local branches of the YWCA were appearing in North America in response to conditions similar to those which had spawned the British Association. The first American branches were established in New York in 1858 and in Boston in 1866 in the context of religious revivals sweeping mid-nineteenth-century America and the rapid industrialization of the North-East. Student YWCA's were also being organized, beginning in an Illinois normal school in 1872, for the increasing numbers of female college students who were demanding their own extra-curricular programs.

Even during this early phase of YWCA history, differences between the American and British movements clearly emerged. From its inception, the American YWCA placed a greater emphasis on the secular objectives of the work, resulting in a preoccupation with developing social service programs and fund-raising for buildings and other facilities, rather than with holding religious meetings and winning souls. The latter, of course, remained the ultimate objective of all programs, but despite criticism from the more evangelical faction within the organization, it tended to

take second place to YWCA social services. In keeping with this emphasis was a rejection of the British use of volunteer "ladies of leisure" to teach classes and supervise the running of boarding homes in favour of a policy of employing a trained, salaried professional--the YWCA secretary--to supervise the management of each local association.

It is an absolute necessity, in starting an Association in any town, that a young woman familiar with Association work and with training which qualifies her to be a leader and guide of young women, be secured as secretary. And yet there are not many of these to be had, the demand is still far ahead of the supply. But the idea of the Secretaryship as a profession is growing among our members.³

Closely related to the emphasis on professionalism was the involvement of the American YWCA with female college and university students. This was a phenomenon which did not occur in Britain where the Christian student movement evolved entirely outside the YWCA and YMCA. The combination of all these features resulted in an Association which was much more concerned with professional standards, businesslike methods, and modern physical facilities than was its more spiritually-oriented British parent.

The unique features of the YWCA as it developed in the United States proved to have much more impact on the shape of the Canadian Association than did the British model. This may be attributed to several factors, the most obvious being the greater proximity of the Americans. YWCA's relied very heavily on paying visits to other Associations and on attending conferences in order to compare programs and methods, as well as on receiving visits from travelling secretaries employed by the various national and international bodies. The YWCA's chronic lack of funds

3. President, International Committee of YWCA's, 1891, cited by Rice, p. 43.

discouraged regular contact between British and Canadian branches and encouraged the Canadians to model their programs after those developed by the well-established and much more accessible branches in centres such as Detroit, Boston, Chicago and New York. Also related to the question of proximity was the greater familiarity of Canadians with philanthropic trends in the United States, due mainly to the steady flow of American religious leaders, social workers and other reform authorities across the border to public-speaking engagements in Canadian cities. Canadians were also struck by the similarity of the problems facing the two young nations, particularly in the field of immigration, and consequently took a great interest in American programs which could possibly be adapted to Canadian needs. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, for the first two decades of YWCA development in Canada, Canadian locals had relatively few contacts with one another but formed part of a North American movement whose structure and character were essentially determined by the American Associations.

Until the 1890's, the North American YWCA existed as a rather loose network of highly diverse, autonomous local units. The first Canadian city YWCA's--organized in Saint John (1870)⁴, Toronto (1873), Montreal (1874), Quebec (1875) and Halifax (1875)--shared many of the characteristics of their early American counterparts. While some bore the name "Young Women's Christian Association", others were known simply as "Women's Christian Associations" or "Ladies' Christian Associations". Most had, of course, elected to specialize in services for young working women, taking as their primary purpose some variant of "the temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women who are dependent upon their own exertions for

4. This was a short-lived effort which collapsed after several years. The first permanent Canadian YWCA was actually founded in Toronto.

support".⁵ However, during this early period, many **traditional** benevolent programs for elderly women, children, families, and even men were carried out under the auspices of YWCA's. Student YWCA's also offered Bible study and social gatherings to college students, beginning in Canada in 1886. As well as lacking a uniform program of work, the early North American YWCA's also lacked a common membership basis, so that while some had concentrated control in the hands of Protestant evangelical church members, others permitted even Unitarians and Roman Catholics to sit on their Boards of Directors.

During these early decades, the Canadian locals shared with their American sisters an increasing desire to further communication between the various branches engaged in YWCA work--a sentiment which resulted in the holding of regular conferences to compare methods and programs and to coordinate efforts to supervise the increasing numbers of young women travelling from city to city. By 1875, some twenty-eight Associations, including Montreal and Toronto, were attending regular biennial conferences in the United States. The Montreal Association was, to its great delight, selected to host the International Conference of Women's Christian Associations held in 1877:

At first the citizens did not seem to understand why ladies should meet in this way, but as the time drew near, the interest was so great that many who had no delegates allotted to them felt quite neglected, and begged the privilege of entertaining for part of the time at least. Fifty-two ladies came, representing twenty-three Associations, and reports and greetings were sent from many others...The many lessons learned; the useful hints obtained by hearing of the management of the different Associations; the excellent papers read and remarks made by ladies whose whole-heartedness was manifest,

5. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1874.

could not fail to produce lasting benefit.⁶

Although no efforts were made to establish a uniform program of work, there seemed to be a consensus that adoption of similar methods was desirable. This view was strengthened by the increasing mobility of young women which seemed to indicate the need for a broader perspective of the work.

In 1881, as an outgrowth of the international conferences, a permanent coordinating body--the International Board of Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations--was established in New York, having a number of Canadian affiliates and one Canadian representative on its executive. The function of the International Board was to foster communication between the various branches and to encourage greater uniformity in the work. The latter concern resulted in a decision to require all affiliating bodies to take the name "Young Women's Christian Association", indicating a specialization in work for young self-supporting women. However, the International Board did not impose a uniform basis of membership upon its affiliates--that is, it did not require that affiliating Associations be controlled by members of Protestant evangelical churches. Instead, the Board defined the work of the YWCA in broad terms, referring to the promotion of the "spiritual, mental and physical interests of women, together with other Christian work"⁷ and was anxious to enlist the cooperation of all Christian women interested in the cause of the young self-supporting woman.

Not all YWCA's, however, were satisfied with such a broad statement of their mandate, and the desire of many Associations to place the work under the control of Protestant evangelical church members led to a split

6. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1878, p. 15.

7. Ibid., 1897, p. 40.

in the North American movement. This split occurred in 1885, when the student YWCA's, anxious to establish their own national body with the same Protestant evangelical membership basis as the student YMCA, approached the International Board (composed solely of city YWCA's) with a proposal to unite the two movements. The failure of the two groups to come to an agreement over the membership basis resulted in the creation of a separate International Committee of YWCA's in Chicago, composed of student YWCA's and some of the more evangelical American and Canadian city Associations.

The argument over the question of the membership basis reflected a more basic disagreement within the early North American YWCA over the fundamental purpose of Association programs--whether their object was to provide social services for working women within a broad context of Christian reform or whether they were to recruit these women into the Protestant churches. Members of the International Committee disagreed with the International Board's vague definition of Christianity and with its failure to establish a clearly evangelical objective:

...in a Christian organization the leaders must be Christian women...How then shall we decide who are true Christians? Shall we have an examining board of ladies to discuss theology and certify to Christian principles? There is such an examining board, the pastors of our evangelical churches...If a woman publicly professes to be a Christian, the place for this profession is at the altar of a church...By the adoption of this basis the confidence of Christian pastors has been gained, permanence of foundation principles has been guaranteed, harmony of purpose has been attained, and the policy of saving the souls of young women and training them to win others has been emphasized.⁸

The more narrowly-defined task of the International Committee was "to unite 'young women from Maine to California and from Canada to Mississippi' in

8. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Fundamental Principles of the Young Women's Christian Association", American Committee of YWCA's, 1902.

work with a "well-defined purpose, the evangelization of the young women of the world".⁹ Canadian YWCA's affiliated with either the International Board or the International Committee, depending upon which membership basis they found more congenial.

By the end of the 1880's, there were faint rumblings that indicated the Canadians were not happy with their position, and discussions of the possibility of forming a separate Canadian organization were taking place.

The early part of the year found us engaged in a correspondence with the other Canadian Associations with reference to the formation of a Dominion Association, and the advisability of holding a conference. All felt that a closer tie between the Associations, frequent communication with reference to the work, and comparison of methods would be most helpful. But very few looked favourably on the idea of a conference, on account of expenses, etc. It was agreed that there should be at least a mutual interchange of Annual Reports.¹⁰

Despite the international scope and objectives of the YWCA, despite the similarity of the work carried out by American and Canadian locals, and despite even the formidable expenses mentioned above, the Canadians did elect to establish their own Dominion Association, holding their inaugural meeting in 1893. Several contributing factors led to this development. First, there is some indication that many Canadian locals were isolated from the American movement by distance and lack of funds. The International Committee's travelling General Secretary reported to the 1891 convention that Canada, "full of rich promise", had been visited only once in five years.¹¹ Of the Canadian locals, only the larger, more affluent branches, particularly Montreal and Toronto, were able to send delegates to conferences in the U.S. on a regular basis. A Canadian Association would offer at least the advantage of greater accessibility to

10. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1889, p. 14.

11. Cited by Rice, p. 44.

9. International Committee, Annual Report, 1887, cited by Rice, p. 42.

many of the locals.

Expense and accessibility, however, were less significant in the establishment of a Canadian YWCA than was the growing sense of national pride which resulted in the conviction that Canada, a young growing nation playing an increasingly important role in world affairs, should have its own national coordinating body. This was in keeping with a larger trend on the part of other Canadian reform organizations and the Protestant churches toward establishing central coordinating bodies. It also reflected a growing conviction that, despite the similarity of social problems facing Canada and the United States, American solutions were not necessarily appropriate for Canadian needs. In addition, the push for a Canadian national YWCA seemed to come particularly strongly from those locals in Canada which most disapproved of the broad membership basis of the International Board and wished to see a strongly evangelical body established in Canada.

Two events prompted the Canadian locals to re-open discussions of establishing a Canadian body after their initial hesitation in 1889. In 1892, rumours reached their ears of the imminent organization of a World's YWCA, and the general consensus seemed to be that Canadians should be represented on this body by their own delegates, rather than indirectly through their American affiliations. However, the immediate impetus for the formation of a Dominion YWCA was provided by the Women's Congress of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. At a symposium on the theme "A Century of Progress for Women of Canada", sixty Canadian delegates from organizations including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Women's Enfranchisement Association and the YWCA thoroughly discussed "the idea

that Canadian women's societies should form themselves into national organizations".¹² One delegate from each organization was selected to act on this recommendation, responsibility for the Canadian YWCA falling to Adelaide Hoodless, President of the Hamilton Association.

Upon my return, I wrote to every city and town in Canada. Where there were already established Associations I asked for their views, etc. Where I did not know of any existing, I wrote the Mayor of the place, asking for information, and if he would kindly place the letter in the hands of some responsible Christian woman who would assist me in my efforts to secure information. In all, I sent out ninety letters.¹³

Mrs. Hoodless' efforts resulted in the inaugural meeting of the Dominion Young Women's Christian Association which was held in Toronto on December 7, 1893, and attended by delegates from city associations in Toronto, Montreal, Peterborough, London, and Hamilton, and from student YWCA's at Alma College (St. Thomas), Toronto University, and the Toronto Medical College.¹⁴ The principal address by Miss Bertha Wright, President of the Ottawa Association, emphasized the world-wide scope of the movement and "the stimulus which would be given to the branches here in the event of a distinct Dominion Association being formed".¹⁵

The inaugural meeting focused on the importance of a Canadian coordinating body and the controversial question of the membership basis. Discussion of the latter proved heated, but in the end, delegates elected to include the evangelical membership test in the provisional constitution.

12. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 9, Minute Book--National Executive Committee 1895-1905, "A Brief History of the Dominion Young Women's Christian Association", 1897, Miss E.K. Price.

13. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 15.

14. The Toronto Globe, December 8, 1893, p. 2. Letters of approval were sent by Associations in Halifax, Kingston, Quebec, Ottawa, Belleville, and Winnipeg which regretted that they were unable to send delegates.

15. The Toronto Daily Mail, December 8, 1893, p. 2.

Montreal and Quebec, as two of the Associations which were closely tied to the International Board, declined to affiliate in protest over this decision. In spite of the disagreement, however, the new provisional executive, headed by its president, Miss Bertha Wright of Ottawa, leader of the victorious evangelical faction, set about its task of organizing the first Dominion Convention. The Executive recommended that all Canadian locals withdraw from the International Board "on account of difference of opinion regarding its management--its basis being too broad" and direct their efforts toward the creation of "a strong national association to be affiliated with the World's Association" "on a strictly evangelical basis" meaning that "the management of affairs will be kept in the hands of Evangelical members".¹⁶

Further discussion of the thorny question of evangelical control took place at the first Dominion Convention of YWCA's, held in Ottawa on January 22-23, 1895, and attended by approximately twenty-five delegates from Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal, Peterborough, Ottawa, Toronto University and McGill University. Two papers were read which presented the opposing points of view. Mrs. J.F. Stevenson, President of the Montreal Association, who also represented Canada on the Executive of the International Board, argued that the membership basis should be left optional to the local Associations, while Miss Bertha Wright of Ottawa advocated adoption of the evangelical test system to permit affiliation of only those locals which were controlled by evangelical church members.¹⁷ These two points of view were not merely personal but reflected differences in the constitutions of

16. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Minutes, January 5, 1895; The Ottawa Citizen, January 23, 1895, p. 8.

17. The Ottawa Citizen, January 24, 1895, p. 8.

of the two associations, which probably reflected, in turn, the church affiliations of their respective Boards of Directors.¹⁸

The arguments presented by Miss Wright were evidently considered more persuasive, for the evangelicals carried the day and the following basis was adopted by the new body.

The Dominion YWCA seeks to unite those young women, who regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, are vitally united to him through the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit and desire to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among all young women by such means as are in accordance with the word of God.¹⁹

The fact that this basis was the same as that adopted by the World's YWCA (after the so-called Paris Basis adopted by the World's YWCA in 1855) organized one year previously, permitted the Canadian Association to apply for affiliation with the world body, a point which no doubt contributed to the victory of the evangelical faction. Canada thus became the fifth active member of the World's YWCA in 1896, following Great Britain, the United States (represented by the International Committee), Norway, and Sweden.

The immediate effect of the formation of the Dominion YWCA was two-fold. First, Canadian locals were expected to sever their ties with the American bodies, particularly the International Board. This, however, took considerable nudging on the part of the new national executive, and in 1897, the Board's affiliates still included Halifax, Charlottetown, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Montreal, Quebec, and Toronto.²⁰ Montreal was

18. More research at the local level is needed to determine whether a higher percentage of evangelical church members automatically resulted in adoption of the evangelical membership test or whether not all evangelicals supported this position.
19. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 1895-1905, Constitution, Article II.
20. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1897, p. 40.

the last to withdraw in 1902. Secondly, those locals which had not already done so were required to modify their constitutions in accordance with the new basis. This meant the adoption of a two-tiered system of membership, which restricted active (i.e. voting and office-holding) membership to evangelical church members, but which left associate membership (eligibility to participate in programs) open to any young woman of good character.

Defeat of the faction within the Canadian YWCA which supported the optional membership basis marked a rejection of the concept of the YWCA as a social service organization working to improve the conditions of young women's lives within a broad framework of Christian principles such as service and charity. The victory of the evangelical wing ensured that YWCA work--"the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social condition of young women"²¹--would remain subordinate to the cause of winning women to the church and that a truly broad base of support could never be established as all interested parties, other than evangelical church members, were excluded from policy and decision-making. Furthermore, as will be seen in discussions of YWCA programs in the following chapters, the evangelical objectives of the YWCA alienated many young working women who might otherwise have taken advantage of its services.

For the first five years of its existence, the fledgling Dominion Association initiated little new work and grew only very slowly. The scattered executive, headed by national president Adelaide Hoodless, met only once or twice a year, the bulk of its work consisting of correspondence with the World's YWCA, the International Board and International Committee,

21. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, Constitution, Article II.

the YMCA, the World's Student Christian Federation, and other international Christian bodies. To compensate for the deficiencies of correspondence, Bertha Wright had been appointed first National Travelling Secretary by the 1895 Convention--

...whose duties should be to visit, and ascertain the various conditions and methods practised by the Associations throughout the country, to arrange a more uniform system, and to assist in organizing new Associations in towns and cities where none existed. Also by personal appeals to the people of Canada to assist in carrying out the aims of the Young Women's Christian Association by contributions of money or service.²²

After only six months, however, "having made upwards of one hundred and fifty calls in Toronto and Hamilton with the result that only fifty dollars had been subscribed to the general fund"²³, Miss Wright was forced to resign as her salary could not be guaranteed. Despite these difficulties and a budget of only \$380.59 in 1896²⁴, the Dominion Association was able to commence publication of a national magazine, organize several biennial conventions and pay at least one visit to each local association. This work was financed almost entirely by gifts from Mrs. John McDougall of Montreal, national president from 1896 to 1900, and from several other executive members.

By 1900, demands on the Dominion Association had increased to the point where the need for a strong central organization with a more efficient structure and secure financial base was obvious. National pride also demanded re-organization of a Canadian Association which now boasted eleven city and ten student branches across the country.

22. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 16.

23. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women's Gazette, November 1901; p. 9.

24. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 6.

Canada is no longer a child, but is taking rapid strides toward womanhood; the Young Women's Christian Association as the strongest, broadest, most rounded organization doing specific work for young women, must of necessity "stride" with it and do its part toward making its young womanhood pure, strong, noble and all that is best. It cannot do that unless it is strong at its centre.²⁵

To rectify the existing situation, the work of the Executive Committee was divided into City and Student Departments, and on October 4, 1901, the Committee resolved itself into a "Dominion Council" composed of

...the Dominion President, a Vice-President resident in each Province, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, a City and College Travelling Secretary, and an Executive Board of sixteen ladies, resident in Toronto²⁶,

thus marking the beginning of an effective national YWCA in Canada.

The Dominion Council was essentially a Toronto body--Toronto being selected as the most appropriate base for a national YWCA for the probable reason that it boasted the largest and most affluent Protestant community, and thus ensured financial support for the work. Members of the Dominion Council were appointed on the basis of their prior experience in reform work and their ability to attract financial support to the organization through their personal contacts. Many active members, like Mrs. H.P. Plumptre and Mrs. L.A. Hamilton, were well-known in Toronto philanthropic circles and were to be found on the Boards of Directors of a variety of reform organizations. The Dominion Council attracted wives of prominent businessmen (Mrs. J.W. Flavelle), wives of politicians (Mrs. N.W. Rowell, married to Ontario's Opposition Leader) and wives of

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women's Gazette, November 1901, p. 9.

26. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada", Dominion Council pamphlet, c. 1902.

prominent clergymen, judges and other professionals--Mrs. R.A. Falconer, who was very influential as national president from 1914 to 1922, was married to the President of the University of Toronto. Not infrequently, Dominion Council members were joined by close family ties to the YMCA. They were also women who, through their own education, personal travels and experience in reform work, were familiar with the most up-to-date trends in philanthropic work, were aware of the larger questions facing the Church and lay workers in Canada and in other parts of the world, and were convinced of the need to integrate YWCA work in Canada into the larger international movement. Their impact on the direction of Canadian YWCA policies and programs would be very great.

The Dominion Council played an active role in strengthening the Canadian YWCA and in communicating to the local associations a sense of their participation in an international movement for young women. From 1901 to the outbreak of the First World War, it experienced a period of steady expansion, having a total of twenty-four city and thirty-nine student branches, a budget of \$18,000, and a staff of seven paid secretaries by 1919. During this period, one of its more important functions was to represent Canada at international YWCA gatherings. While the Dominion Council did little to establish new policies and programs at the international level; generally adopting those recommended by the World's YWCA and the U.S. National Board²⁷, it did attempt to screen all new programs to determine whether they could be adapted for Canadian needs.

In addition, the Dominion Council took steps to ensure that the Canadian YWCA did not lose its separate identity through an over-reliance

27. Formed in 1906 as a result of the merger of the International Board and International Committee, now agreed on the evangelical membership basis.

on American resources. One such step was a consistent effort to recruit and train Canadian secretaries both for the Dominion Council's own staff and for the local associations. For lack of a Canadian training school, applicants were sent to Detroit to supplement their college degree with a one-year course of training at the American Committee's Secretarial Training Institute. A short-lived attempt was made from 1902 to 1905 to combine a training school with a young women's settlement, Evangelia House, in Toronto. This was followed in 1916 by a three-month summer course, offered in cooperation with the Toronto YWCA and the University of Toronto's new Department of Social Service. Efforts to found a permanent Canadian school at national headquarters were, however, abandoned in 1920, due to a lack of applicants.

More successful in furthering a distinct Canadian movement was the introduction of an annual summer conference in 1909. Until that date, Canadians had attended conferences at Northfield and Silver Bay, New York where delegates from all over North America met to exchange reports, discuss mutual problems, develop new policies, and listen to addresses by YWCA and YMCA secretaries, church leaders, missionaries, settlement workers, and representatives of other Christian organizations. After 1909, Canadian delegates to Muskoka, Ontario, not only benefitted from the visits of British, American and World's YWCA staff, but were also exposed to the ideas of their own religious leaders and social service workers, such as J.S. Woodsworth, and intense discussion took place of such questions as the role of the YWCA and the Canadian churches in the solving of national problems such as massive non-English-speaking immigration. It was also the hope of the Dominion Council that the summer conferences would further

contacts between the city and student movements, thereby strengthening the national movement and encouraging college graduates to consider careers as YWCA city secretaries.

An additional function of the Dominion Council was the forging of links with the Young Men's Christian of Canada and making information about YMCA policies and activities accessible to the local associations. While the YWCA originally developed quite independently of the YMCA²⁸, the ties between the two organizations became increasingly strong after the turn of the century. Most local associations had sporadic contacts with the YMCA in their city regarding advice on financial matters and occasional use of the YMCA gymnasium or swimming pool. At the national level, however, the two organizations became more and more conscious of the complementary nature of their respective goals, particularly those which involved the strengthening of the churches and national life. The YMCA's conviction that its programs for young men would be undermined by a lack of similar programs for young women prompted it to suggest cooperation between the two organizations, particularly in work with

28. The first YMCA was organized in England in 1844 by a group of London clerks interested in spiritual and moral self-improvement. The first branch in Canada, and in North America, was established in Montreal in 1851. There were no official links between the men's and women's organizations in the early years--only the concept of an interdenominational young people's society was borrowed from the men. The differences between the two organizations were significant and merit further investigation. In particular, YMCA's seemed to appear in Canada before the spread of the urban industrial conditions which spawned the YWCA; the early YMCA's were organized by young men on their own behalf, rather than by older people as was the case with the women's organization; and the Canadian YMCA's did not form their own national body until 1912, choosing to retain their close links to the American Associations.

adolescents, and to offer a good deal of advice on programs with which it had prior experience, such as Immigration Work, and on sound business methods. YMCA assistance culminated in financial contributions from its Red Triangle Campaigns to the Dominion Council's National Service Department during the War.

The most difficult task facing the Dominion Council was how to forge a cohesive national movement with a strong sense of its participation in a world body out of isolated autonomous branches preoccupied with local conditions and the details of fund-raising and mortgage payments. Although the Dominion Council had no direct control over local activities, it did attempt to educate the branches through the conferences, the national magazine and visits by national secretaries as to what programs should be offered by a YMCA and how these should be organized in accordance with business and professional standards. This task, combined with that of organizing new branches, particularly in Western Canada, where the flood of immigration created a crisis in housing and other facilities for the young female arrivals, was at times almost sufficient to overwhelm the Dominion Council and its staff of travelling secretaries. Nevertheless, both Council members and secretaries were able to take on endless public speaking engagements in cities across the country to educate not only local members but religious leaders, business, city governments, other philanthropic organizations, and the general public about the national and international scope of the YMCA and its need for generous financial support. This national work was financed by contributions personally-solicited in Toronto by the Dominion Council's Finance Committee and by the adoption in 1913 of a system which required city associations to

contribute four per cent of their annual budgets and student associations approximately forty per cent of their membership fees to the support of national work.²⁹

The Dominion Council was not entirely successful in its task of forging a cohesive national YWCA for a number of reasons. The failure of the local associations to offer adequate financial support forced it to rely on personally-solicited contributions, lacking as it did such revenue-generating programs as cafeterias and boarding houses. Without a more secure financial base, it was unable to undertake any really large-scale programs, and even the expansion of the war years led, as will be seen, to collapse with the withdrawal of public support in 1919. The lack of direct control over local programs prevented the development of effective solutions to problems such as housing, industrial standards, and recreation, which the Dominion Council regarded as truly national in scope. Also, due to its chronic lack of funds, the national body was unable to maintain sufficient contact with the locals, which, in the opinion of Dominion Council members, were often sadly lacking in "vision" and needed to be constantly reminded of the Association's larger goals in the national and world context. Weak ties between the student and city locals also militated against an effective national movement, and the Dominion Council was never successful in its goal of recruiting large numbers of students into professional careers with the YWCA.

Despite these weaknesses, however, the Dominion Council did manage, in addition to supervising the work of the locals, to undertake some programs of its own. As part of the missionary effort by the American and British

29. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, pp. 32-3.

YWCA's to carry the Association to Asia--generally referred to as "Foreign Work"--the Dominion Council, beginning in 1903, undertook to support several Canadian secretaries in China, India, and Japan, and was largely responsible for supervising the organization of a national Japanese YWCA. In Canada, it entered the field of Travellers' Aid and Immigration Work by hiring a National Port Worker at Quebec in 1911. In 1910, the national body initiated Canadian YWCA involvement with adolescent girls--"Girls' Work"--by establishing the first school girls' camps and high school clubs. A major expansion during the War years resulted in the establishment of YWCA Hostess Houses at military camps, a recreation centre in Toronto, canteens and hostels for women workers in the war industries, camps for women agricultural workers and assistance to YWCA programs for nurses and women workers in Britain and France. Also during the War years, the Dominion Council established the first Provincial Holiday Camp for Industrial Girls at Longford, Ontario, and became increasingly involved in the questions of wages and working conditions. It participated with the Protestant churches in the development of "Canadian Girls in Training", a program for adolescent girls, and at the end of the War, its contribution to Reconstruction included the supervision of 35,000 dependents of Canadian soldiers en route from Britain to their new homes in Canada. Most YWCA programs were, however, implemented at the local level by the student and city associations, an examination of whose structures and activities is necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the workings and significance of the national movement.

Chapter 3. Local Development: The Student YWCA's

The student YWCA's, organized in universities, colleges, and normal schools across Canada, differed both in structure and in the content of their programs from the city associations, which catered to the working woman.¹ They played a less significant role in the history of the Canadian YWCA than did the city associations, finally withdrawing, in 1920, to form a part of the Student Christian Movement of Canada. Nevertheless, until that time, they formed an integral part of the YWCA's strategy of reforming Canadian society through uplifting its young women. }

YWCA interest in the college student was prompted not so much by concern for her moral standards as by a desire to protect her from intellectual temptation and to win this future professional for Christianity and possibly for a career in the YWCA.

The years spent in college is the time when character is largely being formed, and it is of supreme importance, that along with the intellectual and social aspects there is a true development of the spiritual life. In our colleges to-day are to be found the teachers of the near future, and others who will hold positions of like responsibility and influence. It is fitting that they recognize the real demands of this age, and the fact that in order to successfully meet these, there must go forth graduates who have grasped and inculcated the principles of true Christian womanhood, those who have learned to know God, and who have their faith firmly based on Jesus Christ.²

The organization of a student YWCA presented an ideal opportunity for the parent organization to expand its influence, while recruiting the highly-

1. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate the records of any student YWCA's. Information on student activities was drawn from local reports sent in to the national magazine, discussions of Student Work by national secretaries, and from The Canadian Student.
2. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada", Dominion Council pamphlet, c. 1902.

trained staff and volunteers so desperately required by the city associations.

Several factors contributed to the appearance of the YWCA and YMCA on North American college campuses. First, it reflected an increasing adult interest in organizing the leisure activities of college students. The late nineteenth century witnessed the proliferation of organized sports, debating societies, fraternities and dramatics clubs to the point where no phase of a student's life, not even religion, remained exempt from adult supervision.³ Following the arrival of the women students in the latter decades of the century, all parties seemed agreed that separate organizations were the best solution to the women's demands for equal participation in extra-curricular activities.⁴ Accordingly, the first student YWCA was formed in an Illinois normal school in 1872, followed by its first Canadian counterparts in 1886 and 1887 at Albert College (Belleville), McGill University, the University of Toronto, and the Toronto Medical College for Women.

YWCA involvement in college activities also developed out of the systematic campaign waged by the Protestant churches during the 1880's and 1890's to recruit and organize middle-class youths. Faced with the spread of industrialism, the metropolis, and material values, church leaders heralded the freshness and vitality of youth as the key both to the evangelization of the heathen in foreign lands and to the preservation of Christian ideals at home. Church women, anxious to expand the scope of their activities, were particularly active in the young people's movement, organizing branches

3. Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present, Basic Books Inc., New York, 1977, p. 175.

4. Rice, op.cit., p. 39.

of denominational societies such as Christian Endeavour, the Epworth League, and young people's branches of the Women's Home Missionary Society.⁵ These church leaders and lay workers were well aware of the potential value of programs for college students, as explained by the Bishop of Toronto to a large missionary gathering in 1902:

The student age is that of enthusiasms and emulation. Student pursuits widen the horizon of life's outlook and kindle aspirations that are high and outreaching; and student companionship fosters in like minds lofty and noble impulses. It is this which makes our universities and colleges a grand recruiting ground for missionaries and missionary sympathizers.⁶

In view of the intellectual temptations faced during the college years, coupled with "the fact that nine-tenths of those who leave college unconverted are never won for Christ", the need for "a strong, active, spiritual force in each college" was not one to be ignored, certainly not by the YWCA.⁷

The women students, in their turn, had their own reasons for being drawn to the YWCA. In keeping with the trend away from young people's voluntary associations, it was natural that the young women would seek out adult guidance in establishing their own religious organization, and the YWCA had, by this time, already won the endorsement of church leaders, parents, and college administrators for its work with young women. The students were also drawn to the interdenominational approach of the YWCA which, by drawing together the entire Protestant student body, promised to

5. John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era: The First Century of Confederation, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., Toronto, 1972, pp. 57-9.
6. World-Wide Evangelization, The Urgent Business of the Church: Addresses Delivered Before the Fourth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Toronto, Canada, February 26-March 2, 1902, Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, New York, 1902, p. 17.
7. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada", Dominion Council pamphlet, c. 1902.

be a more effective means of organizing religious and social activities than the fragmented denominational societies. While the YWCA provided more socially-concerned students with an outlet for their energies through its involvement in missionary and social service work, affiliation with it did not require the adoption of any strictly-defined structures or programs, nor did it demand participation in any YWCA activities outside the campus.

Active membership, i.e. the right to vote and hold office in a student YWCA, was limited to members of Protestant evangelical churches, with associate membership being open to any student duly elected by a majority of the membership.⁸ Lacking the Board of Directors and paid secretary of the city YWCA, students elected their own officers and established committees and programs under the guidance of interested faculty members and occasional visits from the Dominion Council's travelling Student Secretary. While it is true that the parent organization did not have the resources to supervise the students more directly, it did appreciate the importance of the peer influence in Christian work--a valuable lesson learned from church youth workers. Religious activities consisted of weekly student-led Bible study classes emphasizing the life of Jesus as an appropriate model for students; monthly missionary meetings at which students were urged to devote their lives to evangelizing the heathen in foreign lands; and student-led discussions of such topics as "The Pure Life", "The Call to Service", "Self-Control" and "Glorifying God in Our Recreations".⁹ Aside from such direct evangelistic work, the associations also held socials for the membership; conducted a yearly membership drive; engaged in benevolent

8. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 21, "Constitution of Young Women's Christian Associations in Universities, Colleges, and Seminaries of the Dominion of Canada"; c. 1902.

9. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbooks--Booklets 1904-1909

work, such as sewing for the poor; and raised funds for the support of delegates to YWCA and Christian student conferences, for the work of the YMCA's Canadian Colleges' Missions in Korea and India, and for the work of the Dominion Council's Foreign Department.

The student YWCA rapidly established itself as the most popular vehicle for the expression of Christian life among Canadian women students, thirty-nine branches in universities, colleges, and normal schools having affiliated with the Dominion Council by 1913. In that year, the YWCA claimed fifty per cent of all women in these institutions as members, with a much higher percentage in universities and residential colleges. The degree of commitment of many of the members was, however, the subject of considerable discussion, active membership indicating

...anything from the most definite Christian attitude to one of such indifference that it merely means paying an annual fee because the unwilling member cannot very well escape the importunities of the Treasurer.¹⁰

Campaigns were frequently held to increase the rather poor attendance at Bible and mission study classes.

Many women students were indifferent or hostile to the presence of the YWCA on Canadian campuses, objecting, according to a survey conducted by one college YWCA president, to its concern with organization and finances rather than "true religion", its evangelical membership basis, its "flabby" interdenominationalism, and even to the behaviour of its members, as described by one disgruntled student.

The Y.W.C.A. is a body of fanatics, interfering with other people and making of itself a centre of emotional, sanctimonious religiousness. The people who are really

10. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 27.

good pray by themselves, 'do good by stealth', and don't preach.¹¹

That there was some truth in this accusation was acknowledged by a YWCA student who advised associations to avoid aggressive tactics in recruiting new members: "Christ stands at the door and knocks; He never goes inside and nags."¹² Despite its unpopularity in some quarters, however, the Association generally obtained the full cooperation of the college faculty. One "lady principal" offered the following comment to the Dominion Council's National Student Secretary:

I consider that the Young Women's Christian Association has been of great value to our college. It develops the girls in their Christian lives, shows them how they can help others, and leads them to realize that loving service is the main purpose of life...Girls have surrendered their lives wholly to Christ while here and are now in active preparation to go as missionaries if God wills. Many beautiful Christian homes are due to the influence of our Young Women's Christian Association.¹³

College administrators were quick to recognize that in encouraging Christian spirit, the YWCA acted as "an important auxiliary to the Faculty in preserving good discipline and fostering the best interests of the school".¹⁴

The interest in the all-round development of the young woman which constituted such an important part of city work was lacking in the programs of the student associations which took as their narrower objective:

11. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1915, p. 158.
12. Ibid., December 1915, p. 197.
13. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, December 1903.
14. Ibid., October 1902, p. 74.

1. To win the non-Christian women students to become followers of Jesus Christ.
2. To guard them against the temptations common in college, to deepen the spiritual life, and to develop an efficiency in Christian service.
3. To lead the young women to place their lives after graduating in the service that will tell most for the extension of the Kingdom of God.¹⁵

Meeting the physical and intellectual needs of the woman student was held to be more properly the responsibility of the university than of the YWCA. The underlying purpose of student association activities was the provision of wholesome Christian fellowship and the attraction of the unconverted to attendance at religious meetings. This reflected the much greater commitment to evangelism and foreign missionary work which distinguished the student local from the city association and which resulted from the former's close ties to the worldwide Christian student movement.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a wave of missionary fervour swept North American campuses, as evangelists directed their attention to the recruitment of college graduates as missionaries for the foreign field. The Christian students of the YMCA and YWCA were among those most affected by this new enthusiasm. In 1886, a conference of student YMCA's and YWCA's of Canada and the U.S. established the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, whose goal was to recruit college students as foreign missionaries and whose watchword was "the evangelization of the world in this generation".¹⁶ The work of the Student Volunteer Movement was actively promoted by the student YWCA's, each of which

15. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada", Dominion Council pamphlet, c. 1902.

16. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Woman's Gazette, February 1900, p. 4; December 1900, p. 8.

contained a small nucleus of volunteers, and much fund-raising was undertaken to send delegates to the SVM's major international conferences held every four years. Close ties were also maintained with the World's Student Christian Federation, established in 1895 to unite national Christian student movements around the world. These ties would prove a disadvantage to the Canadian YWCA in that they fostered stronger links with the American colleges than with city YWCA's in Canada and focused the attention of Canadian students on global evangelization rather than on local and national problems.

The students' interest in missionary work did, however, prove helpful in generating support for the Dominion Council's Foreign Department, which was responsible for several Canadian YWCA secretaries developing programs for young women in China, India, and Japan. YWCA Foreign Work was part of a larger missionary effort, closely linked to Western imperialism, which attempted to accompany economic penetration by the introduction of Western institutions and values. This movement was also prompted by Western fear of Asia's emerging strength and of social disruption being caused by rapid urbanization and industrialization in that part of the world. Canadian students were particularly responsive to suggestions that a failure to control the direction of social change in Asia would ultimately threaten international peace and their own position in Canada:

...unless Canada passes on her heritage, not only to her incoming citizens, but to all the nations of the world, this heritage will pass away. We are all interested in the evangelization of the world. If we want our national life at home to keep pure and strong, we must purify the incoming life at its spring; strengthening the hands of our missionaries, so that the Chinese, Japanese and Hindus, who are affecting strongly the national life of other lands than their own, will be a source of strength and not of anxiety.¹⁷

17. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28, I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1912, p. 275.

Beginning in 1903, when the first Canadian foreign secretary was sent to Japan, the Canadian YWCA assisted the British and American Associations in developing student and industrial programs for young Asian women, playing a particularly active role in Japan. The main emphasis in YWCA foreign programs was on the evangelization of university students--the future leaders of the country--and on arousing upper-class women to a sense of their obligation to undertake philanthropic work. This emphasis was in keeping with the larger goal of reproducing Canadian values and class and economic structures in the newly-emerging Asian societies. Many YWCA students in Canadian universities found such activities more to their taste and more closely related to their goal of evangelizing the world than were the Association's services for young working women in Canada. As a result, the Dominion Council relied heavily upon the student associations for the financial support of the Foreign Department and for the recruitment of foreign secretaries to represent the Canadian Associations in Asia.

In addition to the greater preoccupation of the students with missionary programs, a second factor contributing to the gap between Canadian city and student locals, thus weakening the national movement, was the frequent contact between YWCA students and the male students of the YMCA, World's Student Christian Federation and the Student Volunteer Movement. While contacts between city YWCA's and YMCA's were infrequent and were generally limited to discussions of financial matters, college students of both sexes met regularly and participated on an equal basis in joint conferences, religious meetings, missionary gatherings, Bible study classes and Christian social events. Through these contacts YWCA students were encouraged to define themselves first as a Christian student body and second as an

organization of young women, and consequently tended to take a greater interest in the problems of Christian students in Calcutta than in the difficulties of young female factory workers in Montreal. Preoccupation with the evangelization of the world contributed to the persistent failure of the students to respond to Dominion Council appeals for financial contributions to national work and volunteer service at the local city association. Even more disturbing to the Dominion Council was the failure of alumnae to transfer their allegiance from the college YWCA, following graduation, to their local city association in the form of membership on a Board or committee, or even a career as a city secretary.

Despite the fact that the Dominion Council regularly encouraged YWCA students to develop their sense of responsibility for others, particularly young women of the less fortunate classes, it provided them with no real opportunity to do so, nor even to take responsibility for themselves. In keeping with the attitudes of adult youth workers who viewed young people as too ignorant or irresponsible to make important decisions concerning their own welfare, the Student Department, created by the Dominion Council in 1901, allowed the students themselves no direct representation. Instead, national student work was to be administered by the national Student Secretary and a committee of alumnae appointed by the Dominion Council. This resulted in a situation where much of the student membership had only the vaguest notion of the role of the national YWCA and of its activities beyond the boundaries of the campus.

Shortly before the War, a dramatic change took place in the orientation of the student YWCA's as they came increasingly under the influence of Social Gospel thought, a new force which seemed potentially capable of

uniting the two streams of the Canadian YWCA. By 1910, YWCA students were doing volunteer work in neighbourhood settlement houses across the country and were avidly studying their copies of Woodsworth's Strangers Within Our Gates and My Neighbour. A new wave of speakers from the World's Student Christian Federation and the Student Volunteer Movement, as well as others experienced in social work activities in Canadian and American cities, urged Canadian students to turn their attention to urban problems in their native land and to recognize the importance of "Christianizing" their own society. The new sense of nationalism and interest in the problems of the Canadian metropolis experienced by the students could conceivably have resulted in flocks of student YWCA volunteers appearing at the doors of their local city association. This situation did not materialize for two reasons. First, the students could not be persuaded to channel all their new-found energy and enthusiasm into the YWCA. Most were just as likely to choose volunteer work at a church mission or neighbourhood settlement house. Second, the students were motivated by their beliefs as Christian students rather than as an organization of women and hence were not interested in confining their activities to services for young women. Men, women, and children were seen as equally deserving of their attention.

Most of the students' efforts were channelled into work with the pre-War flood of new immigrants into Canada. Compassion for the plight of the immigrants blended with support for the views of Ruth Rouse, who toured Canadian colleges in 1912 as Women's Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation, urging the students to preserve their heritage of sound moral ideas and reverence for religion from the onslaught of

racial and religious intolerance and socialist doctrines which were the heritage of the immigrants.¹⁸ However, students did not necessarily adopt the YWCA's policy of an exclusive focus on programs for young women and often helped offer special English classes and other services for the entire immigrant community.

The immediate pre-War period witnessed the onset of developments which would ultimately lead to a Canadian student Christian movement independent of both the YWCA and YMCA. Influenced, no doubt, by the prevailing ultra-nationalism of this time, the Canadian students withdrew from the North American Student Council to form the Council of Canadian Student Movements in 1914. Members included the student YWCA's and YMCA's, the Canadian Colleges' Missions and the Canadian branch of the Student Volunteer Movement. The Council was to have no executive function, its purpose being to discuss common problems, encourage coöperation in matters of common interest, and represent the student movements in their relation to the World's Student Christian Federation. Further developments were postponed, however, by the outbreak of war and the near-disappearance of the student YMCA's.

The student associations benefitted from the general expansion of YWCA work which resulted from the successful financial campaigns of the War years. By 1919, four national secretaries, including one for the Western Field and one for Toronto, were visiting and organizing the colleges and four regional student conferences were being held each summer. In addition, a more direct voice in the national administration of student affairs was won as the Dominion Council agreed to act on the recommendation of Ruth Rouse.

18. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1912, pp. 272-3.

to allow the students several elected representatives on the Student Committee. None of these developments, however, was able to offset the growing dissatisfaction of the student locals with restrictions imposed by their affiliation with the YWCA, especially the requirement of the Protestant evangelical membership test.

While contact with Social Gospel thought implied an increased sense of obligation to participate in Christian social reform, it frequently resulted, as well, in a feeling of frustration with orthodox religion and with the petty denominational squabbles which hindered cooperation in the face of large scale social problems. Many Christian students, consequently, were refusing to align themselves with one of the Protestant denominational churches and thus became ineligible for active membership in a student YWCA. The goals of the student association had broadened from "the development of Christian character in its members" in 1902¹⁹ to include, by 1914, the promotion of

...the importance and urgency of world-wide evangelization and the Christian solution of social problems and the permeation of public life with Christian ideals,²⁰

and consequently required the enlistment of as many members as possible. The YWCA requirement of full church membership was, students argued, proving more of a hindrance than a help in this work.

It is not true that the restriction made by the Constitution on non-church members incites them to thoughts of joining a church. Not in one case that has come under our attention has that clause in the Constitution done aught but anger girls and sooner or later turn them away from Association work.²¹

19. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 21, "Constitution of Young Women's Christian Associations in Universities, Colleges and Seminaries of the Dominion of Canada", c. 1902.

20. Ibid., v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1914, p. 201.

21. Ibid., December 1915, p. 196.

Resentment of this restriction was aggravated by the students' growing concern with democratic structures arising out of the War, and a consequent new awareness of their own lack of representation within the YWCA.

In 1916, the students sought and received permission from the Dominion Council to include in their constitution an alternate basis of membership which would allow members to substitute for the evangelical test a personal declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and support for the goals of the college YWCA. However, the insistence of the Dominion Council that the cabinet of the student YWCA be in sympathy with Protestant principles and that two-thirds of its members, including the President, be members of Protestant evangelical churches, did not go far toward appeasing such critics as this writer.

We have not been sufficiently democratic. A more or less autocratic cabinet dictates and carries out a policy... The Associations ought not to be unions of some few who conform to an established point of view and plan of execution which is ipso facto the right one and beyond criticism or discussion. There are very few women in our colleges who are not Christian, whether warm or lukewarm, but there are many not in our Christian Association.²²

With the return of the men from the Front, a new vigour was injected into the Canadian student movement, along with a heightened sense of the importance and urgency of international social and economic problems. Both men and women alike were caught up in the new spirit of the time, described by one student veteran as

...a late but sudden discovery that the world is a single body in which all the parts are closely interconnected, that the effect of the slightest development or disturbance in commerce, in industry, in politics, in thought, will be worldwide and immediate; it is the feeling that a man's a man (and to some extent a woman's a man, too) all the world

22. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 36.

over, whatever his colour, birth, or wealth, that all men are entitled to their fair share in the world's produce, and that a man should draw his share primarily as a man and not as a cog in the industrial machine.²³

In the pages of The Canadian Student, the orthodox denominational churches with which the YWCA and YMCA were so closely associated, were accused by students of being singularly reluctant to confront such fundamental economic and social realities, and disillusionment was expressed with their materialism, conservatism and pettiness. Both the YMCA and YWCA students were convinced of the need to promote the spirit of cooperation as exemplified by the League of Nations, rather than the conflict advocated by socialists, and both men and women agreed that their parent organizations were not the most effective vehicles for accomplishing this end.

Several other factors contributed to the increasing frequency of criticism directed at the YWCA and YMCA. The Protestant evangelical membership test, still required by the YMCA, was proving intolerable to the men students who wished to cooperate not only with Protestant non-church members but with Roman Catholic students as well.²⁴ In addition, both men and women students argued that having separate organizations within the same institution was inefficient and failed to recognize "the principle of co-education".²⁵ They felt hampered in their "honest expression of opinion" by their connection with an organization which was forced to rely on the "good will and support of a conservative element--the community".²⁶ They wanted a more democratic structure and complete responsibility for their own movement. Finally, it had become obvious that the same name

23. The Canadian Student, November 1919, p. 5.

24. Ibid., December 1919, p. 3.

25. Ibid., February 1920, pp. 25-6.

26. Ibid., March 1920, p. 31.

could no longer be used to describe two such distinct movements as the city and the student YWCA's.

The term conveys merely the idea of the City Association, and to most people it is a distortion to make it include work among students. True the object in each is the same, as is true of all Christian work wherever and however carried on--the extension of the Kingdom of God on earth--but in city and student work both method and material differ very widely.²⁷

In this latter objection, the fundamental reason for the ultimate separation of student and city YWCA's was most clearly expressed. It was inevitable that an organization which saw as its task the mobilization of Christian students, both men and women, behind efforts to evangelize and Christianize nations around the world would withdraw from a body which focused exclusively upon the provision of services to young women. Nor could the students, who were increasingly willing to ask probing questions about the relationship between urban problems and social and economic structures, continue in their association with the more conservative city locals who were answerable to the established churches and the business community for their actions.

The failure of the 1919 Red Triangle Campaign and the consequent decision taken by the Dominion Council to turn over the entire financial responsibility for student work to the students themselves was not, then, the cause of the students' withdrawal from the Canadian YWCA so much as it was the final contributing factor. It came as no surprise to the student associations--although it was a considerable shock to the parent organization which were wrapped up in their own financial difficulties and the task of Reconstruction--when the 400 Canadian delegates to the Student

27. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 36.

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Volunteer Convention at Des Moines, Iowa, met in a separate caucus on December 30, 1919, to discuss the Ideal Purpose of a student association, and resolved that a conference of Canadian students be held to discuss the possible organization of a distinctive Canadian Student Movement. At a national student assembly held in Guelph, December 29, 1920-January 2, 1921, representatives from the Christian organizations of nearly every Canadian university approved the constitution of the new Student Christian Movement of Canada, to which would be admitted any "fellowship of students, based on the conviction that in Jesus Christ are found the supreme revelation of God and the means to the full realization of life".²⁸ Representatives from the parent organizations attended the gathering to convey their good wishes and in return the assembly expressed its gratitude "to the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. for their fostering care through these many years of Student Christian work, and their attitude to most recent developments."²⁹

The Dominion Council, preoccupied with its own financial problems in the face of a perceived moral crisis in Canada, appeared, if anything, to be relieved by the removal of its obligations to supervise student Christian work. While student work had certainly been a priority in the early years of the movement, its value to the YWCA was gradually diminished both by the failure of students to respond to appeals to consider secretarial careers and by the growing numbers of young immigrant women, industrial workers and high school girls, all of whom presented a promising field of work for the YWCA. Well before 1920, it had become clear to the Dominion Council that its efforts to uplift the young women of Canada could more profitably be directed elsewhere.

28. The Canadian Student, January 1921, p. 15.

29. Ibid., pp. 24-28.

Chapter 4. Local Development: The City YWCA's

Without the local city YWCA to implement policies developed by national and world leaders, the Young Women's Christian Association would have remained little more than a vision. Few Canadian programs, with the exception of some Immigration and National Service work, several school-girls' camps and the foreign missionary work in Japan, were administered directly by the Dominion Council. The complex of programs and services for the working woman with which the YWCA was generally associated--such as boarding homes, cafeterias, employment bureaux and educational classes--were implemented by the city associations. For this reason, no study of the YWCA's response to the problem of the Modern Girl would be complete without an examination of local activities and structures.¹

The city YWCA was one of a multitude of reform organizations which responded to conditions arising out of the rapid growth of turn-of-the-century Canadian cities. A growing population of women workers and an influx of young rural women into the cities were believed to warrant serious and immediate attention by local leaders of the YWCA.

Some startling facts are revealed by the census returns of 1901, which have other than political significance. In such cities as Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and Halifax the figures show that more than one in every nine of the population is a wage-earning woman in office, factory, shop or in domestic service. Whether such a state of affairs is to be deprecated or not can be left to the theorist to decide. That such facts exist makes it necessary for those of practical bent to seek to meet the needs for preserving, in the midst of these conditions, a well-developed, all-round Christian womanhood.²

1. Information in this chapter is drawn from articles and local reports published in the national magazine, from local histories obtained through correspondence with YWCA's across Canada, and from perusal of the records of the associations in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Vancouver, and Halifax.
2. Hamilton YWCA Archives, Clippings, "The Young Women's Christian Association", A.C. Macdonald, 1902.

The metropolis did not provide the newly-arrived young woman with an hospitable environment, at least not according to the YWCA. First and foremost, she faced an acute shortage of clean, respectable boarding homes at a price that she could afford on a small salary. Isolated in her boarding house, she often found it difficult to make new friends and had few opportunities for social life. While it is true that early-twentieth-century Canadian cities offered saloons, pool halls, movie theatres, and dance halls in abundance, young women who wished to appear respectable were not at liberty to frequent such places.

...many evenings, uncomfortable as her lodging house is, she is compelled to remain in or take the chance of sacrificing her self-respect. A girl's latitude is far more restricted than a boy's; she must observe the most rigid conventions. To do otherwise is to endanger her good name...What the average person of means does not seem to realize is that the girl who wants to be nice, is very much restricted in her habits of life. A boy is not half so much shackled by the social conventions. He can go and pick up acquaintances with people he had never seen before, and nothing is thought of it. But a girl can take no such chances. If she did she would soon be marked...³

Canadian cities had no facility which offered the working woman recreational opportunities with her peers. There were no gymnasia, swimming pools, basketball or tennis courts available for the use of working women who increasingly sought opportunities for physical activity. Educational opportunities were also lacking for the woman who was forced to earn her living during the day yet wished to study at night for self-improvement or to upgrade her job qualifications. Most Canadian cities did not even feature free public libraries at this time.

It was the intention of organizers of Canadian city YWCA's to provide

3. Public Archives of Nova Scotia (P.A.N.S.), Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "What is the Y.W.C.A. of Halifax", 1920.

these much-needed services to working women and by so doing to accomplish a variety of ends. They hoped to offer a substitute for the family and friends of the young woman, particularly the country girl, during the critical period following her arrival in the city.

The first year that a girl spends in the city is her testing time. Usually it is her first attempt to earn a living. It is, too often, her first experience away from home, and perhaps at no time in her life is she so much in need of advice and sympathy and the comforts of a home.⁴

YWCA leaders particularly wished to help the upwardly-mobile, lower-middle-class young woman drawn to the increasing number of occupations open to women in the expanding service sector. Prior to 1900, this young woman constituted the primary focus of YWCA city programs, which assisted her to maintain the appearance of a respectable, middle-class lifestyle despite her meagre income. Religious guidance was also an important object of YWCA services, since during the first year away from her family, a young woman was prone to let church attendance lapse.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Managers, assisted by all members of the Association, to seek out young women taking up their residence in Toronto, and endeavour to bring them under moral and religious influences, by introducing them to the members and privileges of this Association, securing their attendance at some place of worship, and by every means in their power surrounding them with Christian associates.⁵

City YWCA programs served as "bait" to attract young women who would otherwise never be reached by the churches.

Moral supervision was, however, the primary purpose of city YWCA programs. It was considered imperative that a wholesome alternative to

4. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16, "The Work of the Y.W.C.A." from The Globe, August 7, 1915.
5. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1874.

the attraction of commercial entertainments be provided, since young working women, particularly those working long hours at sedentary and monotonous jobs, had a real need for recreation and relaxation outside working hours.

It is conceded that all normal young life calls for and must have recreation and relaxation in some form or other and that if a healthy tone can be given to the occupations and amusements of the evening hours, many pitfalls would be avoided and a higher standard of womanhood attained.⁶

If no alternative were made available to them, lonely young women would inevitably drift to brightly-lit dance halls and moving picture houses frequented by persons of ill-repute and operated by unscrupulous profiteers who gave no thought to their moral welfare.

Finally, city YWCA services were intended to prevent inexperienced young women from falling into the hands of the White Slave Trade. While further research is needed to document the extent of this traffic in women, Canadian reformers believed that the operations of this conspiracy of men and women who kidnapped or deceived decent young women and kept them prisoner in the flourishing red-light districts of Canadian cities, were both widespread and highly organized. The White Slave Trade was of particular concern to leaders of the YWCA since it was quite distinct from the more-or-less willing adoption of prostitution by women of "loose" morals and thereby threatened the respectable young women who were the objects of YWCA attentions.

YWCA leaders believed that the operations of White Slave Traders were rampant in Canadian cities. Their agents were known to frequent railroad stations and seaports in search of bewildered, unchaperoned young women

6. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-16, "The Constructive Work of the Y.W.C.A." from The Presbyterian, November 18, 1915.

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travellers. It was thought that they sought out naive young prospects at dance halls, movie theatres, and even ice cream parlours. They recruited many young women through misleading advertisements for employment, promising good wages, short hours and other benefits. Low-class boarding homes, too, it was believed, were often brothels run by agents of the White Slave Trade, who did not hesitate to take advantage of the young rural woman's ignorance of even the existence of organized vice. The combination of loneliness and lack of experience in city ways which characterized so many young working women in Canadian cities made them extremely vulnerable to the White Slave Traders. Faced with these circumstances, many prominent Christian women believed that the most appropriate action was the organization of a branch of the YWCA in their city.

The organization of a city YWCA generally required the cooperation of about two dozen prominent women drawn from the various denominational churches. The impetus for organization varied from city to city--sometimes resulting from a request by church leaders or the YMCA or sometimes sparked by a visit from an out-of-town speaker bringing word of services offered in American cities. The formation of a city YWCA was frequently an expression of its founders' indignation over public indifference to tales of young women arriving in the city and being forced to knock on doors to beg for a place to sleep. Such occurrences in Western cities prompted a number of women's organizations such as the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire or Local Councils to appeal to the Dominion Council of YWCA's to send one of its organizing secretaries. Prior to the establishment of the Dominion Council, women wishing to form a branch of the YWCA relied on their own experience in reform work and on visits to philanthropic

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enterprises in other cities. In all cases, they were women who felt compelled to act on their religious principles which called for assistance to the less fortunate and who felt a particular sympathy for the sufferings of young women, a group usually ignored by other reformers.

Because YWCA leaders drew heavily on their own prior experience in church and charitable work, it was inevitable that early YWCA's would be greatly influenced by the tradition of benevolent reform which had evolved in nineteenth-century Canada. Until the turn of the century, "YWCA work"--programs aimed specifically at the self-supporting, respectable young woman--co-existed with services offered in the older reform tradition. The Quebec YWCA operated a soup kitchen during the depression of the late 1870's, the Montreal YWCA's Diet Dispensary provided food prepared especially for invalids at no cost to the needy, and the Toronto Association's Mission and Relief Society dispensed various types of assistance to destitute families and the elderly.

Since traditional charity emphasized assistance to the "deserving poor", early YWCA programs of this type were not restricted to services for young women. Association leaders took a particular interest in compensating for the supposed deficiencies of working-class family life by offering day nurseries, training schools, and kindergartens for working-class children.

Nothing can ever take the place of good home training; but we have to deal with children who do not get it...To take children from their miserable homes, and teach them cleanliness; to take them out of an atmosphere of sin and vice, and surround them with purity and virtue; to teach them how to use their hands and heads, to cultivate in them self-control, self-reliance, and a due regard for the rights of others, will go a long way towards saving them for an honorable manhood and womanhood.⁷

7. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1888.

Programs for working class children promised two major benefits. First, by training the children for domestic service, they seemed to offer a possible solution to the problems of crime, unemployment and poverty. Second, they benefitted the parents by creating "a deeper, wider and more far-reaching sympathy between the top and bottom of society". An "evident moral uplift" had been demonstrated to occur in the vicinity of kindergartens, manifested in increased "sobriety, industry, economy, thrift, self-dependence, good manners, kindness and temperance in all things".⁸ This style of reform, as has been observed in more recent times, "undoubtedly preserved many children from malnutrition, incarceration or premature death, [but] prevented any serious inquiry into the relationship between poverty, delinquency and the family system".⁹

A failure to attempt any radical restructuring of society was also characteristic of the YWCA's efforts to rehabilitate "fallen women"-- another feature of the early city branches. The Toronto YWCA's "Haven", a lodging house for women recently released from prison, described its goals in these terms.

It is not certainly, at present, our vocation to revolutionize, or to re-construct society, saving only in so far as prayer, a godly life and example; and holy influences may do so; but it is our vocation to lift up the fallen and unfortunate, especially those of our own sex, and bring them near to Christ.¹⁰

By rehabilitating prisoners, YWCA leaders hoped to eliminate the suffering which inevitably resulted from a life of crime, to ensure the security of

8. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28-i 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1893, p. 28.

9. T.R. Morrison, "'Their Proper Sphere': Feminism, the Family and Child-centered Social Reform in Ontario, 1875-1900", Ontario History, v. 68, March 1976, p. 52.

10. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1880, p. 24.

their own families and property, and to reduce society's financial obligations to support public institutions for the criminal classes. The younger fallen woman attracted most attention, whether she was actually a convicted criminal or had merely given birth to an out-of-wedlock child. Unless these young women were "redeemed", their children would inevitably swell the ranks of Canada's destitute, feeble-minded, and criminal classes, and they themselves, cast out by their families and with no means of support, were in danger of being driven to prostitution. However, unlike some of the more conservative elements in the reform movement, YWCA leaders believed that fallen women could be redeemed and once again lead productive lives.

Rehabilitation was to be accomplished through religious instruction and temporary isolation from worldly temptation.

...during a twelve month of careful training, and of quiet seclusion from sinful haunts and companions, the soul becomes familiar with, and gradually learns to love, for its own sake, purity or virtue.¹¹

However, the major component of programs for the fallen woman was hard work and through it, the inculcation of self-discipline, obedience, cleanliness, punctuality, thrift and industriousness. In fact, training for future employment in domestic service constituted the favoured "treatment" for fallen women under the auspices of the YWCA. Not only would such training provide them with a respectable livelihood and skills which would prove invaluable to them should they marry and raise a family but, by a happy coincidence, it would help to relieve the desperate shortage of domestic servants which plagued the leaders of the YWCA. Of

11. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1877, p. 10.

course, such programs were carried out entirely separately from the work for young self-supporting women for fear of contamination. However, the prospect of employing servants who were redeemed fallen women did not appear unduly disturbing to YWCA leaders, presumably because the low status of the servant within the household would prevent possibly dangerous contacts with family members.

The early benevolent services of Canadian city YWCA's also continued the traditional emphasis on providing assistance only to the truly "deserving" poor, requiring an extensive program of home visitation to determine the "worthiness" of recipients. The Montreal YWCA's Visiting Committee commented on the difficulty of this task.

To go about from house to house, to homes of poverty and suffering, to sympathize with all the sorrows and troubles, to give wise and Christian counsel, to distinguish between the really needy and those who have not only become so by shiftlessness and intemperance, but continue to be so from these very reasons, knowing they can get help from the different charitable institutions, all those who are not thus engaged find it difficult to understand. To help and not to pauperize has become one of the greatest questions of the day, and one that is nearly as far from any proper solution as it has been for many years.¹²

This type of charitable assistance, according to one modern writer, resulted in a situation where "an integral component of the concept of 'need'...became the willingness of a poor family to be scrutinized and assessed by the more affluent members of society".¹³ Neither did YWCA leaders hesitate to refuse assistance in cases where destitution was not accompanied by an apparent desire to conform to middle-class standards. A hard line in such cases was considered justified in view of the ultimate aims of the work--"The sooner this army of parasites is either aroused to

12. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1899, p. 22.

13. Morrison, op. cit., p. 62.

an honest endeavor, or eliminated by the 'law of the survival of the fittest', the more rapidly will Christ's Kingdom be extended."¹⁴

Despite their traditional attitude toward the working-class recipient of charity, YWCA leaders argued that their approach was much more modern and efficient than that taken earlier in the century. The latter, they claimed, had been mere unquestioning and unsystematic alms-giving which "degraded" the recipient by undermining his or her independence. The YWCA's emphasis on efficiency was due in no small measure to the influence of the YMCA, which was always ready to offer advice on the subjects of finances and business methods. YWCA leaders were informed by the Provincial Secretary of the YMCA for Ontario and Québec that Christians had been guilty of following their "misguided, sentimental, milk-and-water-charitable inclinations" by indiscriminately supporting any philanthropic endeavour without investigating to see whether its programs encouraged poverty or fostered independence.¹⁵ Any charity which destroyed the self-respect of the recipients by not demanding that they work and support themselves was simply perpetuating the problem. On the other hand, the "new philanthropy", exemplified by the programs of the YWCA and YMCA, provided assistance, but not charity, to worthy, respectable, self-supporting young people--funds spent on their behalf did not constitute money down the drain but an investment in the future of the community and of the nation. With these arguments, YWCA leaders hoped to overcome the opposition to reform work in general which prevailed in business circles, alienating potential financial support.

14. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, April 1909, p. 59.

15. Ibid., pp. 57-60.

Nonetheless, the early city YWCA's encountered considerable difficulty because of their public image as a religious charity and their association with services for fallen women. The YWCA was constantly forced to defend itself against allegations that it was a type of reformatory for young women of dubious morals; hence, programs for the latter were carried out in facilities quite separate from the boarding homes and other services for the self-supporting young women in order to avoid possible damaging contacts between the two groups. The programs for the sick and destitute also caused the YWCA to be associated with the marginal elements of the community. In order to reassure their financial supporters and respectable young women who would not wish to be associated with charity, city YWCA's regularly published statements such as the following:

It seems necessary again to remind the public that this Home is NOT a charity. True, sometimes there are special cases where a helping hand is extended to those who have no money--but it is intended solely for those who are 'nobly and independently' earning their own living, and only such are allowed to remain there. Neither is it a Reformatory. Many a sad case has come to our notice, and been looked after, but only respectable persons can be admitted into the Home.¹⁶

By the turn of the century, however, it had become obvious that the only solution to this dilemma was the abandonment of charitable programs. With strong encouragement from the national and international bodies, local associations gradually closed their soup kitchens, granted independent status to such flourishing programs as the Montreal Diet Dispensary or The Haven, and left to other organizations, such as the Salvation Army and the Big Sisters, the task of ~~rehabilitating~~ fallen women. In this way, the YWCA was able to state categorically:

16. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1878, p. 10.

...the work of the Association is not reformatory but of a formative character. It is not intended to be a refuge of wrecks of hope and love, the needs of that class being fully met in other institutions. Neither is it of a benevolent character as the young women brought under its influence are not objects of charity but respectable, self-supporting, independent young women who resent benefaction or even patronage. Nor is it, as some suppose, a religious club of old maids and blue stockings. It is, as its name indicates, an Association of Christian young women, having for its aim and object the moulding, forming and polishing of God's own cornerstones, our Daughters.¹⁷

"YWCA work" at the turn of the century was thus clearly defined as consisting of services to two groups of respectable young women--boarding homes, educational classes and clubs for lower-middle-class young women employed as teachers, stenographers, and shop clerks, and Travellers' Aid, temporary accommodation and employment bureaux mainly serving the British immigrant and the rural Canadian girl arriving in the city seeking employment in domestic service. The YWCA did not take an active interest in the factory worker, or "industrial girl", until a slightly later date.¹⁸

The first service offered by a newly-organized branch of the YWCA was generally a boarding home which offered accommodation for up to three years to young women new to the city.

The rapid growth of our city, and the constant influx of young women from the country, seeking employment, together with the dangers and temptations to which they are often exposed, and the difficulties they experience in obtaining suitable homes, have suggested the opening of a Boarding House for young women. Could the class above referred to be gathered into Christian homes, there would be no necessity for the present institution, but this cannot be done, and we are under the necessity of meeting things as they exist.¹⁹

17. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1893-4.

18. Services for the factory worker, or Industrial Work, will be treated separately in Chapter Seven.

19. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1874, p. 5.

The object of the boarding house was to re-create as nearly as possible the atmosphere of the family home, with emphasis on the Christian influences and wholesome restraint supposedly provided by a young woman's parents. Priority was given to women aged seventeen to twenty-two years earning a low income, these tending to be mainly seamstresses, milliners, shop clerks, stenographers, teachers, and students. Applicants were carefully screened and required several character testimonials, including one from their clergyman. Once in residence they were expected to attend church on Sunday as well as "family prayers" held each evening in the home. The strict daily routine required by the Quebec YWCA was typical of Association boarding homes. Breakfast, served at 7 A.M., was followed by compulsory prayers. Residents were expected to make their beds and tidy their rooms, and a daily room inspection was carried out to see that this was done. Boarders were to be at home by 9 P.M. except with special permission, and lights were turned out at 10 P.M.²⁰ Such restrictions prompted one young woman to express her "ungracious" but "typical" sentiment that "I pay for my board [and] am not going to be lectured and preached to, as if I were at an eternal prayer meeting"²¹, and caused one national secretary to advise modification of "House Rules".

...not only do we keep out many fine girls who would appreciate much that we offer, and would be of real help to us, but we are not even loyal to our Christian ideal if we give the impression that a Young Women's Christian Association Home means restriction rather than a place for the development of a fuller life.²²

20. "Historique des premiers cent ans du YWCA de Québec, 1875-1975: Un Prologue à un deuxième siècle", pp. 8-9 (obtained through correspondence with the Québec YWCA).

21. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 41.

22. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1915, p. 103.

Despite their drawbacks YWCA boarding homes never suffered from a lack of applicants. Most reported turning away women in need of accommodation nearly every day in the case of larger cities. As a result, many Associations established a boarding house inspection and referral service in hopes of eliminating "the great danger faced by many young girls in finding themselves inmates of boarding or rooming houses which are run for immoral purposes".²³ Young women welcomed YWCA accommodation for they faced, according to local YWCA housing committees, an acute shortage of clean, respectable low-priced housing in major cities across the country. The situation was aggravated by active discrimination reputedly practised by landladies against women tenants on the grounds that women stayed at home more, were more trouble, and required a sitting room in which to entertain their male guests. The housing shortage became particularly critical in Western cities by 1910, and was being described by the YWCA as a national crisis by 1919.

The opening of a YWCA boarding home was generally followed by the establishment of an Educational Department which required no special facilities other than rented rooms. YWCA leaders stressed the importance of education without which women would be unable to improve their standing in the world.

Never was such stress laid upon education as at the present time. Places of importance and trust are reserved for the mentally able, and, without the advantages which education affords, one must be content to be confined within a very limited sphere of activity and usefulness.²⁴

They believed that educational institutions were ignoring the needs of young working women "deprived of educational advantages on account of adverse

23. P.A.F., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, June 1919, p. 112.

24. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, October 1909, p. 124.

circumstances"²⁵ while at the same time the most attractive positions for women, such as stenographer, required increasingly long periods of training. They also believed that women with skills would be in a much better position to demand higher wages. YWCA educational classes, they hoped, would offer a solution to the problem of the underpaid or underemployed woman worker arriving at the Association.

...if the secretary can make her realize that the reason she fails to get the coveted place or command high wages, is because she has not fitted herself, and can prevail upon her to increase her efficiency and earning capacity through Association class work, or otherwise, that secretary has accomplished one of the 'bigger things' for which the Association stands.²⁶

YWCA night classes in subjects such as Grammar, Bookkeeping, Millinery, Shorthand, Geography, History, Elocution, Cooking, Dressmaking, and Foreign Languages provided one of the few opportunities for working women to further their education or upgrade their job qualifications. While some classes fell into the category of general self-improvement, most had a more strictly practical objective. These were considered to be of two types:

First, that of trades classes, preparing a girl to take a new position, as dress-maker, or milliner, or stenographer...Second, that of general classes, enabling girls to live within their income, supplying the need of keeping well, and making up for the lack of educational opportunity.²⁷

The first category, while certainly important, featured the disadvantage of forcing the YWCA to reject girls who were obviously incompetent or inefficient. Hence, the second type of class was to "represent the chief business of the Young Women's Christian Association Educational Department", as it offered the opportunity of reaching all types of working women. The

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1909, p. 125.

26. Ibid., March 1915, p. 45.

27. Ibid., February/March 1911, p. 70.

latter classes also proved most popular with working women themselves, as explained by one YWCA secretary:

...it is becoming more and more a necessity for young women to dress well and yet live within a small income
 ...A girl needs to know how to trim her own hats and make her own shirt waists.²⁸

Teaching the working woman to sew her own clothes in order to meet the expectations of her employer and helping her to improve her job-related skills in hopes of promotion seemed to YWCA leaders to offer the most acceptable and realistic solution to the problem of low wages.

Women in white-collar occupations were the main targets of YWCA educational classes, just as they were preferred as residents in the boarding homes. In both cases, it was a question of the YWCA's public image.

In beginning educational work, the largest field is usually among young women in offices, or among clerks or teachers. If the Association begins its work in a city among factory employees first, it gives the impression that it is a charitable institution for poor girls only; or, if it is first among young women of leisure, it is classed as exclusive. There is that great middle class, and it is well to work first among them, until the department is established.²⁹

Once the young women were enrolled in its classes, the Association was not about to ignore the "great field of opportunity" which they presented. The classroom situation provided a chance "to develop and transform many, many lives". Hence, the emphasis was placed upon obtaining thoroughly competent but also devout Christian teachers whose aim would be "to touch the lives" of their students--"You may teach a girl to sew, but that will not keep her from temptation".³⁰ One YWCA writer quoted approvingly a

28. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28, I 198, y. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February/March 1911, p. 70.

29. Ibid., p. 71.

30. Ibid.

"practical Christian" who advised, "Give our young people plenty to think about, keep their minds busy, and their morals and religion will not go far astray."³¹

YWCA lending libraries were an important adjunct to the educational classes and were featured by Associations in Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Halifax, Kingston, London and Hamilton before the turn of the century. This was again a vital service in view of the fact that by 1900, very few cities offered free public libraries. Use of the YWCA library was generally restricted to members, who were offered newspapers, in keeping with the modern woman's need to "keep up with the questions of the day"; suitable magazines; books on philosophy, religion, travel, domestic science, history and geography, and most importantly, good, wholesome fiction--

Wholesome, we say, which will not call good evil, and evil good, nor bring its heroes and heroines through a labyrinth of puzzling doubts and doctrines to a grave in the last chapter, but a recreating, vitalizing fiction with a ministry of cheerfulness which will brighten the 'between times' of life's every day work.³²

Probably the greatest single attraction which the city YWCA offered to the working woman was its physical culture classes, later supplemented by gymnasias and swimming pools, which always boasted the largest attendance of any department. Canadian cities in this period offered no public facilities of this kind for women and the frustration felt by many girls and young women was evidenced by the enthusiasm they demonstrated in thronging to the YWCA. Physical culture classes featured marching, drills with wands and Indian clubs, and the Swedish system of exercise which

31. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, March 1908, p. 6.

32. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1893-4.

emphasized strength, grace and coordination without damage to delicate constitutions. By 1912, basketball, tennis and swimming were proving enormously popular, although many city associations, due to lack of funds, were forced to rely upon the generosity of the local YMCA for use of its gymnasium and swimming pool. YWCA leaders were certainly the most active champions in their city on behalf of increased physical activities for young women and were largely responsible for educating both governments and the general public about the need to provide financial support for recreational facilities.

YWCA physical culture classes reflected the general preoccupation of Canadian reformers with the poor health of the working classes arising out of the 1889 Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. YWCA night classes in physical culture were directly related to the conviction of Association leaders that long hours of sedentary factory and office employment were producing physical damage that would decrease the future capacity of women workers to bear healthy children. Physical culture would help to counteract the effects of keen competition and the rapid pace of modern life which drained the "nervous force" of the worker. By increasing the "vital capacity", a worker could be restored to efficiency, thus benefitting both herself and the social order.³³ In addition, the popular physical culture classes would draw many women into their first contact with the Association.

The possibility of providing more than mere recreation and bodily exercise to young women was not lost upon the YWCA. An early essay on spiritual work suggested "to all members who long for opportunities of

33. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1908, p. 8.

influence to join the gymnasium class, and there await the Master's bidding".³⁴ Physical culture soon incorporated, not merely exercise, but

...the consideration of diet, bathing, clothing, right living--in fact, everything which tends to the cultivation of the physical powers, including under what is sometimes called higher physical culture, the mental attitude and psychological aspect.³⁵

Instructors in physical culture, generally trained university graduates, worked in close cooperation with the women doctors who examined each candidate for a gymnasium class. These doctors were staunch advocates of physical activity and dress reform for women, not only on the grounds that inactivity, poor diet, and lack of oxygen due to tight clothing made women sick, but because the resulting lack of "vitality and resistive power" represented a decrease in "the sum of outputting power in our civilized lands" and a staggering "loss to the children of our nation".³⁶

Another feature of early city YWCA's was the noontime rest--the provision of a quiet place where working women could read or talk during their lunch-hour and supplement their lunches with soup, tea, or cocoa. Since this service was offered in the Association building, it catered to office and retail workers in the downtown business district. After the turn of the century, full-scale cafeteria service was introduced, which proved one of the most attractive features of the city YWCA from the viewpoint of the working woman, in addition to being a highly profitable investment for the Association. The cafeteria's object was "the serving of a wholesome, low-priced lunch under conditions that will help in the physical, mental, social and spiritual uplift of the young women who are its patrons".³⁷ Proof of

34. YWCA of Canada Archives, Annual Report, 1896, p. 45.

35. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1908, p. 8.

36. Ibid., June 1909, p. 88.

37. Ibid., April 1910, p. 220.

the need for such a service was amply demonstrated by

...the large number of young women who daily crowd our restaurants and lunch rooms waiting a chance to be served, many of them having to spend their whole noon hour in hot, nauseating places without opportunity for rest or change.³⁸

The most important benefit of the cafeteria from the Association standpoint was, however, the fact that it provided a first point of contact with hundreds of young women who would never be reached by a YWCA boarding home or by the educational classes.³⁹ YWCA volunteers were able to strike up a friendly acquaintance with the workers and make known to them the advantages of Association membership. By serving an evening meal, the cafeteria made YWCA classes available to working women who would not have been able or willing to venture out again after returning to their homes at the end of the day. Most importantly, it made possible the organization of working girls' clubs which met for dinner at the YWCA where they remained for their evening meeting and other social activities.

The YWCA's social department provided working women with the opportunity and facilities to relax and socialize in one another's company. As reported by Evangelia House, a Toronto YWCA settlement for young women, in 1903:

...Toronto, a city of homes, has not many social attractions for the business girl or woman, outside of the church social, theatre or vaudeville.⁴⁰

--and Toronto was not unique among Canadian cities in this regard. To remedy this situation, the YWCA offered its non-sectarian, self-governing club-- a concept introduced to the Canadian YWCA in 1897 by Sara Carson, a visiting

38. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, November 1908, p. 11.

39. Ibid., November 1915, pp. 166-7.

40. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 33.

New York settlement worker who established a number of "I Will Trust" Clubs aimed at the spiritual improvement of their members. The club was considered self-governing in that the members were responsible for electing their own officers and deciding on a program, although these activities were carried out under the close supervision of a YWCA secretary. Some delicate manoeuvring on her part was required to interest the club members in the character development and training in leadership and social service principles which the Association had in view. Nevertheless, by 1920, clubs had been organized for a variety of groups including children, domestic servants, young marrieds, school girls, factory workers, recent immigrants and young ladies of leisure. The clubs and other activities offered by the YWCA's social department stressed wholesome enjoyment.

It was very gratifying to notice that silly, sentimental love songs and dramatic display had no place in any of the entertainments held during the year...⁴¹

They also aimed to keep young working women seeking a good time in their leisure hours as far away as possible from contacts with young men.

An additional attraction of the city YWCA was the opportunity it provided to many working women to escape the city for a brief period of time to enjoy a vacation in the country--an opportunity which was normally denied them because of their low incomes. The first YWCA summer cottages for working girls became available in Ontario in the 1890's and were considered especially beneficial for workers who could not afford to sacrifice one or two weeks' income in order to take a vacation.

It is to meet the need of the business girl that our Associations are attempting to establish and carry on summer homes in pleasant and healthful surroundings. When the cottage is situated conveniently near the city,

41. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1893-4.

1893-1894
Annual Report
YWCA
Ottawa

these business girls find it a great boon to be able to spend a few weeks there, coming in to their offices or stores each morning and returning at night to their cool haven.⁴²

In the summer of 1907, the first full-scale summer camp for working women was made available by the Toronto YWCA at a farmhouse near Weston. This camp and its successors in other cities did not offer an organized program of activities or religious instruction for the campers but relied instead on the wholesome, natural environment and the company of other respectable girls and women to produce an elevating effect.

Contrasting with the popularity of the physical and social departments was the lack of appeal of the religious department. Although it was the intention of the YWCA to invite any young women it contacted through its programs to join an Association Bible class leading to full church membership, statistics from the local associations suggest that many young women were prepared to make use of the facilities while resisting appeals to develop their spiritual lives. The Dominion Council regularly recommended that city associations devote more energy to this department by hiring a special worker to devote her full attention to religious work, by encouraging a social atmosphere which would bring to Bible study class girls "who would not be thought religious for anything" and by recruiting "key girls" as a way of attracting others.⁴³

The success or failure of the religious department was of concern to YWCA leaders because of their vision of the Association as a handmaiden to the churches. Indeed, they believed, "every Y.W. member should be an agent for her Church Sunday School".⁴⁴ Some proselytizing was no doubt carried

42. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1908.

43. Ibid., February/March 1911, p. 74.

44. Ibid., The Association Outlook, March 1917, p. 45.

on among the many Roman Catholic and Jewish girls who were welcomed into associate membership (without the privileges of voting and office-holding); in fact, the Bishop of Hamilton was prompted to ban attendance of Catholic young people at either YWCA or YMCA functions in 1906.⁴⁵ However, the primary objects of YWCA attentions were Protestant girls who had abandoned the church altogether or who had been drawn to such "new and fanciful cults" as Theosophy and Christian Science.⁴⁶ The YWCA's religious department aimed to provide an alternative to the strict, dogmatic views and "old-fashioned phraseology" of some local churches which were blamed for alienating the modern girl from the church.

She will revolt against old-fashionedness; she has no time for those who say to her "Don't", without intelligently telling her why, or who say to her "Do", without clearly and sympathetically giving her reasons for that too.⁴⁷

For the modern girl who lived in a world very different from that of her grandmother, "a new presentation of old truths" was required--one which would reject theoretical discussions in favour of instruction in how to carry out "the suggestions of the Spirit of God...in the most ordinary and practical and trivial facts of life". Fortified in this way, the modern girl would then "have little use for the vulgar play or the suggestive book".⁴⁸ Despite the lofty intentions of leaders in the religious department, however, attendance at YWCA Bible classes remained dismally low.

While YWCA boarding homes, educational classes and cafeterias

45. Hamilton YWCA Archives, Clippings, "Ban Placed on Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.", November 16, 1906.

46. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1918, p. 90.

47. Ibid., p. 91.

48. Ibid., p. 93.

serviced mainly women working in white-collar occupations, the Association also devoted considerable attention to domestic servants. Young rural girls seeking positions as domestics were accommodated in special quarters in the Association building, carefully segregated from travellers and from the regular boarders--a comment, no doubt, on the status of the servant as compared with the stenographer, teacher, or girl of leisure. YWCA employment bureaux, which first appeared during the 1880's, aimed to link these prospective servants with middle-class women who depended heavily on servants to run their homes so that they could meet their extensive religious and social commitments. Socially-prominent women, including YWCA leaders and other female reformers were faced with an acute shortage of experienced domestic help as more workers opted for the higher wages and greater independence offered by factory employment. The YWCA employment bureau, which limited its activities to domestic servants until about 1910, combined the advantages of protecting young rural women from "the misleading character of some of the servants' registries in the city"⁴⁹ by screening prospective employers, and of providing a place where middle-class women could apply for a servant in exchange for a small fee. Young rural women who expressed interest in factory work were informed that domestic service constituted "more suitable and healthy employment".⁵⁰

We are...more than repaid for time and effort spent, by seeing some girls comfortably settled in good homes, instead of being obliged to drift into the great, distracting whirl of the factory-world, where so many girls are seeking refuge from the long and irregular hours of domestic service.⁵¹

The YWCA believed that it had a critical role to play in solving the

49. Hamilton YWCA Archives, Clippings, "Christain[sic] Women: Business Meeting of the W.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. Yesterday", 1889.

50. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1874, p. 7.

51. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1906-7, p. 56.

"servant problem" by steering a middle course between the two opposing factions--young untrained women with unrealistic expectations on the one hand, and middle-class employers expecting to secure slave labour on the other. The YWCA recognized the need to educate employers to be more responsible:

If we had a Training School for Mistresses as well as maids, we would not have to listen to the sometimes inhuman remarks we hear in our office from civilized women on the servant question.⁵²

It also supported the demand of servants, who were on call virtually twenty-four hours a day, for shorter, fixed hours.

The economics of the household will have to include, in that day when domestic peace and harmony prevail, the matter of settled hours for housework.⁵³

However, it never tackled the working conditions of domestic servants with the same zeal that it would later reserve for factory workers, and not until 1919 did a national convention recommendation to study local industrial conditions include "household workers" within its scope.⁵⁴

YWCA leaders were convinced that the final solution to the domestic question lay in the "professionalization" of domestic service through the introduction of classes in domestic science.

This phase of the work has been forced upon the Association owing to the deplorable lack of knowledge on the part of many who undertake the responsibility of homes of their own, and also to the fact that there is a modern crusade of unskilled women who come year by year from their rural homes, and who imagine that positions in domestic service are to be had for the asking, and to be held regardless of competency or incompetency. They must have work, but how can they compete with the skilled help of

52. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1898-99, p. 4.

53. Ibid., 1901-2, p. 17.

54. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 38.

the city where the law of the survival of the fittest is inexorable?⁵⁵

The professional training of the domestic servant also promised to remove the stigma attached to this occupation

If we increase their respect for their work it will undoubtedly lead to larger accessions from the more intelligent classes. We trust that the day is not far distant when a trained cook will be regarded with the same respect as a trained nurse.⁵⁶

City YWCA's, notably in Hamilton and Ottawa, were among the earliest Canadian pioneers of domestic science classes. Classes established in Hamilton by YWCA president Adelaide Hoodless, laid the groundwork for the Normal School of Domestic Arts supported by the Ontario government. The YWCA's self-interested motives for undertaking the work and the advantages which would accrue to those who offered their financial support were obvious in early discussions of domestic science classes.

...with our dependence upon a class that is utterly ignorant of every law of health, yet providing for us the food upon which health depends, we have become almost a nation of invalids.⁵⁷

YWCA domestic science classes failed as an effort to professionalize domestic service and thereby halt the trend to factory employment, but they were influential in convincing government and school authorities that such training ought to be incorporated into the education of every young Canadian woman.

In order to implement its various programs for young working women, the city YWCA had to recruit a core group of about two dozen volunteers to serve on its Board of Directors and committees. This was a difficult

55. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1894-95, p. 6.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

task as the suitable candidate was

...always a woman who is sought by other organizations for their positions of leadership and usually has a domestic and personal life rich in its associations and consequently demands upon her time and sympathies.⁵⁸

YWCA programs for young women were forced to compete for volunteers with other causes considered by many to be more "worthy", or at least more appealing to "women's instincts".

Anyone conversant with the facts...would concede that there is vastly more being done to-day for children, young men, and the aged than for **young women**, so a thoughtful woman might well ask herself whether it is not her privilege to leave to others the more obvious appeals and give her service to the still comparatively neglected task of the serious study of the changing conditions among young women and wise provisions for their protection and development.⁵⁹

In order to attract volunteer workers, the city YWCA relied, of course, on its traditional argument that young women required attention because of their vital role in social life.

...whether we realize it or not our young women are the very foundation of society. It has been said that 'no large city can safely neglect its young women whose aggregate influence as the wives and mothers of our citizens will be more powerful for good or for evil than that of any political or industrial organization of man'. The moral, social and spiritual condition of the people will not, cannot rise above the condition of the mothers.⁶⁰

Such an argument was not, however, sufficient in itself to justify the existence of the YWCA, as a number of other organizations were also doing work for young women. YWCA leaders, however, saw their organization as unique.

58. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1910, p. 172.

59. Ibid., p. 169.

60. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1893-94.

Other agencies, to be sure, there are, doing an important work not possible for the Association but they are confined to either a single denomination as the Girls' Friendly, or to a certain neighbourhood as the Girls' Clubs of the settlements, or committed to a specific piece of service as bands of King's Daughters, or composed of a definite class of women as Business Women's Clubs, or a segregated group of workers with a single objective as the Women's Trade Unions. There is no other organization which even claims to admit to its general membership all women of good character in a city, regardless of neighbourhood, denomination, occupation or station in life and to band them together for the development of their spiritual, intellectual, social and physical life.⁶¹

Similar arguments were also advanced in the never-ending quest for financial support for YWCA buildings and programs.

By 1920, the city YWCA had won the respect and support of governments, church and business leaders, educational authorities and other reform organizations, but in the early years at least, the going was painfully slow.

Like kindred societies in other cities, the Association needtime and persistent work in order to be understood. People understand the need of orphanages, hospitals, etc., objects directly appealing to their sympathies, but when one pleads for funds for the establishment of a home for young women dependent upon their own exertions for support, the need of such an institution is at once questioned.

"Are they not able to care for themselves?" "Will it not result in the pauperization of a great number of hitherto self-supporting self-respecting young women?" "Will not other self-supporting women who have to pay their own way feel the effects of your short-sighted philanthropy as well as all men who enter into competition with them, for you will be adding to the number of women who can work for something less than the actual cost of maintaining life, and the only ones who will receive benefit will be the employers, who can clear their consciences of responsibility if they can count upon charity to supplement wages". "Will it not deprive a large class of respectable women, who are earning a livelihood by keeping boarding houses of their only means of support?" These and many other objections

61. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1910, p. 169.

and difficulties meet the weary canvasser as she goes from house to house collecting for the new building.⁶²

Critics argued that a good girl could take care of herself, and if she strayed, then she wasn't good enough to have deserved assistance in the first place. YWCA canvassers also incurred the wrath of those who feared that their activities would encourage the already alarming tendencies of modern women to abandon their traditional roles and occupations for newer, more lucrative sectors of the paid labour force. Indeed, the Toronto YWCA reported that what opposition it encountered was "chiefly from women, who say that we are encouraging girls to work at other things who ought to be servants".⁶³ All these objections had to be overcome in order to win financial backing for the work which, for the first few years at least, required an enormous outlay of capital to pay for a building especially designed and constructed to meet YWCA needs.

City YWCA leaders operated with a considerable financial handicap in comparison with their counterparts in the YMCA. Indeed, they exhibited a certain jealousy of the lavish facilities and large budgets at the disposal of the men's organization. The General Secretary of the Ottawa YWCA commented in 1906:

...I believe that the time is coming when men and women shall be as ready to help the young woman...as all the world is to help the young man. We congratulate the Young Men's Christian Association on their splendid success in providing for the young men of our city. But we believe the time is coming when the thinking public will no longer expect the Young Women's Christian Association to do the work of the Physical Department without a gymnasium, nor the work of the Educational Department in one small classroom.⁶⁴

62. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1892-93.

63. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1883, p. 9.

64. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1906-7, p. 55.

ALL GIVE A LITTLE.

And the "Full Up" Sign Will Come Down.

The Vancouver Daily Province, June 15, 1909

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Reluctant to accuse the general public of outright prejudice against the young woman, YWCA leaders tactfully speculated that the lack of public support for Association programs

...may be because the Young Women's Christian Association is not kept so constantly in the public eye as that of the young men's and that the scope of the young women's work is not so well understood.⁶⁵

In addition, YWCA board members lacked the personal capital available to YMCA leaders--often highly successful businessmen--and lacked the men's contacts in the business community and experience in business methods. The latter disadvantage was, however, overcome by appointing a male Advisory Board to whom the Board of Directors was able to turn for financial advice.

The YMCA, as well, had a good deal of advice to offer on the subject of fund-raising and sound business methods. YWCA Boards were advised that

...the day when Christian work should be financed by chicken pie socials, ice cream festivals and "Tag days", has been relegated to the past with the rest of its mistaken ideas about philanthropy.⁶⁶

The personal solicitation of funds for the Association represented, on the other hand, "the highest type of modern philanthropy".⁶⁷ While this type of fund-raising was conceded to be "the hardest thing to ask women to do",⁶⁸ nevertheless, local associations successfully financed the construction of entire buildings by soliciting thousands of small contributions from local church members, businessmen, and interested citizens. After the turn of the century, the annual short-term financial campaign of the YMCA was generally adopted by city associations, with two weeks of newspaper advertisements, businessmen's luncheons, drawing-room meetings, door-to-door

65. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1901-2, p. 7.

66. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, April 1909, p. 60.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., January 1914, p. 21.

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canvassing, public meetings with paid speakers, and Association Sundays at the local churches usually being sufficient to raise the bulk of the year's budget. By the War years, the YWCA had won the support of the movement for civic improvement with boosters arguing that their city should not have to be embarrassed by its lack of a splendid building for young women, leading to occasional contributions to building funds from City Councils and Boards of Trade.

Decisions about the spending of funds and the development of new programs were made by the city YWCA's volunteer Board of Directors which was, according to the requirements of affiliation with the Dominion Council, composed solely of Protestant evangelical church members. These programs were, however, implemented by the General Secretary--a specialist, generally a college graduate, trained in YWCA methods and hired by the Board to administer the work. The arrival of a trained secretary, usually referred by the Dominion Council, could, and often did, transform a small boarding home into a thriving city association with religious, physical, social and educational departments. While the Dominion Council went to great lengths to promote the YWCA secretaryship as a career for college women, unattractive working conditions at the local level discouraged many potential applicants. Since the secretary boarded at the Association, hours were long and privacy was limited. Her Christian character and conduct were required to be above reproach, and she was often expected to use her leisure time to become involved in church and other philanthropic work. In fact, the secretary had to be rather an exceptional young woman.

An educated young woman, by nature a leader, modest, womanly, deferential, sure of her own salvation, eager for the salvation of others, able to organize committees, to counsel with cabinet or board, to interest young

women to become members, loyal to her church, her local and outside relations, a help to pastors and mothers, a friend to girls, receiving a salary as any teacher or clergyman would do, and being as businesslike as any business man could desire in the management of public affairs, able to present the work to individuals and audiences, not unwilling to aid in any work, financial or otherwise, learning from other fields to help her local work, and every day making her calling and election sure. Such is the general secretary.⁶⁹

Despite this impressive list of requirements, salaries were generally "not at all commensurate with the heavy responsibility and great importance of the position of a secretary". As one writer commented dryly, the situation demanded "much self-sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom of God if really experienced and capable women are to accept these posts in some cities".⁷⁰ The secretary's position was further complicated by fiction with board members who were often older, "hopelessly ignorant of Association methods"⁷¹, and had to be reminded that the secretary was "by nature and education...a member of refined society" and was therefore not to be treated with "a patronizing, 'You are a paid worker' attitude".⁷² Cooperation between board members and the secretary was considered highly desirable in efforts to advance the kingdom of God, but was apparently not always achieved.

Board members were also isolated from the associate or girl membership of the city YWCA since it was the secretary who was responsible for actually implementing programs approved by the board. By the War years,

69. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Fundamental Principles of the Young Women's Christian Association", American Committee pamphlet, 1902.

70. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 21.

71. Ibid., November 1915, p. 177.

72. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, March 1904, p. 43; The Association Outlook, October 1919, p. 159.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

the distance between the Board members and girls was being described as a "chasm" caused by

...the method of election to Boards, the failure to conceive of our organization as an Association, a lack of faith in the judgment and initiative of the girls themselves, the fact that most of the members do not know the directors, etc.⁷³

An innovation which attempted to bridge this chasm was the Membership Council, first imported from the United States by the Vancouver Association in 1916. The Council was composed of girl representatives from the various clubs and departments in the Association and was to make recommendations to the Board to be considered in the drawing up of new policies. Although the decision of many boards to establish the Councils was an admission that their "wish to help girls to the best things has often been their undoing because they have conceived for themselves what the girls ought to want", their decision to limit Council representatives to active members (that is, full members of Protestant evangelical churches) "in order that the great underlying purpose of the Association may be conserved and forwarded" probably ensured that what the Board actually heard from the girl membership did not differ greatly from what it wanted to hear.⁷⁴ No attempt was made to change the actual membership structure which placed all responsibility for policy and decision-making in the hands of the active membership. The majority of young women who used the services of the YWCA (many of whom were not even Protestant) opted for associate membership (open to any young woman of good character upon payment of fifty cents per year) and were therefore deprived of the right to vote or hold office.

73. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, April 1917, p. 71.

74. Ibid.

Local YWCA leaders remained content to implement their own views on what constituted the needs of working women. Despite the rhetoric about working "with" young women rather than "for" them, and about bringing together all the women "of good character" in the community, by its very structure, the city YWCA served to perpetuate the existence of the class distinctions it claimed to abhor. Contacts between the various classes of women did not represent dialogue but an attempt to impose the values and moral standards of older, middle-class women upon young working women. Clubs, classes, and boarding houses segregated women into rigid categories defined by age, marital status, and occupational group--even a separate boarding home for "colored girls" in Toronto⁷⁵--as a means of most effectively "meeting their needs". Under these conditions, it is not surprising to find that the most acute "needs" of young working women were defined as the protection of their virtue, the preservation of their traditional relationship to family and church, and the cultivation of a "wholesome, normal attitude toward the society-circle in which they live, and...a higher ideal of home and life in general".⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the Association fulfilled an important function on behalf of many women in turn-of-the-century Canadian cities. Its building served as an early "Women's Centre" in that it was often the only facility both suitable and available to serve as a meeting place for women. Prominent women's clubs and organizations such as the Local Council often made use of YWCA rooms for meetings or social functions. An out-of-town speaker wishing to address women and girls on the subject of Hygiene, a newly-

75. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1912, p. 202.

76. Ibid., June 1916, p. 109.

organized company of Girl Guides, or a group of Red Cross workers gathering to make bandages all found YWCA facilities equally suitable for their purposes. The Association also functioned as an Information Bureau for the city's female population.

The secretaries in charge of the desk have hundreds of telephone calls daily, besides scores of enquiries over the counter. They are an information bureau for the women and girls of the city. Some of the enquiries are for dentists, physicians, dress-makers, music teachers, reliable employment bureaux, directions to various parts of the city, respectable boarding houses or rooms, swimming pools, cooking lessons, language teachers, time of the day, times of arrivals of trains and boats, names of denominational ministers and churches, baggage, etc.⁷⁷

Not only did the YWCA offer services and facilities which were unavailable elsewhere in the city, or at least inaccessible to those on low incomes, but it was often the only organization which consistently drew public attention to the presence of the young working woman in Canadian cities and to the problems she faced there. YWCA Board members, and particularly the secretaries, laboured long and hard to overcome the enormous prejudice against the working woman, especially the business woman, which existed in many quarters. This prejudice was such that the Halifax YWCA, in its efforts to persuade citizens to take business women into their homes because of the desperate shortage of boarding house accommodation during the War, had to resort to arguing that not only were business women actually very nice people, but many of them were really teachers in disguise.

...the average business girl is a nice, sensible interesting person, who nobody needs to shrink from having in their home. Not a few of them are former school teachers. In general, no woman would hesitate

77. Vancouver YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1919, p. 6.

1919-1920

to have a teacher even as her guest. Just because a girl turns from teaching to the business world, she is not materially changed.⁷⁸

The Hamilton YWCA, upon opening its new building in 1915, was forced to defend itself against charges that its simple rooms were "altogether too fine and expensively furnished for working girls"; it replied rather feebly that the more extravagant features of the building were justified by the fact that it also served as a centre for Hamilton club women and that many girls from the best homes in the city participated in programs. The General Secretary, however, retorted indignantly that many of those married, comfortably settled women who displayed such a "spirit of superiority and suave but thinly-veiled contempt for the working woman" had conveniently forgotten that they themselves "ever worked in a factory, sold goods over a counter and manipulated the keys of a typewriter".

It takes courage and grit nowadays to be a working woman. From the struggle, such as I know many girls are facing, the shallow-minded woman of idleness would shrink in dismay. Her courage would not be equal to the strain. To earn for oneself for eight, ten, twelve, fifteen years or a lifetime, and through those years, despite the evils that on every hand clutch at one with smirching fingers, to preserve one's soul upright and clean, requires all the optimism, the strength and fortitude of which womanhood is capable. The working woman is, to-day, leaving indelible marks on the pages of this twentieth century, and nothing that will make for her betterment, for her comfort, or for the enlargement of her life, is too good, too expensive or too beautiful.⁷⁹

The consistent expression of sentiments such as these at public meetings, gatherings of religious and social service workers, and in newspaper and magazine articles did serve to raise the level of public awareness of the

78. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "Scarcity of Rooms for Girls in Halifax", 1917.

79. Hamilton YWCA Archives, Clippings, "For Working Girls", 1915.

situation of the working woman, to foster a somewhat more tolerant attitude toward her, and to make the Canadian city a more hospitable environment for her.

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Chapter 5. Girls' Work

By 1920, both the city associations and the Dominion Council were involved in the development of YWCA programs for adolescent girls, an outgrowth of nineteenth-century training classes for working-class children and reflecting the growth of a large high school population which presented a new category of accessible young women of interest to the YWCA. Girls' Work, pronounced the Dominion Council, was among the greatest of the great movements having as their aim "the making of a better Canada". Its staff of Girls' Workers were hopeful of reaching every Canadian teenage girl and helping her "to develop into the finest type of Christian citizen".¹

The field of the Girls' Work movement is the Girlhood of Canada; our purpose is to help every single girl in Canada to be the kind of girl that God wants her to be, to so open her heart to the spirit of God that her character will not only be made beautiful, true and pure, but that she will also be led to a life of service.²

The Canadian Girls' Work Movement, in which a leadership role was played by the YWCA, was part of a larger attempt by middle-class reformers in Europe and North America to respond to the ominous spread of materialism, corruption, and moral decay, the decline of religious and rural values, and the threat of class conflict and working-class socialism by instilling in the impressionable adolescent the values considered most appropriate for good workers and contented citizens.³ By the outbreak of the First World

1. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work, 1918-1921.

2. Ibid., v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 16.

3. John R. Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present, Academic Press Inc., New York, 1974, Chapters Three and Four; Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1977, Chapters Seven to Nine.

War, conservative elements in Canada, as elsewhere, had come to regard the adolescent as an important resource--akin to minerals, lumber and agricultural produce--to be recruited into programs increasingly nationalistic, militaristic and Social Darwinist in content.⁴

In Canada, Girls' Work programs sponsored by the YWCA evolved from training classes for working-class girls in the nineteenth century, through Junior Clubs for middle-class girls after 1900, to summer camps, school girls' clubs and Girl Guide companies by 1910, all aimed at the increasingly large high school population. The culmination of YWCA Girls' Work was the introduction of the Dominion Council's own religious and nationalist program for adolescent girls--Canadian Girls in Training--during the First World War.

The YWCA's programs for middle-class adolescents had their origins in the three types of "preventive work among children"--day nurseries, kindergartens, and training schools--pioneered in Canada by the Montreal YWCA between 1875 and 1900.⁵ While these programs were developed for working-class girls under the age of twelve, their content and methods would influence later work for middle-class adolescents.

The Montreal YWCA's kindergarten, established according to the teachings of Froebel in 1893, exploded the myth that mothers knew instinctively what was best for their offspring and placed the care of pre-school children on a strictly "scientific" basis. Supervised play was to foster the symmetrical development of body, soul, and spirit, and indelible impressions left by specially-designed games, talks, pictures, and songs

4. P.A.C.; YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 44, Scrapbooks--Local Clubs, n.d., 1918, "Conference Marks New Era in Girl History".

5. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1888, p. 22.

were to instil in children a love of God and a strongly-developed "moral and aesthetic sense and a love for that which is pure, true, honest and of good report".⁶ The Day Nursery, the Helping Hand Society, and the Kitchen Garden Association all emphasized preparation for motherhood and for future employment in domestic service, endeavouring in the process "to make Duty synonymous with Desire".⁷ Instruction in table-setting, cooking, plain-sewing and bed-making would, it was hoped, prove "very helpful in the formation of these children's characters, causing them to be industrious, neat and clean" and would put the girls "in the way of making home happy and comfortable, and as an after result, of bringing comfort to other homes into which they may enter as domestic servants".⁸ The self-interested motives of YWCA leaders who promoted these programs were clearly expressed in their discussions of the work:

When we do anything to make the little girl a better wife, mother, housekeeper, remember we are affecting the next generations for good. Do you think if such a system of education had been in practice for the past twenty-five years, we should be struggling in our homes today with such incompetent domestic service, and that there would be so many pensioners upon the public bounty, who can do nothing to earn an honest living because they have never learned to do one thing well?⁹

While classes for working-class girls continued to be offered after the turn of the century and were incorporated into the programs of YWCA settlements, a new and separate feature of YWCA work appeared after 1900 in the form of "Junior Clubs" for middle-class girls aged approximately five to sixteen. Club activities placed the same emphasis upon character

6. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1893, p. 28.

7. Ibid., 1892, p. 22.

8. Ibid., 1888, p. 10.

9. Ibid., p. 24.

formation, teaching values through organized play, instruction in domestic skills, and preparation for adult roles as the earlier "preventive work". This development reflected the spread in Canada of Froebelian thought and the growing emphasis on the scientific aspects of childrearing. Motherhood had now become a profession which demanded moral and domestic training for those who were to make it their life's work. The content of club activities was directed to girls who would one day manage households, rather than work as servants, and who would, it was hoped, lead active lives serving the cause of Christian social reform in Canada.

The first Junior Clubs developed out of YWCA Bible study classes, modelled after the systematic programs of Christian education pioneered for middle-class young people by the Sunday School movement, during the latter decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Reorganization of the Bible classes into clubs reflected, according to a comment by the Junior Committee of the Ottawa YWCA, the general trend among Canadian middle-class women toward pursuing their interests by means of the women's club.

This is an age of clubs and kindred organizations. Even among the children clubs of all sorts are springing up and thus last fall when a self-governing club was suggested and substituted for the Junior Group Bible Study Class it immediately became popular.¹¹

The relatively exclusive character of the clubs may also be noted from the Committee's comment on the difficulty of holding meetings "as it was found impossible to arrange for any afternoon hour when music lessons and other calls did not take away the majority."¹²

While working-class girls had not been regarded as part of the Association,

10. Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

11. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1907-8, p. 46.

12. *Ibid.*, 1905-6, p. 46.

a new category of Junior Membership was created to give young middle-class girls the illusion, at least, of real participation in YWCA affairs. The Junior Clubs were never, however, seen as an attempt to reach every girl but remained a program designed to groom a select elite for future social service work. It was hoped that by encouraging the Juniors "to remember others less fortunate than themselves" through social service projects such as making dolls' clothes and scrapbooks for poor children in hospital, that the "little ones" would develop "a spirit of unselfishness and thoughtfulness for others", a love of Christ, and "a personal interest in the Association".¹³ In fact, the Juniors were being primed as "the future strong working force" of the YWCA.¹⁴

The development of YWCA Girls' Work programs, beginning about 1910, marked a shift in focus to the adolescent high school population, aged thirteen to seventeen. This in turn reflected the arrival in Canada of "the era of the adolescent" which dawned in Europe and North America in the two decades after 1900, heralded by the publication in 1904 of the enormous treatise, Adolescence, by the American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, and characterized by "the appearance of both the institutions and psychology that were to govern the social treatment of youth for much of the 20th. century".¹⁵ Adolescence was a new social category, resulting from an increasing pattern of age segregation and the removal of young people from the labour force by the introduction of compulsory schooling which increased the years during which young people were forced to remain dependent upon

13. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1910, p. 284.

14. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, February 1902, p. 4.

15. Kett, op. cit., p. 215.

adults. During the nineteenth century, the Protestant Sunday Schools--the first adult institutions to attempt to organize middle-class young people--had followed the traditional age groupings of children (under the age of fourteen or fifteen) and youths (aged between fifteen and somewhere in the early twenties). The latter was a category which existed primarily for young people of the middle classes and was determined by social status rather than physical development, its end being signalled by the assumption of full adult responsibilities. The nature of the new category, adolescence, was, on the other hand, thought to be entirely determined by the universal experience of puberty.

In response to the demographic and economic changes which produced adolescence, European and American psychologists, doctors, church leaders, educators, and lay youth workers created a number of adult-sponsored organizations which sought to extend adult control over the leisure activities of this age group, and, subsequently, to democratize the middle-class experience of adolescence by extending the pattern of dependence to young people of all social classes. This was to be accomplished by removing adolescents from the adult world (ostensibly to protect them) and, in particular, by tightly controlling adolescent sexuality. In the process, adult reformers hoped to combat juvenile delinquency--a phenomenon increasingly attracting their attention--which they defined as including cigarette smoking, swearing, stealing, sexual promiscuity, and the frequenting of pool halls, movie houses and dance halls by teenagers. New theories concerning the peculiar susceptibility of adolescents to religious conversion added to the importance of the work and competition was keen amongst the various religious and secular organizations anxious to lay claim

to the field. Each youth worker dreamed of creating a program which would appeal to every adolescent, drawing him or her into an environment in which the various spiritual, intellectual, and sexual crises believed endemic to this age group could be experienced under close adult supervision. In Canada, this dream was nearly realized by the YWCA, the YMCA; and the Protestant denominational churches, whose cooperative programs for adolescent girls and boys--Canadian Girls in Training and Canadian Standard Efficiency Test--were enthusiastically adopted by thousands of adolescents and adult leaders across the country during and after the First World War.

An entire decade of careful study and intense debate on the subject of Girls' Work was launched in 1909, when the Dominion Council first discussed the possibility of reaching the high school population, "practically the largest undeveloped field, in Young Women's Christian Association work in Canada", estimated at 35,000 by 1913.¹⁶ The YWCA needed programs for high school girls in order to reach the many "future leaders" who would not go on to attend college¹⁷, and, as far as Association Girls' Workers were concerned, the high school girl needed the YWCA.

She is the growing girl in every sense of the word, and she needs often more physical attention; she needs vocational guidance; she needs legitimate social life (this is especially true of the H.S. girl from the country studying in the town or city); she needs opportunities to express her deepest self in service. She needs ideals--above all she needs to be put on the trail of the Great Quest, the finding of Christ as a living Personality.¹⁸

To most effectively meet the perceived needs of the adolescent girl, the

16. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes; May 6, 1909; v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 60.

17. Ibid., v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 60; October 1913, p. 145.

18. Ibid., January 1914, p. 60.

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Dominion Council experimented with several program options developed in Britain and the United States.

Canadian YWCA Girls' Work programs reflected familiarity with the new principles of adolescent psychology, particularly with Hall's demonstration of adolescent susceptibility to religious conversion.

There is no other age when she will ever be quite so receptive, quite so eager for all that is idealistic and beautiful...And at this point there is brought to her that most appealing and beautiful ideal, the life of the Master and Friend of men.¹⁹

Also stressed was the importance of peer group pressure, which could be "good and constructive when the group is bound together by a common purpose and a common ideal"²⁰--that is, when channelled and controlled by adults.

The type of activity offered in the programs was to depend "somewhat on whether we are going to give what they want or what we think they need".²¹

The latter option was, of course, adopted by the YWCA; consequently, its programs for high school girls aimed "to create, maintain and extend throughout the school, high standards of Christian character" and to produce "a Nucleus of student leaders" who would "influence the entire school towards their ideals". The girls were encouraged to develop their "potential leadership" and "Christian responsibility" and to consider "Christian service in various vocations and in all parts of the world".²² As with the Junior Clubs, Association leaders sought to recruit from the high school population a new generation of women active in Christian social reform movements,

19. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28/I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1913, p. 143.

20. Ibid., The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 16.

21. YWCA of Canada Archives, "Notes on the round-table conference on High School Girls' Work Held in New York, November 30th, 1914".

22. YWCA of Canada Archives, "High School Work", n.d.

including, of course, the YWCA.

The first attempt to attract the high school girl to the YWCA was the introduction of Association summer camps by the Dominion Council in 1910. The camps, modelled after those pioneered in the nineteenth century by the Protestant churches, were part of the larger attempt by Christian reformers to counteract the unwholesome influence of urban industrial conditions through a healing contact with "Nature".

...as soon as the camp is reached the superficialities and the unhealthy, artificial atmosphere of the city is cast aside, and everyone behaves and thinks naturally. The subject of clothes is seldom mentioned for everyone wears middies and bloomers--there is no distinction of wealth because all are allowed only a certain amount of pocket money. No one is ashamed to admit in that atmosphere that what they really care about most is not the latest movie star, the newest dance, the serial running in the "Cosmopolitan", but the real, lasting things of life.²³

At a cost of fifteen dollars for twelve days, the camps featured a highly organized program of hikes, picnics, swimming, and other sports with emphasis on "informal Bible study groups and Twilight Talks at sunset and ...wholesome comradeship between 'officers' and girls."²⁴

The option of the summer camp was especially appealing to YWCA leaders because of their belief that religious conversion occurred more easily under the influence of Mother Nature.

Since it is His handiwork, the very beauty of Nature calls us back to God, and takes our thoughts to the One who bade his followers "Consider the lilies". So it is only natural that at the beginning of a happy day in God's out-of-doors, little groups of girls with their leader should turn their thoughts God-ward,

23. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, September 1918, p. 149.

24. Ibid., v. 21, Camping--Publicity Pamphlets, 1910-1925.

gathering by the shore, or in boats on the lake, to consider together the wonderful life and teachings of the Christ.²⁵

The camp experience was shared each summer at Lake Couchiching and Camperdown, Ontario, by approximately one hundred fifteen-to-nineteen-year-old "representative" schoolgirls nominated by the principals of selected Toronto residential schools, and by other girls at camps established in rapid succession by YWCA city associations across Canada. While it is not known how many girls actually experienced conversion, the Dominion Council's School Girls' Secretary reported that

...principals of the schools testify to a deepened sense of responsibility, parents speak of a sweeter thoughtfulness, and philanthropic workers tell of sympathetic help given by old campers,²⁶

thus indicating considerable success from the adult point of view. However, the problem of reaching the entire high school population remained to be solved.

Several possibilities were considered as a means of following up the summer camp. After the example of the U.S. National Board, the Dominion Council rejected the notion of independent high school associations similar to those organized by college students, arguing instead that

...all work for adolescent girls should be a branch of an Association, controlled by older people, allowing, of course, for all wholesome originality not involving new policies.²⁷

Another possibility examined by the Dominion Council was the organization of YWCA clubs in the high schools themselves, an option which would combine

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 21, Camping--Publicity Pamphlets, 1910-1925.

26. *Ibid.*, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, September 1913, p. 129.

27. YWCA of Canada Archives, "Report Regarding the Policy for High School Work", 1913.

the advantages of cooperation with the school staff and easy access to a larger membership than could be generated outside the school building. However, the vociferous objections of Jews, socialists, and the Roman Catholic Church to the presence of the YWCA in American high schools had led the National Board to conclude reluctantly "that whatever is done amongst High School Girls [should] be generated from a centre outside the school".²⁸ In Canada, the Dominion Council feared that opposition from Catholics would preclude the use of the YWCA high school club as a means of reaching girls across the country since this option could be employed in Quebec only in the Protestant schools and in Manitoba would be "simply out of the question".²⁹ Furthermore, strong pressure was being exerted by the YMCA, which feared that its Canadian Colleges' Missions, which had organized civics clubs and mission study circles for boys and girls in many Ontario high schools, would be threatened by YWCA attempts to enter the field, since this would increase the already existing hostility of Roman Catholics to the YCM and possibly put an end to all such work in the schools.³⁰

Although several YWCA clubs were organized in Toronto high schools in 1911 by the Student Committee of the Dominion Council as a follow-up to the first school girls' camp, this work was considered purely experimental and there was little optimism that the methods used could be applied elsewhere. Instead, the Dominion Council looked more favourably upon that approach to

28. YWCA of Canada Archives, "Report Regarding the Policy for High School Work", 1913; "Notes on the round-table Conference on High School Girls' Work, held in New York, November 30th, 1914".

29. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 60.

30. YWCA of Canada Archives, "Report Regarding the Policy for High School Work", 1913.

high school work which had been adopted by the YMCA of Canada and the U.S. and by the National Board of the YWCA--namely, the organization of clubs for high school girls which would meet in the building of the local city Association. However, it was soon recognized that this option featured several disadvantages in that difficulties in travelling to the club meeting-place excluded many girls from participation, one building could not house the entire high school population of a city, and two-thirds of the high school girls in Ontario alone lived outside cities having an organized branch of the YWCA. A more flexible approach was clearly required.

At about this time, a new movement for adolescent girls, the Agnes Baden-Powell Girl Guides, was launched in England, its first Canadian branch appearing in St. Catharine's, Ontario, in 1909. On first consideration, the Girl Guide program seemed tailor-made for the needs of Canadian teenage girls, as its leaders shared the YWCA's interest in outdoor activities and domestic training.

The training of the Girl Guides in work for the home includes cookery, housekeeping, first aid, home nursing, making clothes and the care of children: in physical development, Swedish drill, laws of health, life-saving and out-of-door games; in woodcraft, camping, natural history, map reading, boating, swimming, cycling and signalling; and in discipline, obedience to those in authority, self-sacrifice, sense of duty, self-reliance and good manners. Awards of badges are made for proficiency in most of these subjects. Girls from eleven to eighteen years of age are eligible for membership in the organization. It is hoped that by interesting girls in this work during these impressionable and dangerous years the future welfare of the nation may be served, and such women developed as are fitted to be "guides" to others, and to do splendidly their share of the world's work.³¹

Despite some public concern that Guiding would make girls bold or encourage

31. Girl Guides of Canada Archives, Clippings, The Globe, Toronto, August 29, 1912.

them to ape their brothers, Association leaders were among those who heartily endorsed the new movement, and the YWCA was the first of the major women's organizations to sponsor Guide companies. One of its physical directors, Miss Mathilde Zeltmann of the Ottawa Association, was, for example, responsible for organizing no less than five of the six local companies and was appointed District Commissioner of the Girl Guides in 1913.³² The YWCA was also represented on the Dominion Council of Girl Guides, organized in 1912.

However, for reasons not clearly stated, YWCA support was gradually withdrawn from the Guide movement so that by 1920, there were no longer any companies composed solely of Association girls. This decision may be explained in two ways. First of all, the YWCA was critical of the British orientation of the Girl Guides, strongly advising "the necessity of publishing a hand-book and literature adapted to Canadian ideals and conditions"³³, especially in view of the need for programs to assimilate Canada's large and diverse immigrant population. Secondly, the YWCA was dissatisfied with the non-sectarian stance of the Girl Guide movement and its lack of close ties with the Protestant evangelical churches. Given these conditions, it was impossible that Guiding could ever satisfy the needs of Canadian high school girls as perceived by the YWCA.

An attempt was also made by the YWCA to reach the rural adolescent in cooperation with the YMCA, in view of the need for attractive programs and facilities to halt the migration of large numbers of young people from the rural areas to the urban centres. Town and Country Work was first broached

32. Girl Guides of Canada Archives, Clippings, The Ottawa Citizen, March 28, 1913.

33. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 1, Convention--1913--Winnipeg(2).

in 1913 when the Dominion Council was approached by Boys' Workers from the YMCA of Canada; a YMCA worker was appointed that summer to cooperate in the supervision of playground athletics with the YMCA community worker at Brockville, Ontario, and a committee was established to devise a policy of close cooperation between the two organizations in the fields of Boys' and Girls' Work.³⁴

YMCA leaders frequently promoted programs for adolescent girls on the grounds that they would have a significant impact on boys. They supported the views of YMCA leaders that men were somehow not responsible for their own actions in the face of female temptation, and applauded YMCA Girls' Workers who berated thoughtless young women for dressing in provocative fashions, thereby lowering the moral standards of young men.

There is nothing more depressing to the social worker than to see among our girls their lack of appreciation of the power of their young womanhood. If it were only possible for our girls to realize the influence they carry for good, or evil, it would mean much in saving our girls and safeguarding our boys...Our boys will be moral when our girls dress and live in a way that will help, not tempt the men.³⁵

Sentiments such as these, expressed in an address to adolescents by Dr. Margaret Patterson of the Dominion Council's Department of Health Education, won the whole-hearted endorsement of the YMCA and would undoubtedly have led to further cooperative efforts in Town and Country Work had not the disruption of the War postponed further developments until the 1920's.

34. P.A.C., YMCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 23; v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, February 6, 1913 and March 6, 1913.

35. Ibid., v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work 1918-1921, "A Girl's Value to Her Country", c. 1919.

By 1915, the trend which has been described as "the democratization of adolescence"³⁶ was evident in the new desire on the part of the YWCA to extend its jurisdiction to the employed adolescent and provide her with the same wholesome supervision it offered to the high school girl.

In the stores, where they act as cash girls and bundlers, in homes, where they serve as maids and nurse girls, and in factories, we may find all over the country girls of high school age who, because of economic conditions, are barred from the fun, fellowship and self-development which a high school affords.³⁷

This resulted in the creation in 1916 of the Dominion Council's Department of Girls' Work, to be responsible for both the high school and the employed girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen, thereby ensuring that all Canadian girls would have the opportunity for a satisfactory adolescent experience.

Prior to 1915, no definite policy of cooperation with the churches had been followed by YWCA Girls' Workers in their task of winning adolescent girls for Christianity during this vulnerable period of their lives. While officials of the International Sunday School Association and of the denominational Sunday School Boards were becoming aware that the new "teen-age" group was not being reached by the churches, existing local groups such as Christian Endeavour or Women's Home Missionary Societies still followed the traditional age division by offering children's groups and youth groups which were divided at approximately the age of fifteen.³⁸ National church leaders wished to see the establishment of a program for adolescent girls in which members would be limited to one congregation with the leader responsible to that congregation, and had apparently rejected the Girl Guide

36. Gillis, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

37. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, November 1916, p. 179.

38. *Ibid.*, The Association Outlook, March 1918, p. 55; v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work--Provincial Girls' Work 1918, "The Beginnings of the CGIT Movement".

movement on the grounds that it was neither church-centred nor church-controlled.³⁹ The YWCA would, of course, prove much more receptive.

In 1915, at the behest of the YMCA and the Sunday Schools, the Dominion Council of the YWCA, jointly with the Sunday-School Association and the Sunday School Boards of the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches, established the National Advisory Committee for Cooperation in Girls' Work. After two years of deliberations, during which the Committee considered the unnecessary duplication of efforts by the large number of existing denominational young people's societies, as well as the special religious, educational, and social needs of Canadian teenage girls (for the Committee members were determined that theirs should be "not a made-over 'hand-down' from the boys but a real programme for girls"⁴⁰), Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) was unveiled.

It is a Canadian Programme, prepared by Canadian men and women for Canadian Girls. It is a program of religious education, having as its centre the ideal of life seen in the character of Jesus. And it is a Programme which makes provision for the "all-round" development of the girl, a Programme which urges the girl to live up to her best, physically, intellectually and spiritually, that she may be the better able to serve.⁴¹

In short; it was to be the perfect answer to the problem of the Canadian teenage girl.

Membership in a CGIT group required that the adolescent girl attend a mid-week meeting led by a Sunday School teacher or YWCA Girls' Worker where she would, it was hoped, be led to accept Christ and enroll in the

39. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I.198, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work--Provincial Girls' Work 1918-21, "The Beginnings of the CGIT Movement".

40. Ibid., v. 46, The Association Outlook, April 1919, p. 73.

41. Ibid., v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work 1918-1921.

Sunday School of her choice. The meetings consisted of activities under each of the four standards--spiritual, intellectual, physical, and service--and discussions of such topics as "My Ideal of True Beauty", "How to Set a Table and Wash Dishes", "Why Go to School?", "How Girls Live in Other Lands", "Being Like Jesus in Every-Day Life", "Self-knowledge, Self-reverence, Self-control", "Good Taste in Dress" and "How to Choose a Vocation".⁴² The CGIT Code also required that each girl practise personal health habits, read a newspaper and the Bible, attend Sunday School and CGIT, and be neat and punctual, thoughtful, courteous and unselfish.

While the program was basically standardized for all girls in the CGIT age range, classes were divided into two age groupings. The twelve to fourteen-year-olds discussed home and school life, while the fifteen to nineteen-year-olds were also instructed in hygiene, relationships with men, community service, and choosing a vocation. The charting system used by the YMCA in which a boy could win points "for everything from swimming to daily bowel movements"⁴³ was rejected as leading to "a certain superficiality, a satisfaction with the outward attainment rather than a desire for true inward growth".⁴⁴ No individual awards were given in order to discourage competition and the emphasis of CGIT was placed instead, on personal interviews with the leader, group discussions, and careful study of the lives of Jesus and of those women deemed to meet the ideal of perfect womanhood.

An important part of the CGIT curriculum was instruction in "personal

42. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work--Provincial Girls Work 1918-21, "Supplementary Suggestions for Canadian Girls in Training".

43. David MacLeod, "A Live Vaccine: The Y.M.C.A. and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada, 1870-1920", Histoire Sociale/Social History, Vol. XI, May 1978, p. 21.

44. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1917, p. 50.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Hygiene" by the female doctors and nurses of the Dominion Council's Department of Health Education, or by the local Girls' Worker. There was, however, little distinction between physical and moral instruction in this typical "Talk to 'Teenage Girls'" which instructed adolescents in how to strengthen the controlling powers of their "nerve fibres", weakened by lack of sleep and exercise, poor diet, impure air and deficiencies in early childhood training.

If you allow a message to be sent out for activity of any kind, in speech or action, gradually that habit is formed. To overcome this habit the controlling or inhibitory centres and fibres must be brought into action, to steady the impulse. By the repetition of this control, gradually the power to stop and think is strengthened. Begin to-day and try gradually to restrain the nerve fibres not to respond to unclean thoughts or wrong actions.⁴⁵

CGIT programs also emphasized citizenship training, the teaching of the history of women's struggle for the franchise, the importance of the home and purity in national life, the girl's duty to assist in assimilating the New Canadians, and the responsibility of future mothers to become involved in community service work and keep informed on public issues such as the liquor question and legislation affecting women and children.

The Dominion Council described its role in the CGIT movement in the following terms:

Now the special place of the Association in this whole movement is to see that every last Canadian girl is reached; to strive to bring every Canadian girl who is not connected with the Church, into a Sunday School class. The Canadian Girls in Training programme should eventually reach every Sunday School. This can be done through clubs, industrial, business, school, rural community--specially among the newly arrived immigrants. We can think in terms of 'every girl'--and we can be ever searching for gaps, finding them and filling them in. At present, a large

45. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, June 1919, pp. 115-117.

share of the actual work of the movement falls to the Association--greatest, the task of providing secretaries and workers.⁴⁶

The role of the YWCA Girls' Work Secretary was "to re-enforce all that the mother has done and is doing"⁴⁷ while at the same time behaving more like an older sister than a mother.

- She and all her assistants must be childlike, not childish, possessed with the heart of childhood and the head of adulthood.⁴⁸

Her job required that she win the confidence of the girls by befriending them on an individual basis, and their respect by participating fully in their activities. For these reasons, the Girls' Worker was invariably a young, unmarried woman. She also had the unenviable task of bringing about the cooperation of local denominational church workers, training them in the principles of the new and highly suspect psychology of the adolescent, and overcoming their objections to CGIT which seemed to steal "their" girls from already organized children's and young people's groups. By 1921, this work had achieved professional status, and a one-year course of training for Girls' Workers at the University of Toronto included instruction in Bible and Mission Study, Girl Psychology, Social Economics, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Recreation and Playground Work, Community Organization and the Principles of CGIT.

From its introduction in 1917 until the mid-1920's when it became exclusively a movement for Church girls, CGIT closely rivalled the Girl Guides as the most popular and successful branch of the Girls' Work movement

46. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 17.

47. Ibid., p. 16.

48. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, October 1910, p. 284.

in Canada, with an estimated 12,000 girls following the program by 1920.⁴⁹

The most enthusiastic support for the CGIT program, unlike that for Guiding, its more Ontario-centred rival, came from the Maritime and Western

Provinces. Co-operative conferences and camps were held across the country and were attended by thousands of girls and their leaders, with the full

support of the new Religious Education Councils and women's organizations like the United Farm Women. The publicly-stated emphasis on citizenship

training, rather than on drawing girls into the Protestant churches, led

even non-Protestant groups such as the Ukrainian Separate School in Saskatoon

and the Order of B'nai B'rith in Winnipeg to request that CGIT groups be organized for their girls.⁵⁰ By 1919, the Girls' Work Department of the

Dominion Council was proud to report that "...the Cooperative Movement as worked out for the first time in Canada is attracting attention in the United States, England and other countries".⁵¹

Because of the importance of Girls' Work, as well as its close connection with the churches, the Dominion Council did everything possible to protect this department from the impact of the financial crisis in 1920.

By 1921, however, the YWCA's financial circumstances were such that it was forced to place the department and its entire staff of Girls' Workers under the financial control of the National Girls' Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada.⁵² The YWCA retained representation on this body but lost its claim to leadership of the Girls' Work movement,

49. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work, 1918-1921.

50. *Ibid.*, *The Association Outlook*, October 1919, p. 169.

51. *Ibid.*, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work, 1918-21, "Report 1918-1919 Girls' Work Department".

52. *Ibid.*, v. 10, National Executive Committee Minutes, February 5, 1920 and April 23, 1920.

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in Canada. By that date, however, it could claim to have played a substantial role in focusing public attention on the new adolescent age group, popularizing the newly-developed theories of adolescent behaviour and psychology, and in generating public awareness that not only adolescent boys but girls as well needed special programs and facilities. It also provided large numbers of Canadian girls with opportunities for socializing and participating in outdoor physical activities, particularly swimming and camping, which many had previously been denied. The popularity of the CGIT programs both during and after the War testifies to the fact that a genuine need was indeed being met.

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Chapter 6. Travellers' Aid and Immigration Work

From its earliest beginnings in Canada, the YWCA directed part of its attention to the increasing numbers of young women travellers arriving in Canadian cities. The need for Travellers' Aid services had been a major impetus behind the founding of the British YWCA in 1855, and reflected the growing trend among young women to travel without the supervision of their families, whether they were young middle-class women travelling for pleasure or educational purposes, or young working women seeking new employment opportunities. YWCA Travellers' Aid workers across Canada participated in the construction of what they saw as

...an everlasting chain of protection which encircles the world, so that our children and the children of the mothers of every land can go in and out without fear.

During the pre-war years, with the influx of large numbers of British and "foreign" immigrants into Canada, YWCA efforts expanded to include special programs to supervise the arrival of the young woman immigrant, ensuring that she, as the potential mother of future Canadians, was pointed in the "right" direction at the start of her new life. YWCA Immigration Work was closely linked to conservative nationalist efforts to ensure the continued domination of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant values in Canada in the face of massive non-English-speaking immigration. These services won considerable public recognition for the YWCA and constituted one of the few departments of work to generate actual financial support from local governments and Boards of Trade across the country. In the process, they made a significant contribution to the increasing mobility and economic

1. Vancouver YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1905, p. 11.

independence of the young Canadian woman.

The initiative in organizing Travellers' Aid work on a large scale was taken by the British YWCA in 1886, when representatives of various London societies interested in young women met by invitation of the YWCA "to plan a united scheme of protection for girls when travelling", including those not connected with any society.² Travellers' Aid spread rapidly throughout the globe largely by means of the already-existing world-wide structure of the YWCA. Many other national and international women's organizations, including Councils of Jewish Women, Catholic Women's Leagues, Girls' Friendly Societies, Women's Missionary Societies, Deaconesses of the Methodist Church, and King's Daughters' Circles, played a lesser role in the development of Travellers' Aid, often in cooperation with or under the leadership of the YWCA.³

The pattern of work established by the founders was continued by Travellers' Aid representatives around the world and aimed to protect young women travellers:

- 1st. By meeting young women by appointment at railway stations or seaports, seeing them safely on their way, and providing them with suitable lodging homes.
- 2nd. By enquiring as to the respectability of situations they are thinking of taking.
- 3rd. By looking after stray cases; respectable young women who arrive in towns where they miss their friends, or have none, and are exposed to the greatest peril.⁴

In Canada, the first YWCA T.A. worker was appointed by the Quebec Association

2. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, November 1912, p. 325.
3. Ibid., v. 24, "History of the National Travellers' Aid Association, 1911-1948" (U.S.).
4. Vancouver YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1905, p. 9.

in 1887 to meet young women at the docks and railroad stations, to present them with cards of introduction to the YWCA and to warn them of the dangers they faced as travellers. Similar work was undertaken during the next two decades in other major centres across Canada--wherever young women were arriving in large numbers. In fact, the obvious need for an organization to house and otherwise receive the large influx of young women immigrants in the first decade of the twentieth century led to the establishment of new branches of the YWCA by concerned women in a number of Western cities. By 1909, YWCA's in Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Brandon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria were all engaged in some form of Travellers' Aid and Immigration work.

Canadian YWCA leaders were motivated by two major considerations in entering the field of Travellers' Aid work. The first was the fact that travel for the inexperienced young woman of limited means was indeed a perilous business. Today, credit cards, travellers' cheques, tourist information bureaux, reputable hotel chains and greater sophistication on the part of the average traveller allow us to experience as minor inconveniences what would have been major disasters for the young woman travelling alone at the turn of the century. Setbacks to even the most well-organized plans were a frequent occurrence, as Travellers' Aid workers pointed out:

Unforeseen circumstances over which they have no control are frequently encountered by travellers; connections are missed and, having to remain overnight, they may not know of a respectable place to stay at a moderate rate; they have left home with wrong addresses or none at all; money runs short unexpectedly; friends or relatives fail to meet them; difficulties are encountered with tickets or luggage; it may be late at night and it is necessary to cross a strange city to another station; there is often hunger and weariness and lack of sufficient funds to pay for that which will satisfy either; and last, but by no means least, dangerous acquaintances are made on the journey.⁵

5. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.

The latter reference indicates the second motivation behind T.A. services--fear of the possible results of the absence of parental supervision and other normal restrictions on behaviour combined with the sense of freedom and adventure associated with travelling. Some of this anxiety was maternal in that YWCA leaders feared for the welfare of their own daughters, who were increasingly travelling for recreational and educational purposes. However, most of the concern was for the young rural or working-class women who were not only more inexperienced in dealing with the practical difficulties of travel but were not considered capable of resisting temptation to the same degree as well-trained young middle-class women.

The dangers facing the inexperienced and unescorted young female traveller included, in the view of YWCA leaders, not only robbery, fraud, illness, and destitution but possible seduction by unscrupulous fellow-travellers. However, a fate worse than death awaited her should she encounter agents of the White Slave Trade. Although in theory any young woman was a potential target of the White Slave Trade, it was believed that its agents habitually frequented seaports and railroad stations to take advantage of the vulnerability and confusion of the traveller.

...the hirelings of this traffic are stationed at certain ports of entry in Canada, where large numbers of immigrants are landed, to do what is known in their parlance as "cutting out work". In other words, these watchers for human prey scan the immigrants as they come down the gang plank of a vessel which has just arrived and "spot" the girls who are unaccompanied by fathers, mothers, brothers or relatives to protect them. The girl who has been spotted as a desirable and unprotected victim is properly approached by a man who speaks her language and is immediately offered employment at good wages, with all expenses to the destination to be paid by the man. Most frequently laundry work is the bait held out, sometimes housework or employment in a candy shop or factory.

The object of the negotiations is to "cut out" the girl from any of her associates and to get her to go with him. Then the only thing is to accomplish her ruin by the shortest route. If they cannot be cajoled or enticed by promises of an easy time, plenty of money, fine clothes and the usual stock of allurements--or a fake marriage--then harsher methods are resorted to. In some instances the hunters really marry the victims. As to the sterner methods, it is of course impossible to speak explicitly, beyond the statement that intoxication and drugging are often used as a means to reduce the victims to a state of helplessness, and sheer physical violence is a common thing.⁶

These operations were believed to be not only widespread but systematic; thus, organization was critical on the part of those whose concern was the welfare of the young woman traveller.

Travellers' Aid work in Canada developed as part of a global campaign to stamp out the White Slave Trade, in which a prominent part was played by churches and women's organizations. According to the Rev. J.G. Shearer, Secretary of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada, it was imperative that the following tactics be incorporated into the "Canadian Crusade": prosecution of those who were bringing girls into Canada for immoral purposes; proclamation of the single moral standard for men and women; posting of warnings to young women; provision of Travellers' Aid services; referral of young women to safe and comfortable boarding homes; and the provision of instruction to the young "in the purpose and problems and perils of sex".⁷ The programs of the YWCA, more than those of any other single organization, represented concrete efforts to prevent the young female traveller from falling victim to the White Slavers.

Many of the young travellers being reached by the YWCA were, of course,

6. Edwin W. Sims, "The White Slave Trade of Today", War on the White Slave Trade, p. 57.

7. Ibid., "The Canadian Crusade", pp. 350-51.

emigrants from Great Britain and Europe and were part of a massive influx which provided, according to the Rev. Shearer, an ideal environment for the flourishing of the White Slave Trade:

Canada is to-day the Mecca of the immigrant from all lands. Its lands are wondrous wide, its grain and sand and rock are indeed golden. Men are wanted. So are women--young women--for domestics, waitresses, wives. Here then is the slaver's golden opportunity. Men and women (!) hunt and bait and ensnare them, even as the wild things of the forest are hunted, baited and ensnared. It is easy to do. The true stories of demand and opportunity and success that the mails bear back to every land make the deception of victims and immigration officials, and Moral and Social Reform agents, alike easy.⁸

It was inevitable that YWCA Travellers' Aid work and efforts to stamp out the White Slave Trade would overlap to a considerable degree with programs to receive the new immigrant. According to a well-publicized statement issued in 1910, Edwin W. Sims, United States District Attorney, Chicago, estimated that approximately 15,000 foreign girls in the United States and Canada fell victim every year to the White Slave Traders.⁹ Reports such as these increasingly aroused the ire of Canadian reformers and made them aware that the immigrant girl faced even greater dangers than those confronting the rural Canadian girl.

YWCA immigration services had two primary objects. The first, of course, was the protection of the young woman immigrant from moral and physical harm. As the mother of future Canadian citizens, it was imperative that her chastity be guaranteed, for YWCA leaders were haunted by fears of racial degeneration brought about through the contamination of future offspring by the prior sexual misconduct of the mother. These fears were

8. "The Canadian Crusade", War on the White Slave Trade, p. 337.

9. Ibid., p. 333.

linked to increasingly prevalent conservative nationalist sentiments and the ubiquitous belief in the ability of women to determine national moral standards. By overseeing the arrival of the young immigrant, YWCA leaders intended to ensure that she would remain physically and morally fit to fulfill her obligations to her new country.

The second motivation for YWCA Immigration Work was to ensure that during this unsettled period of their lives, the young immigrants would not abandon their childhood religious faith. In the case of the British Protestant immigrant, who occupied most of the YWCA's attention prior to 1912, this simply meant informing the new arrival of the location of the denominational churches in her city and encouraging her not to let church attendance lapse. The Supreme Objective of this work was "to conserve to the Church and the YWCA of Canada the large numbers of young women coming to our shores".¹⁰

The problem of the immigrant was considerably aggravated in the immediate pre-War period not only by the unprecedented high rate of immigration--including 82,922 female immigrants over fourteen years of age in 1912 alone¹¹--but by the high percentage of non-English-speaking immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. YWCA leaders shared the conviction of government, religious and reform authorities that the problem of the settlement and assimilation of these foreigners was "one of vast proportions and fraught with the gravest possible consequences".¹²

10. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, November 18, 1912.

11. Ibid., Immigration Committee Minutes 1914-1920, "Young Women's Christian Association Immigration Work", Dominion Council pamphlet, 1914.

12. Ibid., v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 52.

During the fiscal year ending March 31, 1911, over twenty-one per cent of the total immigration was non-English-speaking--one out of every five a foreigner. According to numbers they stand in this order: Austro-Hungarians, Italians, Russians, Chinese, Hebrews, Sweden¹³ Germans. According to religion they are: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian, Jewish, Protestant, Mormon, Doukhobor, Mennonite, Confucianists, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Hindus...What is Canada, what is the British Empire, what is the Church of Christ going to do with all these elements?¹³

Not only did the religious beliefs of the young foreign immigrant threaten the continued supremacy of the Protestant churches in Canada, but her loneliness and ignorance of Canadian ways made her particularly vulnerable to the machinations of unscrupulous men and agents of the White Slave Traffic.

How easy for a slave agent of either sex who can talk their victim's native tongue, to win her confidence, a lonely stranger in a strange land, and persuade her to change her plans and go with the Agent to an inviting situation among her own country folk!¹⁴

Nor were her moral standards considered to be on a par with those of Canadians or British immigrants, and the implications were disturbing.

Surely, some time sooner or later, she will somewhere mould the destinies of the future Canadians, making us feel how important it is for us that we take steps now to make sure that the moulding process be along the lines we desire.¹⁵

These sentiments, expressed by Bruce Walker, Commissioner of Immigration for Manitoba, at the 1913 YWCA Convention, were shared by YWCA leaders and by the various government bodies and local Boards of Trade which offered encouragement and financial support for YWCA immigration programs. And the

13. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, December 1912, p. 339.

14. Rev. J.G. Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade", War on the White Slave Trade, p. 339.

15. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 55.

YWCA, of course, was more than willing to respond to suggestions that it was more competent and equipped to undertake the solution of this problem than was any other agency because of

...its national and world-wide organization...its magnificent equipment, and...most valuable of all, its large and increasing membership of young women, ready and willing to expend part of their energies in services for others.¹⁶

The entry of the Dominion Council into the field of Immigration Work in 1912 was a response to pressure coming from several directions. Since the 1880's, local T.A. workers in Canada had maintained close ties with the Colonial Emigration Office and with the United British Women's Emigration Society who attempted to inform potential emigrants of employment opportunities in Canada and to supervise them during their entire voyage. It was a source of continuing distress to British and European T.A. correspondents that the lack of an organized national system of Travellers' Aid in Canada meant that the safety of the emigrants could not be guaranteed after they reached Canadian ports.¹⁷ Furthermore, the YMCA, which was already offering immigration services for young men, argued that there could be "no more valuable contribution to the life of a nation than the taking hold of this problem of the immigrant girl on a broad statesmanlike basis".¹⁸ When the Dominion Council received an additional appeal in 1911 from the Protestant churches and the local YWCA in Quebec, overwhelmed by the arrival of 2,000 young women in that city each month from May to October, it could no longer refuse the opportunity to expand the scope of its activities.

16. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, December 1912, p. 341.

17. Ibid., v. 24, "History of the National Travellers' Aid Association, 1911-1948" (U.S.).

18. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, November 18, 1912.

Dominion Council efforts in the field of immigration commenced with the hiring of an immigration secretary at the port of Quebec for the 1912 season:

The duties of her office are to meet all the incoming steamers and to help the great tide of immigrant women in their perplexities and inquiries. To the immigrant is given a printed message of welcome from the Canadian YWCA, containing also a directory of all the City Associations of Canada, suggestions helpful to strangers and a table of Canadian money and its equivalent in English money. To girls and women going to a city in which there is an Association, a card of introduction is filled out, to be given to the local secretary. Notices are also sent to secretaries that they may report to the Immigration Secretary whether they have been able to be of service to the new-comers.¹⁹

In 1913, the port secretary reported meeting 155 steamers, all from English ports, and distributing 3,300 pamphlets and 2,796 cards of introduction to local associations. Her experiences led her to the conclusion that "on their arrival in this country, our immigrant sisters are more plastic, more susceptible to good influence, than they are likely to be at any later period in their lives". Therefore she recommended:

...if at this particular time we can link these changes in their lives with the directing power of a Divine Providence, making them feel the presence of Him Who rules in all the affairs of life--even in the doing of the commonest tasks--we may be able to render a service impossible after adjustment has proceeded further and habits have been formed.²⁰

Clearly this was not an opportunity to be ignored.

Canadian policy for Travellers' Aid and Immigration Work was drawn up in consultation with the British YWCA. After a three-month tour of Canada during the summer of 1912, Miss A.M. Wingate, National Head of the British

19. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1912, p. 315.

20. Ibid. December 1914, p. 245.

YWCA's Employment and Emigration Department, proposed to the Dominion Council

that an immigration worker at Quebec should be in direct communication with London, and receive girls on their arrival, and that the employment bureaux of the Associations of the two countries should be in close touch, so that British immigrant girls might have a direct knowledge of the work they were coming to in Canada, and Canadians know the qualifications of the coming citizens.²¹

Further consultation with Canadian YMCA Immigration Secretaries led to the development of an overall strategy of establishing contact with the girls at the ports, welcoming and visiting them at their destinations and recruiting corresponding members to follow up those girls going to the country districts and smaller centres lacking an organized branch of the YWCA.²²

Beginning in 1913, the Dominion Council's Immigration Committee worked hard to win the support of governments, churches, and railway and steamship companies for its immigration programs. In 1914, it hired a permanent National Port Worker to receive the immigrants at Quebec. It persuaded the C.P.R. to allow YWCA posters warning young women of the dangers of travelling alone to be placed in railroad stations across Canada. In cooperation with the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Methodist Deaconesses' Society--also undertaking organized T.A. work, but to a lesser extent than the YWCA--it published a T.A. directory and introduced a badge to be worn only by authorized persons.²³ It also developed a network of corresponding members to follow up the immigrants going to the smaller town--contacts were reported in 232 centres by 1920.²⁴ The

21. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1914, p. 74.

22. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, November 18, 1912.

23. Vancouver YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1916, p. 9.

24. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 30.

Immigration Committee also participated with the National Council of Women and other organizations, in lobbying the Ottawa government for stricter screening of the morals and employment backgrounds of women emigrating to Canada in search of employment in domestic service. Canada, it pointed out, should be mindful of "the serious troubles that have resulted in North America from the 'too open' door of the past".²⁵

The Dominion Council's entry into Immigration Work also led to efforts to educate the local Associations about the importance of programs to assimilate the foreign immigrants. An article by J.S. Woodsworth in the YWCA magazine described the dismal existence of these young women and the difficulty of reaching even those who worked in English-speaking homes;

What chance has the ordinary foreign "girl" in our home. Her sphere of work is limited very largely to the kitchen. Her thought need not rise much higher. Where can she go for social enjoyment. The cheap theatres are perhaps the only place open to her. Where shall she receive her company. The public street offers the greatest privacy, and who is to determine who that company shall be. A chance acquaintance or an introduction by a new made friend is the only means by which she may enlarge her circle or indeed have any circle of friends. What chance has she to educate herself. A few night schools have been started but many girls have not even their evenings to themselves. There are social clubs but rarely for girls of this class. Is it a wonder that often she acquires rather coarse ways and occasionally goes wrong.²⁶

With the encouragement of the Dominion Council, local YWCA's began offering clubs and night classes for immigrants, similar to those being provided by settlement houses. Emphasis was placed upon the "Canadianization" of the young woman immigrant--which of course, included conversion to Protestantism--largely by means of the teaching of English.

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, March 2, 1917.

26. Ibid., v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, December 1909, p. 150.

These new comers cannot know our ideals or our standards of civilization until they know our language...By the point of contact established in teaching English, we can teach our ideals, our civilization and our Christ.²⁷

The failure of the public schools to reach adult immigrants only added to the importance of this department of YWCA work. A YMCA leader, writing in The Young Women of Canada, argued that the poor attendance at night classes offered by educational authorities was due to prejudice against public institutions and a lack of comfortable seating arrangements for adults. He concluded that "the pioneer work of education among the foreign born will have to be done in the homes, halls, churches, etc., by such organizations as the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations."²⁸

Clubs and classes organized by the YWCA for foreign immigrant girls were, upon the recommendation of the National Port Worker in 1913, kept entirely separate from clubs being organized for British immigrants, no doubt for the protection of the latter.²⁹ While a great deal of emphasis was placed upon understanding the viewpoint of the foreigner and learning about her country of origin, YWCA leaders agreed that Canadians should "carefully guard against taking any of the national tendencies, thoughts and ideals from the newcomers".³⁰

Despite the best efforts of YWCA T.A.'s on behalf of young travellers and immigrants, the lack of cooperation on the part of many of the young women was a source of continuing distress to the National Immigration Secretary:

27. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, April 1914, pp. 115-6.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, March 6, 1913.

30. Ibid., v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 13.

It is discouraging to find the headstrong girl unwilling to accept advice, but you realize that she does not know the world, and that it is through this ignorance she drifts into an intimacy that is often dangerous. The man is usually just filling in time, and she will, in nine cases out of ten, never see him again after landing. You advise her: she may accept, and act upon your advice, but more often she does not!³¹

Many young women refused to accept the T.A.'s judgment of proper behaviour and reacted with suspicion to her maternal appearance. Unlike secretaries hired by the Girls' Work and Industrial Departments, the paid workers of the Travellers' Aid and Immigration Department were older, married women (presumably widowed and forced to support themselves). It can be assumed that this was a deliberate policy on the part of the YWCA arising out of the sensitive nature of the work--T.A. workers encountered situations that were not for the inexperienced or faint-hearted.

The maternal image of the T.A. was recognized as a problem by the YWCA. Upon its adoption of the National Travellers' Aid badge in 1916, the Vancouver YWCA reported:

It was with some regret we decided to discontinue the familiar gray uniform of our T.A. Those who have made a special study of T.A. work have proved to us that a uniform is a drawback to the work, arguing that the modern girl does not care to accompany anyone who looks 'institutional'.³²

However, the appearance of the T.A.'s was probably less of a problem than their excess of zeal which often led them to cooperate with a young woman's family in the supervision of her conduct even against the wishes of the young woman herself. The following typical case was described by the Montreal T.A. as particularly "appalling from a moral point of view".

31. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, May 1915, p. 89.

32. Vancouver YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1916, p. 9.

A young woman arrived by steamer, coming out to be married. Her brother had requested that she should be met and seen on the train. On landing the Travellers' Aid found her, but she manifested indignation at the action her brother had taken and offered payment, stating that she intended staying with friends. It was discovered that the friends consisted of a man, who had engaged rooms at a downtown hotel. After considerable discussion and pointing out that if these plans were executed they were making themselves subjects for deportation, she was finally persuaded to say goodbye to the man and proceed on her journey.³³

No doubt, however, not all cases of this nature had such a "successful" outcome.

Despite their sometimes less than altruistic motives, YWCA T.A.'s did contribute to making geographical mobility and economic independence a reality for many Canadian women. Thousands of grateful young women and their anxious parents were happy to take advantage of the services offered by this department. Rural Canadian girls arriving in the city to find employment, immigrants setting foot on a new land, children being sent to join relatives in another city, and sight-seers in search of safe and happy adventure--all were helped by YWCA T.A.'s, some 27,000 cases in 1913 alone.³⁴

Further research is required to establish the actual extent of the dangers which were thought to menace the young woman traveller. We do know, however, that belief in their existence, and particularly in the operations of the White Slave Traders, generated considerable fear, and imposed restrictions on the activities of many young women. According to a "lady detective" employed by the government to investigate conditions in

33. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1911, p. 17.

34. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 26.

Hamilton (where, she pronounced, there was "more white slave trafficking ...than in any other city of its size in the whole of America--not Canada, but America"), lack of an organized Travellers' Aid service was presenting problems for many young women and their parents.

When I came to this city ten days ago to take charge of this work I was astounded to find that there was no society here. Parents are beginning to get afraid to send their daughters to this city, where they know temptations exist at the railway stations. There are scores of parents who wish their daughters to come here to attend school, to go into business or for other purposes, but are afraid to send them knowing of the danger, and that there are no good women at the stations to watch for the incoming trains.³⁵

Thus, YWCA services must have had the effect in many cases of opening up opportunities to young women who would otherwise have been denied them by their anxious parents. We are also justified in assuming, given prevailing conditions, that many young women were in fact protected from becoming unwilling victims of robbery, fraud, kidnapping, and rape. At any rate, YWCA and other authorities such as this railway official were convinced that their work was having an effect.

A few years ago young girls arriving in the city were subjected to the usual alluring young men that hang around a railway depot and whom it is impossible for the policemen to keep track of and, in scores of cases, the results were bad. Now knowing that your people have a watchful eye on them, they are afraid to venture for fear you will call the police.³⁶

Comments such as this made all the work seem worthwhile.

By 1916, the Dominion Council had come to the conclusion that an effort must be made to consolidate work with travellers and immigrants in Canada under the direction of a national organization. The British

35. The Hamilton Spectator, September 24, 1910.

36. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1920, p. 83.

Traveller's Aid Society was pressuring for unification of Canadian work, and American organizers of an upcoming conference to establish a non-sectarian organization in that country were requesting a delegate to report on the situation in Canada. The Dominion Council, expressing its fears about unnecessary duplication of work and the possible affiliation of Canadian bodies with the new American society, attempted to organize a Canadian conference, but met with a less than enthusiastic response to its proposal. Apparently, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Salvation Army were suspicious of YWCA motives, perhaps with justification. Relations between T.A.'s representing the different organizations had sometimes been less than harmonious at the local level--leaving the historian to wonder, on occasion, whether the object of the work might not have been to "get" the immigrant, rather than to help her. Hence, the WCTU and the Salvation Army questioned the YWCA's assumption that it would naturally play a leadership role in any national body, while the Catholic women, for their part, were opposed to anything but a non-sectarian approach to Travellers' Aid. These barriers prevented even an informal conference on the subject of a national organization from taking place until 1922.³⁷

The failure of the Canadian YWCA to realize its dream of a national Travellers' Aid Association reflected its inability to compromise its principles for the sake of cooperation with others as well as the weakness of its own organization. Developments in Britain and the United States had already clearly demonstrated that a non-sectarian approach was the key to the unification of Travellers' Aid work, yet the Canadian YWCA

37. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 14, Immigration and Travellers' Aid Committee Minutes, January 26, 1922.

seemed somewhat slower to come to terms with this fact. Even within the Association itself, centralization was difficult as the locals operated independently of the Dominion Council and of each other--and the key to the success of this department lay, after all, with them.

While girls' lives can, have been, and will be vitally influenced in some cases through the efforts of the secretary at the port, yet in the majority of cases, the greater results can only be obtained when they reach their destination.³⁸

The success of local programs depended on the ability of the T.A. to win the support and active involvement of the churches. However, no systematic plan of action was followed by all the locals, who consistently neglected to send in reports of their follow-up work to the National Immigration Secretaries, making it difficult to evaluate the overall success of the programs.

Travellers' Aid and Immigration would survive the Dominion Council's financial crisis in 1920 and would continue as a viable department of Association work, with the Dominion Council continuing to maintain immigration workers at the major ports as well as taking over the work at the border cities in response to increased American immigration. By 1920, however, the Dominion Council had taken the position that the settling of the immigrant and the provision of health care, education and housing ought to be the responsibility of governments rather than of organizations such as the YWCA, although the latter would still have much to do.

...there still remains a big opportunity for the work of the Church and the Association, in giving comradeship, understanding and protection, by taking the newcomers in to work with us to build a bigger, better

38. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, December 1912, p. 342.

nation...Indeed, as handmaid of the Church, the Association has a very special work to do, in associating all new Canadians with the Churches of which they are members, so that they feel the spirit of sympathy and fellowship.³⁹

, This sentiment would dominate YWCA work with foreign-born Canadians during the 1920's.

39. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.

Chapter 7. Industrial Work

During the nineteenth century, YWCA programs for the working woman were aimed at those employed in white-collar occupations, such as stenography, retail sales and teaching, and at those working in domestic service. In the first decade of the new century, an important shift in policy occurred as the Association turned its attention for the first time to the army of "industrial girls" employed in Canadian factories. By 1920, Industrial Work--the provision of such services as cafeterias, summer camps, and social clubs for factory workers--constituted a large and thriving department of all city associations located in industrial centres, and reaching the industrial girl had become the single most important challenge facing the Canadian YWCA.

The new interest in the problems of the industrial labour force on the part of the YWCA was part of a larger trend in which middle-class Christian reformers in Europe and North America concerned themselves with working-class housing, health, family life, poverty, and working conditions to a greater extent than ever before. Since the full impact of industrialization was experienced first by Great Britain and the United States, Canadian reformers lagged slightly behind their counterparts elsewhere in taking up these questions. It was not until the 1880's that Canada witnessed the first government investigations of industrial conditions, the passing of the first factory legislation and the "resurgence of an articulate and angry labour movement".¹ The shocking revelations of the 1889 Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital coincided with

1. Greg Kealey, "Introduction", Canada Investigates Industrialism: The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, 1889 (Abridged), Kealey, Greg, ed., University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1973, p. ix.

the spread of Social Gospel thought in Canada, with its emphasis on the role of environment in the spread of vice and immorality, and on the duty of Christians to attempt to improve conditions in this life. In turning its attentions to the problems of factory workers, the Canadian YWCA was following the lead of the British and American Associations and of the Protestant churches and reform organizations in Canada. An additional reason for the YWCA's interest in industrial problems was the ever increasing participation of young unmarried women in this sector of the labour force, as many abandoned domestic service for more attractive and lucrative positions in Canadian factories. By the turn of the century, it was becoming obvious to more far-sighted YWCA leaders that this was a large and important group of young women which lay completely outside the range of Association activities.

The YWCA's attitude toward the employment of women in factory production was less than positive. Domestic service was certainly considered a more suitable occupation for women in that it offered a home environment and training for family life. Even work in offices and stores, it could be argued, trained women in responsibility, organization, and self-discipline, all of which would be useful later in life. However, these occupations were not suitable for all young women. YWCA leaders were well aware that many had been denied the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to win higher-status positions, and they acknowledged that those with few skills could hardly be blamed for preferring the shorter hours and higher wages of factory work, given the conditions they faced in domestic service.

Factory work was considered less desirable than employment in domestic

service, office work or retail sales for several reasons. First, the factory environment itself was considered unsuitable for a decent young woman being, in the view of YWCA leaders and other reformers, much more likely than other types of workplaces to corrupt her morals. Secondly, the long hours at sedentary occupations were considered harmful to a young woman's health and consequently threatened her future capacity to bear healthy children. However, the major problem with factory employment was the stultifying boredom it produced in the worker, resulting in a dangerous craving for stimulation and excitement at the end of the day. By the War years, YWCA leaders were increasingly arguing that this problem was aggravated by low wages which placed pleasant, respectable living conditions and wholesome amusements beyond the reach of the average female factory worker.

The question of how to resolve the problem of the industrial girl was one which caused considerable dissension within the ranks of the YWCA--probably more than any other department of work. The main thrust of industrial programs, the one with which most leaders seemed to feel comfortable, was the supervision of workers in their off-hours when they were most likely to get into trouble. This was, after all, a more appealing activity than trying to change the conditions of factory production or the structure of the industrial labour force, particularly for women whose families belonged to that business community which controlled the factories. Nevertheless, many YWCA leaders gradually came to terms with the fact that, as more young women entered the factories, the problem of the industrial girl would not be resolved until the issues of wages and working conditions were faced more directly. The result was

educational campaigns to inform both middle-class reformers and factory workers of existing legislation protecting workers' rights, public denunciation of low wages and poor working conditions, and an increasing recognition of the right and need of women workers to organize for their own protection.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, YWCA industrial programs evolved from uplifting religious services in the factory to supplementary practical programs, such as hot lunches, to lobbying for improved legislation and finally, in the case of the most progressive leaders, support for women's trade unions. The essential aims of the programs remained, however, fundamentally conservative, limited by a vision of working women as future mothers rather than bona fide workers.

The problem of regulating female labour is very much complicated by the fact that the fundamental function of a woman is not to make goods, but to make men and women, and that men and women may be well made is the foremost necessity of every state. So when we come to consider the conditions of industry for women, we have to test their efficacy not only by those standards which we apply to conditions among men workers, but also to ask how these conditions will affect married women workers, and how they will affect the potential motherhood of the younger women workers.²

This attitude resulted in a focusing of attention on issues such as wages, housing, and working conditions, only as they were perceived to affect the morals and physical health of the factory worker and thus to contribute to the possible contamination of future mothers and their potential offspring. The industrial girl was not to be permitted to define her own priorities. Instead, reform was to come from above, through the benevolent activities of girls and women of leisure. Thus, YWCA industrial programs,

2. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, December 1915, p. 193.

despite considerable rhetoric about the desirability of bringing together women of different social classes, failed to challenge the structural basis of class differences and may have actually reinforced them. In all fairness, however, many female factory workers did derive tangible benefits from YWCA industrial programs and many took advantage of YWCA noon rest, cafeterias, summer camps, and social clubs and did, in addition, benefit from the Association's lobbying and efforts to publicize their inadequate wages and working conditions.

The first industrial programs offered by the Canadian YWCA were an outgrowth of services being provided by the locals for office workers and store clerks beginning in the 1890's. In 1895, Toronto became the first Canadian Association to establish a separate branch in a building located in a factory district, featuring a boarding home, noonday rest and hot lunches for factory workers.³ Other facilities were constructed in the residential areas in order to reach workers who could not take advantage of facilities in the downtown core, as explained by the local YWCA upon opening a branch in Hintonburg, a suburb of Ottawa:

The fact that 800 girls go into the City every morning from Hintonburg is a proof that our work is needed right in that locality. These girls grade from the clever stenographer in civic service employ to the little half-grown girl employed in the mica factories and tailor shops. These girls coming home in the evening will not turn about and come in to our building in town--we must go to them.⁴

The building of separate facilities was, however, confined to the larger industrial centres where there was not only a greater need but the

3. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Woman's Gazette, November 1900, p. 10.

4. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1910-11, p. 13.

Association was usually in a better financial position to undertake such a major investment.

Although the initiative in developing industrial programs was taken by the larger local associations in Canada, the Dominion Council played a significant role in influencing the course of YWCA industrial policy in the first two decades of the twentieth century. National secretaries provided the local associations with a rationale for undertaking industrial work, informed them of policies and programs developed in the U.S. and Great Britain, and consistently attempted to place YWCA activities in the context of the larger "social and industrial awakening". The impetus for the Dominion Council's involvement was provided by the return of Canadian delegates from the 1902 summer conference in Silver Bay, N.Y. where they had been exposed to enthusiastic reports of industrial programs in American cities, and by encouragement from the YMCA which welcomed the YWCA's entry into industrial work on the grounds that "the minds of men and women must be appealed to differently to gain the same result".⁵

Early discussions of industrial work were attempts to convince skeptics within the Association itself, as well as those who provided the financial support, that there was indeed a need for programs for the industrial girl. To justify the work, some analysis of the effect of industrialization upon women's traditional work and of the important role of the woman worker in the new industrial economy was usually provided:

We are living in an industrial age, and young women and older women too are making this possible. Women's work has been largely taken from the home. Take the simple item of baking. Formerly all that was done in the home. To-day our great bakeries are turning out all kinds of

5. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Dominion Tie, October 1903, p. 233.

baking. Then laundry--formerly that was performed in the home, but to-day the laundry is done away from the home, and these laundries are running night and day, and the girls are there. Shoes, hosiery, paper mills are all made possible through the labor of girls.⁶

YWCA leaders were encouraged to consider that they owed their privileged position and material comforts to the labour of the industrial girl.

I can scarcely think of anything we wear that girls don't make. They are making in the great mills our cotton underclothing. They are making our silk goods. They are working in the shops making our winter and summer hats. Every bit of dress trimming, braids, etc., they make. Every tick of every watch, of every clock testifies of the faithful labour of girls.⁷

This personal debt to the industrial girl was to be repaid by support for YWCA industrial programs. Some doubters, apparently, had also to be persuaded that industrial work, important though it was, was indeed the province of the YWCA and not some other body. They were won over by arguments which emphasized both the YWCA's experience in dealing with women and the religious principle underlying the work which frequently resulted in company support for the programs.⁸

In the first decade of the new century, Dominion Council discussions of industrial work stated flatly that it was not the province of the YWCA to question the organization of factory production. The object of the work was "not to change material surroundings, but to kindle in the soul a fire that nothing can quench" and ultimately "to bring the unchurched masses into contact with Christ and the Church".⁹ The primacy of the religious objective was reflected in the type of programs first offered:

6. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, March 1907, p. 40.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, October 1903, pp. 233-4.

9. Ibid.

by YWCA Industrial Secretaries.

...so the Secretary will go into these centres, and perhaps there will be an organ. The girls know and hurry through with lunch, and they gather to greet the Secretary...She has singing, perhaps a Bible lesson and perhaps ten minutes of physical culture ...And then the Secretary hurries away. And during the afternoon the memory of the songs and the joy that has come will buoy them up, and strengthen the desire for the best things in life.¹⁰

The secretary's intentions were to distract the worker from the monotony of her work and the bleakness of her environment, to encourage her to consider more spiritual matters, to counteract somewhat the harmful physical effects of sedentary factory employment and, of course, to acquaint her with the benefits of membership in the local YWCA.

Gaining access to the female factory employees required tact and careful treading on the part of the YWCA secretary. The suspicions of the manufacturers, whose permission was required to enter the factories, had first to be overcome by emphasizing the Christian objectives of the work. While many manufacturers remained hostile or indifferent, some responded with outright enthusiasm. The Hamilton Association reported in 1904 that three manufacturers had purchased a total of 180 membership tickets to allow their employees to attend YWCA classes.¹¹ Results such as these encouraged YWCA leaders to speculate that their programs, with the support of such responsible, Christian employers, would lead to the ultimate resolution of the industrial problem. They did not consider that, to some employers at least, the YWCA's emphasis on improving worker morale and efficiency and its promotion of harmony, rather than conflict, in the

10. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, March 1907, p. 41.

11. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, March 1904, p. 44; May 1904, p. 76.

workplace, may have appeared to offer tangible and immediate gains which had little to do with the discharging of Christian obligations.

More difficult to win over were the workers themselves who were reportedly suspicious of this unknown organization, "the very name of which sounds 'goody-goody' to them". One secretary warned of the great need for tact in first establishing contact with the women.

Everywhere is the concealed fear that the Association is trying to better the industrial girl, and the industrial girl does not welcome the betterment.¹²

The lack of cooperation on the part of many women workers was due, no doubt, to their conviction that "betterment" was not necessarily in their interest. Others were, however, won over by the secretary's concern, particularly if she was able to avoid appearing patronizing, as illustrated by one American secretary in her address to a Canadian YWCA audience.

1,500 girls on the payroll. I was never more terrified in my life as when I knew I had to say something to these girls. I said, "I don't know what to talk about". "Well", one girl said, "Whatever you do, don't tell us to be good". And another girl said, "We don't want any tracts". Then one girl spoke up and said, "Miss Barnes, they like you alright". And then she said, "Miss Barnes, we would just like to hear about girls who study, and girls who can stay at home all day if they want to."¹³

For the first decade of YWCA industrial work in Canada, little attention was paid to improving actual working conditions in the factories, and hopes for future improvements were vested in the inevitable awakening of employers to a sense of their Christian duty, as Christianity permeated Canadian society. By 1910, however, it had become obvious to many leaders,

12. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, September 1916, p. 127.

13. Ibid., March 1907, p. 41.

particularly in countries where the work was more advanced, that such an approach was inadequate and that the YWCA would have to play a more active role if improvements in conditions were ever going to occur. As more young women entered the factories with each passing day, as YWCA leaders learned more about the conditions under which they lived and worked, and as the whole industrial question loomed ever larger in the minds of Canadian reformers, it became increasingly apparent that the Association would have to do more than "brighten" the lives of factory workers--it would have to effect real improvements in conditions lest harm come to the women, their future offspring and the nation itself.

A turning point for YWCA industrial work came in 1910 when the World's YWCA Conference in Berlin, attended by nine Canadian delegates, took as one of its themes, "The Place of the Young Women's Christian Association in the Social and Industrial Awakening". The conference resolved that the Association should devote more study to social and industrial problems; reach out to all young women in the community and adapt itself to particular groups, such as waitresses, saleswomen, domestic servants and telephone operators; study the subject of recreation and promote "physiological teaching"; and offer courses to increase the efficiency of commercial and industrial workers.¹⁴ Most significant, however, was the shift in strategy for effecting change as YWCA leaders abandoned their traditional reliance on the Christianization of employers in favour of more aggressive tactics. From this time on, YWCA industrial policy, as promoted by the Dominion Council, stressed both the need to encourage girls of leisure to study the conditions of working women and

14. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1910, p. 244.

lobby for change on their behalf, and the importance of providing commercial and industrial workers with knowledge of existing social measures and protective legislation. However, the amount of debate which took place and the lack of documentation of local efforts along these lines suggest that many local leaders were reluctant to become so directly involved in political and economic questions and preferred to direct their energy into more traditional YWCA programs. Setting up cafeterias, boarding homes, social clubs, and summer camps for industrial girls was, after all, certainly less controversial than calling into question the conditions of industrial production itself.

The YWCA programs whose object was to supplement the low income of the factory worker were directly modelled after those which had already been organized for office workers. In some cities, separate boarding homes for factory workers were established in the industrial districts--such a home was opened by the Halifax YWCA in 1914, in cooperation with the Local Council of Women and some prominent business and religious leaders.

At the present time there are quite a number of young girls in the city, working at the various manufacturing concerns, who are unable to live as they should live--in comfort. They are not able to pay much for board, and generally have to live in squalid surroundings, where they are subjected to influences which are not very elevating.

Girls who live under such circumstances naturally are not attracted by the home life, for cramped accommodation, poor food and the general lack of cheer in such places cannot but make these girls miserable. The consequence is that they spend their evenings out on the streets and go home late at night, rising early, dressing, hastily swallowing down a meagre breakfast and rushing off to work.

If these girls lived in clean and healthful surroundings, under good moral influences, in a home where they could spend their evenings together in harmless enjoyment, they would be elevated socially,

morally and physically. This is the desire of the citizens who have interested themselves in the proposition.¹⁵

Cafeterias, too, were opened in the industrial districts. This service was consistent with the overall industrial strategy of the YWCA in that it increased the productivity of women workers, counteracted the harmful effects of factory employment, educated future mothers in the selection of cheap, nutritious foods, and provided a wholesome alternative to the sordid factory environment.¹⁶

Educational classes concentrating on preparation for entry into a high school were initiated for factory workers, prompted by the desire to help as many ambitious young women as possible escape the confines of the factory.

Take, for instance, the young women in our factories occupied from early morning until six o'clock in the evening and after, many of whom are very young, taken early from school, with no opportunity in the home for discipline or training for life's duties...For this class of women the Association has a valuable work to do in reaching their real life and preventing them, in so far as is possible, from allowing the drudgery of their daily routine to destroy their power to develop and rise in the social scale and make their lives tell in this great world of which they form so important a part.¹⁷

These classes were also an outgrowth of the growing concern of reformers over the problems of unemployment and low wages among women workers. YWCA leaders did not seem to consider the fact that industrial production demanded a large pool of unskilled labour and assumed, naively perhaps,

15. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "Boarding House for Working Girls", 1914.

16. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, November 1915, pp. 166-7.

17. Ibid., October 1909, p. 125.

that increased skills would automatically be rewarded by higher wages and that there would be enough skilled jobs for all women with training.

The program on which the YWCA based its greatest hopes for winning the factory worker was the industrial or working girls' club. These were modelled after the earlier clubs for business women and were first organized in Canada after the 1910 Berlin conference, where Canadian leaders learned of American and British efforts in this line. The clubs were to be organized on a self-governing and non-sectarian basis in order to overcome the "fear and distrust on the part of the girls who do not understand the real meaning of the Young Women's Christian Association".¹⁸ However, club activities were supervised by an industrial secretary who had very clear ideas about the direction she wished the clubs to take.

The purpose of girls' clubs is chiefly that of character-building. This is accomplished by offering the girls entertainment and, incidentally, instruction of such nature that their influence will establish a wholesome, normal attitude toward the society-circle in which they live, and will lead them towards a higher ideal of home and life in general. The object in view is moral and physical rather than mental.¹⁹

Industrial club work also stressed developing "leadership" abilities in the women workers for it was believed that the YWCA's message would seem much more persuasive if it came from the workers' peers rather than from outsiders.

Methods of organized play were to develop in the girls such character traits as trust, self-confidence, patience and a sense of fair play; to inspire the club as a whole to undertake social service projects such as

18. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 26.

19. Ibid., June 1916, p. 109.

—paying for a bed in a hospital to be used by poor girls; contributing to a day-nursery; supplying entertainment at Old People's Homes; the payment of the salary of a Travellers' Aid worker at the Union Station in one of our cities²⁰

and hopefully to prepare the members for the "deeper message" which they were "not ready" to receive.²¹ It was the hope of Dominion Council members that, ultimately, Canadian working women would be organized into Federations of Working Girls' Clubs similar to those developed in Great Britain and the United States, so that the "slowly awakening social consciousness of working women" could be directed on a much larger scale.²² The American YWCA reported that its Industrial Councils, composed of club leaders, constituted "a new resource...in making articulate our message of a larger life to the girlhood of our cities".²³ If working women could be encouraged by means of industrial clubs to channel their new-found strength into social service, then the YWCA would gain a powerful ally in its quest to remake Canadian society in the image of Christ's teachings.

YWCA industrial club work revealed the conviction of Association leaders that the factory worker was incapable of acting on her own behalf. While stressing the importance of the woman worker's economic contribution and the dignity and self-respect which should be her due, club leaders sometimes revealed an attitude which can only be described as patronizing, despite the fact that they themselves warned against playing the part of the "Lady Bountiful".²⁴

20. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 25.

21. Ibid., April 1915, p. 71.

22. Ibid., February 1916, p. 25.

23. Ibid., The Association Outlook, November 1917, p. 181.

24. Ibid., December 1918, p. 201.

The majority of these girls have had only grammar school education and their interests are not highly intellectual. Their home life is in most cases that of a poor family struggling to make both ends meet. In many ways these girls are still childish in their attitude, but at the same time they are sensitive and jealous of their rights as self-supporting grown-ups. Their mental calibre is limited and their power of concentration weak, so diversity in the evening's programme is necessary.²⁵

This lack of faith in the ability of the working woman reinforced the conviction of YWCA leaders that reform of industrial conditions would result from the charitable actions of leisured women--"The girls in our industrial centres are waiting for some college girl who shall give her life to this phase of our work".²⁶ The college graduate was obviously better equipped to determine the special needs and priorities of industrial workers than were the workers themselves who lacked the secretary's training, impartiality, broad knowledge of social issues, and higher vision.

YWCA leaders were confident that their industrial department would help to eliminate class conflict by bringing together the working woman and the woman of leisure. The former would benefit from exposure to the education, leadership abilities, and Christian training of the middle-class woman, who, in her turn, would be rescued from a selfish, idle existence and encouraged to fulfil the obligations of her position--"Education and culture are privileges to be accounted for, and a trust to be used for the common good".²⁷

25. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1916, p. 109.

26. Ibid., March 1907, p. 42.

27. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1907-8, p. 53.

The Association owes opportunities for service to girls who have undeveloped qualities of leadership just as truly as it owes opportunities to girls of limited circumstances. We are not unmindful of our debt to the little girl of the ten hour day, but we seldom realize that we have just as real a debt to pay to the 'girl of leisure', and to help her find herself and express her best in service. The Association ought to be the connecting link between the girl with time and ability, and the girl with long hours and limited opportunities.²⁸

As an attempt to create this link, a number of city Associations established Girls' Auxiliaries, in which young girls of leisure learned to organize social and recreational activities for young business girls thus gaining first-hand knowledge of the latter's economic problems as well as training in social service methods and principles.

The control of the Industrial Department by women and girls of leisure no doubt accounts for the fact that an inordinate amount of time was spent in discussing the question of how the working woman should spend her leisure time rather than in addressing the conditions under which she worked. While YWCA leaders believed that the rise of factory production, by appropriating women's traditional work, had robbed the young woman of the "joy of life" and "opportunity to use her creative power, and to do things on her own initiative", substituting in their stead "meaningless, routinary and monotonous" factory labour²⁹, they never challenged the organization of factory production, choosing to accept it as inevitable and even to be admired for its efficiency. While they were well aware that long hours of sedentary employment were physically harmful to the female operative, YWCA leaders did not attack these conditions but relied instead

28. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, November 1917, p. 179.

29. Ibid., December 1919, p. 214.

on promoting physical culture in the workers' leisure hours, effectively shifting the responsibility for her poor health to the operative.

Health of body and of mind are essential, for a warped judgment is certain to follow on unhealthy habit of living and thinking. A certain woman operator on a heavy machine makes a point of swimming or taking some other wholesome exercise every day. The consequence is that she is full of vitality and is doing excellent work.³⁰

Rather than working to eliminate the dehumanizing working conditions which left women bored and restless at the end of the day, Association leaders elected to supervise the workers in their leisure hours when it was most likely that their "pent-up nervous tension"³¹ would get them into trouble.

Fear of the possible moral ruin of the future mother and of the contamination of her potential offspring was the major motivation behind the YWCA's preoccupation with the recreational facilities available to the industrial girl. Robbed of her traditional work by the factory system, removed from the supervision of her family, and isolated in a lonely boarding house, the young working woman was believed to be powerless to resist the attractions of commercial entertainments, any discussion of which drove YWCA leaders into a state bordering on frenzy.

Ought you to be mild when you know that in order to satisfy the desire of the girl for a good time, and for relaxation after hours of labour, many girls go to picture shows which poison their minds, or to dance halls which are worse to them than death is to your boy?³²

YWCA recreational facilities were meant to provide an attractive alternative

30. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, October 1918, p. 155.

31. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 24.

32. Ibid., The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 10.

to movies and dance halls. In the safety of the YWCA building, the working woman could spend her leisure time in wholesome and healthful activities far removed from the attractions of the opposite sex. The fact that YWCA clubs, physical culture classes, swimming lessons and other activities proved popular with many working women should not be taken as an indication that the latter shared the concerns of YWCA leaders but rather as a reflection of the shortage of facilities available in Canadian cities for young women who wished to participate in physical activities and socialize in each other's company.

An extension of the recreation programs of the industrial department, and a service which proved highly popular with women workers, was the YWCA summer camp for industrial girls. YWCA leaders were united in their conviction that working women stood only to benefit from exposure to wholesome outdoor recreation during the summer, preferably away from the cramping city environment. Attention to this question could resolve a number of difficulties. The provision of summer recreation programs would retain the links with working women which had been established during the winter months and were often lost as most Associations closed their buildings for the summer.³³ In addition, the temptations facing the young woman were greatly increased with the arrival of warmer weather.

The wonderful growing days of early summer bring the lure of the out-of-doors and stir the gypsy blood innate in us all. And for many a girl this natural impulse only initiates her into the terrible dangers of evenings in the public parks or by the crowded waterfront. Our Young Women's Christian Association cannot afford to holiday throughout the summer unless it holidays with the girls who need it, for the forces

33. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1912, p. 277.

of evil are never known to take a vacation, and in the summer months they reap their largest harvest from the ranks of the unprotected girls who love freedom, companionship and the Out-of-Doors.³⁴

By 1912, Montreal, London, Toronto, Winnipeg, Brandon, Calgary, and Vancouver offered camps which provided a low-priced vacation to hundreds of working women in two-week shifts throughout the summer. In recognition of the fact that factory wages were too low to permit many workers to take a holiday, individual financial assistance was available.³⁵ The Dominion Council opened a Provincial Holiday Camp for Industrial Girls at Longford, Ontario, in the summer of 1916, when a total of 155 store and factory employees from southern Ontario spent \$5.00 per week for a two-week vacation described in this way by one of the campers.

Away from the disquieting roar of city life, hot pavements and din of traffic, in air charged with ozone, holiday-makers are seen loafing about in middy blouses, rubber-soled shoes, crush hats, or bathing suits, with books and sketching paraphernalia--every item a promise of a joyous hour. Rambles, rowing, fishing, bathing, tennis; all contribute to the radiance of this summer camp, and even while lying dreamily in the hammock the reality of the glorious sense of freedom seizes us.³⁶

This camp was supplemented in 1918 by the first City Girls' Conference, where thirty-three delegates from business girls' clubs in five cities met at the camp to discuss "The All-Round Girl of 1918" and made a number of recommendations concerning health, dress, thrift, education, recreation and religious and moral standards.³⁷ Camps and conferences such as this, YWCA leaders hoped, would "catch, develop and transform"

34. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, April 1914, p. 111.

35. Ibid., June 1912, p. 279.

36. Ibid., September 1916, p. 140.

37. Ibid., The Association Outlook, May 1919, pp. 96-7.

the working woman's "spirit of play...into a bigger spirit which shall show our girls how to live better and more easily".³⁸

The climate of labour unrest which prevailed in Canada during the War and post-War period, as well as the Dominion Council's involvement with the supervision of women workers in the war industries³⁹, resulted in a new determination on the part of YWCA Industrial Secretaries and some of the more progressive national and local leaders to address not only the question of the recreation of the industrial girl but also the larger issue of the YWCA's role in the resolving of the entire industrial question. While YWCA leaders had been convinced for a number of years that they would prove "largely the factors that shall help to work out the great problem between capital and labour"⁴⁰, the War years brought home the importance of recruiting industrial workers into the Association where their presence would exert "a most wholesome pressure for the consideration of wage standards, hours of labour and working conditions, etc." In return, the YWCA's industrial secretaries could provide an alternative to socialism by interpreting Christianity to the "thinking women of the industrial group [who] have questioned Christianity deeply because they have not seen it concerned with their practical economic problems". By bringing women together in this way, the YWCA would help to create "an understanding which must work for a better social order".⁴¹

The new cooperation and mutual understanding between women of

38. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 24.

39. See Chapter Eight.

40. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, March 1907, p. 41.

41. Ibid., The Association Outlook, November 1917, p. 182.

different classes would also help to eliminate labour disputes which, YWCA leaders were convinced, were almost always due to misunderstanding and a failure to communicate. Strikes, as a means of resolving labour disputes, were considered both tragic and unnecessary. YWCA leaders believed that they could potentially play an important role in the elimination of class conflict by acting as an intermediary between employers and employees in instances where difficulties arose. Comments such as the following from American industrial girls interviewed by a Canadian secretary were cited as proof of the potential of YWCA industrial work:

"If it hadn't been for Miss---- they'd have had a strike of 2,000 girls on their hands, but she just explained things, and we knew she was right, and we got together and it all was all right."

"Sure, the boss comes to our forum meetings. He spoke to us one night. He's great, now we've got to know him. We used to have rows all the time, and strikes, mostly over nothing, just because a forewoman got smart,--but now we know it's just the forewoman, because if it's fair he sets things right."⁴²

If all workers could only be persuaded to adopt a similar attitude, YWCA leaders believed, class conflict would completely disappear without any necessity for the more drastic changes being advocated by socialist labour leaders.

Included in the Dominion Council's wartime strategy for industrial work was a stronger emphasis on the need to inform workers of their rights under existing legislation, as had been recommended by the Berlin Conference in 1910. The 1917 conference of Canadian city locals resolved "that the Association seek to educate girls in industrial problems and thus promote

42. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28. I 198, v. 44, Clippings 1915-1925, "The Industrial Girl", Dominion Council pamphlet, c. 1920.

initiative and self-help along ameliorative lines".⁴³ For this to occur, it was first necessary that YWCA leaders should be informed about the intricacies of labour legislation and the kinds of tactics used by unscrupulous employers who violated the law to increase their own profits. With this in mind, the Dominion Council began to include in the national publication articles which would inform local leaders about building regulations, hours and conditions of work, home workers, regulations governing shops, and factory inspectors.⁴⁴ YWCA leaders were also urged to act on their Christian duty to exercise their influence as consumers by informing themselves as to "whether the goods we are demanding are cheaper than similar goods because of unguarded processes, child labour, underpaid workers, bad conditions, or because of real efficiency in production".⁴⁵ By the post-war years, national industrial secretaries were educating local leaders about the process of collective bargaining, the workings of trade unions and the necessity for legislation establishing a minimum wage.⁴⁶

Let us see that our Canadian girls have wages that will let them pay for good meals, not force them to make shifts of picnicking in their bedrooms; let them have a room, though small, that they will not have to share with strangers, in a house where there are conveniences for cleanliness (in how many cheap rooming houses can you get a warm bath even once a week?) and a place to sit that will not drive them in desperation to walk the street; let them have sufficient for clothes, laundry, and incidentals, and a margin for holiday, recreation, sickness, and self-improvement. Make a list of the

43. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers; MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, November 1917, p. 189.
44. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, December 1915, p. 193.
45. Ibid., The Association Outlook, November 1919.
46. Ibid., March 1920, pp. 84-6; May 1920, pp. 141-2.

minimum needs of a girl, set the costs against them, and compare this with wages earned by girls in some of the poorer paid factories, stores and laundries in your city.⁴⁷

Only by thoroughly familiarizing themselves with industrial questions could YWCA leaders hope to be in a position to instruct women workers "to save them from being led off by the arguments of unscrupulous agitators."⁴⁸

Fear of the possible influence of the more radical elements of the labour movement, particularly in the immediate post-War years, prompted some national leaders to argue the need of a more active and progressive stance on the part of the YWCA. It appeared likely that women industrial workers would become contaminated by the increased labour militancy of 1919 unless they were provided with guidance and support from another source.

No one can doubt that the industrially productive groups are to play an ever greater part in ruling the world in the near future. Is it, then, altogether safe to assume that no knowledge of economic laws and forces is needed by the women who form a steadily increasing proportion of our wage earners? We may expect the women who are economically self-supporting to become increasingly class-conscious as their brothers have done. Shall we take no thought that this development shall be sane and normal and constructive?⁴⁹

This line of reasoning led industrial secretaries to argue the necessity of YWCA support for women's trade unions. Employers had left the women workers with no alternative but to organize in order to protect themselves, and the secretaries feared that unless active leadership was provided by Christian reformers, control of the increasingly organized female labour

47. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1920, p. 142.

48. Ibid., November 1917, p. 182.

49. Ibid., January 1919, p. 7.

movement would fall to the socialists. Vocational training, too, was actively promoted after the War due to the conviction of YWCA leaders that unemployment and the labour unrest it engendered could be remedied by upgrading the qualifications of unskilled workers, large numbers of whom constituted "a positive menace to the industrial order and a cause of much needless suffering to the workers themselves".⁵⁰

The YWCA national convention held in 1919 took as one of its three major themes, "Christ's Spirit in Industry" in order that the Association's position on industrial questions be thoroughly discussed and clarified. In addressing the convention, Lady Falconer, the national president, argued:

...we need to study and understand the industrial problems relating to the girls and women of to-day. We need to collect evidence, and have a point of view on--The Eight-Hour Day; No Night Work for Women; One Day's Rest in Seven; A Living Wage; Equal Pay for Equal Work; Child Labour; Collective Bargaining; Social Insurance; Industrial Democracy.⁵¹

Out of the discussion which took place, emerged a resolution that each local association should form a group to study industrial conditions relating to girls and women for the purpose of making a survey of industrial conditions in each community having a branch of the YWCA. The survey was "to be made from the point of view of the worker, the employer and the neutral" and would include for the first time in the classification "worker", the domestic servant, now to be called the "household worker".⁵²

One such survey was undertaken by the Toronto YWCA which visited 270

50. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1919, p. 7.

51. Ibid., January 1920, p. 1.

52. Ibid., p. 38.

factories in 1919,

...only ten of these intimating that they did not wish the work of the Y.W.C.A. while most are heartily in sympathy with the programme, and all the managers were pleased to have posters put up announcing our classes and club work, many asking for extra posters.⁵³

Further research will one day uncover how many industrial surveys or similar programs were actually undertaken by local YWCA's. For now, we are left with the impression that the role of the YWCA as a leader of the labour movement, as an intermediary in industrial disputes and as a factor in eliminating class conflict in Canada was largely the vision of a few far-sighted national leaders. From the amount of discussion and arguing that took place, it would appear that industrial secretaries were having a difficult time convincing many local leaders that it was the business of the YWCA to undertake industrial programs which went beyond providing hot lunches to workers and supervising them in their off-hours. In any case, few local associations were in a position to hire a trained industrial secretary so that the additional programs fell to the already overburdened general secretary.

More tangible and immediate benefits for the industrial girl could perhaps have been won if YWCA leaders had been willing to allow her the opportunity to act and make decisions on her own behalf. All industrial programs and policies were, after all, developed without consulting the working woman about what she felt to be her major needs and the most appropriate ways of meeting them. A greater say in the running of their own affairs would perhaps have rallied under the YWCA banner many of the working women who were justifiably skeptical of the Association's attempts.

53. Archives of Ontario, Toronto YWCA Papers, Box MU 3527, Annual Report, 1918-19, p. 17.

to protect and represent them. However, the prospect of organized working women not under the control of responsible, Christian middle-class leadership was one which frightened many leaders within the ranks of the YWCA, particularly at the local level. A vision of working women channelling their new self-confidence and solidarity into community service through their club activities was certainly more appealing than the prospect of organized workers challenging the conditions of factory production and perhaps the entire social order.

Nonetheless, the activities of YWCA industrial departments did produce some results which cannot be measured so easily as can the number of industrial surveys conducted. The Association was, after all, the only organization providing concrete services for the industrial worker and drawing public attention to the conditions she faced. It was not enough, YWCA secretaries argued, merely to condemn the moral standards of the factory worker. One had to understand how low wages and the conditions of her work made it impossible for her to conform to the standards of behaviour expected by the city's more affluent middle-class citizens. An important function of the YWCA's industrial department was to educate the public about the exact nature of this relationship between moral standards and poor housing and working conditions, and about the type of problems encountered in her daily life by "the five-dollar-a-week girl".

Back of most of the problems in any community lies the economic question...When a girl works eight hours a day, six days in the week for five dollars, she faces the question of which is better, a clean life without relaxation or pleasure obtained in a way which is bound to spoil the soul and wipe out ideals...If she comes from out of the city and has to pay her board, she is fortunate indeed if she has one dollar a week left for her own use. If she is living at home but has to contribute to the

support of the family, she is again fortunate if she has a dollar a week for herself. What will one dollar per week purchase? It will not go far in providing gloves, hose, handkerchiefs, neckwear--just the etceteras of a girl's necessary outfit. It will do practically nothing towards purchasing shoes, clothes, furs and the absolutely essential things. Even once a week to the movie shows is a heavy tax upon such a slender balance, and carfares, even in extra bad weather are not to be thought of. Fruit, crackers, chocolate,--things that all girls find it necessary to supplement boarding-house tables with, are out of the question. What is a girl to do with her evenings? She cannot even go to church societies, for they all entail some expense, and properly should...But how can the five-dollar-a-week girl pay? She cannot be expected to work all day and go home to sit in her room until bedtime every night. The love of adventure is born in every soul and without it the world would be a dreary place indeed. In time it drives her forth.⁵⁴

Such graphic descriptions of working and living conditions, in addition to regular lectures on the importance of the contribution being made to the nation's economic well-being by the factory worker, did inspire many middle-class women to take a more active interest in the problems of the industrial girl and perhaps encouraged them to regard her with a new respect.

54. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "Fix the Responsibility", November 1917.

Chapter 8. The War and National Service Work

The outbreak of war in 1914 came at an important time in the development of the Canadian YWCA when the older, more established locals in Eastern Canada had reached a turning point.

They have got beyond the stage confronting many Associations in the West--that of providing board and lodging at a moderate cost and under suitable conditions for the girl who is thousands of miles away from friend or relative. Will they follow in general the ideal of the American Associations and try to meet the girl in all relations of life, or will they accept the narrower field left to many of the Associations in the cities of older countries, and leave to other societies, and to the commercial purveyors of recreation, work and training, to get into actual touch with the girl?¹

The wartime activities of the Canadian YWCA on many fronts expressed its firm commitment not to be relegated to the status of a mere provider of lodging and religious instruction for young women.

The War provided the impetus for a period of rapid growth and entry into new fields of work by aggravating the problems to which the Association was attempting to respond. More young women were entering the industrial labour force due to both the lure of high wages in the war industries and the greater acceptability of female employment, now justified by patriotic motives. Furthermore, the greater mobility and economic independence of young people of both sexes resulted, in the cities at least, in an unprecedented degree of freedom from adult supervision during leisure hours, a condition which seemed to herald the onset of a national moral crisis. Thus, the need for regular YWCA programs seemed greater than ever before.

For middle-class YWCA leaders who were anxious to increase both their involvement in public life and the prestige of their organization,

1. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I.240, v. 38, Annual Report, 1914-15, p. 33.

the War also offered an opportunity to extend the scope of their activities; indeed, it demanded a response. There was a sense that the War marked a period of transition for women and that women's organizations had an obligation to play an active role in determining the nature of the changes taking place.

Things are changing for women; some shut their eyes to this fact, but others are awake to what is happening... Very perplexing are the questions raised because of the change of conditions, questions which concern women and their responsibilities... Women have scarcely understood to what extent the conscience of the community has been a man's conscience; now women must work out women's problems.²

The belief in an urgent need for action in the face of wartime conditions coincided with a greater availability of funds as a result of public willingness to support patriotic causes. The result was a major expansion of YWCA work which saw the national budget soar from \$16,000 in 1914 to \$129,000 in 1918, the staff of national secretaries increase from seven to twenty-eight, and new national programs introduced in virtually every department of YWCA work.³

The YWCA's response to the War did not mark a radical departure from its previous position. In fact, its reaction to the War as a threat to moral standards was remarkably similar to its earlier attitude to the advent of industrialization. In both cases, the circumstances demanded increased vigilance on the part of Christian reformers and closer supervision of young working women as they entered the labour force, acquiring a new degree of economic independence. In neither case did the YWCA initiate or

2. P.A.C., Montreal YWCA Papers, MG 28 I 240, v. 39, Annual Report, 1915-16, p. 15.

3. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, pp. 44-46..

actively encourage the entry of young women into new sectors of the labour force. Instead, it followed the lead of the women workers and took upon itself the task of supervising their moral welfare in their new environment. The challenge of both industrialization and the War was to ensure that working women would retain their pure, young womanhood and their attachment to home life in the face of vastly changed conditions.

The undertaking of National Service programs during the War was quite compatible with the YWCA's fundamental goals and religious principles. Following the lead of the Protestant churches to which its leaders belonged, the Association was able to accept the War as a just and necessary defence of the British Empire, and, as the fighting continued, to embrace it as a holy crusade against the forces of evil which must inevitably result in the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.⁴ Participation in the war effort did not conflict with traditional YWCA activities which now acquired new importance as a patriotic duty.⁵ The YWCA was not slow to seize upon the War as an opportunity to extend its jurisdiction over young Canadian women and to win greater support from governments and employers, and its leaders saw in the War an unprecedented opportunity to draw the attention of the Canadian public to the needs, problems and valuable contribution of the young woman worker.

The local associations initiated the YWCA's entry into the war effort, working along with many other organizations to mobilize Canadian women as a veritable second army on the Home Front. Thousands of garments and hospital necessities were cut, rolled, sewn and knitted at YWCA meetings. Field Comfort Clubs were formed which sent hundreds of boxes to soldiers

4. J.M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I", The Canadian Historical Review, v. 49, no. 3, September 1968, pp. 213-33.

5. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 10.

at the Front, in military hospitals, and in prisoner-of-war camps. Fund-raising was undertaken for the Red Cross and the support of beds in military hospitals. Soldiers' families were supplied with necessities and entertainments.⁶ By 1917, city associations were operating canteens for women war workers, often with financial aid from the Dominion Council, and were helping to find employment for returned men and war widows. Student associations not only participated in the usual Red Cross work but were engaged in fund-raising for the Canadian Students' Friendship War Fund, the proceeds of which supported YMCA work at the Front, and with Allied soldiers in P.O.W. camps, YWCA war work in France and Russia, and needy student movements in other countries.⁷

The Dominion Council itself, however, was somewhat slower to become actively involved in the war effort. During the 1913-14 depression, unemployment among the local association members and hard times among subscribers generally had reduced the Dominion Council's major sources of income, resulting in staff and travel cutbacks.⁸ Thus, for the first year of the War, the national body contented itself with urging members to contribute as individuals. All women were encouraged to take up volunteer work, particularly for the Red Cross, and to use their personal influence as wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts to encourage their men to enlist.

6. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 34, War Services--World War I, "War Work Accomplished by the Young Women's Christian Associations of Canada, 1914-1918", 1939.

7. Ibid., v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1918, p. 53.

8. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, October 1914, p. 191.

We, as women of the Empire, have much to do with the success or the non-success of the call for men for Imperial service...Are we so small-minded, and so selfish, that we put stumbling blocks in the way of those who are hearing the call to offer themselves? Courage, and love that will sacrifice, and confidence that our men will desire to do their share in this great fight, such are some of the qualities we must show to-day.⁹

Regular YWCA work was, of course, not to be neglected.

Women of Canada, Association women, patriotism must mean for you not only giving your boy and working for him, but also throwing strength of work and prayer into all that safeguards and helps your girl.¹⁰

Business women were asked to take an interest in the personal problems of their co-workers, to "find out what is being done for the needy and unemployed" and to "report the situations of hard-up unemployed girls to the responsible people".¹¹ Students were expected to cut back on college and personal expenses.

Treatment with a little Red Cross bottle of iodine (the price of a banana split) may be sufficient in the case of one of our soldiers to turn the balance between life and death.¹²

The War, argued the Dominion Council, was bringing out "some of the best possibilities of Canadian women", and the YWCA, as a strong national body, could help to meet "the tremendous needs of many classes of girls...to make use of the new desire for volunteer service, and to strengthen the whole 'morale' of the nation".¹³

The traditional emphasis on the role of the YWCA in building up the

9. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, May 1915, p. 81.

10. Ibid., The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 10.

11. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, March 1915, p. 48.

12. Ibid., October 1914, p. 199.

13. Ibid., January 1915, p. 9.

nation was complemented, during the War, by a new stress on its duty to support and defend the British Empire. The decision to inaugurate a Canadian branch of the League of Honour, an organization dedicated to upholding the honour of the Empire by promoting Prayer, Purity and Temperance among British women, marked the real entry of the Dominion Council into the war effort in December 1915.¹⁴ The YWCA's initiative led to an inaugural meeting in Toronto in February, 1916, attended by representatives of the YWCA, the National Council of Women, the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Red Cross, the Girl Guides, and the Girls' Friendly Society.¹⁵ The League aimed to recruit every Canadian woman to its membership for three reasons:

- (1) Because, individually and corporately, we, the women of Canada; are responsible for the outcome of the war, and the greatest force in the world is prayer; therefore our prayers are needed.
- (2) Because the influence and lives of women count as never before: the sacredness of the home, the education of children, the shining purity of our own lives--for which our husbands, brothers, fathers, friends are sacrificing theirs--are our "bit". We are responsible for doing it worthily and faithfully.
- (3) Because this war in its final issue will depend upon money as much as upon men. Therefore women are called upon to save--to be temperate and economical.¹⁶

By September of 1916, the League claimed 12,000-15,000 members in sixty-four Canadian centres¹⁷, and until it was disbanded in March, 1919, it continued its efforts to mobilize Canadian women behind the war effort by

14. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 23.

15. Ibid., March 1916, p. 50; June 1916, p. 104.

16. Ibid., June 1916, p. 104.

17. Ibid., September 1916, p. 129.

encouraging everything from thrift and modest dress to work in munitions production and support for the Union Government.

The League's assumption that women would make their greatest contribution to the war effort through exerting their influence in the home was shared by the YWCA, government and business leaders, and the public. For the first year of the War, little or no consideration was given to the possibility of employing women's talents outside the domestic sphere, particularly in sectors of the labour force traditionally dominated by men. At a public meeting on the topic of "Women and the War" organized by the Dominion Council in November 1914, both Ontario Premier Hearst and Opposition Leader N.W. Rowell delivered well-received addresses in which they confined themselves to lauding the influence of good mothers as "the highest and best in the world" and to praising the YWCA for its work in "uplifting" the wives and mothers of the country.¹⁸ By 1916, however, a shortage of male labour and the example of Britain's successful use of women workers in the war industries and in agricultural production led Canadian government and business leaders to revise their policy on employing women in wartime production and resulted in YWCA programs to supervise the women war workers and efforts to win for them improved conditions and public support.

Since the outbreak of the War coincided with the YWCA's first serious involvement in industrial work, it was natural that the Dominion Council should take an active interest in women involved in wartime industrial production. The YWCA clearly stood to benefit from the considerable free publicity which would inevitably result from association with the war workers, both in the factories and on the farm. (Young women in overalls

18. The Toronto Globe, November 17, 1914, p. 8.

were a novelty which attracted a great deal of attention from the Canadian press.) In addition, since the war workers were consistently portrayed as patriotic and self-sacrificing, not competing with men and performing a vital task in releasing men for the Front, the YWCA would be making a valuable contribution to the national war effort by providing services to improve worker morale and efficiency. The government, farmers, and factory owners were, in their turn, no doubt relieved to turn over the responsibility for the women war workers (as well as a good deal of the costs involved) to the YWCA and were happy to be able to draw upon its expertise in this field.

YWCA participation was considered vital by those responsible for the war workers in that women workers were believed to need special protection, both physical and moral, not required by male workers. Those who feared that the morals of the women workers, many of whom were new to factory work, would be corrupted by the factory environment or who feared that delicate constitutions and reproductive capacities would be damaged by the strain of heavy labour, were reassured by the presence in the workplace of an organization such as the YWCA. Government and employers also breathed more easily since any scandal involving the war workers could have seriously threatened further attempts to employ women workers. In any case, the example of the programs undertaken on behalf of British women in the war industries by the British YWCA was sufficient to convince any skeptics of the benefits which would accrue to Canadian war production from YWCA involvement.

The British example prompted Lady Falconer, YWCA national president during the War years, to contact J.W. Flavelle, Chairman of the Imperial

Munitions Board, early in 1916:

Intimations have come to us that a great many women and girls are being employed in the making of munitions in Canada. We are very anxious to do some work among the women and girls thus employed, similar to the work being done by the Young Women's Christian Association in Britain.¹⁹

In October, the Imperial Munitions Board formally requested the YWCA to undertake the supervision of women workers engaged in munitions production, resulting in the creation of a national Military Purposes Committee:

In some towns where girls will come from outside, our work will be to provide boarding places for them; in other places the need will be for a 'canteen' or lunch-room where good meals can be got close to or in the factory; or yet elsewhere it may be to find a 'welfare worker' who will be placed on the staff of the firm and will help the employees in all kinds of ways.²⁰

Under the auspices of the Military Purposes Committee and the Toronto local association, canteens were operated in three Toronto munition factories during 1917 and 1918 with equipment supplied by the employers and volunteer labour provided by the YWCA. The largest canteen was kept open twenty-four hours a day and served an average of 1,200 women daily for a period of seven months. The canteens proved popular with the munition workers and financially successful for the Dominion Council. More would have been opened if fluctuations in orders for munitions had not led to the closure of the factories early in 1918.

Profits from the canteens were used to finance the staffing and operation of a hostel for munition workers in St. Catharine's, opened at the request of the Imperial Munitions Board, and operated at a loss to the YWCA for the entire twelve months of its existence. In addition, the Dominion

19. P.A.C., J.W. Flavell Papers, MG 30 A 16, v. 5, file 47.

20. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, November 1916, p. 172.

Council supervised an employer-financed hostel and canteen at the Wm Davies Co. canning factory in Harriston which daily produced 200,000 tins of pork and beans for soldiers at the Front.²¹ The efforts of the Dominion Council to provide a proper home environment, sanitary surroundings, wholesome food, the companionship of other young women, and the supervision of matrons undoubtedly removed most of the objections being offered to women's participation in factory production as part of the war effort. The YWCA relieved the IMB of any responsibility to provide such services and no doubt unwittingly contributed to the healthy profits of the munition manufacturers through its efforts to improve worker morale and efficiency.

YWCA involvement in the war industries did not, however, always work to the advantage of employers and the IMB, for there were instances when the manipulation or exploitation of munition workers earned for the employers the outspoken criticism of YWCA industrial secretaries. In an article on "Women in Industry and National Service", the YWCA's National Industrial Secretary commended the war workers for their patriotism and for the "new understanding of sacrifice" which they had gained from the War. However, she added rather pointedly, "this spirit is not universal".

The cost of living is rising faster than the rate of wages; certain firms are making a definite attempt to keep women's wages low--for instance, one firm has already dismissed a quick woman worker and employed two slow women in her place lest the good worker should raise the average rate of pay for piece work. Women doing men's work are not in all cases receiving men's pay. There is a danger that women who do not have to be self-supporting will undersell those who do, thus lowering rates which are already too low. Where conditions are bad and action is needed, women are totally lacking in co-operation and organization among themselves.²²

21. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I.198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1917, p. 99.

22. Ibid., October 1918, p. 155.

While the YWCA certainly believed that self-sacrifice was an admirable feminine trait, it was not prepared to stand by while the munition manufacturers, who were inordinately fond of preaching the value of patriotic sacrifice to their employees, took advantage of many women's patriotic motives. Critical comments delivered at public meetings and to the press helped to draw public attention to the worst abuses. The records do not reveal, however, whether stronger measures, such as unionization or strikes, were supported by YWCA industrial secretaries involved with the munition workers.

The second phase of YWCA involvement in war production began early in 1917 when the Dominion Council was asked by the Ontario government to supervise the housing, provisioning and chaperonage of the female agricultural workers, popularly known as the "farmerettes". These were "students from both College and High School, teachers, office workers, leisured girls, factory workers and domestics"²³ who were being recruited by the Department of Trades and Labour to harvest the fruit crops of the Niagara Peninsula. YWCA leaders, whose attitude toward the employment of women in factories was always somewhat ambivalent, demonstrated unbounded enthusiasm in their support for the use of women workers in wartime agricultural production because of the beneficial effects they believed that agricultural labour would have upon urban working girls.

The camps give an opportunity for country living and a long holiday to many a girl who could not, under present conditions, afford a good outing. The outdoor life and exercise help enormously to build up our girls physically, and the simple living, near to nature, has its beneficial effect on their mental, moral and spiritual life. In scores of instances, the long term agricultural camps have saved the

23. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, December 1919, p. 210.

situation for workers who faced ill health and idleness. Physically incapable of carrying on at regular work and financially unable to take a rest, they sought outdoor work as a solution of the difficulty and returned to the winter's work happy and healthy, even to huskiness. What other solution of a serious problem could one of these girls have found?²⁴

The Dominion Council was particularly optimistic that university students, through their experience of the realities of manual labour, would gain a "new sense of kinship with all who labour" and would perhaps even be motivated to consider a career as a YWCA industrial secretary.²⁵

In the summer of 1917, twelve camps, under the direction of a national secretary and staffed by YWCA employees, housed a total of 800 young women for periods ranging from several weeks to several months. Accommodation was provided by the fruit growers with the addition of tents loaned by the Department of Militia. Despite the initial doubts of the farmers, the girls proved able workers who were invaluable in saving the crops.

...besides picking and packing fruit, they handled horses, pitched hay (though this is not work that every girl should be allowed to do), drove motor trucks to market and sold the fruit, sold fruit from stands along the highway, took charge of chicken houses, worked in canning factories, put handles on baskets, hoed for ten hours a day, and put their hands to various other forms of farm work.²⁶

Indeed, the farmers were rapidly "convinced that girls could not only make good, but that they far outstripped the ordinary man worker in certain lines which demand deft fingers and careful attention to details".²⁷

Despite the praises sung by many of the fruit growers, low wages were

24. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, December 1919, p. 212.

25. Ibid., October 1917, p. 153.

26. Ibid., March 1918, p. 60.

27. Ibid., December 1919, p. 210.

a serious problem which caused YWCA secretaries concern lest the desire of the women workers to make a patriotic contribution be exploited by the growers. A low piece rate and poor weather conditions left many girls barely able to cover their own expenses with the result that they organized and drew up a scale of wages and hours to be presented to the fruit growers in December 1917.²⁸ This action was supported by the Dominion Council not only because of its concern for the welfare of the girls, but because the inability of the girls to pay the costs of their board and lodging left the Dominion Council unable to meet the expenses of running the camps.²⁹ By 1918, conditions appeared to have improved. Nearly 2,000 women reported for work and were accommodated in thirty-eight YWCA camps, all under the supervision of the National Secretary.

Similar work was undertaken in 1918 in the Okanagan and Fraser Valleys of British Columbia after the Dominion Council received an urgent appeal from the B.C. local associations, whose assistance had been requested by the fruit growers. A national secretary was despatched to negotiate with the B.C. government and the fruit growers to whom she voiced her concern that the women be paid fair wages.³⁰ The Provincial Labour Department, clearly pleased to be relieved of the expense and effort involved, formally requested the YWCA "to undertake the work of securing, registering, placing and supervising some two thousand National Service workers", a task which was ably accomplished through cooperation between the Dominion Council and the local associations of Vancouver,

28. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1918, p. 60.

29. Ibid., June 1917, p. 122.

30. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbooks, n.d., 1918, "Women Will Work on Land If Paid Wage That is Fair".

Victoria and New Westminster. As in the case of Ontario, doubting farmers were impressed by the women's ability to do the work and to endure the agonies of the worst mosquito pest the province had seen in years. Again, however, the National Secretary was led to express her indignation over inadequate accommodation and low wages, recommending that "a rate commensurate with the splendid services rendered by the girls be adopted".³¹ It is probable that without the presence of the YWCA, such exploitation of the agricultural workers would have been worse than it actually was and, in Ontario at least, YWCA efforts did contribute to winning improved conditions.

YWCA national service programs were made possible not by direct financial support from the public but by substantial contributions from the YMCA's Red Triangle Campaigns. During the War years, public attention was more than ever focused on the needs of young men, making fund-raising a more difficult task for the YWCA than for its "older brother". After three years of attempting to raise money for a new building, the Halifax General Secretary commented, "The magnificent work of the 'Red Triangle' among the boys has, of course, somewhat overshadowed the association's efforts to serve the girls".³² One year later, public attitudes had not changed and the Halifax YWCA was still without a new building.

Is the girl worth less than the boy? If we are to develop manhood we must develop womanhood first. The opportunity for service is great for 1918. We must minister to the life of the girl for what shall it profit a whole nation, if it gain wealth and lose its girls.³³

31. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 34, War Services---World War I, "Report of National Service Department--Local Associations B.C.".

32. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "The Great Work of the Y.W.C.A.", 1917.

33. Ibid., "Urges a Morality Campaign in City", April 30, 1918.

Large-scale programs at the national level would certainly not have been possible without YMCA support, given that these programs were not financially profitable. The \$1,000 surplus from the Dominion Council's canteens and hostels was immediately reinvested in the agricultural camps whose maintenance required an expenditure of \$25,000 in 1918 alone.³⁴ In the spring of 1917, the Dominion Council turned for assistance to the YMCA, asking "if they would include a certain sum for National Service war work under the Dominion Council in their budget to be raised in a joint appeal".³⁵ The Red Triangle Campaign for YMCA war work was held in Toronto in May, 1917, resulting in a contribution of \$15,000 to Dominion Council National Service funds out of a total of \$210,000 subscribed during the campaign.³⁶ A larger contribution of \$75,000 was awarded to the YMCA from the 1918 campaign.³⁷

The YMCA's willingness to make its first contribution to YWCA funds may be attributed to its conviction that programs for the war workers complemented its own services to the troops. Certainly, the arguments advanced by YWCA secretaries during the joint appeal stressed not the special needs of the women war workers, but the ways in which services provided to them would benefit the soldiers at the Front and would make the women worthy wives for the men at the end of the War.³⁸ This type of argument no doubt also proved more effective in winning public support than could any description of the problems of the woman worker.

34. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1918, p. 66; January 1920, p. 46.

35. Ibid., March 1918, p. 65.

36. Ibid., June 1917, p. 119.

37. Ibid., January 1920, p. 46.

38. Ibid., June 1917, p. 119.

The YWCA and YMCA shared a conviction that wartime conditions were producing a state of moral crisis in Canada, indeed, in the world, and that evil stalked the land as never before. Many of the conditions which were believed to contribute to moral breakdown in young people had worsened as a result of the War. Thousands of young men were away from their families, many for the first time, and roamed the streets of Canadian cities in search of entertainment. There they were joined by the many young women drawn to the cities by the lure of high wages in the war industries. The possible consequences, given the desperate lack of chaperoned recreational facilities, were almost too appalling to contemplate. A Halifax newspaper article arguing for the support of the local YWCA commented that "there was never a time when street-walking flourished and vice so openly flaunted itself as now", and attributed the "girl-on-the-street problem" to a lack of "wholesome play".

She has no outlet for her craving, a natural craving for the excitement of the game of life. The lure of the streets and the dance-hall are all that she has to answer that craving. The community of which she is an important integral part does nothing for her. Even with a million dollar budget for fifty thousand people, there is nothing to be spent for providing wholesome recreation for the young that they may not find the streets too attractive for their own good. A paltry contribution to supervised playgrounds is all that the city has to its credit, and that applies only to children. There is nothing done for the older girls, the girls who spend their daylight hours in the factories, shops, laundries, restaurants or kitchens.³⁹

YWCA efforts to combat these conditions resulted in the creation of a new national Department of Recreation as a cooperative venture with the YMCA.

The Department of Recreation developed out of YWCA and YMCA concern over the unsupervised interaction taking place between soldiers stationed

39. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Clippings, "Custom Stales All Things", 1918.

in Canadian military camps and the local young women from the surrounding towns and cities. "The problem of letting girls and men meet in thoroughly good surroundings" was resolved in May 1918 with the establishment of the first YWCA Hostess House at Beamsville, Ontario, following the return of two Dominion Council members from a tour of military training camps in New York, Boston, and Buffalo.⁴⁰ By the end of the War, a total of eight Hostess Houses at Beamsville, Long Branch, Leaside, Camp Borden, Toronto University, Petawawa, London, and Niagara were providing "a bit of home in the Camp" complete with such feminine touches as plants, chintz-covered chairs and rose hedges.⁴¹ The Houses aimed to provide a resting place and temporary accommodation to mothers, wives, and children who had often travelled long distances to visit their men. More importantly, however, the Houses attempted to deal with the problem of "stray girls" who were not wanted in the camps, at any rate not by the YWCA nor by the YMCA.⁴²

They came for a hundred miles each side of the Camp. They meant no harm but it was felt that if they were left to meet the men in the parks and the dark roads surrounding the Camps, harm would result.⁴³

The Dominion Council's Hostess Houses provided "proper conditions" where the soldiers and young women could socialize, dance (folk dancing only), and sing together, and in addition provided the men with "the opportunity of meeting the right kind of women".⁴⁴

40. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 11; June 1918, p. 121.

41. Ibid., June 1918, p. 121; September 1918, p. 141.

42. Ibid., January 1918, p. 11.

43. Ibid., v. 34, War Services--World War I.

44. Ibid.

The crisis of the war years forced a re-evaluation of the YWCA's traditional policy toward recreation. This policy was based on the premise that the best form of recreation for young women was that which kept them as far away as possible from young men and which distracted them from dwelling on thoughts of the opposite sex. During the War, however, more and more YWCA leaders argued that such a policy was outmoded and that the Associations would be well-advised to prepare for the inevitable results of the return of the troops--"inasmuch as the girls of to-day are going to be the mothers of to-morrow, a well-rounded work cannot be done for them if it is an entirely segregated work".⁴⁵ Progressive members argued the necessity of a new approach to recreation in which the YWCA and YMCA together would face the thorny question of how to provide properly-chaperoned entertainments, including dancing and moving pictures, which would compete with commercial attractions.⁴⁶

By the time that the last Hostess House had closed in January 1919, the Dominion Council had been led "to see the great importance and opportunity for a place of friendliness and recreation for men and women"⁴⁷, an awareness which resulted in the creation of the Department of Recreation and the opening of an experimental centre in Toronto, based on the model of the Hostess Houses.⁴⁸ The Blue Triangle Recreation Centre, under the direction of the National Recreation Secretary, offered Reception Rooms to boarding house residents who had "nowhere but park and streets to entertain their men friends"; a Recreation Hall where both sexes could participate

45. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, June 1915, p. 115.

46. Ibid., The Association Outlook, December 1918, p. 202; December 1919, p. 215.

47. Ibid., March 1919, p. 55.

48. Ibid., April 1919, p. 87.

in games, pageants, plays, singing, and folk dancing; and a program which was designed to make the most of every opportunity

By the Story Telling Hour and the Community Singing, high ideals will be suggested, and the games are all planned with a view to quickening the perceptions, developing the social instinct, and strengthening the will power.⁴⁹

The principal object of the Centre's activities was to compete with those unscrupulous vendors of commercial entertainments who were prepared to profit from "the social-play instinct of girls" without regard for their moral well-being.⁵⁰ To supporters of the Centre, there seemed to be no obvious reason why the YWCA couldn't run a movie theatre or a dance hall, too, and perhaps even make a little profit from the venture.⁵¹

The latter viewpoint was held by those YWCA leaders who believed that it was not movies or dancing in themselves which brought about the ruin of young women, but the surroundings in which these entertainments were offered. Some even believed that smoking and card-playing would not be harmful providing they took place in a wholesome environment. This, however, represented the opinion of a minority within the YWCA. The split over the issue of recreation was not confined to the Canadian YWCA, as was reported in The Association Outlook in 1919:

The British Isles are having a very serious time because of smoking, dancing and cards being introduced whilst New York Central has taken a very decided stand against all three.⁵²

Local associations were urged to establish their own recreation centres.

49. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, November 1919, p. 189.

50. Ibid., The Young Women of Canada, June 1915, p. 115.

51. Ibid., The Association Outlook, December 1919, p. 215.

52. Ibid., September 1919, p. 141.

similar to the Blue Triangle and to decide for themselves the controversial question of what type of recreation should be offered. The position of local option was adopted by national leaders who, despite their personal support for dancing, were anxious that the YWCA should not take any action which might offend the local churches.⁵³

As an outgrowth of both wartime concern over the recreation question and efforts to combat the White Slave Trade, a new program known as Girls' Protective Work was initiated by the Dominion Council early in 1918. The Canadian YWCA's "investigations along the line of protective work to lessen the danger for both men and girls on the streets and in places of amusement"⁵⁴ were based on the example of England and New York City where women patrols of "protective officers", both paid and volunteer workers, were patrolling the dance halls, directing young women to "places where entertainment and amusement can be had in proper surroundings".⁵⁵ That spring, a Toronto newspaper announced the appointment of one dozen girls' protective officers, wearing YWCA badges, as "the latest innovation of the Dominion Council to provide real friends and protection for Toronto maidens during the spring and summer months". Recognition of the work was granted by the Toronto Board of Police Commissioners who required that the women be "discreet and of sound judgment", that they have no power to make arrests and that they limit their efforts for good to persuasion only.⁵⁶

53. Hamilton YWCA Archives, Clippings, "Y Ladies Are in Favor of Dancing", November 18, 1919.

54. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1918, p. 12.

55. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbooks--Local Clubs n.d., 1918, "Women Serious Moral Danger to Men After War".

56. Ibid., "Girls' Protective Officers Are to Parade in Toronto".

This was a short-lived effort, apparently eliminated as a result of the financial cutbacks of 1920, and there is no evidence to suggest that any local associations followed suit.

The recreation question also led to YWCA work overseas in cooperation with the American and British YWCA's. All three Associations shared the conviction that wartime conditions posed the greatest threat to women near the Front, resulting in a flurry of activity on behalf of war workers, nurses, and the British women of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) who were stationed in France.

The forces of Evil are abroad; temptation to lower the standard of morality, recklessness in the face of misery and despair are threatening the purity of the womanhood of the world, but the forces of Good are gathering for a mighty effort, and of the issue we cannot be afraid.⁵⁷

Although the end of the War would soon render such a mighty effort unnecessary, the Dominion Council did manage to contribute two secretaries and a recreational hut. A national staff member was loaned to the War Council of the U.S. National Board for a period of seventeen months during which she worked with Paris business girls and nurses in military hospitals, served as Business Secretary of the Allied Women's War and Service Conference held in Paris, and worked as Tea and Lunch Room Secretary at a club for war workers in Le Havre.⁵⁸ Another Canadian secretary worked under the British YWCA at a London canteen, at a WAAC Hostess House at Le Havre, and at the "Canadian Hut" for WAAC's, erected at Honfleur with Dominion Council funds. This hut was one of the first to experiment with the concept of a recreational centre for both men and women under the joint auspices of the YWCA and YMCA and was, according to the Canadian secretary, a great success:

57. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, April 1918, p. 84.

58. Ibid., April 1918, p. 83; October 1918.

...no obscene language was ever used in the Hut, and very rarely did an intoxicated man enter; if he did, he never forgot where he was.⁵⁹

Canadian YWCA work at the Front further fueled the Dominion Council's convictions that the wartime moral crisis was one of truly international dimensions. In the immediate postwar period, the YWCA of Canada formed part of an international network of organizations concerned with Social Hygiene--campaigning for the single moral standard for men and women, sexual continence for both sexes, venereal disease prevention, sex education, and improvements in housing, wages, working conditions, and recreation as "essential to progress in Social Morality".⁶⁰ Apart from representing Canada at international conferences on Social Hygiene, the Dominion Council's major contribution to the global effort was the establishment of a national Department of Health Education in 1919.

Health Education, an extension of the work which had been undertaken by the physical directors of the local associations, was an attempt to respond to the challenge of Reconstruction with a program of sex education for young women, developed by YWCA doctors and nurses. In this "new era of reality", there could be "no place...for her who hides her head from the world of grim fact, and thereby denies the existence of forces which must be acknowledged"⁶¹, especially in view of the national epidemic of venereal disease being predicted by public health officials.

The war has taught the dangers of ignorance of natural functions. The social evil has touched many an innocent home, and wrong moral standards have caused endless sin and misery. Our young women of to-day should be able to

59. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, March 1920, p. 78.

60. Ibid., December 1918, p. 204.

61. Ibid., September 1919, p. 143.

turn for instruction as to their sex life to an Association which is founded upon ideals, and which should give her[sic] the necessary enlightenment in the purest possible way...Let the Associations then courageously face the subject of Social Hygiene and sex instruction, building their teaching upon that basis of purity which was in Christ Jesus.⁶²

The Department of Health Education was staffed by Dr. Margaret Patterson, a medical missionary returned from India, and Miss E. Harcourt, a trained nurse with experience in the United States in lecturing to parents on the care of school children. On behalf of the Dominion Council they visited city associations, attended conferences and institutes and held mass meetings for girls and parents across the country to generate support for health education.

In their addresses, Dr. Patterson and Miss Harcourt opposed the Victorian practice of equating the innocence of a young woman with her ignorance of sexual matters, urging both local associations and parents to consider the possible harmful consequences of such a policy.

If by our negligence, or false modesty, we should cause one of these young women to perish, then are we culpable indeed, and the sin should be laid to our charge.⁶³

Only the frank discussion of sexual matters, they argued, would enable a young woman to protect herself from the horrors of venereal disease and from those who would take advantage of her ignorance, and to take "a greater pride in her body and in herself as a potential mother".⁶⁴ YWCA Health Education workers did not shrink from their duty to address even the most

62. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, December 1918, p. 203.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-1916.

Canada. The primacy of the religious motive, the preoccupation with relationships between social classes, and the recurrence of a feminist vision all provide an underlying sense or meaning to the YWCA's many activities on behalf of the young Canadian woman and its seemingly ambivalent attitude toward her.

While the YWCA had, in its early days, attracted both women with a commitment to evangelization and those with more secular objectives, including Roman Catholics and other non-Protestants, the victory of the evangelical faction at the founding convention in 1893 ensured that YWCA work would remain essentially religious in motivation and distinctly Protestant in flavour. Although YWCA leaders certainly believed that evangelization was a service to their young female clientele, their religious objectives centred more on strengthening the Protestant churches by returning lost young women to the fold, women who could not be reached except by means of an interdenominational lay organization such as the YWCA.

The Church as such can do but a fraction of the work of to-day...Vast as is the field of girlhood it is small compared with the whole area of human life which the Church must care for. To aid the Church in its work in this special field and to bring into the Church the youth and strength and enthusiasm and grace which but for such specialization would be lost, this is the mission of the Association.²

The evangelical intent of YWCA programs, however, not infrequently hampered the effectiveness of its social service activities.

The predominance of the evangelicals within the YWCA meant that matters of dogma often took precedence over the Association's more secular activities. Many prominent, socially-committed women were

2. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 46.

forbidden topics. In a postwar lecture to adolescents entitled "A Girl's Value to Her Country", Dr. Patterson warned adolescent girls of the dangers of immoral relationships, promiscuous kissing, and public toilets. For those who betrayed the "trust" of the "gift of reproduction", a "very terrible punishment" awaited in the form of Syphilis and Gonorrhea. In addition, popular theories linking sexual excess with loss of health and vitality in men were apparently adapted for young women.

...there is a constant secretion from the ovaries of a fluid which is absorbed into the blood. This gives the lustre to the eyes, the gloss to the hair and the fresh healthy colour to the complexion and causes the lanky awkward girl to fill out into the graceful woman. Anything which disturbs or irritates these organs, such as improper clothing, constipation, cold wet feet, handling the parts, too familiar relationships with men or even thinking too much about the opposite sex will have a disturbing influence and the girl pays the price in the loss of vitality that this secretion gives.⁶⁵

The shifting moral standards of the wartime period and the YWCA's concern that its own standards should prevail in the period of Reconstruction led to the first raising of the question of the relationship between the YWCA and the delinquent girl. Every local association encountered such girls "who through bad environment or other conditions, usually quite beyond their control, have found it quite impossible to keep pace with their more virtuous sisters". While old or repeat offenders were to remain the province of other organizations, YWCA national leaders now recommended that the locals consider the problem of the young first offender.

The more or less incorrigible girl forms the largest class of delinquents--perhaps the word is a misnomer. She has such a dread of being reformed. She's not really bad, but she would like us to think she is a woman of the world. She is sixteen or seventeen and

65. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work 1918-1921.

thinks she looks at least twenty-one. Her toilette is incomplete without a lavish application of rouge and powder. She scorns boys of her own age as far too young. To get in early is a weakness. She thinks we live a dull existence, and accordingly feels sorry for us. She adores dancing, knows all about the leading movie actresses; holds Church and Sunday School in the greatest contempt. There is, however, a great fascination about this class of girl; one feels instinctively that she has wonderful possibilities; that she has qualifications, which, properly developed, would fit her as a leader. Could we do better than influence her?⁶⁶

Possible means of serving the delinquent girl included the opening of YWCA gymnasium classes in the local industrial home for girls and housing such girls in the section of the YWCA reserved for transient accommodation until such time as Association leaders judged that contact with the regular boarders could take place "without any harm coming to our girls".

The final piece of YWCA war work, undertaken early in 1919, was also related to the Association's anxiety over the postwar moral climate. This was the supervision of the wives and children of Canadian soldiers during their voyage from Britain to their new home in Canada. The view that travel undermined moral standards was a familiar theme in YWCA work, but in this case, the fears of YWCA leaders seem to have been heightened by some doubts about the type of standards which the wives were bringing with them to Canada. In October 1918, Mrs. Ham, the National Immigration Secretary, reported to the Dominion Council that the wives of soldiers were being admitted at Canadian ports "without question" and that she feared "Canada would have trouble from them later on".⁶⁷ Upon learning, one month later, of the government's plans to begin demobilization with the

66. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1920, p. 121.

67. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, October 25, 1918.

transportation of some 35,000 dependents of Canadian soldiers from Britain to Canada, the Dominion Council requested and received permission to supervise their embarkation and debarkation.⁶⁸

Early in 1919, Mrs. Ham left for England, where she set up a Canadian YWCA office at Buxton in cooperation with the Canadian Departments of Immigration and Militia, and secured several suitable Canadian women to travel as ship's secretaries on every transport carrying more than 200 women and children. The ship's secretaries were to obtain details of their situations from all those on board who would require assistance, referring them to YWCA locals, Soldiers' Wives Leagues, and other bodies at the ports, as well as keeping a watchful eye on the conduct of the female passengers. In addition, Mrs. Ham made detailed recommendations to the Ottawa government on every aspect of the undertaking from the vaccination of children and the assignment of berths to the character of the medical officers.⁶⁹ The task of receiving the immigrants, largely at the port of St. John, was supervised by the National Travellers' Aid Secretary under whose direction huts were erected and a Women's Welcome Committee representing fifteen women's societies in St. John was convened to arrange for rest rooms, special accommodation, a Red Cross dispensary, assistance in boarding trains, and notification of local T.A. workers of the arrival of immigrant trains.⁷⁰ In addition, the Dominion Council supported a worker in Halifax, Moncton and Quebec as well as cooperating with the Red Cross Society and Patriotic League in the reception of immigrants at Montreal.

68. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28.I 198, v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, November 20, 1918.

69. Ibid., February 3, 1919.

70. Ibid., December 16, 1918 and February 3, 1919.

Early in 1919, before the debarkation had been completed, a dispute developed between the Dominion Council and the Department of Immigration. Una Saunders, National General Secretary, was summoned to Ottawa to meet with Immigration officials and with Mrs. Robson and Mrs. Massey of the Repatriation Committee which wanted to take over the work of the YWCA ship's secretaries and the office at Buxton. The Dominion Council was indignant that it should be asked to hand over the work after it had received government approval and large sums of money had been invested in it, with no explanation of why the work had failed. A compromise was reached whereby the ship's secretaries were paid by the Department of Immigration but reported to the Dominion Council. However, when the Department of Immigration hired three more ship's secretaries without consulting the Dominion Council as it had agreed to do, the YWCA agreed to cooperate in handing over special cases, feeling that it had no choice, but withdrew its badge from the Government conductresses, as their Christian character could no longer be vouched for, and closed its Buxton office. The ship's conductresses continued to report to the Women's Division of Immigration and were later taken over by the steamship companies.

Despite the fact that its contribution to the national war effort and Reconstruction ended on such a sour note, the YWCA, in 1919, was proud of its accomplishments during the previous five years, well-satisfied with the expansion and increased vigour of the national body, and optimistic about its prospects in postwar Canada. The publicity which accrued to the YWCA as a result of its war work resulted in the kind of recognition which had seemed only an impossible dream prior to 1914. To YWCA leaders,

71. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, March 25, 1919; July 7, 1919; September 26, 1919.

the end of the War seemed to herald a new era for Canadian women whose increased participation in the labour force and in politics and public affairs promised scope for even further expansion of Association programs.

Despite the many significant changes which took place during the wartime period, the YWCA did not alter its most fundamental attitudes toward the young working woman. In particular, it continued to regard employment as little more than a prelude to marriage. There were, however, some slight modifications of its views due to the circumstances arising out of the War. One of these was a new emphasis on the right of the single woman to a satisfying career as a substitute for husband and children.

The war will leave to every warring country a great legacy of women for whom there will be no probability of marriage and homes of their own. And yet there is urgent necessity that these women shall have the possibility of a full and satisfying life so that they may not eat out their hearts in loneliness and aimlessness. They will need careers and satisfying careers.⁷²

There was little change, however, in the type of career which the YWCA believed most suitable for a woman, namely, "a work which calls to her for something of 'spiritual motherhood'". YWCA leaders promoted postwar careers in the field of social service since these were the next-best thing to motherhood, allowing women "to retain the mother light in their eyes and go through life helping the younger generation of women to prepare for that finest of national service--making a home..."⁷³ Nevertheless, some YWCA leaders did argue that women should not be denied the right to choose a vocation in the non-traditional fields of work which had opened to them during the course of the War. Mrs. Constance Hamilton,

72. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, February 1917, p. 33.

73. Ibid., March 1917, p. 55.

in particular, devoted considerable energy to the possibility of government land grants to women who were drawn to the prospect of a career in agriculture as a result of their experience in National Service work.⁷⁴ They also hoped that a young woman's brief experience of economic independence would strengthen her traditionally dependent position within the marriage and that the postwar Canadian marriage would be more of a partnership in which the wife would be entitled to a share of her husband's income, "by right, not by grace".⁷⁵ Yet it was also true that this same brief taste of independence posed a threat to women's love of home life.

No longer are women economically dependent on men; and particularly in these later days have they proved that in many a hitherto forbidden path they have the power to make good. Many folk see a real danger to home life in this change and fear that women will no longer be content to be homemakers and housekeepers, and leave the business and industrial world.⁷⁶

YWCA leaders, too, were uneasy about the future.

The War, it seemed, had brought irrevocable changes. The young woman of the postwar period who had taken up the challenge of non-traditional work, who had tasted economic independence, who had won new political rights, and who enjoyed an active and relatively unrestricted social life, could never be satisfied with married life as her mother had known it. For the YWCA, the legacy of the War was the problem of convincing the young woman who had come to maturity during these years of turmoil that her path in life lay not in rejecting the traditional destiny of woman, but in embracing it as a career to which she could apply her talents, energy and initiative.

74. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, December 1918, p. 215.

75. Ibid., March 1917, p. 56.

76. Ibid., p. 55.

Does not the whole problem of the modern girl then resolve itself into a challenge to the older women... to those of us who have had a little more experience because we happen to have lived a little longer, and who because of this should be able to make allowances for those who are weaker because less experienced? Is our love to Him not strong enough to make us willing to spend ourselves in bringing the modern girl back to her home, the Church, and to her old-time religion, while at the same time proving to her that all her tremendous energy and up-to-date training are quite indispensable to our welfare, and that just as her splendid physique is essential to the very production of the next generation, so there is abundant play for all her vision, and scope for her most magnificent ability in consecrated motherhood and sanctified womanhood.⁷⁷

Such a task would require not only the re-education of the young woman herself, but also a campaign to convince the general public that the status of the homemaker must be elevated to make it an attractive job for a modern young woman.⁷⁸ It also implied continued expansion of YWCA programs and services to meet the challenge of Reconstruction. Such expansion, however, was not to be.

YWCA leaders were rudely awakened from their dreams by the failure of the 1919 Red Triangle Campaign, as Canadians quickly forgot the "wonderful lesson of generosity" they had learned during the War.

This year...has made us realize that men and women have not yet seen the vision of a national service as great in peace time as in war time. The partial failure of the combined Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. Campaign last spring has meant that instead of receiving the expected \$175,000. we have been asked to carry on all the projected work with less than half that amount, an absolute impossibility. We stand at the parting of the ways. Do the men and women of weight in Canada believe that our service of women is an absolutely vital thing? Do they want to stand

77. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, May 1918, pp. 93-4.

78. Ibid., March 1917, p. 55.

behind us in a fight against all forms of unrighteousness? If so, we appeal to them to state in unmistakeable fashion, that instead of surrendering many of our plans and cutting down our Budget, they will guarantee us all we ask and yet more, so that not only the large centres of population, but the smaller towns may be able to have the services of trained women workers.⁷⁹

The appeal, however, was to no avail, and by 1920, the Dominion Council found itself with a deficit of \$20,000, resulting in drastic cutbacks to staff and services. Few departments remained untouched by the crisis, and the planned postwar expansion did not materialize. It would be several years, in fact, before YWCA leaders could again begin to think in terms of expansion and new directions.

79. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 31.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

From its humble beginnings in the early 1870's--rented rooms in the downtown cores of some of Canada's fledgling industrial centres, where lodging and basic instruction could be obtained at a moderate cost to the working woman--the YWCA of Canada had evolved, by 1920, into a complex organization whose intention was to establish its own undisputed jurisdiction over the field of social service work with young women and to win the trust and support of young women to the point where it would influence every facet of their lives.

It must aim at making itself an essential part of a girl's and woman's mental horizon, and particularly of those away from home. It must work its way, as it were, into every part of the young women's life--not of itself being a universal provider, but showing such a complete understanding of the conditions of work and play of the young generation, that a girl will go spontaneously to the Association for sympathy in her play, advice in time of difficulty, information about her work, or for practical help if necessary in time of need.

This objective led YWCA leaders to establish a wide variety of programs--including boarding homes, educational classes, Travellers' Aid services, social clubs and other recreational programs, employment bureaux and vocational counselling, cafeterias, instruction in hygiene and sex education, summer camps, and religious services--for such diverse groups of young women as college students, immigrants, rural girls newly-arrived in the city, domestic servants, white-collar workers, high school girls, factory workers, and young ladies of leisure. Despite this apparent complexity and diversity, however, three themes clearly emerge from the pattern of YWCA development during the Association's first fifty years in

1. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, April 1914, p. 118.

Canada. The primacy of the religious motive, the preoccupation with relationships between social classes, and the recurrence of a feminist vision all provide an underlying sense or meaning to the YWCA's many activities on behalf of the young Canadian woman and its seemingly ambivalent attitude toward her.

While the YWCA had, in its early days, attracted both women with a commitment to evangelization and those with more secular objectives, including Roman Catholics and other non-Protestants, the victory of the evangelical faction at the founding convention in 1893 ensured that YWCA work would remain essentially religious in motivation and distinctly Protestant in flavour. Although YWCA leaders certainly believed that evangelization was a service to their young female clientele, their religious objectives centred more on strengthening the Protestant churches by returning lost young women to the fold, women who could not be reached except by means of an interdenominational lay organization such as the YWCA.

The Church as such can do but a fraction of the work of to-day...Vast as is the field of girlhood it is small compared with the whole area of human life which the Church must care for. To aid the Church in its work in this special field and to bring into the Church the youth and strength and enthusiasm and grace which but for such specialization would be lost, this is the mission of the Association.²

The evangelical intent of YWCA programs, however, not infrequently hampered the effectiveness of its social service activities.

The predominance of the evangelicals within the YWCA meant that matters of dogma often took precedence over the Association's more secular activities. Many prominent, socially-committed women were

2. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 46.

excluded from membership on YWCA Boards because of their religious affiliation, especially if they were Roman Catholic or Jewish. Some activities which would have drawn many young women into membership, particularly dancing and other mixed recreational programs, had to be rejected because they were offensive to the Protestant evangelical churches. The religious aura surrounding the YWCA also alienated many young women who would have been attracted to a more secular organization. An unwillingness to compromise on matters of dogma strongly hampered the YWCA's ability to cooperate with other reform organizations, causing fragmentation and duplication of services as in the case of Travellers' Aid. This inflexibility went to such lengths that the YWCA did not affiliate with the National Council of Women until 1916 because the non-sectarian stance of this organization required that meetings be opened with silent prayer in order not to offend any of the membership. The controlling faction within the YWCA was adamant that meetings should be opened with the "correct" form of audible prayer.³ Evangelical predominance also contributed to a certain self-righteousness on the part of the YWCA, as displayed by the Ottawa General Secretary in 1907:

...Christ said "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", (and we know that that word 'neighbour' covers every young woman in Ottawa, and we know that Christ's conception of love meant a protection of thy neighbour from the evils of his or her own ignorance and weakness).⁴

Such an attitude alienated many potential members, friends and financial supporters from the YWCA. Nevertheless, it did lead to a certain zeal which prevented the YWCA from ever becoming a mere religious club or prayer circle for young women.

3. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Minutes, April 13, 1895; P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, October 7, 1915.

4. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1907-8, p. 52.

...the creed of this Association is not by any means faith without works, as it would never have attained its present standard without faith and works going hand in hand. We are perhaps a good deal like the little girl who said to her S.S. teacher, "I'm so glad my brother is not going to catch any more birds in his trap". "O" said the teacher, "did he tell you so?" "No, I did not say anything to him, I just went and asked the Lord not to let any more birds in." "And are you sure the Lord will answer your prayer?" "Why, He will have to because I went out to the yard and smashed the trap."⁵

Not all active members within the YWCA, even though they personally attended a Protestant evangelical church, shared the strong evangelical convictions of the dominant faction. Questions such as dancing and affiliation with the National Council of Women came up again and again and generated discussion which was very heated indeed. There were many members who believed that the YWCA's social service programs were of more benefit to young women than were efforts to save their immortal souls, and that the religious motives of the Association ought to be downplayed in order to attract more members. With the passage of time, this element within the organization would come to the fore, shaping the much more secular, social service agency which we know today as the YWCA. However, even in the early period being discussed here, religion was never viewed by the YWCA as being divorced from social service or from involvement in public issues outside the Church.

The Y.W.C.A. is a social institution which bases its right to existence on the larger idea of service. It brings Christian work into touch with the industrial and commercial world. It is a work undertaken by women for women. The great changes in the industrial and commercial world, bringing as they did a change in the position of women, created a need for public institutions equipped as residences, and surrounded by religious and educational influences,

5. Ottawa YWCA Archives, Annual Report, 1908-9, pp: 19-20.

for the women who have been forced to leave the seclusion of their homes, and found themselves face to face with the problems of life in our towns and cities...⁶

Nevertheless, the concerns of the Protestant evangelical churches were unmistakably stamped on YWCA programs, reflected in the preoccupation of Association leaders with such individual sins as dancing, drinking, and premarital sex rather than with larger economic problems, or sins, as some argued, such as speculation, profiteering, and monopolistic control of wages and prices. The image of God's kingdom which the YWCA hoped to see imposed on Canadian society had a distinctly Protestant middle-class flavour, and religious teaching was often indistinguishable from indoctrination with the moral standards and values of Canada's urban Protestant middle class.

The YWCA, although preoccupied with the question of class, did not define itself as a middle-class organization but rather an organization for all women, and the only women's organization which sought to unite young women of different social classes.

Our title has been misread as though it involved a limitation--it is not an association of Christian women, but a Christian association of and with young women, and no girl, whatever her views or disposition, her class, condition or race, is outside its sphere. The rich, the poor, the idle, the industrious, the hard-working girls in our factories are not more surely under the claim of the Association than the cultured girl of wealth. Our work is for all, as the Swiss motto so beautifully puts it, "All for one, and one for all."⁷

The YWCA's vision of itself as an advocate of social harmony and a

6. P.A.N.S., Halifax YWCA Papers, MG 20, v. 776, Year Book, 1908-9, p. 14.

7. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 273.

dismantler of barriers between different social classes was eloquently expressed by one of its most active Girls' Workers, Miss Mary S. Edgar, in her play "The Wayside Piper" which took first prize at the Panama Exhibition in 1916. In this adaptation of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin", the Piper, symbolizing the spirit of the YWCA, plays a flute into which Faith, Hope, and Love have breathed their essence. During his wanderings, the Piper comes upon a council meeting where the Spirit of Service and her Counselors from the Workshops, the Fields, and the Campus are discussing the seemingly hopeless problem of meeting the needs of girls. Upon hearing the Piper's music, they send him "out into the highways of the world to attune the inner lives of girls to his clear true notes", whereupon he visits industrial, country, and college girls, giving them "new joy and the consciousness of a purpose in life". In the closing scene, the Piper brings all the girls together, uniting them in a hymn of service and a new desire to extend the kingdom of God.⁸

Deeply concerned by the growing class divisions which seemed to threaten their world, YWCA leaders were convinced that the teachings of Christ offered a common ground where women of different classes could meet. Drawn together in this way by shared concerns, they would then learn to understand one another's problems and develop a new mutual respect. They would recognize the essential oneness of the social organism and the necessity of maintaining a delicate balance between its interdependent parts. Not economic, or even social, equality but respect, understanding and, above all, cooperation between the classes offered the key to social harmony and stability.

8. YWCA of Canada Archives, "The Wayside Piper", 1915.

The eroding of barriers between the classes did not, in the view of YWCA leaders, imply radical structural changes in the society with which they were familiar. Rather, it required changes in attitudes and the elimination of certain kinds of prejudice, such as that which suggested the inferiority of a working woman to one who was affluent enough to stay at home. The problem with this approach was that the YWCA was unable to rid itself of the prejudice of its own members, particularly of its middle-class leadership, which accepted without question its greater fitness for directing the affairs of the Association and determining the needs of its clientele. YWCA leaders found it especially difficult to respect moral standards which were different from their own. A few secretaries had begun, by 1920, to argue the need for a new tolerance of working-class values, but their words fell mainly on deaf ears.

If this girl or that group of girls has a moral code different from that which you learned in your sheltered life, we must seek to understand that code of morals, or the seeming lack of it. Perhaps our own code is spineless and purposeless, and we may learn new values of life from this very group. At all odds, we must reckon with the group; we can no longer dismiss them as impossible and fulfil honestly our responsibilities as leaders.⁹

The failure to heed such warnings resulted in an organizational structure which actually re-inforced class divisions and rigidly segregated women into groups which did not meet on an equal footing. Despite the fact that women from all classes congregated within the walls of YWCA buildings, no Association functions or programs encouraged them to mingle freely as equal individuals. Each woman's needs were believed to be most effectively

9. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Association Outlook, September 1919, p. 143.

met within the circle of her own narrow social or occupational group.

Despite its strong interest in the issues of religion and class, the YWCA was not just another middle-class Protestant reform organization, of which there were great numbers in turn-of-the-century Canada. It also had well-developed ties with the nineteenth-century women's movement. It was no coincidence, after all, that the women drawn to the YWCA believed that the key to establishing God's kingdom on earth lay in providing services to young women, rather than to the poor, children, young men, or any number of other groups. There were many active Christians who never gave young women, particularly working women, a second thought, at least not until their attention was drawn to this group by the YWCA. Overcoming public prejudice against the young woman and the resulting reluctance to fund services or facilities for her was considered by YWCA leaders to be one of the most fundamental objectives of their organization. There were women on the staff of the YWCA, outstanding among whom was Una Saunders, National General Secretary from 1912 to 1920, who devoted years of their lives to the never-ending educational work that this task required, travelling back and forth across the country, addressing public meetings, church groups, gatherings of reformers and educational authorities, government leaders and businessmen, and writing endless streams of newspaper articles on the importance of the young woman to national life and on the problems she faced in the modern world.

The YWCA had a vision for the young women of Canada--a vision which grew directly out of the concerns of the larger international women's movement. It supported their right to education, and to vocational training, that they might better their standing in the world. It respected

their struggle to gain economic independence for at least a part of their lives and came to argue the right to the satisfaction and dignity of a career for those women who would never marry. The YWCA championed the right of young women to be more physically active than their mothers and grandmothers and to shed many of the constraints of clothing and convention. It fought for public recognition of their contribution to their city and their country both in the labour force and in their future role in the home. It envisioned a much greater involvement of women in public and national life. In fact, it saw young women as poised on a threshold, ready to step out into a new world and to play an active part in determining the shape of that world.

There was, however, a certain fundamental ambivalence in this vision, because the YWCA did its best to ensure that the young woman would step off the threshold with only one foot, keeping the other securely within the confines of the home. It never abandoned its conviction that women could, and should, embrace economic independence and greater involvement in public life while retaining their traditional close ties to the family and the church.

...after all our thinking and talking of the progress of women, it is true that there is nothing ever comes to us so sweet as the life of home; and though we seek for our girls the largest freedom, the broadest culture, the highest service, we wish them to always hold in their hearts home life most sacred, and devote their highest powers to objects that uplift all homes.¹⁰

The YWCA continued to argue that women bore the responsibility for national moral standards; that despite their growing participation in business life "where the struggle, physical and mental, is keen, and where the battle

10. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 273.

is to the strong", women still stood "behind society"; and that the YWCA, by doing "constructive work among the ranks of the world's young womanhood" was "safeguarding the race and building strength into the nations".¹¹ Despite its heralding of the arrival of "the century of young womanhood" and its recognition of vastly changed conditions, the YWCA argued that "the same standard of character is expected by God and man from the young woman of to-day" and saw its primary task as helping her to maintain this standard (whether she wanted to or not).¹² Finally, although the YWCA consistently pointed out that young women were on the threshold of adulthood and would soon be assuming important adult responsibilities, its efforts seemed to be directed to keeping women, sexually at least, in a state of prolonged adolescence, and it was reluctant to confront the seemingly obvious need to prepare them for adult life by dealing with the question of relationships with men more directly than by ignoring the whole issue.

YWCA leaders were hopeful that their efforts would help to resolve the problem of the Modern Girl. They feared for her and for her future in a world that was unprepared for her, reluctant to acknowledge her existence, and often hostile to her. Greater, however, was their unspoken fear of her and what she represented. For the Modern Girl symbolized the erosion of a way of life by new and frightening developments--the decline of rural values in the face of urbanization, the cancerous growth of the metropolis, the weakening of family ties and religious values, the growing challenge to the supremacy of the Protestant middle

11. P.A.C., YWCA of Canada Papers, MG 28 I 198, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, October 1909, p. 124.

12. Ibid., The Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 278.

class by massive foreign immigration and organized labour, and the threatened disappearance of the home as a haven where cherished values were preserved from contamination by the cut-throat world of public and business life. The Modern Girl was the key to stemming the tide of change, and by keeping her good, YWCA leaders hoped to retain some semblance of order in a world where social forces seemed to be rapidly slipping out of control.

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alluded to in discussions of the work, these were impossible to document. Neither is there any concrete information on the type of women who made use of the YWCA's services and, of course, it is very difficult to determine either their motives for doing so or their opinion of the YWCA. Nevertheless, it is possible to read between the lines of the official documents, particularly the wealth of material in the YWCA periodical (which was aimed at YWCA leaders rather than the young women concerned). Invaluable documents such as the case reports of Travellers' Aid workers and surveys conducted by industrial secretaries appear, unfortunately, to have been lost.

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