✓ The Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, 1870-1920:
"A Movement to Meet a Spiritual, Civic and National Need" ✓

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the YWCA in Canada from 1870 to 1920. It traces the development of the organization over its first half century, and analyses the significance of that development for the historian's understanding of the part that evangelical religion and the women's movement played in shaping social reform in a rapidly urbanizing Canada. In working to strengthen the Canadian Protestant churches and to advance the cause of evangelical religion by winning women for Christ, and by promoting the ideal of evangelical domesticity that emphasized the redemptive capacities of family life and motherhood, YWCA women believed that they were simultaneously advancing the interests of women.

Part I describes the organization's growth, from the formation of the first city and student locals in the 1870s and 1880s to the establishment of a Dominion YWCA in 1893, a development that provides evidence of women's significant participation in the shaping of a Canadian evangelical nationalism in the nineteenth century. Part I also outlines the attempts of early local branches to define their mission to the growing numbers of young working women living independently in Canadian cities. Drawing on their heritage of evangelical women's benevolent work, nineteenth-century YWCAs experimented with a variety of strategies for addressing "the girl problem," gradually abandoning traditional rescue work for "fallen women" in favour of "preventive" measures on behalf of "respectable" working women.

Part II examines the way in which the YWCA in Canada responded to the challenge of its expanding mandate in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The local YWCAs' response to the problem of the city involved the creation of a female

institution embodying a vision of female community and constituting, in most Canadian cities, the first public space designed by and for women. The Dominion Council attempted to formulate a national vision for the YWCA that would incorporate the resolution of "the girl problem" as an essential part of the churches' struggle to achieve the Kingdom of God on earth and that would inspire the city and student associations to take up the challenge of the social gospel.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Young Women's Christian Association was formed in the second half of the nineteenth century by evangelical Protestant women who were simultaneously participants in an international evangelical crusade to establish the global pre-eminence of the Protestant faith, and in an international campaign to advance the interests of women and secure their increased participation in the masculine realms of politics, paid employment, and higher education. Beginning in the 1870s, branches of the YWCA, similar to those already flourishing in Britain and the United States, were formed in major Canadian centres such as Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and Halifax. Established by groups of mainly married and middle-aged women drawn from the rising entrepreneurial and professional classes and from the congregations of local Protestant churches, nineteenth-century YWCAs offered a variety of programs and services including boarding homes, employment bureaux, educational classes, and social and religious functions intended for the benefit of young working women and students. Their stated objective was to provide young women living independently with a substitute for parental supervision and the environment of a "Christian family home." In this way they hoped to protect the physical, moral and spiritual well-being of the mothers of the future generations of Canadians, the mothers who would determine the moral and spiritual standards of the nation, and to ensure that women's traditional close ties to home, family, and church were not severed by their experiences of employment and higher education in a formative period of their lives. YWCAs also

undertook more traditional women's benevolent work such as the "rescue" of fallen women, the "friendly visiting" of the poor, the founding of day nurseries, diet dispensaries, and missions for seamen, and were active participants in the development of new methods of "scientific philanthropy" that stressed the segregation of the "deserving" from the "undeserving" poor.

YWCA women chose to organize as evangelicals, excluding non-evangelicals from the privileges of voting and office-holding, and describing their new organization as a handmaiden to the churches, committed to strengthening their influence and to spreading the teachings of Jesus Christ to the unconverted. Yet they chose also to organize as women in a lay interdenominational organization not under the control of clergy or congregations, arguing that in this way the resources available to any one church were vastly increased. In fact, however, their commitment to interdenominational cooperation considerably increased the power and autonomy of church women, as compared with local denominational women's societies operating under the watchful eye of the clergy. The founders of the YWCA viewed their work for young women in the context of an evangelical crusade to win Canada for Christ, and as part of an onslaught on the spread of intemperance, organized vice, crime, atheism, and Roman Catholicism among the inhabitants of the young Canadian nation. At the same time, they viewed their objective of advancing the cause of the evangelical Protestant churches by winning women for Christ as simultaneously a commitment to the cause of women, whose situation, they believed fervently, would be much improved as the impact of the teachings of Jesus Christ were felt throughout the land.

By the end of the nineteenth century, YWCA women identified themselves, albeit with some ambivalence, with the international women's movement and described themselves as the oldest women's organization doing a helpful work on behalf of women.

Through their work for young women, they developed and promoted a model of Evangelical Womanhood, an ideal of behaviour that emphasized the potential benefits to women and to the nation of a population of virtuous, devout, energetic and capable women, active in the service of their religion and living useful lives dedicated to the welfare of others. The ideal of Evangelical Womanhood, YWCA women believed, was applicable to the circumstances of all Canadian women and would provide women with a means to unite on the basis of their common interest, which was to remake Canadian society in the image of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Such a society, they had no doubt, would place a high value on women and womanly qualities, and by providing women with greater opportunities to serve, would elevate them from the status of decorative objects, save them from sexual exploitation, and provide them with dignity, fulfilment, and unprecedented outlets for their ambitions and opportunities for the exercise of their considerable talents.

* * * * *

As an example of the phenomenon of middle-class women forming themselves into organizations to respond to the profound changes taking place in Canadian society in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the YWCA was by no means unique. During the three decades from 1870 to 1900, the growth of women's organizations mushroomed and the character of those organizations underwent a significant shift as isolated local branches united to form genuinely national bodies of organized women, a phenomenon hitherto unknown in this country.¹ While it was the case that from the beginning of the century, women had undertaken benevolent and charitable activities to relieve the suffering of the poor and the sick, they had done so either as individuals or in the context of church societies such as Dorcas Sewing Circles or Ladies' Aids. Wendy

Mitchinson has characterized these early women's organizations as "the homemakers of the church", providing "social contact for women who were not involved in other activities and a means by which they could respond to the immediate, charitable needs of their parish." They did not, she observes, "have the means, the time, the organization and perhaps the desire to deal with social problems in any methodical way."²

By mid-century, women's charitable activities had begun to take on a more structured form and to assume greater independence from church control. Legally incorporated women's societies, capable of contracting debts and holding property, assumed responsibility for building and managing a range of charitable institutions including orphanages, creches, maternity hospitals and homes for convalescents, incurables, inebriates, idiots and imbeciles, deaf-mutes, the blind, the aged, and the insane.³ The absence of scholarly studies on the charitable activities of Canadian women during this period of transition means that we know little about the workings of such societies or about the women who joined them. For most of the century, however, participation in these activities was limited to the very few women who had the requisite financial resources, leisure and education, and the scope of the work remained purely local.⁴ Undoubtedly, adherence to what American historian Barbara Welter has labelled the Cult of True Womanhood, an influential ideology of domesticity widely promulgated by nineteenth-century women's magazines and religious literature, discouraged many women from extensive involvement in activities outside the home. True Women were encouraged to cultivate the virtues of purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity, best accomplished by remaining at home where they would ensure their own personal happiness, the well-being of their families, and the preservation of the social order.⁵ These imported ideas about women's sphere gained, according to one

recent study, widespread acceptance among members of Upper Canada's "Family Compact" and those who aspired to join its ranks, with the result that "women of the elite class in early Upper Canadian society had a very limited set of options to choose from when determining the course of their lives."⁶

During the second half of the century, a variety of factors combined to stimulate the formation of women's organizations, increasing the numbers of women involved, expanding the scope of their activities, and leading to organization on a national scale.⁷ The removal of much of women's traditional household production to the factory, the growing availability of domestic servants, the declining fertility rate, and increased educational opportunities combined with a frustratingly narrow range of occupational choices, all contributed to the growth of a "profound restlessness" on the part of many women who increasingly resented their dependency and lack of a definite purpose in life and who were encouraged by their political disenfranchisement and economic vulnerability to "regard feminine organization with favour."⁸ The organization of the first branches of the YWCA in Canada, leading ultimately to the formation of a Dominion Council of YWCAs of Canada in 1893, was only one manifestation of this trend.

The decades after 1870 witnessed the birth of provincial and national associations of the denominational women's missionary societies, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Dominion Order of King's Daughters, the Aberdeen Association and Women's Art Association of Canada, the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association, and the National Council of Women of Canada.⁹ In forming these unprecedented female alliances, Canadian women were influenced by many of the same forces, including a new national pride and improved transportation networks, which had prompted their male relatives to form great partnerships such as

the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Labour Union and the Methodist Church of Canada but, as Veronica Strong-Boag has noted, "'Superior' women had their own blueprint for Canada's future."¹⁰ Their agenda included an impressive array of concerns including temperance, white slavery and prostitution, education, immigration, child welfare, public health, urban reform, child and female labour, and woman suffrage, all of whose implications extended far beyond the boundaries of the local parish.

The literature on the turn-of-the-century Canadian women's movement is, in comparison with that of countries such as Britain and the United States, still in its infancy.¹¹ Despite the paucity of studies, however, a number of generalizations about the motives of women reformers and the goals of their organizations have gained considerable acceptance among Canadian scholars. This "orthodox" interpretation of the Canadian women's movement characterizes it as an expression of "maternal feminism," a reform ideology based on "the conviction that woman's special role as mother gives her the duty and the right to participate in the public sphere."¹² This understanding of the activities of women's organizations emphasizes their use of the ideology of maternalism to sabotage the Cult of True Womanhood which confined women to the home. Middle-class women reformers manipulated contemporary ideas about motherhood and women's maternal nature to their own advantage, justifying their forays into the public world of men as a defence of home and family, and drawing on the notion of women's inherent domesticity to support their attempts at "social housekeeping." As T.R. Morrison has argued, "When women left the home to become involved in social reform--especially that connected with disadvantaged and delinquent children--they did so with the intention of making it a better and more secure place to return to."¹³ Maternal feminism has been interpreted as an attempt to restore value to middle-class women's work in the home, eroded by industrialization, by emphasizing the

dignity and importance of motherhood. It was an attempt to assert the right of middle-class women to a life with a meaningful purpose that would provide an alternative to a perpetual preoccupation with fashion and the social round.

Participation in women's organizations provided middle-class women, particularly married women who very rarely engaged in paid labour, with the only opportunities they had, given the barriers to their participation in politics and business, to acquire the skills of public speaking, investigating social conditions, lobbying, fundraising, and administration. It also provided them, historians have argued, with an opportunity to carve out of the emerging industrial order a sphere within which they could wield real power, if not over men, then over women and children of the working classes.

In the literature on maternal feminism, Canadian historians have attributed the formation of the major women's organizations to a combination of self-interested class-based concerns and material changes in the situation of middle-class women that led many to rebel against an existence that they experienced as overly confined and useless and to demand the right to contribute to resolving the problems of the new urban industrial order. A commitment to "social reform," in this view, outweighed any commitment on the part of women reformers to advancing the interests of women, other than those of their own class. Maternal feminists have been portrayed as motivated by class solidarity, rather than feminism, sharing with the men of their class a growing fear of the "dangerous classes" and a profound uneasiness about the implications of the increasing prevalence and visibility of poverty, overcrowded and inadequate housing, disease, labour strife, unemployment and crime.¹⁴ According to T.R. Morrison, middle-class women felt compelled to enter the field of child welfare when they concluded that the problems of the poor were beginning to impinge on their own homes and were threatening their ability to care for their families.¹⁵ In examining the work

of women's charities in late-nineteenth-century Toronto, Joey Noble has argued that such organizations were "specifically class organizations, the form in which the rising groups of entrepreneurs and professionals sought to comprehend and contain the emerging phenomenon of urban poverty."¹⁶ With reference to the joint efforts of male and female middle-class suffragists to win a greater political voice for women, Carol Bacchi concludes succinctly that "social disintegration was the fear and social order the goal."¹⁷ Most recently, Terry Crowley has emphasized the class connotations of the home economics movement and emphasized the unity of purpose on the part of middle-class reformers of both sexes who sought to preserve the existing sexual division of labour in the face of rapid industrialization and the movement of women into the labour force.¹⁸ For maternal feminists, then, "the identification with women as a separate collectivity was secondary."¹⁹

More than a decade ago, in a study of Canadian suffragists, Deborah Gorham warned that, given the lack of information about the Canadian women's movement, it was perhaps too soon to "enclose Canadian feminism in a new orthodoxy" by assuming that all women reformers were motivated only by a desire to engage in civic housekeeping.²⁰ Recently, the first signs of a revisionist disenchantment with the "social control" interpretation of maternal feminism as rooted in class-identified self-interest have begun to appear in print. Veronica Strong-Boag has recently confessed that these early accounts, her own included, left "the distinct impression that activists in Canadian feminism, or at least its suffragists, were a pretty poor lot, hardly proper foremothers for 'better' feminists today."²¹ Sylvia Van Kirk has accused Carol Bacchi, the strongest proponent of the social control thesis in the literature on maternal feminism, of distortion and presentism in her use of a class analysis that "obscures and denigrates what were in essence the feminist motivations of a significant group of middle-class

women reformers, who genuinely believed that their woman-identified concerns cut across the barriers of class."²² In a recent survey of nineteenth-century organizational activity, Gail Cuthbert Brandt has conceded that maternal feminism, given the prevailing ideological context, was an important factor contributing to the winning of educational and employment opportunities, political rights and improved legal status for women, and helped "to break down the rigid division between public and private spheres that had been so widely accepted in the Victorian era."²³ Some recent revisionist studies have demonstrated that historians of maternal feminism have over-emphasized class solidarity in the women's movement by disparaging the genuine, if sometimes misguided, commitment to the welfare of other women that characterized many maternal feminists, and that the public statements of women reformers did not always reflect their inner convictions but were sometimes intended to appease male critics and financial supporters.²⁴ There is a growing sense that the sweeping characterization of maternal feminism that was developed in the 1970s was premature, and that there is much that we need to know about the effect of local and regional conditions, the concerns of the membership rather than the leadership of many women's organizations, the contributions of many neglected elements of the women's movement, including working-class and farm women, "ethnic" women, and Catholic and Jewish women, and the relationship between class-based and gender-based concerns in the ideology of the women's movement, which was surely more complex than has thus far been allowed.

One of the more serious deficiencies of the existing literature on maternal feminism has been its inadequate handling of the religious question in the women's movement and, more specifically, the connections between the rise of the latter and the growth of a crusading evangelical Protestantism in late-nineteenth-century Canada. The

evangelical contribution to feminism, conservative perhaps but significant nonetheless, has been studied and acknowledged by historians of the women's movement in Britain and the United States²⁵ but Canadian historians, by and large, have been attracted to the study of the more "progressive" or "radical" women who, according to Carol Bacchi, "usually moved outside the traditional churches."²⁶ Studies of Canadian maternal feminism have emphasized the homogeneity of the urban Anglo-Saxon elite who dominated the Canadian women's movement and have tended to overlook the often significant religious differences between its members. There has been an assumption, remaining largely unchallenged, that evangelical women in particular constituted the rear guard of the women's movement and that by the end of the nineteenth century, organized women whose activities remained rooted in a traditional religious framework were defenders of the status quo who opposed any fundamental changes to the social fabric. Evangelicals in the women's movement, in contrast to the "social gospellers [who] stressed a fundamental change of social conditions," located social problems in the failings of the individual and confined themselves to "moral rescue work."²⁷

Canadian women's historians, in recent years, have not been kind to evangelical women's organizations, with the possible exception of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which has been judged more acceptable by modern feminist historians because of its support for woman suffrage.²⁸ Wendy Mitchinson has conceded, more readily than most, that evangelical women's organizations were, in their own way, interested in improving the position of women but her accounts, too, stress that "none was a feminist organization."²⁹ Ramsay Cook, who has dealt more directly and knowledgably than any other historian with the influence of religion on the English-Canadian women's movement, has argued that the social gospel impulse pushed religious women in the direction of social reform rather than toward a commitment to

other women or a "feminist" critique of Canadian society.³⁰ Consequently there has been a conspicuous neglect, in the literature on the Canadian women's movement, of the contribution of evangelical women to shaping the position of maternal feminists on "the woman question," of the use of evangelical rhetoric to advance gender as well as class interests, and of the historical roots of a significant component of the Canadian women's movement in a well-established tradition of lay evangelical organization, a tradition in which, over the course of the nineteenth century, women were playing an increasingly prominent part.

* * * * *

In neglecting to devote serious critical attention to the "evangelical factor," Canadian women's historians have much in common with their colleagues in other fields, whose lack of interest in evangelical religion, according to George Rawlyk, contrasts sharply with that demonstrated by American historians.

Most American scholars see an important link between evangelical Christianity and American society and many, moreover, are not afraid to probe into the core of this fascinating relationship...Yet in Canada there has been, to my knowledge, little serious attempt made to explore the often fascinating connection between evangelical religion and evolving Canadian society...It is as though there is no interest in examining a possible relationship or else a sophisticated realization that there is none. But even if there is none (and the available evidence would suggest that there, in fact, is) then some scholar or scholars should be trying to explain why there is none...It may be that some Canadian scholars are not eager to be associated with a group which has unacceptable intellectual roots or perhaps is too closely tied to too many unpopular causes.³¹

In the case of Canadian feminist scholars, who have until recently shown little interest in contemporary evangelical women despite their increasingly organized and vociferous presence in this country, there is probably some validity to this hypothesis.³²

Canadian historians of both sexes, whatever the explanation, have not given

nineteenth-century evangelicals their due, and much work remains to be done on the massive campaign by the Protestant evangelical churches and lay organizations to refashion Canadian society in the image of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Virtually ignored by Canadian historians has been the participation of evangelical women in this crusade, the fact that they had their own agenda for change, and that they were increasingly organizing in their own right to ensure that their concerns were recognized and addressed.

In assessing the contribution of evangelical women to the nineteenth-century women's movement, it is important to consider Goldwin French's argument that the dominant strand in Canadian Protestantism in the nineteenth century was in fact evangelical, and that those who equate nineteenth-century evangelicals with contemporary revivalist groups vastly underestimate the significance of the former.

Conceiving as we do that these [revivalist groups] are the haven of mostly illiterate, lower-class fanatics, we dismiss them as of little consequence in our sophisticated society, and unwittingly we conclude that the convictions of our predecessors were similarly lacking in relevance. In reality, the evangelical Protestantism of the last century was in the mainstream of the Reformed tradition.³³

Late-nineteenth-century Canadian evangelicals were drawn from all the major Protestant denominations and included within their ranks substantial numbers of Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Congregationalists. Nor were they in any way socially or economically marginal, including, in fact, many members of the same urban Anglo-Saxon elite who dominated the campaigns for woman suffrage, child welfare, and other causes promoted by maternal feminists.³⁴ The major exponent of the evangelical position was the Methodist church which had, over the course of the century, undergone a remarkable transformation from a "frontier sect" into "a respectable, urbane social institution" containing "an inordinately large proportion of

the nouveau riche members of Canadian society."³⁵ Indeed by the 1880s and 1890s, Methodism was much criticized for its close ties to and dependence upon the wealthy, particularly in Ontario where it was strongly influenced by prominent laymen drawn from the ranks of monied middle-class families including the Rowells, Masseys, Coxes, Flavelles, Fudgers, and Eatons.³⁶ In cities across the country, the growing affluence of the evangelical faithful was reflected "in the impressiveness of new church buildings, in the growing formality and decorum of services of worship, and in lessened insistence on doctrinal precision."³⁷ A recent profile of fifty-five prominent Anglican evangelicals in late nineteenth-century Toronto, which unfortunately neglects to consider the contribution of evangelical women, suggests that this "well-educated and sophisticated group" whose members included some of Ontario's leading politicians and businessmen "played an important part in the development of...Canadian life, political, economic and social."³⁸

Although late-nineteenth-century evangelicals varied in their styles of worship from unrestrained revivalism to a sober emphasis on sound doctrine, they nonetheless shared a commitment to certain fundamentals that crossed denominational boundaries and that allowed them to recognize one another without difficulty.³⁹ They were united in their commitment to the divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the scriptures, and the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the scriptures; the word evangelical literally means "being imbued with the spirit of the Gospel."⁴⁰ Above all, they stressed the importance of an individual commitment to Christianity and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Rejecting the strict Calvinist view that salvation was possible only for the elect, chosen by God, they believed that the atoning death of Christ made possible the salvation of all who truly

repented their sins and who were willing to acknowledge and accept him as their personal saviour. For most of the century, evangelicals, particularly the Methodists, expected to experience "conversion," which involved an extended confrontation with the sinfulness of one's nature, feelings of disgust and self-loathing, and an overwhelming consciousness of Christ's love and his sublime sacrifice that provided the opportunity for salvation to even the most unworthy. This experience frequently resulted in an intense feeling of obligation to carry the news of Christ's sacrifice to others. The sense of urgency that led by the 1880s to the call for "the evangelization of the world in this generation" was one of the chief characteristics distinguishing evangelicalism from "orthodoxy" during the nineteenth century.⁴¹

In the British context, evangelicalism has been identified as one of the more important forces that created the ethos of the Victorian age, "responsible for giving the Victorians their notorious seriousness and high-mindedness... 'It was', one of them commented, 'just a perpetual call to seriousness--to a sense of personal responsibility; taking the form of an appeal to be like Christ, to trust Christ, to be near Christ.'"⁴² Evangelicals exhibited an intense concern for spiritual health and felt an obligation to demonstrate their faith by charitable deeds and upright behaviour and to display the proper attributes of "honesty, sincerity, sobriety, seriousness, a sense of purpose, and the acceptance of responsibility for others."⁴³ Often accused of anti-intellectualism, evangelical religion was emotional, even sentimental, in content and expression, although overt displays of emotionalism were strongly discouraged by the end of the century.⁴⁴ Evangelicals rejected the cold formality of churches that stressed doctrinal precision and a formal catechism, claiming that theirs was a "vital" lived Christianity. In what some regarded as a distinctly unchristian spirit, however, evangelical doctrine and practice set the faithful apart from others, including fellow Christians and

Protestants. By affirming, for example, their "belief in the divine-human person and atoning works of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the only sufficient source of salvation, as the heart and soul of Christianity, and as the centre of all true Christian fellowship," evangelicals deliberately excluded Universalists, Unitarians, Quakers, and Roman Catholics, not to mention free thinkers, confessional or high-church advocates, theosophists, Christian Scientists and Mormons.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the evangelical emphasis on public prayer, testimony, and lay exhortation represented a rejection of the earlier distinction between private and public religious exercises and a new emphasis on what Sandra Sizer has called "social religion." Evangelical practices "were employed to create a community of intense feeling, in which individuals underwent similar experiences (centering on conversion) and would thenceforth unite with others in matters of moral decision and social behavior."⁴⁶ The sense of evangelical fellowship, therefore, transcended denominational divisions.

Most historians of religion in both the United States and Canada, as George Rawlyk has noted, have largely ignored the response of women to the great evangelical revivals of the nineteenth century, and have not given serious consideration to the possibility that evangelical religion had a distinct appeal to women. "A great deal of revival scholarship...has dealt almost exclusively with the preachers and the message, largely at the expense of the congregations. And when congregations are analyzed, they are usually done so from a distinctly male perspective. It is as if women, children, and young people do not even exist."⁴⁷ In the United States, however, feminist historians, have addressed the question of women and evangelical religion with some enthusiasm, focusing primarily on the responses of white women in the northeastern states to the revivals of the Second Great Awakening from 1795 to 1830,⁴⁸ and to a lesser extent on the "Third Great Awakening" from 1880 to 1920 which spawned the great female

evangelical societies such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Foreign Missionary Societies.⁴⁹ They have observed that historians' "interpretations of the origins of mass religious fervor have characteristically concentrated on men" while, in fact, it was women who were more susceptible to the evangelical message and made up the majority of converts.⁵⁰ Given that women in nineteenth-century America had fewer opportunities to demonstrate autonomy than did men, the act of joining a church independently of relatives, as women often did during periods of revival, may be viewed, it has been suggested, as the assertion of a degree of religious autonomy.⁵¹ Evangelical revivals "offered women an opportunity to exercise control, to state a preference, to identify", an opportunity that was "consciously seized and exploited", particularly by young women in ante-bellum America.⁵² The evangelical requirement that adherents pay close attention to their thoughts and actions and be responsible for the state of their souls allowed women "a sort of holy selfishness, or self-absorption" that contrasted with the self-abnegation required by their domestic vocation.⁵³

Several noted American feminist historians have identified evangelical religion as an important element of what has come to be called nineteenth-century "women's culture", a newly-defined field of study based on the assumption that "women have distinct experiences and values and that these must be studied as unique contributions to culture."⁵⁴ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, in a landmark essay, was the first to argue that "from at least the late eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century, a female world of varied and yet highly structured relationships appears to have been an essential aspect of American society. These relationships ranged from the supportive love of sisters, through the enthusiasms of adolescent girls, to sensual avowals of love by mature women. It was a world in which men made but a shadowy appearance."⁵⁵ Such relationships were fostered by the rigid gender-role differentiation within the family

and the larger society and were institutionalized in a variety of social conventions and the many rituals that marked the various phases of a woman's life. Building on the work of Smith-Rosenberg, more recent explorations of this "female world of love and ritual" have emphasized the importance of its religious dimension. Given that women's lives were bounded by home, church and the institution of visiting, it was inevitable that religion and religious activities would assume an important place within them. Women's evangelical faith "provided a common understanding of life that united women with bonds far stronger than gender alone could furnish. It made them sisters in the Spirit as well as in the flesh."⁵⁶

The close links between women and evangelical religion in the nineteenth century had, according to American feminist historians, important implications for religion as well as for women, resulting in the forging of alliances between male clergy and middle-class women "whose roles too had changed as a result of mobility and industrialization and who were, like the clergy, insulated from the primary processes of government and decision-making."⁵⁷ Particularly during times of revival, the evangelical clergy relied heavily on the assistance of the female members of their congregations who, as "the power behind the pulpit" rather than merely the objects of evangelization, were instrumental in the conversion of members of their family and household to the extent that "one must include the pious mother as one of the major evangelical forces of the nineteenth century."⁵⁸ In order to protect their own authority, however, evangelical clergymen encouraged women to confine their evangelistic efforts to recruiting members of their own sex, and thus helped to ensure that "evangelical religion would remain women's domain throughout the nineteenth century."⁵⁹ The cooperative efforts of women and evangelical clergymen led to the development, largely through the vehicles of hymns and evangelical novels, of what

Sandra Sizer has described as a new ideology of "'evangelical domesticity': of home and woman as primary vehicles of redemptive power, as embodiments of a pure community of feeling."⁶⁰ Like the Cult of True Womanhood described by Welter, evangelical domesticity emphasized the separateness of the home from the world, and the role of the former as a refuge and sanctuary for the preservation of virtue. What made it genuinely evangelical, however, was its emphasis on the home as "the channel through which women could tame, and ultimately save, the rest of the world."⁶¹ Sizer has emphasized the usefulness of this ideology to the evangelical clergy who found in it "an excellent strategy for solving the problem of order and passion by, as it were, putting passion in its place."⁶² It is equally clear, however, that such an ideology could serve the purposes of the women who promoted it by redefining their role as mothers as central to the success of the evangelical crusade. It allowed evangelical women to view themselves as the principal agents of salvation who would redeem their husbands, sons, and the sordid male world of money and materialism.⁶³

The significant presence of women in evangelical congregations influenced the content of sermons and even led to the modification of fundamental church teachings such as the doctrine of infant damnation, which had traditionally been very difficult for women to accept, a process that has been characterized as "the feminization of religion". This thesis was first advanced by Barbara Welter who argued that in post-Revolutionary America, religion "became the property of the ladies", thereby allowing the preservation of the traditional religious values of humility, submission, and meekness in a society that regarded these as signs of weakness, incompatible with success in the masculine realms of politics and economics. In this way, religion "entered a process of change whereby it became more domesticated, more emotional, more soft and accommodating--in a word, more 'feminine'."⁶⁴ Other historians have

argued that during the nineteenth century evangelical theology underwent changes that made it appeal particularly to women and that heightened the identification of religion with "woman's sphere". The softening of the doctrine of predestination brought with it a new emphasis on the humanity of Christ who was transformed into an exemplar of meekness, humility, submission, renunciation and self-sacrifice. Christ became a personal saviour with whom women especially could identify, sharing with him a special identification with suffering and innocence.⁶⁵ This identification encouraged evangelical women to embrace the religion that exalted the qualities associated with the female sex and to value themselves more highly. Particularly at a time when evangelical religion took the form of a declaration of war on all forms of sin, women were told that the virtues they embodied were essential to the struggle, and were thereby provided with a sense of identity and meaningful purpose.⁶⁶

Because of the absence of a similar body of scholarship on women and evangelical religion in nineteenth-century Canada, it is impossible to make any categorical statements about the affinity of Canadian women for evangelical religion. However, in their documentary survey of the experience of women in British North America, Beth Light and Alison Prentice have called attention to the fact that "from the revivalism of Henry Alline's followers in late eighteenth-century Nova Scotia to the regeneration of Roman Catholicism in mid nineteenth-century French Canada, there was a major rekindling of religious life, which had important results for women."⁶⁷ Some recent work by Canadian historians suggests, in fact, that many of the findings and provocative conclusions of American historians will prove applicable to the experience of evangelical women in this country. As the first Canadian historian to integrate women into a major study of evangelical Protestantism, George Rawlyk has recently drawn some suggestive conclusions in his work on Henry Alline, "radical

evangelicalism", and the Second Great Awakening in Nova Scotia. Unlike American feminist historians who have preferred to approach women and revivalism in the context of women's culture, that is, emphasizing the importance of same-sex relationships, Rawlyk stresses the significant sexual overtones of the Nova Scotia revivals, observing that women were "drawn to Alline like moths to a lamp burning in the midst of a black summer's night."⁶⁸ As evidence for his conclusions Rawlyk notes the sensuous imagery of Alline's hymns, his obsession with the New Birth as the "ravishing" of the soul by the Holy Spirit and conversion as "marriage" to Christ, and the attraction of the women, sometimes noticed by jealous husbands, to the preachers who were for the most part "unusually vigorous and attractive young men."⁶⁹ Yet in keeping with the findings of American historians, Rawlyk notes that "in the revival meetings [women] were given the opportunity to express their most deeply felt feelings and attitudes as equals. They also often appropriated the power to control events; the Holy Spirit, as they saw it, did not distinguish between males and females."⁷⁰ Concurring with the findings of Mary P. Ryan, Rawlyk argues that "maternal evangelism"--the imposition by women of their religious values onto husbands and children--was an important factor in the revivals, and that radical evangelical religion provided women with "psychological and social space" and a "justification for independence and collective support for what was almost universally regarded as aberrant behaviour."⁷¹

These studies are extremely suggestive of the factors that attracted large numbers of nineteenth-century American and Canadian women, as individuals, to evangelical religion, but in themselves they do not account for the phenomenon of organized evangelical women and the proliferation of women's societies organized on a national and international basis and dedicated to remaking society and even the world in

conformity with the teachings of the evangelical churches. Part of the explanation for this phenomenon must be sought in the increasing emphasis being placed by the evangelical churches on "social" or "applied" Christianity, which required the application of Christian teachings to the social order, and the churches' increasing reliance on organizations of lay evangelicals as a means of effectively mobilizing all members of the congregation, including women and children, for this task. The emergence of organized evangelical women must also be placed in the context of women's perceptions of the attractions and advantages of associating with like-minded women, independent of clerical control, and most particularly in the context of women's understanding of the implications for themselves and their "heathen sisters" of the application of Christian teachings to the social order.

* * * * *

In nineteenth-century Canada the evangelical position constituted more than a set of doctrinal beliefs, implying a deeply-felt commitment to save others and having "profound social implications."⁷² The evangelical rejection of a transcendent God, removed from the affairs of the world, had resulted by mid-century in an overwhelming conviction of the immanence of God and his power and active role in human affairs.⁷³ In the post-Confederation decades, evangelicals were convinced that they had an active role to play in the task of building a new nation and the working out of a vision of a "manifest destiny" for Canada. Protestant clergymen envisioned the new nation as "the dominion of Christ from sea to sea...[which would]...demonstrate to the rest of the world the superiority of a nation wholly dedicated to an applied Christianity."⁷⁴ During the 1870s and 1880s, the five major Protestant denominations were increasingly thinking in national terms and creating the new institutional structures required for the

creation of a truly national church.⁷⁵ By the end of the century, all but the two smaller bodies, Baptist and Lutheran, had achieved national organizational structures, and in the process generated considerable nationalist propaganda. Richard Allen has observed, however, that "it would be a mistake, perhaps, to overemphasize the national component in this emerging evangelical nationalism...the primary impulse through it all was evangelical; if there was a mission to the nation or by the nation it was not primarily nationalist but evangelical."⁷⁶

In many ways the evangelical nationalism of the late nineteenth century was a defensive response to the profound changes taking place in the fabric of Canadian society. It was prompted by many of the same factors which had propelled the various denominations toward unification, the most influential of which was undoubtedly the perceived threat of the Roman Catholic church, identified by most Protestants, according to John Webster Grant, with "ignorance, semi-pagan religious practice, and hostility to free institutions" and regarded as "a monolithic machine whose priests were all agents committed to a deliberate plan of world domination."

To evangelicals who dreamed of the achievement of a Christian Canada, its entrenched position was an offence comparable only to the existence of the nefarious liquor traffic.⁷⁷

In Canada, anti-Catholicism as a movement within the nonconformist Protestant churches steadily gained in strength from the 1840s to the 1890s in response to both European and indigenous stimuli including the Vatican Council of 1870, particularly the adoption of the doctrine of papal infallibility, and the increasing influence of ultramontanist in Quebec as evidenced by the launching of a vigorous programme catholique in 1871.⁷⁸ The opening of the Northwest and the Riel Rebellion impressed upon evangelicals the need to save the West not only from heathenism but also from Roman Catholicism in order to ensure that Canada's future as a Christian nation would

be a Protestant one.⁷⁹ Such an enormous task clearly required Protestants to lay aside their petty denominational squabbles and to pool their resources in the face of this threat from what was still, in 1891, the largest single denomination in the country, claiming 41% of the population.⁸⁰

Similarly, the transformation of Canada from a rural to an industrial capitalist society posed a challenge that no denomination could hope to face singlehandedly. The growing populations of the major urban centres threatened to stretch limited church resources beyond their capacity. Comfortable middle-class Protestants feared the concentration of the "vicious classes" in the cities, associating their presence with the spread of crime, poverty, intemperance and ignorance, and a subsequent breakdown of the social order.⁸¹ There was considerable discussion of the fact that churches such as the Methodist that earlier in the century had appealed largely to the poor had become solidly allied with and dependent upon the business class. Pew rents and an emphasis on systematic benevolence as a sign of personal consecration placed church attendance beyond the means of large segments of the working class, many of whom had turned to more appealing sects such as the Salvation Army or had abandoned religion altogether.⁸² Many of the churches' middle-class constituents, it was feared, had succumbed to the temptations of materialism, losing their faith or failing to live in accordance with the doctrine of Christian stewardship that Andrew Carnegie was to popularize as "the gospel of wealth".⁸³ An ominous chasm appeared to be opening between rich and poor as evidenced in the spread of socialism and growing numbers of strikes, threatening the vision of organic community treasured by many middle-class Protestants, particularly the Methodists.⁸⁴ Working-class family life, rooted in the needs of the family economy and situated in overcrowded tenement conditions, failed, as well, to conform to the evangelical ideal of the Christian family home.⁸⁵ In the face

of these profound changes in the fabric of Canadian society, and the apparent threat to continued Protestant hegemony, many evangelicals turned their attention from theological to social questions, espousing what was variously known as "social", "applied" or "practical" Christianity, requiring the application of Christian teachings to the social order.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Canadian evangelicals, in conjunction with their counterparts in the United States and elsewhere, had developed an agenda of items requiring urgent attention that included immigration, the saloon, illiteracy, the perils of the city, estrangement from the church, ultramontaniam, prostitution, and the relation of the church to the capital and labour question.⁸⁶ However, the grandiose evangelical vision of a Canadian nation founded on Christian principles often translated into an obsession with the personal morality of the citizens of the new dominion, as John Webster Grant has noted.

Presbyterians were most disturbed by the desecration of the Lord's day. Methodists inveighed with special force against undesirable literature, in which they commonly included all novels. Baptists took a strong stand against dancing and occasionally passed resolutions against enticing posters in front of theatres. Anglicans were particularly upset by the deeply ingrained Canadian habit of taking the Lord's name in vain. Against all of these practices, however, as well as against the use of tobacco, there was a widespread evangelical sentiment that transcended denominational lines. None of these vices, nor all together, could arouse a fraction of the indignation that was vented on the consumption of booze....Without question...the war against alcohol was the evangelical cause par excellence of the late nineteenth century.⁸⁷

In the mid-1880s, a coalition of forces including trade unionists, women reformers, enemies of the liquor traffic, and newspaper editors rallied in support of "good government" and the election of evangelical William Howland as mayor of Toronto. Their platform included enforcing Sabbath observance, waging war on prostitution and the liquor traffic, and ridding the city of boodlers and ward-healers. According to

Desmond Morton, the commanders of this army "were undoubtedly the Methodist clergymen who thundered weekly from their pulpits and who, with their evangelical brethren in other churches, had been early converts to the campaign for moral and social reform."⁸⁸ Similarly, Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles argue that in the attack on the proposal to run Toronto's streetcars on Sunday a leading role was played by Protestant clergymen who regarded their quiet Sabbath "as a symbol of what they hoped to make Toronto--a progressive, modern, morally righteous Christian municipality, a kind of city on the mount."⁸⁹ These evangelical crusades, Armstrong and Nelles have noted, "reflected deep and abiding tensions within the community" that must be situated in the context of fears of urbanization and industrialization and of a renewed assault by the Church of Rome. More than outbursts of indignation, campaigns for municipal reform sought to transfer power from the ward-healers to the more "responsible" members of the Board of Trade, and the fight over Sunday streetcars revealed the determination of the Sabbatarians "to resist any challenge to their social dominance in the community."⁹⁰

Despite the importance of the social and economic context of the 1870s and 1880s, it would be a mistake, as Richard Allen has argued, to adopt an uncomplicated "thesis of stimulus and response" to explain the rise of social Christianity which must also be understood as a religious and intellectual movement.⁹¹ The emergence of social Christianity was symptomatic of profound theological tensions within the evangelical community arising out of differing responses to new religious and intellectual currents, and resulting in a growing split between liberal and conservative evangelicals.⁹² Liberal evangelicals, who sought to reconcile Darwinian science and historical criticism of the Bible with their traditional religious beliefs, were led, Ramsay Cook has argued, "to attempt to salvage Christianity by transforming it into an essentially social

religion." This liberal evangelical synthesis underlay many varieties of social criticism in late nineteenth-century Canada.⁹³ Historical study of the Old and New Testaments had a profound influence on the concepts and language of religious and social reform, as reformers found in the example of the Prophets of Israel justification for denouncing oppressive social and economic relations, and in the recovery of the historical Jesus and his preaching of the Kingdom of God a potent impulse for social regeneration.⁹⁴ Affected too, by the more romantic and sentimental views of childhood that gained in popularity during the century, the churches revised some of their traditional harsh doctrines respecting the depravity of children and increasingly placed their hopes for the future in the young.⁹⁵ It is these new intellectual and theological currents that help to explain the buoyant millennial optimism, often overlooked by historians, that was as characteristic of the nineteenth-century evangelical impulse as its defensiveness and concern with maintaining social order in the face of the working-class and Roman Catholic menace. It is significant that evangelicals believed in the necessity for social change; it is equally significant that they believed that such change was possible.

At national and international gatherings nineteenth-century evangelicals stressed the importance of cooperation in Christian work and sought to develop new institutions and new methods to meet the challenge of the social question. A significant outlet for the expression of the evangelical impulse, one whose importance can scarcely be overestimated, was the lay voluntary organization, usually interdenominational and often national or even international in scope. The proliferation of these societies, formed to undertake benevolent work for the poor, moral reform or missionary activities, was one of the most significant products of the evangelical revivals that swept North America in the early nineteenth century.⁹⁶ It vastly expanded the

churches' sphere of influence and their capacity to respond to changing social conditions. Acting on their perception of a need for new ways of permeating society with Christian values, lay evangelicals developed new tools of communication, including tract distribution and Sunday Schools, with an increasingly important role being played by a new phenomenon--the itinerant professional evangelist. The organization of voluntary societies permitted the churches to mobilize their lay membership on their behalf, provided effective channels for common Protestant action without compromising the various denominations, and contained none of the disadvantages of establishment. They also provided an outlet for individuals to demonstrate their commitment to their faith by engaging in activities that emulated the work of Christ, for the emphasis of evangelical religion was increasingly on usefulness and on the responsibility of individual Christians to bring about the moral reformation of others. Throughout the century these lay evangelical societies promoted a vision of social transformation that was voluntarist, individualist and milliennialist. Their proliferation, growth in membership, and increasingly ambitious undertakings all contributed to the growing conviction of evangelicals that they had found a way to evangelize not only their fellow citizens but other nations for Christ, and that Protestant Christianity was rapidly becoming the most important religious force in the world.

One of the most significant factors contributing to the growth and increased influence of the evangelical churches and their affiliated lay societies was the mobilization of women. By the latter part of the century, this fact was acknowledged by substantial numbers of liberal evangelical clergymen, not to mention by women themselves, who increasingly adopted the position that a significant part of the work that remained to be done in order to ensure the coming of the Kingdom would be accomplished by women. This did not mean, however, that evangelical clergymen

expected women to play a leadership role in evangelical crusades or that they expected women to speak or act independently in any public capacity at all. National and international gatherings of evangelicals, at a time when it was still considered unseemly for a respectable woman to mount a public platform, typically featured programs dominated by male clergymen.⁹⁷ It is perhaps because of this absence of direct and public female participation at evangelical gatherings that Canadian historians have so consistently failed to acknowledge adequately the contribution of women to evangelical campaigns and have failed to address the significance of their participation in large numbers and as members of autonomous female bodies.

The presence of women in the late-nineteenth-century Toronto campaigns for temperance, sabbath observance, and the election of William Howland has been noted perfunctorily by historians Morton, Armstrong, and Nelles. John Webster Grant, in discussing the efforts of the Canadian evangelical churches to evangelize the heathen goes so far as to note that within their ranks "women were the first to organize for the furtherance of the missionary cause...[and] undoubtedly came to know and care more about distant countries than any other class of Canadians."⁹⁸ Yet none of these historians has focused specifically on the motives and concerns of evangelical women which, too often, have been subsumed into those of men. Where class, ethnicity, and denominational affiliation have been recognized as important explanatory variables to be considered in accounts of evangelical crusades, gender has not. Historians have tended to focus on the public statements of the evangelical clergymen who assumed leadership roles in evangelical campaigns and to identify their concerns with those of organized evangelical women. Yet a growing body of literature produced, once again, by American feminist historians, suggests that evangelical women, while sharing many of the concerns of evangelical men, organized for reasons that had to do with their own

interests as well as those of the churches, had their own agenda for change which tended to equate the coming of the Kingdom with advancements in the position of women, and saw distinct advantages to be gained from association with like-minded women in a manner that promised an unprecedented degree of freedom from clerical and male supervision.

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Following Wendy Mitchinson's pioneering studies of the YWCA, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the women's church missionary societies, all of which suggest that these organizations, while not feminist, were indicative of an increasing sense of autonomy and female identification on the part of evangelical women, Canadian women's historians appear to have lost interest in the question of organized evangelical women and the significance of their presence in or contribution to the turn-of-the-century women's movement. Recently, however, the issue has surfaced once again in a study by Margaret Conrad of nineteenth-century women's culture in the Maritimes, as recorded in women's letters and private journals. Confirming the links between religion and women's culture as evidenced by "the central position of religion and the church in the lives of nineteenth-century Maritime women," Conrad notes the ambiguousness of women's relationship with the evangelical churches which helped women to bear the burdens of their domestic responsibilities, providing them with solace from overbearing husbands, illness and death but which also helped to expand their public role.

Religion...served both as a vehicle for resistance to oppression, encouraging equality, self-respect, and public action, as well as a vehicle

for accommodating oppression, counselling submissiveness, deference, and restricted options for women.⁹⁹

Religious doctrine, "especially that of the evangelical sects", she notes, "steered women away from the vacuous idle pedestal, the ideal that so vitiated many Victorian ladies" and helped to open the doors to higher education and careers in foreign missions to women. Nineteenth-century Maritime evangelical women were "found in the very forefront of missionary work, temperance activity, and moral uplift" and were thus, like their counterparts in Britain and the United States and undoubtedly in the rest of Canada, participating in what has been called "the evangelical contribution to feminism."¹⁰⁰

Conrad's observations about nineteenth-century Maritime women, like the recent work of George Rawlyk discussed earlier, reflect the influence of a decade of writing by predominantly American historians on the phenomenon of organized evangelical women. American feminist historians, interested in understanding the evangelical component of the women's movement and the relationship of evangelical religion to nineteenth-century feminism, have recently come to understand organized activity by evangelical women as an attempt, perhaps not radical but certainly subversive, to reinterpret traditional religious teachings in a way that justified their own movement into the public sphere and that promised to advance the interests of all women. The Cult of True Womanhood, confining women to home and hearth as described in Welter's influential article, does not, it has been argued, adequately convey the fact that several distinctive life-styles were in fact available to middle-class women in the nineteenth century. In a critical response to Welter, Ronald Hogeland posits the existence of a model of "evangelical womanhood" promoted by evangelical clergymen as a strategy for mobilizing women to advance the cause of evangelical religion.¹⁰¹ In further refinements of this model, feminist historians have emphasized that evangelical

women themselves promoted and actively contributed to the development of a model of female behaviour that both encouraged and required female organization. The debate by American historians over the relationship between this organized activity by evangelical women and the emerging women's rights movement has resulted in some important insights that promise to contribute to our understanding of the factors that produced evangelical women's organizations and that shaped their distinct agenda for social reform in this country.

While sharing many of the concerns that prompted organization by evangelical men, nineteenth-century women, American historians have noted, had more incentive to form religious associations because they were denied the options of pursuing careers in business, politics, and the professions. It was, as Joan Jacobs Brumberg has noted, the absence of other opportunities rather than any "superior feminine susceptibility" that drew nineteenth-century American women to organized religion in much greater numbers than men. Rather than merely offering the promise of a better life in the hereafter, evangelical religion "legitimized the idea of female activity in the here-and-now and accorded women some real opportunities for demonstrating their competence, fortitude, and skills of expression."¹⁰² Through their membership in female evangelical associations, women sought and found opportunities to assume responsibility, undertake public speaking and administration, learn business procedures and act independently of male authority. The interdenominational character of temperance and foreign missionary societies worked to women's advantage by providing them with more autonomy than they had experienced in the denominational women's societies that were more closely supervised by the male clergy.

Temperance campaigns, for example, have recently been reinterpreted as a female "quest for power and liberty". Through their membership in the Women's Christian

Temperance Union, "women learned of their legal and social disabilities, gained confidence in their strengths and talents, and became certain of their political power as a group and as individuals."¹⁰³ Sunday schools, too, have been characterized as one of a number of alternative institutions created by evangelical women as part of their "redefinition of the conversion experience to mandate social action" and as a means of providing themselves with opportunities for active public lives.¹⁰⁴ The recruiting of significant numbers of women as Protestant missionaries to foreign lands created a new role and enhanced status for women within one of the most important organized religious movements of the nineteenth century, while at the same time providing individual women with opportunities for travel, adventure and professional fulfilment that were closed to them in the land of their birth.¹⁰⁵ For many women who remained at home, the biographies and published memoirs of female missionaries provided "a model of religious commitment, which proposed a submission of self that was simultaneously a pronounced form of self-assertion."¹⁰⁶ While women initially ventured out of the home on missions that accorded with their ideas of woman's special nature and talents, female voluntary organizations served as "a bridge between the domestic sphere and the male-dominated arena of public life", a bridge that "eventually changed women's estimation of themselves and their capabilities."¹⁰⁷

As participants in nineteenth-century evangelical crusades, women acted, according to American feminist historians, not only in defence of their religion and their class interests but also in defence of home, family and the interests of women. The evangelical vision was family-centred, enshrining the family as the cornerstone of a republic of virtuous God-fearing citizens, and the mother's role as pivotal within the family.¹⁰⁸ Women believed that evangelical teachings exalted their domestic role and, by stressing the crucial influence of the mother, made them central to the evangelical

crusade for a Christian social order. In advancing the interests of the evangelical churches, women could and frequently did express their commitment to other women, their belief that the teachings of Jesus would lead to advances in the position of women, and their conviction that a powerful lobby of organized evangelical women could successfully challenge widespread intemperance, poverty, and prostitution, whose consequences they believed to be particularly devastating for women. Thus in cooperating with male evangelical reformers, women frequently acted according to a distinctly female agenda for reform; indeed, they sometimes employed evangelical rhetoric to launch an oblique attack on male sexual dominance and even to lobby for political rights for women. Evangelical women's associations such as the New York Female Moral Reform Society studied by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg took advantage of a position that was "unassailable within the absolute categories of a pervasive evangelical world-view" to express anti-male sentiments and to assert their right to define and limit male sexuality by challenging the double standard of sexual morality.¹⁰⁹ Later in the century, the campaign of the Women's Christian Temperance Union for "Home Protection" and the "white life for two" was intended to enhance women's moral authority and protect them from abuse, desertion, and venereal diseases contracted from prostitutes by their husbands. According to Barbara Epstein, the WCTU transformed the tradition of female evangelism into a social morality defined in religious terms centring around the defence of home and family, and developed a "protofeminist politics" in which the vote was seen as necessary for the defence of these institutions and values.¹¹⁰

It was, however, in their campaigns to evangelize the women of "heathen" lands such as Burma, India, China and Japan that evangelical women most clearly revealed that they equated the promotion of Protestant Christianity with the defence of women and

family life.¹¹¹ Protestant Christianity, they believed, was the great liberator of women, and Jesus Christ the only major religious figure to exalt and embody in his own person the qualities associated with the female sex. American evangelical women embraced the study of ethnology because they were anxious to learn about the condition of women in other lands, and evangelical theology, in comparison with scientific or professional anthropology, focussed to a significant extent on women's status and roles. American Protestant women, particularly those who joined female missionary societies, learned that the hatred of women underlay the teachings of all other major religions, that heathen women endured intellectual deprivation, domestic oppression and sexual degradation as a result of these teachings, and that a host of barbaric practices including suttee, female infanticide, foot-binding, consecrated prostitution and child marriage flourished in countries where the influence of Christianity had not been felt. They believed that the position of women in Christian lands was uniquely protected and privileged, and they were particularly distressed by the absence of a period of dependency in the lives of sexually-mature young women, patrilocal living arrangements that denied the young married woman her own household, and by what appeared to them to be a complete absence of supportive relations between women in non-Christian countries. It is clear that in their attempts to export Protestant Christianity to heathen lands, evangelical women believed that they were effecting a transformation in relations between the sexes, family life, and in the role and status of women.

During the past decade, American feminist historians have rejected the assumption made in the pioneering studies of Welter and Hogeland that the ideal types of womanhood and female behaviour described in nineteenth-century prescriptive literature were formulated by men to serve their own ends. In two important

revisionist studies, Nancy Cott and Kathryn Kish Sklar argue that evangelical women actively participated in the development of an ideal of womanhood that stressed their special capabilities, provided a positive self-image, and offered opportunities for public service.¹¹² In a study of Sunday school teachers that serves as a model for understanding the phenomenon of evangelical women's organizations, Anne Boylan argues that such organizations were more than merely a response, albeit a creative one, to a repressive male ideology and that "women themselves devised both the organizations and the ideology to express their view of female nature."¹¹³ Sunday school teachers, she argues, were among those women who promoted an ideal model of "Evangelical Womanhood", which represented a rejection of the frivolous, gay and useless life of the lady and an attempt by evangelical Protestant women to create an alternative ideal of womanhood that combined the traditional Protestant ideal of the "vertuous woman" with a new evangelical stress on action. Evangelical Womanhood "was a role choice whereby individuals shaped their lives around their religious convictions, forming friendships, undertaking activities, even choosing jobs that would best further their image of themselves as converted persons."¹¹⁴ Thus when evangelical women developed seminaries, benevolent societies and church groups, "they were creating alternative institutions through which the evangelical ideal of woman could be developed, taught and promulgated." Within the complex set of constraints that limited women's activities in the nineteenth century, "evangelical women manifested a clear drive to take hold of their lives and shape goals and activities based on their own conception of womanhood."¹¹⁵

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Among the central insights developed by American historians in this new literature is the observation that evangelical rhetoric could be used by women to express concerns rooted in gender as well as in class and that participation in evangelical crusades by women reflected the existence of a distinctly female vision of the coming of the Kingdom. Organizations of nineteenth-century evangelical women promoted the interests of the evangelical churches in part because in their view those interests coincided with the interests of women. They were able to identify themselves as participating simultaneously in an international evangelical crusade and an international movement to advance the cause of women. These findings promise to add a great deal to our understanding of nineteenth-century evangelical revivals and crusades in Canada and to our understanding of the relatively neglected evangelical component of the Canadian women's movement. Despite the fact that these insights are based on studies of evangelical Protestantism in an American context, recent work by Canadian historians George Rawlyk and Margaret Conrad suggests that there is considerable potential for applying them to the experience of Canadian evangelicals and that much of value can be learned from them by Canadian historians. Some judicious borrowing seems particularly appropriate in the case of a study of the Canadian YWCA which, during its formative decades, developed in the context of what was essentially a North American movement. Through the vehicle of the YWCA, Canadian evangelical women organized in an attempt to apply Christian teachings to social problems in a Canadian context.

This thesis is a study of the YWCA in Canada from 1870 to 1920. The two chapters in Part I trace the development of the YWCA from its origins to the end of the nineteenth century. Chapter 2 describes the growth of YWCA organization from the founding of the first local associations in the 1870s to the establishment of the

Dominion YWCA in 1893, while Chapter 3 examines the nineteenth-century YWCA's attempts to define and address "the girl problem." The two chapters in Part II carry the story forward from the end of the nineteenth century and describe the organization's consolidation and growth during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Part II shows how YWCA programs and policies were altered and expanded in response to the pressures and tensions of the changing urban context of the early twentieth century. Chapter 4 examines the work of the city YWCAs in this period while Chapter 5 deals with the Dominion Council.

NOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. For a substantial list of women's organizations founded in the last third of the nineteenth century, see Wendy Mitchinson, "Aspects of Reform: Four Women's Organizations in Nineteenth Century Canada," (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 1977), p.1, n.1.
2. Wendy Mitchinson, "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century: A Step Towards Independence," Atlantis 2(2) Part II (Spring 1977), pp. 58-59.
3. For an indication of the scale of women's involvement in these organizations, see the capsule histories compiled for the Paris Exhibition of 1900 in the National Council of Women of Canada's Women of Canada: Their Life and Work (1900; reprinted by National Council of Women of Canada, 1975) pp. 324-392.
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7. Mitchinson, "Aspects of Reform," pp. 33-54; Deborah Gorham, "The Canadian Suffragists," in Gwen Matheson, ed., Women in the Canadian Mosaic (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1976), pp. 23-56; Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women:

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24. Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness"; Christina Simmons, "'Helping the Poorer Sisters': The Women of the Jost Mission, Halifax, 1905-1945," Acadiensis 14(1) 1984, pp. 3-27; Ernest Forbes, "The Ideas of Carol Bacchi and the Suffragists of Halifax: A Review Essay on Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918," Atlantis 10(2) Spring 1985, pp. 119-126; Diana Pedersen, "'Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow': Businessmen, Boosters, and the YWCA, 1890-1930," Urban History Review 15(3) 1987, pp. 225-242.
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38. D.C. Masters, "The Anglican Evangelicals in Toronto, 1870-1900" Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society 20(3-4) 1978, p. 51.

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43. French, "Evangelical Creed," p. 21.

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46. Sandra S. Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), pp. 50-52.

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50. Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism," in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 1. See Cott, "Young Women in the Second Great Awakening," on the involvement of young unmarried women in the revivals, and Ryan, "A Woman's Awakening," on the participation of married women.

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52. Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 43.

53. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood, p. 140.

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55. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" Signs 1(1) 1975: 1-2.

56. Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism," p. 9. See also Keith Melder, The Beginnings of Sisterhood: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States, 1800-1840 (New York: Schocken, 1977), pp. 39-43.

57. Sizer, Gospel Hymns, pp. 83-110. On a similar alliance between women and the liberal clergy, see Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture.

58. Ryan, "A Woman's Awakening," p. 604; Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism," p. 6.

59. Blauvelt, pp. 6-7, 9; Rendall, Origins of Modern Feminism, pp. 78-79.

60. Sizer, Gospel Hymns, p. 87.
61. Ibid., p. 88.
62. Ibid., p. 107.
63. Sizer, Gospel Hymns, p. 89. For a discussion of the maternal model of domestic religion, see McDannell, Christian Home, pp. 127-136.
64. Welter, "Feminization of Religion", p. 138. For a perceptive critique of the feminization thesis, see David S. Reynolds, "The Feminization Controversy: Sexual Stereotypes and the Paradoxes of Piety in Nineteenth-Century America," New England Quarterly 53 (1980), pp. 96-106. Reynolds argues that any discussion of nineteenth-century American religion "is distorted when based on a single sexual stereotype." The feminization thesis overlooks "the fact that during this period a fervent muscular Christianity began to take shape." Paradoxically, "American religion became both more 'feminine' and more 'masculine' during the nineteenth century."
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67. Beth Light and Alison Prentice, eds., Pioneer and Gentlewomen of British North America (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1980), p. 182.
68. George A. Rawlyk, ed., The New Light Letters and Spiritual Songs, 1778-1793 (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1983), p. 28.
69. Rawlyk, Ravished by the Spirit, pp. 15, 130.
70. Ibid., p. 129.
71. Rawlyk, New Light Letters, pp. 28-29.
72. Masters, "Anglican Evangelicals," p. 59.
73. French, "Evangelical Creed," p. 18.
74. Trevor Wigney, "Manifest Righteousness: The Presbyterian Church, Education and Nation Building in Canada, 1875-1914," in Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald, eds., Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1977), p.89. See also William E. de Villiers-Westfall, "The Dominion of the Lord: An Introduction to the Cultural History of Protestant Ontario in the Victorian Period" Queen's Quarterly 83(1) 1976, pp. 47-70.
75. Semple, "Ontario's Religious Hegemony"; Magney, "The Methodist Church"; Grant, Church in the Canadian Era, pp. 46-60; Handy, History of the Churches, pp. 344-354; Wigney, "Manifest Righteousness," pp. 88-99.

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82. Clark, Church and Sect, pp. 368-424; Magney, "The Methodist Church", pp. 12-13; Semple, "Impact of Urbanization", pp. 51-53. On the Salvation Army, see R. Gordon Moyles, The Blood and Fire in Canada (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977).
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95. Neil Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord': Nineteenth-Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood'" Histoire sociale/Social History XIV (No. 27) May 1981: 157-175.

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99. Margaret Conrad, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume Two (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 58.

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111. This discussion of evangelical women and foreign missions is based on the excellent analysis developed by Joan Jacobs Brumberg in Mission for Life and "Zenanas and Girlless Villages."

112. Cott, Bonds of Womanhood; and Sklar, Catharine Beecher.

113. Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood," p. 63.

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115. Ibid., p. 76.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 1870-1900: FROM THE FIRST LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS TO THE FORMATION OF THE DOMINION YWCA

In a pioneering article on "Nationalism, Feminism and Canadian Intellectual History," Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, observes that "nationalism and feminism have usually been in bad odour in Canada" and asks whether it is possible that there might exist "more than a fanciful connection" between the two. Would studies linking nationalism and feminism allow historians to arrive "at a role for women in the formation of ideology and thereby a broader view of the nature of intellectual history?"¹ Trofimenkoff attributes the absence of such studies in the Canadian literature to several factors. First is the fact that "intellectual history has been and can be done without taking women into account," especially given the tendency of intellectual historians to study nationalism as a political idea. A second factor is the development of women's history as "an outgrowth of social history, therefore in isolation from intellectual history."² There has also existed a methodological difficulty, given the shortage of female-generated sources of the type generally used by intellectual historians. Finally, Trofimenkoff suggests, Canadian intellectual historians, most being "liberal academics," have "given us a basically negative view of nationalism," and feminist historians, hostile to or ambivalent about nationalism in the present, have been reluctant to link "their" cause with nationalism in the past.³ Yet women's organizations, among them the Young Women's Christian Association, played a significant role in the formation and dissemination of nationalist ideas in late nineteenth-century English Canada--a role that with few exceptions remains largely

uninvestigated.⁴ This chapter will explore the developments leading to the formation of the Dominion YWCA in 1895 and the rationale behind its creation, both of which suggest the existence of some significant links between the crusading evangelical Protestant nationalism of the late nineteenth century and the unprecedented organization of English-Canadian middle-class women to address issues that they *perceived to be of concern to women and to the nation.*

* * * * *

Unlike many traditional women's benevolent societies of the nineteenth century that were organized on a parish basis in even the smallest communities, YWCAs were an urban phenomenon and first appeared in Canada's leading urban centres including Toronto (1873), Montreal (1874), Quebec (1875), and Halifax (1875). The first Canadian city YWCAs were established on the initiative of local women in response to local conditions rather than as part of any larger organized Canadian movement. They were, however, undoubtedly inspired by the existence of similar associations founded during the previous fifteen years by British and American women. In all cases the founding of a YWCA was preceded by a growing conviction on the part of local churchwomen that the changing circumstances of the young women of their community required an organized response on their part. The founders of the Toronto YWCA explained the need for their new organization in their 1874 report:

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.⁵

The YWCA's response to the "girl problem" in Canadian cities was not formulated by the young women who constituted that "problem." Unlike some of the earliest branches of the Young Men's Christian Association in Canada, which, beginning in Montreal in 1851, were organized by pious young men proceeding without the support of their disapproving clergy, the YWCA invariably resulted from the initiative of adult women on behalf of the "daughters" of the community.⁶

The impetus prompting the founding of a YWCA varied from one community to another, and could result from the initiative of a local woman familiar with the work of the YWCA in Britain or the United States, from the visit of an out-of-town speaker, or from a request by the local clergy or Young Men's Christian Association. The Toronto Women's Christian Association, the first Canadian YWCA to be organized on a permanent basis, was launched in 1873 as the direct result of an appeal by H. Thane Miller of Cincinnati, one of the leading laymen in the American YMCA and guest speaker at the ceremonies dedicating the new building of the Toronto YMCA, who addressed over three hundred Toronto women on the work of Christian women in Boston, Philadelphia and Cincinnati.⁷ The Toronto women voted unanimously to respond to his eloquent appeal for a similar work on behalf of their own young women and appointed from among their numbers two representatives from each Protestant church in the city to form a committee. Encouragement in this undertaking was offered by some of Toronto's leading clergy and representatives from the YMCA. In keeping with what would come to be defined as the mandate of all YWCAs, the new Toronto association, borrowing from the constitution of the Boston YWCA, described its principal concerns as "the temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women who are dependent upon their own exertions for support".⁸ The Montreal YWCA was organized in 1874 on the initiative of a Miss Hervey "who urged a number of ladies to organise themselves for the purpose of

attending to the temporal, moral, and religious welfare of the many young women who are attracted from different parts of the country to Montreal." The newly-opened branch requested "all Protestant young women who are strangers in the city...to report themselves to the Reception Committee" where they could obtain access to the reading room and boarding house accommodation by bringing an introduction, and promised that the Committee Rooms were to be "always at the disposal of ladies who desire to hold meetings, or to discuss schemes in the interest of women."⁹

The Toronto and Montreal YWCAs were followed in 1875 by new branches in Quebec City and Halifax, and by the turn of the century, nine more YWCAs had been organized in Kingston, Toronto (a YWCA Guild that amalgamated with the Toronto YWCA in 1911), Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Ottawa, Victoria, Brantford, Winnipeg and Vancouver.¹⁰ The founders of these early branches were drawn from the congregations of the largest and most prosperous churches and from some of the leading families in the community; officers were generally the wives of clergymen or of socially prominent business or professional men. Unlike some nineteenth-century women's organizations such as suffrage societies or Local Councils of Women where single professional women frequently played an active and prominent role, YWCA members were almost invariably married women.¹¹ In keeping with the pattern characteristic of nineteenth-century women's volunteer work, it is probable that most were middle-aged, having completed the most demanding of their responsibilities for childbearing and rearing, and depended upon the labour of servants to free them from the remainder of their household obligations.¹² City YWCAs were tightly controlled by an all-female Board of Managers consisting of some two or three dozen women. Access to a position on the Board was highly restricted, as "elections" generally consisted of the ratification of the choices of the Board's Nominating Committee by the membership at the annual meeting; officers

on the executive frequently retained their positions for decades. The young female clientele of the YWCA were not regarded as members at all during the 1870s and 1880s but were rather considered as the "objects" of the work. Admitted to the category of "associate membership" in the 1890s, they lacked the right to vote, hold office or participate in the making of policy.

Any general picture of the development of the YWCA at the local level in Canada in the last decades of the nineteenth century must include mention of the student YWCAs. In addition to the city YWCAs, this very different type of YWCA was appearing on Canadian college and university campuses in these decades. Unlike the city YWCAs, which were founded by YWCA women for young women, student YWCAs resulted from initiatives taken by women students themselves. Lacking the broader concern of the city YWCAs with the "temporal, moral and religious welfare" of young women, student YWCAs concentrated on the provision of "Christian fellowship" by linking all the Protestant women students on campus in what was to become, by the end of the century, one of the most important organized societies for Canadian women students. Student YWCAs were structured much more democratically than the city YWCAs, and their objectives, which will be discussed in a later chapter, were also very different. What the two types of YWCAs shared were similar origins and a similar perception of the "girl problem."¹³

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Neither city YWCAs nor student YWCAs were an indigenous Canadian phenomenon. The developments that had profoundly changed the lives and circumstances of Canadian young women--the rise of industrial capitalism, the spread of the factory system, urban

growth, and immigration--were by no means restricted to this country but were occurring on a global basis.¹⁴ In responding to these developments by establishing YWCAs in Canadian cities and universities, Canadian evangelical women were inspired by the example of British and American women in major centres such as London, Boston and New York, which appeared to portend the future for Canadian cities. Almost from the beginning, the founders of Canadian YWCAs realized that the dimensions of the "girl problem" extended far beyond their own communities and required new solutions, broader and more imaginative than anything conceived by their earlier counterparts of the ladies' aid societies and Dorcas sewing circles. Through travel and correspondence, and then by unprecedented international gatherings of evangelical women beginning in the 1870s, they sought to exchange information on programs and methods in order to benefit from the experience of like-minded women engaged in a similar undertaking. In the process they affirmed their membership in what was increasingly coming to regard itself as an international movement of evangelical women. The formation of the World's YWCA in 1894 was an institutional expression of the belief of British and North American evangelical women in their own special role as missionaries and in the importance of Evangelical Womanhood in the quest to redeem the world from the forces of darkness. By organizing a Dominion YWCA to affiliate with this body, Canadian evangelical women became full-fledged participants in a global effort to rescue heathen women from slavery and bondage and, by winning the young women to Christ, to convert the heathen nations to Christianity and the benefits of "civilization."

Nineteenth-century Canadian city and student YWCAs developed within the context of what Richard Allen has described as "a vast North Atlantic triangle of culture and religion."¹⁵ During their formative years, they were exposed to two distinctly

different patterns of YWCA development—one British and one American. While the British YWCA contributed in some significant ways to shaping the character of the YWCA as a world movement, providing it, for example, with a strong sense of its imperial mission, the "Canadian" YWCA evolved during the 1870s and 1880s as part of a North American organization. YWCAs in Canadian cities, often having little or no contact with their Canadian neighbours, developed as affiliates of two American YWCA bodies, designated "international" in deference to the presence of the Canadians.¹⁶ By 1890, Canadian evangelical women were firmly committed to the "American" pattern of YWCA work, which implied an emphasis on buildings, fundraising and administration, and the provision of a broad range of social services; the employment of trained college graduates as part of a commitment to the professionalization of YWCA work; incorporation of the Christian student movement within the YWCA; and a consciousness of the YWCA as distinctly a women's movement. Yet despite their adoption of the American model, Canadian YWCAs became, by the 1890s, increasingly dissatisfied with their status as junior partners within a North American YWCA. Their unhappiness was exacerbated by a profound split within the American movement over the question of the YWCA's relationship to the evangelical churches, which prompted some Canadians to voice a desire for an organization of their own that would be more committed to the cause of "true Christianity." The breaking away from their American affiliations to form a Dominion YWCA was an expression of a deep evangelical commitment on the part of the Canadian YWCA women that was increasingly tied to an incipient Canadian nationalism.

Like women in Australia, South Africa, Egypt and India, Canadian evangelical women were familiar with the work of the YWCA in Britain, offshoots of which followed the spread of the British Empire throughout the globe.¹⁷ YWCAs were established in Hong

Kong, Calcutta, and a host of other cities by missionaries, the wives of British colonial officials, and British travellers and immigrants. Of the two patterns of YWCA work to which Canadian women were exposed, the British was the more deeply evangelical and committed to the importance of "personal work," the bringing of individual women to the acceptance of Christ as their saviour through the personal contact of a one-to-one relationship. Yet the British YWCA, too, had from the beginning a broader conception of the role that evangelical women should play. Its objectives were described in a letter sent to all British YWCA workers in 1885:

As an Association our first aim is to win their souls for Christ. But we are not an evangelistic agency only. And when their young hearts are His, our aim is, when (1) they are won for Christ, (2) to help them to be better daughters, sisters, servants, teachers, women of business; and so, in the future, better wives and mothers than they would have been if the Y.W.C.A. had not touched them. We want the homes of England to be brighter and holier places because our Y.W.C.A. has a place in the land...Then (3) we want to help them to be better church-members. As Y.W.C.A. workers it is against all our principles to proselytise. Our work is to help our girls to be regular and faithful in their place and in their work in the part of Christ's Church to which they belong, conscientiously seeking to establish and never to unsettle them; taking all difficulties and differences to God, letting them feel that we give Him the first place, and that His Word is truly our Guide, and His Spirit is our Counsellor.¹⁸

Helping British women to be "better daughters, sisters, servants, [and] women of business" was to involve the British YWCA in the provision of a range of "secular" services such as boarding houses, cafeterias, and Travellers' Aid, yet this, as will be seen, was a more restricted definition of the YWCA's mandate than that which was to win acceptance in North America.

The British YWCA originated from two distinct movements begun in 1855. The first was a network of prayer circles organized by a schoolmistress named Emma Roberts to pray each Saturday night for the souls of young women everywhere.

1. Our Princesses, and all who are in the glitter of fashionable life. 2. Daughters at home of the middle classes. 3. Young wives and mothers. 4. Governesses in families, and teachers in day and Sunday schools. 5. Shopwomen, dressmakers, milliners, and seamstresses. 6. Domestic servants. 7. Factory girls. 8. Young women in our unions, hospitals, and reformatories, the criminal and the fallen. 9. Those who are enchained by Judaism, Popery, and heathenism.¹⁹

The idea of a prayer union on behalf of young women proved popular and branches sprang up in many other small communities. Their object was primarily the spiritual welfare of their membership, most of whom were "girls of leisure" and already full communicants of Protestant churches, with a view to winning them to dedicate their lives more fully to Christ and a life of Christian service. An attempt was made in 1876 to unite the prayer circles with the fledgling Girls' Friendly Society, which expressed its concern for young women in more concrete terms by fostering "semi-maternal" relationships between upper-class women and individual working women, particularly servants.²⁰ The attempt at amalgamation was unsuccessful, however, because the YWCA prayer circles had been organized from the beginning on an interdenominational basis that proved incompatible with the GFS's close ties to the Church of England.²¹ An alternative plan was adopted, allowing for the creation of an outer circle of young women who were perhaps only nominally Christian and thus ineligible for membership in the prayer circle, but who desired to associate with others and could be encouraged to commit themselves more fully to Christ. The YWCA, according to this plan, was to become "an organised band for aggressive work among young women".²² By 1872, one hundred and thirty such bands had been organized in rural parishes throughout the British Isles.²³

Also in 1855, a very different movement on behalf of young women was launched by Lady Mary Jane Kinnaird, wife of a British member of Parliament and prominent philanthropist. Concerned particularly for the welfare of young women travelling alone,

Kinnaird helped to place matrons responsible for the protection of young women emigrants on ships bound for the colonies and established a home in London in 1855 for the temporary accommodation of young women en route to join Florence Nightingale and her nurses in the Crimea.²⁴ With the end of the war, this became a permanent home for young women coming from the provinces to seek employment in the city. Over a period of years, the original home became three and the provision of accommodation was supplemented by Bible classes, religious meetings, educational classes, social activities, employment agencies, libraries, restaurants, Travellers Aids, and clubs. As in the case of the prayer unions, no formal organization evolved but as word spread of the success of Lady Kinnaird's undertaking in London, similar homes appeared in other urban centres throughout the British Isles. By the 1870s, both the prayer unions and the London homes had used the name Young Women's Christian Association in imitation of the already well established Young Men's Christian Association. The union of the two wings of the movement that became the British YWCA occurred in 1877 when Kinnaird and Robarts agreed to merge their movements in a formal organization to be known as the London Young Women's Institute Union and Christian Association, soon known simply as the Young Women's Christian Association. The first steps toward the creation of a truly national organization were taken in 1884 with the formation of a United Central Council, which included representatives from the Councils of London, South of England and Wales, North of England, Scotland and Ireland. Its objects, as stated in the constitution, were to include "1. Union for prayer for young women. 2. Work amongst young women of all classes by all means that are in accordance with the Word of God."²⁵

While the work of the Evangelisation Department remained paramount, the British YWCA rapidly became involved in a variety of activities that attempted to provide for

the material rather than the spiritual needs of young women. An important component of its work was assistance to travellers and emigrants. From an early date it cooperated actively with the British Women's Emigration Association and other similar organizations engaged in the task of peopling the Empire with "redundant" British women.²⁶ In 1885, at the height of a public outcry over child prostitution and "white slavery", the British YWCA played a key role in the launching of the Travellers' Aid Society which rapidly developed into an international movement in its own right.²⁷ Factory workers were also targeted early in the history of the British YWCA. The Factory Helpers Union, launched in 1886 under the auspices of the YWCA, led to the formation of another independent movement--the Federation of Working Girls' Clubs. Local branches of the YWCA offered libraries and educational classes for working women and in 1884, the London branch opened the first British restaurant for women. The evangelical objectives of the work, however, were never far below the surface. The British YWCA quickly adopted a distinction between members (of the prayer union) and associates to allow Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants who had not yet declared themselves for Christ, to become members of the general Association. Thrift and total abstinence from alcohol were encouraged among the membership and in 1896 girls' camps were initiated as "one of the most potent methods of evangelisation."²⁸ Conferences of YWCA secretaries, the first of which was held in 1877, emphasized prayer, Bible study and the deepening of the inner spiritual life of the workers, as well as consultation over methods. The recruiting and training of missionaries was also considered a central task of the YWCA.

In her analysis of the important formative decade following the organization of the United Central Council, World's YWCA historian Anna V. Rice has outlined four outstanding characteristics of the early YWCA movement in Britain. First, the British

women who founded the movement were "without exception...the product of the great evangelical movement that was of such importance to the religious and cultural development of Great Britain in the nineteenth century. The Trittons, the Kinnairds, the Morleys, the Campbells, all belonged to that remarkable group of families with large business interests and active in affairs of Empire-wide extent, which had been drawn together by the evangelical revival."²⁹ As Rice notes, involvement with the YWCA was in some ways "a family project" and men played a prominent and public role, holding the posts of president and paid Secretary to the National Council until 1908; the first president of the British YWCA was the noted philanthropist Anthony Ashley Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.³⁰ The basis of the British YWCA's original constitution was a deeply evangelical statement: "A living union with Christ our God and Saviour,--the only principle of action being the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,--uniting in prayer and work those who desire to extend His Kingdom among young women by all means that are in accordance with the Word of God."³¹ The evangelical character of the British YWCA was strengthened under the influence of the revivals of the 1870s following the British tours by American evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey, and it continued to place a heavy emphasis on Bible study and evangelistic efforts, stressing the importance of conversions brought about by one-to-one contacts between women.

The second outstanding trait of the early British YWCA, as noted by Rice, was its disregard of denominational lines. This commitment to interdenominational cooperation was to distinguish the YWCA from other organizations such as the GFS and women's missionary societies which worked along more narrowly denominational lines. Thirdly, the British YWCA relied on voluntary rather than professional leadership. Almost all the work, in the first decades, was carried out by Honorary Secretaries, "women of

social standing who carried correspondence, kept accounts, taught Bible classes, held evangelistic meetings, traveled over the British Isles and sometimes far beyond, in the interests of the work."³² Finally, the British YWCA was unique in the strength of its missionary interest. One of the first actions of the United Central Council was to establish two committees for the extension of YWCA work beyond the British Isles: the Foreign and Continental Division to look after foreign young women in Britain as well as British women on the European Continent, and the Extra-European and Colonial Division to extend the Association to the British colonies and other lands beyond Europe. In keeping with the evangelical commitment of the founders, the expanding missionary commitment of the churches, and growing imperial sentiment, wherever the YWCA was carried by British emigrants, travellers, and missionaries, it was reproduced as Protestant, evangelical and interdenominational. It was the missionary commitment of the British YWCA that would lead by the end of the century to the formation of a World's YWCA.

Meanwhile in the United States, a distinctly North American YWCA movement, sharing some characteristics of the British YWCA but differing from it in some significant respects, was also taking shape.³³ The unique features of the nineteenth-century American YWCA were to have a profound influence on the pattern of YWCA development in Canada. The first American city to undertake YWCA work was New York where, in 1857, a Ladies' Christian Association growing directly out of a religious revival first endeavoured "to labor for the temporal, moral and spiritual welfare of self-supporting young women." A boarding home for young women was opened in 1860. Like the New York branch, the Boston association, the other principal pioneer of American YWCA work, was a direct response to the growing numbers of young women coming to the city to seek work in the expanding factories. Boston was the first

American Association to call itself a YWCA and took as its mandate "the temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women dependent on their own exertions for support." Within a few years both branches featured boarding homes, Travellers Aid, employment bureaux, religious meetings, and classes to provide training for employment in offices, shops and domestic service. In both New York and Boston, the basis of active (voting and office-holding) membership was full membership in a Protestant evangelical church. Like the early branches of the British YWCA, both were interdenominational, retaining administration in the control of Protestant evangelicals while the associate and non-member constituency was not bounded by religious lines.

The rapidly proliferating branches of what was to become the American YWCA developed on a much more diversified and decentralized basis than was the case in Britain, no central administrative body emerging to promote standardization or the organization of new branches. More than the British YWCA, which tended to be more evangelistic in its orientation and to remain narrowly focussed on young women, early American YWCAs placed more emphasis on the physical, social and intellectual, rather than the exclusively spiritual, development of the young woman, and undertook the "rescue" of prostitutes and "fallen women," and the dispensation of relief to the poor in the tradition of nineteenth century women's charitable work. Many early branches were known as Ladies' or Women's Christian Associations rather than YWCAs in keeping with this broader mandate. Differing even more dramatically from the British case, there was no attempt to develop a uniform basis of membership that would retain control in the hands of evangelical church members. Unlike the Boston and New York branches, other associations, "while Christian in motivation and spirit, did not define their basis in evangelical or even in Protestant terms, and had as officers or on their

Boards of Managers members of non-evangelical churches such as the Unitarian, and Roman Catholics as well as Protestants."³⁴

One of the most significant features of the YWCA as it developed in the United States was its emphasis on the holding of property and the construction of buildings. To a much greater extent in North America than in Britain, the YWCA was a physical entity as well as an organized body of women. As early as the 1880s, rented rooms and converted boarding houses were proving inadequate for the purposes of YWCAs in many American cities. Their broader mandate and increasing emphasis on the "four-fold" development of the young woman along social, physical and intellectual as well as spiritual lines, achieved architectural expression in the specially designed and constructed YWCA building, featuring a boarding home, meeting rooms, classrooms, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. The requirements of the physical plant led to an enormous diversion of energy into the tasks of fundraising and administration, with the result that the tension between the religious and secular goals of the YWCA was much more aggravated in the United States than was the case in Britain. When fundraising, rather than evangelistic work, became the major task of the Board of Managers, YWCA workers were valued more for their social contacts and administrative abilities than for the strength of their religious convictions. Increasingly, too, as the costs of property and buildings drove YWCAs to seek financial support from the public, the American organization formed an alliance with the business community that was to prove as significant as its relationship with the evangelical churches.

Unlike the British YWCA which drew its workers and teachers from a supply of volunteer "ladies of leisure," the American YWCA movement emphasized the importance of a staff of trained and salaried YWCA secretaries. (The British YWCA later adopted the use of trained professional workers, but this was largely the result of the influence

of the American movement.) In the employ of a local branch, a secretary acted as a manager or "executive director" who was responsible for instituting and running programs and services according to the instructions of the Board of Managers.

Increasingly the YWCA secretary was drawn from the ranks of female college graduates and was required to take at least one year of additional training in YWCA work and methods. Included as an important part of the training of the YWCA secretary was instruction in evangelistic methods or "personal work." Although the British YWCA required earnestness and zeal in its workers, formal training in evangelistic techniques was never adopted to the same extent as in the United States.³⁵ College students were encouraged to consider the YWCA secretaryship as a career. In 1891, one prominent figure in the American YWCA commented that "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, she noted, "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."³⁶

Undoubtedly the American tendency toward the professionalization of YWCA work, and consequent interest in recruiting the future female professional during her college years, had some connection to the incorporation by the American YWCA (and YMCA) of the student Christian movement, a development that did not occur in Britain where the student movement developed entirely independently.³⁷ As a result, the Christian student movements in the two countries exhibited the same "American" and "British" patterns as the YWCA and YMCA. On a visit to Britain in 1894, John R. Mott, founder of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, found British students "in advance" in social settlements and off-campus mission activities, but "behind the

Americans" in fifteen areas, "most notably in organization, membership strategic programs such as the fall campaign for new students, 'personal work', revivals, Bible Study, missionary activities, buildings, leadership training programs, and paid secretaries."³⁸ In North America, the first student YWCAs were closely tied to the Intercollegiate YMCA which had preceded them, the first campus YMCAs being organized as early as 1857, having their roots in earlier student devotional societies.³⁹ By 1877, twenty or thirty such isolated societies were to be found on Canadian and American college campuses and in that year were organized into an Intercollegiate Department of the YMCA which had, by 1885, over 250 branches with over 13,000 members.⁴⁰ In the late 1880s, the president of a leading American college observed that "the Young Men's Christian Association has well nigh the monopoly of the religious culture of students in our universities and colleges."⁴¹ Under these circumstances the increasing numbers of women students frequently turned to the YMCA as the only opportunity for religious fellowship on campus, often playing an active role on the executive. By the 1880s, it appeared to some observers that the YMCA was in danger of losing its distinctive character as a religious agency for young men.

According to Clarence P. Shedd, historian of the American student Christian movement, three factors worked independently to bring about the formation of an Intercollegiate YWCA separate from the men's organization.⁴² One influence came from within the YMCA itself. Those hostile to the presence of women argued that the YMCA ought to be an agency of young men giving specialized religious leadership to young men, on the grounds that a broader mandate threatened to make the YMCA into another religious denomination. Pressure was therefore exerted on women students to form their own religious organizations. A second factor in the creation of an Intercollegiate YWCA was the spontaneous and independent formation of student religious societies

composed exclusively of women students. In 1872 the first student YWCA was formed at Illinois State Normal University, borrowing its constitution from the YMCA. Many women students apparently were not satisfied with their place in an organization that was dominated by men and primarily concerned with the welfare of young men. Furthermore, if the only opportunity for intercollegiate relationships was through the student YMCA, women in co-educational colleges were effectively cut off from contacts with fellow students in women's colleges and seminaries, a situation that many found unsatisfactory. The final impetus toward the formation of a student YWCA movement was the increasing interest in the women students being demonstrated by the Women's and Young Women's Christian Associations, already organized on a national basis. Given that the student YMCAs had been organized as an Intercollegiate Department of the YMCA in 1877, the women students had every reason to expect that a similar relationship between the women's city and college associations would evolve. In fact, however, this relationship was considerably complicated by the students' strong commitment to the evangelical membership test as a prerequisite for membership in the YWCA. This question of the membership basis was to prove highly divisive and profoundly significant for both the American and Canadian organizations.

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During the formative decades of the 1870s and 1880s, when Canadian YWCAs evolved largely in isolation from one another, contacts between the branches were often precipitated by the growing mobility of the young women targeted as the objects of YWCA work. Requests received from young women or their families that a particular young woman should be met by a YWCA worker on her arrival at the dock or train station were frequently relayed from one branch to another, requiring correspondence and

cooperation between the various locals. Port cities that received large numbers of British immigrants were often in direct contact with the British YWCA and with the British Women's Emigration Society to ensure that young women could be supervised during every stage of a voyage from London, England, to Victoria, B.C. Other Canadian branches were in contact with major American centres such as Boston and Seattle. By 1891, the Toronto YWCA was able to report: "Christian Association boarding houses are now like a network all over Great Britain, Ireland, the United States and Canada. Any young woman can go directly from one to the other."⁴³ If a Canadian city was visited by a British or American woman involved in the YWCA in her own community, members were treated to an account of the progress and problems of the work elsewhere; likewise, Canadian members of local YWCA Boards, while travelling on vacation in Britain or the United States, made a point of paying a visit to the local YWCA, returning to share their experience with fellow Board members. Yet while the British influence on the development of the first city YWCAs in Canada was significant, exerted largely through the influence of British emigrants settling in Canadian cities, the context in which nineteenth-century Canadian YWCAs evolved was primarily North American. As in the case of other early developments in the field of social welfare originating in England, such as prison reform and charity organization, "Canadians encountered their principles and practices through their American followers."⁴⁴

While the early North American city YWCAs did not follow the British example by creating a centralized administrative body, they quickly came to the realization that they would benefit by comparing methods and programs and by sharing information and solutions to common problems. The holding of national conferences for consultative purposes, made possible by improvements in rail transportation, became the major vehicle for the standardization and professionalization of American YWCA work in the

nineteenth century. The process began with an exchange of annual reports through the mail and quickly led to informal gatherings of delegates from the various branches.⁴⁵ The first such gathering was held in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1871 as delegates from Boston, Providence, Lowell, Buffalo, Washington, Cincinnati and Philadelphia arrived to gather for prayer and discussion of questions of common concern to those engaged in "striving to protect and to benefit in every way their young sisters, who are toiling for their own and others' support, with many trials and temptations."⁴⁶ A model for those of successive conferences, the Hartford program consisted of reports of the work in the eight associations represented and in thirteen other cities unable to send delegates, in addition to discussion of the following topics:

1. What are the greatest obstacles to the successful working of our Associations?
2. How shall we secure efficient committees?
3. How shall we establish systematic payments?
4. How shall we best gain a permanent influence over the industrial young woman?
5. What is the best method of Bible teaching in the classes of young women connected with the Homes or Associations?
6. Is it expedient to have a department for the more thorough training of sewing girls in the Homes?
7. Is it economy or promotive of family feeling to have the Home table on the restaurant plan?⁴⁷

Among the delegates to this Hartford gathering was H. Thane Miller of the American YMCA, who was shortly thereafter to inspire the women of Toronto to undertake similar work.

One of the more important resolutions passed at the Hartford conference of Women's Christian Associations provided for similar meetings to be held at intervals of not more than two years. In 1873, forty-eight delegates from seventeen cities met in Philadelphia where they were pleased to learn that this work was being undertaken by Christian women in thirty-six American cities. The greetings received from Italy and

word of new Associations in Canada led to the first international gathering in Pittsburgh in 1875, at which reports and letters were received from England, France, Holland and Switzerland, and from Canadian branches in Quebec City and Belleville, Ontario. The Pittsburgh gathering was important in that the first steps were taken toward establishing a formal international organization. A constitution was adopted and an executive committee was assigned, not only to organize future conferences, but also to "prepare and publish a report of the conferences, conduct correspondence with, and encourage visitation among the Associations, promote the work of existing societies, stimulate organizations in places where they do not already exist, and transact such other business as may be entrusted to them by the conference."⁴⁸ Although no efforts were made at this stage to establish a uniform program of work, there was a consensus that the adoption of similar methods was desirable, a view that was strengthened with each passing year by the increasing mobility of the young women who were the targets of the programs.

For those Canadian YWCAs fortunate enough to send delegates, who generally travelled at their own expense, attendance at these early gatherings was perhaps the most important means by which isolated locals learned from one another's experience and gained a sense of their common objectives. Delegates from the Quebec WCA who attended the Seventh Biennial Conference of Women's Christian Associations in Boston in 1883 reported: "While all the Associations have different branches of work to suit the exigencies of their surroundings, uniformity of construction is the prevailing characteristic. All have the same end in view, many of the same difficulties to overcome."⁴⁹ The practical insights into the problems and possibilities of YWCA work gained from attendance at such gatherings was considered invaluable. Even more important, however, was what YWCA conference delegates consistently referred to as

the "inspiration" they derived as a result of their opportunity to associate with like-minded women and to gain a larger perspective of YWCA work. The Quebec delegates commented: "...it was indeed a glorious privilege to meet those noble women whose names had so long been familiar to us, and to feel that our Association, feeble and insignificant though it is, does not stand alone, but is an integral part of a great whole."⁵⁰ Of course, few nineteenth-century Canadian YWCAs had the resources to send representatives to such gatherings and complaints of isolation from their sister organizations elsewhere were frequent.

One of the greatest honours to which a nineteenth-century YWCA could aspire was the hosting of one of these illustrious gatherings. Not only did such an event generate considerable excitement and "inspiration", but it also provided a great deal of publicity and helped to raise the profile of the organization in the community.⁵¹ This was particularly the case for women's organizations as the unusual spectacle of ladies meeting in conference inevitably attracted the attention of the press. Thus the meeting of the Fourth International Conference of Women's Christian Associations in Montreal in 1877 was, as the Montreal Daily Witness observed, "an event of no small importance" in that community.⁵² The conference was a "coup" for which the members of the Montreal YWCA were much indebted to their president, Mrs. P.D. Browne, who had attended the 1875 gathering in Pittsburgh, and persuaded the largely American gathering to hold its next meeting in Montreal. Fifty-two delegates arrived for the conference, representing fifteen American cities, England, Quebec City, and Brockville, Ontario, and reports and greetings were sent from many other Associations. At first, as the Montreal YWCA later reported, "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."⁵³ The delegates were welcomed at an elaborate reception held in the Congregational Church of the Emmanuel where some four hundred ladies and gentlemen spent the evening in "social intercourse" accompanied by music and refreshments. Among their numbers members of the press noted "many of our most prominent and benevolent citizens and a number of the city clergy."⁵⁴

The reports of the Montreal conference sessions reveal the wide range of activities being undertaken by Women's Christian Associations in the 1870s, including boarding houses, employment bureaux, industrial schools, reading rooms, dispensaries, flower missions, hospital and prison visitation, Magdalen Asylums, homes for aged women and experimental projects such as a cooking school and a seaside home for working women. At the opening of the conference, the retiring president, Mrs. Lamson of Boston, greeted the delegates with the declaration that since her arrival in Montreal, particularly in view of the accomplishments of the host association in three short years of existence, her thoughts had been filled with the growth of women's work.

Not only in Christian Associations are women called to work now; the wise men in many of our States are calling us to help them on all their various boards which have the care of women and children. In the workhouses, the reformatory schools and the prisons for women our counsel is sought. The power of women has been felt throughout the land in the temperance work of the past two years. Ladies, we must meet these demands upon us. Can we not as Christians hear the voice of our Heavenly Father in the call, and see His hand is opening all these doors of usefulness to us? ⁵⁵

That the Montreal ladies were indeed eager to make themselves useful was suggested by the attendance of two to three hundred women at each session of the conference. For most of them it was undoubtedly the first such experience of their lives and provided a valuable lesson in organization and proper business procedure.

The sessions at the 1877 conference included detailed reports of the work being undertaken in each city represented at the conference, with a short history and statement of the objectives of the work, a description of the programs and religious services offered, and a report on the status of the mortgage and condition of the treasury. In addition, lengthy papers were read on important topics of general interest such as "Employment for Women," "Boarding Homes," and "The Rescue of Fallen Women," substantial extracts of which appeared in the Montreal English press. One Montreal delegate, a Miss Mackin, Lady Superintendent of the Montreal General Hospital, contributed a paper on the training of nurses. Like Mrs. A.B. Leslie of Cleveland who spoke to the delegates on "The Rescue of Fallen Women," problems such as "the foul stream of prostitution" were conceived and addressed in evangelical terms that would have been very familiar to those in attendance.

To-day, as this turbid river of death, swollen into a flood, rolls through the world with a mighty impetus gained from its descent through the ages, we are met each to ask his neighbour what can be done to stem the torrent, or if that is already beyond our control, what can be done to narrow its channel, to keep it within its banks, to save all that is most precious to our national and individual life from being swept into its seething vortex of corruption.

In keeping with the evangelical tendency to look for social transformation through the spiritual transformation of the individual, she advised those who would reform fallen women that "in overcoming the evil of prostitution, as that of its sister evil, intemperance, they must get to the very root of the matter--in the heart. New motives, new principles must be supplied."⁵⁶ As well as discussions of the principles of philanthropy, however, the conference sessions also provided an opportunity to discuss the practical details of organizing and managing a YWCA. The following discussion was prompted by the paper on boarding homes presented by Miss Drinkwater of Boston:

Q. Has any difficulty arisen from receiving young men as visitors? A. No.
Q. Have you ever had any trouble as to time for family worship? A. Yes.
The hour was nine and afterwards changed to 7, i.e. immediately after tea.
Q. Do you compel your boarders to go to church? A. Yes, as a rule, it is
expected. Q. Would you tell us something about your socials? A. The young
ladies invite their own friends and that works well. Q. Do you limit the age
of those you admit? A. Yes, since we have been crowded we admit none
over forty years old.⁵⁷

Similar discussions following the reports and papers provided the delegates with
valuable opportunities to learn from the experience of others.

At gatherings such as the Montreal conference, the evangelical women of the
community were given the chance to affirm their sense of their own importance to the
church and to society, and to define the increasingly important role that they believed
they would play in the future. It appears, however, that some members of the Montreal
community were made somewhat apprehensive by the novel spectacle of organized
womanhood, and Mrs. Lamson's opening address to the conference was perhaps as much
a message of reassurance to the men in the audience as a word of advice to the women.

That woman is to be an increasing power in America, I may say in the world,
no one doubts. Let us see to it that it is the power of true Christian
women. Bear with me in one warning word: that influence is not to be
exerted by unsexing ourselves. Why is it that gentlemen ask our aid in
their public work? Is it because we are like themselves? No, but because
we are women, and have women's hearts, and women's heads, and women's
instincts...As Christian mothers, we have a duty to our daughters to train
them for what is before them, that they may learn while young what we of
this generation are just acquiring, and so be prepared to fill our places; but
never should they have cause to doubt that we believe our duties as wives
and mothers are paramount to all others, and that, however good the work
we may be doing, it had better be left undone if we must neglect our home
duties. ⁵⁸

Nevertheless, the women insisted on their right to conduct their own proceedings, and
to their bemusement gentlemen supporters found themselves excluded from the
conference sessions. Although most accepted their fate with good grace, the reporter
from the Daily Witness betrayed some irritation in his comment that the conference

deliberations had been "of an able, interesting and important character", as could be judged "from the broken and somewhat confused reports of their proceedings which have appeared in our columns--and which have been obtained second-hand and with some difficulty, in consequence of the ladies excluding newspaper reporters (and all others of the sterner sex) from their sessions and attempting to report themselves."⁵⁹

It is not difficult to surmise the reasons for the delegates' decision to exclude men from their sessions, since even the most sympathetic and supportive gentlemen were sometimes unintentionally patronizing and betrayed a certain inability to grasp the significance to the women of their Christian work "for women and by women." During the large public meeting held during the conference, conducted of course by men, such attitudes were clearly in evidence when some of the clergy appeared to have difficulty in treating a conference of Christian women as a serious event. The Rev. A.J. Bray observed in addressing the conference that he was glad the ladies "had found something to do." His mirthful remarks barely concealed his contempt for the women and their activities, evident even to the male reporter from the Daily Witness.

He said he did not know much what to say; did not know much about the object of the meeting. Two of the ladies had called on him, and suggested a subject on which he should speak; but, about ten minutes before leaving home, he had tried to think what it was, and for the life of him could not...The speaker proceeded in this strain, and in the course of further remarks said he presumed a portion of their work was to educate young women in domestic duties, for which there was need. So far as his acquaintance went, the ladies did not know much about work (!); they did not know when a potato was cooked. There were many unhappy marriages of young women, who when you heard them giggle, you heard all there was of them; when you saw them smile you saw all there was of them; they possessed no ideas. He was glad the Convention had come to Montreal, and he was sure it would result in good.⁶⁰

These remarks were greeted with polite silence by the visiting delegates and the undoubtedly mortified members of the host Association, but the chairman, Rev. G.H.

Wells, publicly rebuked the speaker, remarking that "if Mr. Bray had taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the ladies who had been meeting in Convention, he would have had a more favorable opinion of women."⁶¹ More supportive speakers, including Rev. L. Gaetz, Rev. J.F. Stevenson, and Principal Dawson of McGill University, praised the women effusively, drawing comparisons with the Biblical Naomi and Mary Magdalene, and expressing admiration for "their ability and tact--which the men could not aspire to."⁶² While acknowledging, however, that "it would belong to woman to stay the approaching tide of opposition to Christianity," they could not refrain from pointedly remarking that because of the "higher ministry" that God had given them, "women could afford to put aside all the controversies about creeds, &c., which occupy men's minds."⁶³

In accepting Mrs. Lamson's exhortation to "prepare to meet the demands of the nineteenth century by training ourselves," the delegates to the Montreal conference undoubtedly shared her view that "there is no better school than the Christian associations, and...no better college than these conferences."⁶⁴ But as well as being a time for conducting important matters of business and learning about the practical details of the administration of a YWCA, these early YWCA conferences were occasions that were valued for the opportunity to share religious fellowship with like-minded women. The conference sessions, which were held in the city's Protestant churches, were opened and closed with prayer, at a time when leading public prayer was an activity that required considerable courage for women, and the presentations of reports and papers were punctuated by the reading of psalms and the singing of favourite gospel hymns, including "I Left It All with Jesus," "Guide Me, Oh Thou Great Jehovah," and "Oh, To Be Nothing." Telegrams received from supporters elsewhere, such as the ladies of the Zenana Mission meeting concurrently in Pittsburg, contained greetings and

messages expressed in the form of Biblical verses. Even during their final expedition to shoot the Lachine Rapids on the steamer "Empress" before leaving Montreal, the delegates, overcome by the excitement, could not refrain from bursting into exuberant choruses of "Shall We Gather at the River?" and "Hold the Fort." All in all, the Montreal YWCA later reported:

Not a single unpleasantness occurred to mar the wonderful unanimity of feeling that rested upon the assembly. Truly our prayers were answered, and we trust our Master was honored. 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, could not fail to produce lasting benefit.⁶⁵

After "the warmest expressions of good will," the delegates departed, leaving the members of the host Association deeply affected and profoundly grateful for their experience. The Montreal YWCA, however, was unique among the Canadian associations in having an opportunity to feel itself so prominent a participant in the larger international movement. Most branches were unable to send delegates to the conferences, and since the International Conference lacked the resources to maintain a staff of travelling secretaries to provide needed assistance to struggling locals, the Canadians continued to be isolated from the Americans and from one another.

* * * * *

By the late 1880s, such a situation was becoming increasingly unsatisfactory to some of the Canadian branches, particularly those in Ontario, in keeping with an established pattern of "religious hegemony" of that province.⁶⁶ Joined in the early 1890s by the newly-formed Ottawa and Hamilton associations in agitating for greater

contact between the Canadian locals, the women of Toronto first initiated discussions of the possibility of a distinctly Canadian YWCA, reporting in 1889:

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.⁶⁷

Toronto, with the largest and wealthiest Protestant community of any city in the country, was to become the home of the new Dominion YWCA.

Among the several factors precipitating discussions of a Canadian organization was the perennial problem of isolation from the "international" movement. One travelling secretary reported to the 1891 international conference that Canada, "full of rich promise," had been visited only once in five years.⁶⁸ Advocates of a Canadian association were convinced of "the necessity of appointing an earnest and capable organizing Secretary, whose time and talents will be devoted to arranging and harmonizing the various Associations throughout the country, as well as organizing new ones in the many towns and cities of the Dominion."⁶⁹ Adelaide Hoodless, President of the Hamilton YWCA, argued that a Canadian secretary would have not only more time to give the Canadian locals, but greater commitment than any American could be expected to bring to the work.

We have had visits from International Secretaries, of one day, and I never felt that we had received any practical benefit. Of course, it is scarcely reasonable to expect the same interest or assistance from foreign visitors as from one whose loyalty would enable her to arouse the enthusiasm necessary for successful work.⁷⁰

There was also an expectation that a Canadian association could provide the locals with literature bringing a distinctly Canadian perspective to YWCA work. Those convinced of

the benefits of amalgamation had only to point to the example of others who had already discovered that "in all societies where the general welfare and strength of the cause is considered, it has been found necessary to organize a Dominion Council, for instance, the W.C.T.U., Girls' Friendly Society, King's Daughters, Christian Endeavour, Y.M.C.A., and others." Only in this way could the Canadian YWCAs hope to meet their principal need which was for "greater unity of purpose."⁷¹

A more disturbing problem to some of the Canadian women was the profound split that had arisen in the American movement, inevitably involving the affiliated Canadian associations, over the thorny question of the membership basis. The loosely organized International Conference of WCAs and YWCAs which had met in Montreal in 1877 did not impose a uniform basis of membership upon its affiliates; in particular, it did not require that they be controlled by Protestant evangelical church members. The Conference defined its mandate in broad terms that included relief work for the poor and the "rescue" of prostitutes, and attention to women's material as well as spiritual well-being. It also sought the cooperation of all Christian women, not only those who had "declared themselves for Christ," who were interested in the cause of the self-supporting young woman. Not all branches, however, were satisfied with such a broad statement of their mandate, and the desire of many Associations, particularly the more evangelical student locals, to place the work under the control of Protestant evangelical church members led to a split in the North American movement in 1886 when a separate International Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations was organized in Chicago. Joining the ranks of this new body were some of the Canadian associations who were unhappy with the broad mandate of the International Conference, thus further dividing the isolated locals of the fledgling Canadian movement.

The disagreement between the International Conference and the International Committee over the question of the membership basis reflected a more fundamental conflict over the ultimate objectives of the YWCA. This split, interestingly, never occurred in the British YWCA which was solidly committed to the evangelical membership test, nor did it occur in the YMCA which did not have to face the question of its relationship to a larger women's movement. Among North American YWCA women, however, the divisions were profound. Was the object of YWCA work the provision of social services for working women within a broad context of Christian reform or was it the winning of young women for Christ? Was the YWCA allied to the broadly based secular women's movement, or should its real loyalties lie with the Protestant churches and lay organizations such as the YMCA, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, and the Evangelical Alliance? These divisions were frequently expressed in the form of a debate over the nature of "true Christianity." Members of the International Committee criticized the International Conference for its vague definition of Christianity and for its failure to require that members demonstrate their faith and commitment by joining an evangelical church:

...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.⁷²

Paying little heed to accusations of narrowness and intolerance, members of the International Committee intended to unite "young women from Maine to California and from Canada to Mississippi" in work with a "well-defined purpose, the evangelization of the young women of the world".⁷³

Opponents of the evangelical membership test, many of whom were evangelicals themselves, insisted that a personal declaration of sympathy with the fundamental objectives of the YWCA ought to suffice as a requirement for membership, and that to ask for more was to demand something that even Christ himself had not asked of his followers.

To demand such a test is to supersede really Christ's own position. This question of creed and following is one that Christ himself, while yet in bodily form on earth, had to contend with; and strange to say, the contention was with the apostles themselves. They were always "forbidding," and Jesus was always saying, "Forbid them not." John, the beloved disciple, was the one who said, just after witnessing the Transfiguration, too, and when, one would think, his soul was most open to a better knowledge of the broadness of Christ's work and sacrifice, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name and he followeth not us, and we forbade him because he followeth not us." Did Jesus commend John's form of loyalty, his excluding spirit, his evangelical testings? Jesus said, "Forbid him not, for no one that doeth a miracle in my name can speak lightly of me."⁷⁴

In 1891, when members of the International Committee proposed amalgamation on the basis of agreement on the evangelical membership test, the older movement declined on the grounds that conformity to the evangelical basis would mean the curtailment of much YWCA work with no commensurate gain and "the loss of the fellowship of many who have long been most earnest and sympathetic co-workers, whose labors have been visibly stamped with God's approval."⁷⁵ According to American YWCA historian Mary S. Sims, this split resulted from "many different elements of conflict--the older against the younger, the religious liberal against the more restricted, the East against the Middle West, and the influence of the Young Men's Christian Association against a distinctly[sic] women's movement."⁷⁶ The split further deepened when the International Conference resolved itself into a parallel formal organization, the International Board, with headquarters in New York and a permanent executive committee, to include one representative from the British Provinces. Not until 1906

would these fundamental differences be resolved when the American associations finally united on the basis of the evangelical membership test to form the National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States.

The strongest push for the formation of a distinct Canadian YWCA came in the early 1890s from those branches, including Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, and the Toronto students, that were most dissatisfied with the broad mandate and basis of the International Board and were most committed to the YWCA as a united movement of evangelical women dedicated to the promotion of "true Christianity." Negotiations made little progress, however, until 1892 when rumours reached the ears of the Canadian women that a movement was afoot to establish a World's YWCA for the purpose of comparing and coordinating existing national organizations as well as extending and promoting the YWCA as a missionary movement in the foreign field. The formation of the World's YWCA resulted from an initiative by the British YWCA and the International Committee of YWCAs because of problems that were being encountered in countries such as India where both British and American YWCA missionaries were establishing new branches along the lines with which they were familiar, thus laying the basis for chaos with respect to the development of new national movements.⁷⁷ The staffing and financing of the new organization by the British and American YWCAs ensured, as World's YWCA historian Anna V. Rice, has commented, "a pattern of a world movement largely Anglo-Saxon in character."⁷⁸ More problematic from the point of view of Canadian women, who had no objection to Anglo-American domination of the international movement, was the fact that they would be represented on the new body only through their affiliation with the International Committee. Those Canadian branches affiliated with the International Board would have no representation at all because in keeping with the views of its founders the new world body was firmly

committed to an evangelical basis. From the outset, the advocates of a Dominion YWCA in Canada determined that Canadian women should be represented as a united national movement, ready to assume their part in the task of carrying the work of the YWCA to the women of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

The immediate impetus for the formation of the Dominion YWCA was the inspiration provided by the attendance of a number of prominent Canadian philanthropic women at the Congress of Women which met for two weeks at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The Congress, one of the most important women's events of the nineteenth century, was set up in sections dealing with "education, literature, science, religion, government, occupations, social reform, [and] philanthropy," and while in session it was addressed by over two hundred women on subjects ranging "from art to agriculture, from cookery to Assyrian mythology, from Islam to the industrial revolution, from women as pioneers to women as financiers."⁷⁹ A Canadian YWCA delegation including Mrs. Hoodless of Hamilton, Mrs. Fairburn of Peterborough, and Mrs. Harvie and Mrs. Cumming of Toronto, attended a day of YWCA sessions that included papers on "The Association Working with the Church," "The Strength of the YWCA," "The YWCA, Its Methods and Its Aims," and "What the Association Does for Young Women."⁸⁰ 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."⁸¹ This symposium launched the negotiations leading directly to the formation of the National Council of Women of Canada,⁸² and the responsibility

initiating similar negotiations to organize a national YWCA fell to Adelaide Hoodless, who later reported:

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.⁸³

Hoodless's efforts led to the inaugural meeting of the Dominion Young Women's Christian Association, which was held in Toronto on December 7, 1893, attended by delegates from city associations in Toronto, Montreal, Peterborough, London, and Hamilton, and from student YWCAs at Alma College (St. Thomas, Ontario), Toronto University, and the Toronto Medical College.⁸⁴

At the inaugural meeting, the principal address by Bertha Wright, President of the Ottawa YWCA, 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."⁸⁵ What opposition there was to the idea of a Dominion YWCA seemed to be based on fears of a lack of funds to support a national staff, and of a national organization in competition with the locals for the same sources of funds. Such objections were confidently dismissed by Adelaide Hoodless: "I cannot imagine any Y.W.C.A. worker having so little faith in the love and power of our Heavenly Father...Surely between Vancouver and Halifax sufficient money can be raised to extend the work of the Y.W.C.A., and it would be a poor compliment to the zeal and energy of Canadian women if they should fail in an effort of this kind."⁸⁶ The principal topic of the meeting thus became the question of the membership basis, the Canadians being just as divided over this issue as

their American counterparts. After heated discussion, it was decided to include the church membership test, requiring each local to ensure that control of the organization rested in the hands of evangelical church members, in the provisional constitution. Further discussion was postponed until the first Dominion Convention to be held in 1895. In the interim the provisional executive, principally Bertha Wright and Adelaide Hoodless, occupied itself with investigating the state of YWCA work across the country and with lobbying "the local associations [to] sever their connection with the two international bodies in order to build up a national association to be affiliated with the World's association."⁸⁷ By 1895, eleven associations had yet to take a position, eight had affiliated (Hamilton, London, Brantford, Ottawa, Toronto, Toronto University, Toronto Medical College, and McGill University), and five had refused to affiliate in protest against the church membership test.⁸⁸

The first meeting of the new Dominion Association, held January 22-23, 1895, in Ottawa, marking the birth of the YWCA as a distinctly Canadian organization entitled to affiliate as a national body with the new World's YWCA, was not a large affair, and its attendance by delegates entirely resident in Central Canada suggests that the claim to "national" status was somewhat premature. The Ottawa press reported, in addition to the members of the host association, only about a dozen delegates from outside the city, representing established local branches of the YWCA in Toronto, Hamilton, Peterborough, Montreal, London, Toronto University and McGill University.⁸⁹ The Daily Citizen observed, however, that despite the small number of delegates in attendance, the convention should be regarded as "perhaps one of the most unique gatherings of Christian workers ever held in Ottawa."⁹⁰ Reports of the work were read from the officers of the national executive and from the affiliated societies, and papers were delivered on the subjects of educational work--specifically the need

for domestic science and Bible classes, spiritual work or "personal work", and the inter-collegiate movement. Once again, however, the central issue confronting the delegates was the debate over the membership basis. The Ottawa Daily Citizen reported:

Two splendidly written papers were read, having reference to the different bases of membership. One of them, read by Mrs. Stevenson, president of the Montreal association, recommended that the basis of membership be left optional to the local associations, while Miss Bertha Wright recommended that the evangelical test system be adopted, keeping the control of the association in the hands of the Evangelical church.⁹¹

One of the factors that helped to sway the decision of the convention was undoubtedly the changed position of Adelaide Hoodless who, in order to avoid the serious schism that had occurred south of the border, professed a willingness to compromise on this question:

While a year ago I pronounced in favor of the evangelical basis on all sides, I have by experience and investigation had reason to modify my views somewhat. While my sympathy is with the evangelical movement, I would in the interest of harmony and the strength of united action, recommend that the question be left optional with local Associations, who know their own needs best, but the Dominion officers to be members of evangelical churches. However, as I do not think it is a question that will ever cause difficulty in our work--not half as much as a split--let the majority decide, and while we may agree to differ on that point, our efforts for the Association and its general welfare, may be united.⁹²

What emerged from the convention was a compromise that smoothed the way for the creation of a national movement united on the question of evangelical control, a development that did not occur in the United States for another decade.

Rather than the evangelical church membership test, the convention adopted the so-called Paris Basis of the World's YWCA, a statement that had the advantage of confirming the evangelical character of the YWCA and permitting the Canadians to affiliate with the new world body organized in the previous year.⁹³ It avoided,

however, the contentious evangelical test which offended some members with its implication that one could not be a "true Christian" without attending an evangelical church. The more "hardline" locals were granted the option of applying the evangelical test if they so desired, and of appending the basis of the Evangelical Alliance to the constitution.⁹⁴ As a result of this compromise, the dissenting locals were gradually brought into the fold in the five years following the first Dominion Convention. During that time the advocates of evangelical control were able to strengthen their position, swaying the dissenters to their view that "our basis is the best human agency to secure as our only foundation, 'The Rock, Christ Jesus.'"⁹⁵ By the end of the century, virtually all the affiliated branches had adopted a four-tiered system of membership categories--life, sustaining, active, and associate--which required that the active (voting and office-holding) membership be members of evangelical churches. By 1902, the model constitution endorsed by the Dominion Council enshrined the principle of evangelical control and, in order to avoid confusion, defined an evangelical church.⁹⁶

While the endorsement of evangelical control of the YWCA was both a statement of YWCA women's commitment to the evangelical churches and a patriotic rejection of a religious liberalism that was identified in some quarters as "American," it was also a concrete expression of the YWCA's position on "the woman question" and a statement of its relationship to the larger women's movement with which the YWCA increasingly identified itself. To some extent, of course, the two viewpoints expressed in the debate over the evangelical membership test continued to co-exist within the organization. In 1897 the liberal Mrs. J.F. Stevenson welcomed delegates to the conference of the International Board which was once again meeting in Montreal with a statement of her position on the YWCA's mandate. "Service to others for His sake must

be our watchword, as we hope for the highest success. And that service broadens out into all kinds of work, and meets all sorts of requirements. While in the deepest and truest sense evangelistic, it is our privilege to take our evangel, our "God's spell," into all that we do, and to count nothing outside our province that shall be for the elevation and aid of our sister-women."⁹⁷ At the same time, Bertha Wright defined the aim of the Ottawa YWCA more narrowly as "to lift all young women and not those of any special class, into a higher and nobler Christian womanhood, to train those who are already Christians to a full realization of their responsibility to other young women; and to lead those who are not yet Christians into Christ's Kingdom."⁹⁸ It was the predominance of the latter perception of the YWCA's mandate that undoubtedly accounts for the ambivalence of the YWCA toward the Canadian women's movement, most clearly expressed in its refusal to affiliate with the embodiment of the female reform impulse in Canada, the National Council of Women.

The question of possible affiliation of the YWCA with the new National Council of Women was first raised at the Dominion convention of 1895 and was submitted to a vote of the local associations later that year. Indicative of the degree of ambivalence existing within the YWCA over its relation to the women's movement was the defeat of this measure by only a narrow margin. Opponents of the measure shared the position of the Ottawa YWCA which was prepared to support membership in the NCW "provided its sessions are opened with audible prayer and the form used be the Lord's Prayer as given in Luke 11:2-5."⁹⁹ Disagreement over whether the meetings of the NCW should be opened with audible or silent prayer had already proven itself a source of considerable rancour within the NCW itself, suggesting the importance of religious divisions within the Canadian women's movement. The prayer question was in actuality a dispute over whether membership in the Council should be limited, as desired by the

London Local Council of Women, to "certain Associations of Women who believe in God and in Son our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁰⁰ Under the direction of Lady Aberdeen, the Council was persuaded to adopt a non-sectarian stance, indicated by its use of silent prayer which would not offend Catholic and Jewish women, as the only possible means by which the NCW could hope to lead a truly national and representative movement of women. The battle had been hard won, however, and not until 1900 were all local councils persuaded to adopt silent prayer.¹⁰¹

Opposition to the use of silent prayer at NCW meetings was led by the YWCA, in company with the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The YWCA's inflexible insistence on a particular form of audible prayer is perhaps difficult to understand from a contemporary perspective and the sympathies of historians have tended to lie with Lady Aberdeen and the more tolerant advocates of silent prayer. It is tempting to draw the conclusion that YWCA women were merely narrow-minded religious bigots who lacked a genuine commitment to the welfare of women, given that they were prepared to subordinate the latter to the interests of the Protestant churches. Yet the reality was considerably more complex. Wendy Mitchinson has suggested that the evangelical position on the prayer question was tinged with nationalism, as indicated in the reply of one speaker to an American observer who addressed the meeting of the NCW in favour of silent prayer: "...are we willing to follow in this respect the teaching of a nation...where the Bible can be banished from its schools as a sectarian book?"¹⁰² Yet the insistence on audible prayer also reflected the YWCA's commitment to evangelical forms as an expression of "social religion" and as an affirmation of membership in a female community of believers. Silent prayer had the disadvantage of being cold and intellectual, unlike audible prayer which not only provided women with an important emotional bond but also affirmed their commitment to those precepts that in

the view of the YWCA provided women with the surest basis upon which they could unite.

The YWCA's conflation of the interests of women with those of the Protestant churches helps to explain its position on the question of audible prayer and indicates that its refusal to compromise on this issue did not by any means indicate a lack of commitment to the cause of women. As the YWCA's representative at the 1895 meeting of the National Council of Women, Bertha Wright wished the NCW "God-speed in all its undertakings." The YWCA, she noted, "though not a federated Society, is in hearty sympathy with this and every movement which has for its aim and object the elevation of women." But she also felt compelled to state pointedly and significantly on behalf of the YWCA:

We believe that the women of this and every Christian land owe their advanced position to-day to the Crucified One whose pierced hands extended to woman, lifted her up from the very depths of degradation, and placed her on the pedestal of Hope and Love; and we seek to awaken our young women to the grand possibilities before them for the development of a grand ideal Christian womanhood.¹⁰³

The YWCA was committed to advancing the interests of women and to expanding the opportunities available to women, but unlike the NCW, was convinced that it was only in the context of evangelical religious teachings that such a goal should or could be accomplished. Although this differing perception of the interests of Canadian women did not preclude cooperation between local YWCAs and Local Councils of Women, it did prevent affiliation of the Dominion Council of YWCAs with the National Council of Women for nearly two decades. Not until 1914 did the YWCA eventually resign itself to the necessity of silent prayer at NCW meetings.

The view that Christianity, and evangelical Protestantism in particular, would inevitably advance the interests of women was held not only by the YWCA but by liberal

evangelicals of both sexes in the late nineteenth century. In Canada, one of the most articulate writers on the subject of the benefits of Christianity for women was the Reverend Benjamin Fish Austin, Methodist principal of Alma Ladies' College in Belleville, Ontario.¹⁰⁴ The YWCA heartily endorsed the views of Principal Austin, the Ottawa branch seeing fit in 1892 to reproduce his short essay, "What Christ Has Done for Woman," which neatly summarized the principal arguments used by liberal evangelicals to link the interests of women and evangelical religion:

Of all the religions of earth, Christianity is the only one that sets the crown of honor upon woman...Christ was the first teacher that humanity ever had who emphasized the value of those qualities in which woman excels. I allude to the passive virtues, gentleness, meekness, patience, self-denial and other virtues which women possess in a pre-eminent degree...Christ was the first to show that ideal humanity embraced not only the manly man but also the womanly woman...Hence, it is, wherever Christ has been preached, womanly attributes have risen in the estimation of mankind; wherever Christ's banner has been unfurled, woman has found protection, privilege and power...Christ, through His truth has emancipated woman from the slavery of ignorance, prejudice, fear and degradation...It was the Bible that first styled woman a helpmeet for man, [and] it was Christianity that first crowned motherhood with honor and threw ineffable sweetness and an unspeakable charm into those words, MOTHER and HOME. What wonder that from the days of Christ's earliest ministry to the present hour, woman has been most largely represented among His followers...Everywhere woman is recognizing Christ's call, and going forth in His name to proclaim, if not by ministry of words, by the far the more eloquent ministry of loving deeds, His Glorious salvation. And thus is woman attempting to repay the infinite obligation which she owes to Him who has conferred more of honor, nobility and glory upon womanhood than all the other teachers on earth...¹⁰⁵

Variations of these arguments were used by YWCA women on many occasions.

At the third biennial conference of the Dominion YWCA, meeting in Peterborough in 1898, Mrs. John McDougall, national president and president of the Montreal branch, expounded on what was possibly the YWCA's favourite argument demonstrating Jesus's commitment to women--that the news of the resurrection was entrusted to Mary Magdalene rather than to any of the (male) disciples.

Woman's love and faithfulness drew her to that rocky tomb. Heaven had a message for the earth that day, and "the angel of the Lord" had descended to give it. The heavenly messenger awaited the coming of an earthly one. Mary came and to her it was committed. "Go quickly and tell the disciples that He is risen from the dead"; and on the way she met the risen Lord, when He too availed Him of her assistance. Has that fact no significance for us? We think it has viz., that Woman should do her share in the great work which He was so soon to commit to others. In belief of this, we who are privileged to do it place Jesus first, undertake all in His name, do all for His glory...and wherever there is a young woman to be helped, try to reach her for the sake of Him who died to save her, and for the benefit that she in turn will be in showing to those around her the power of His redeeming love.¹⁰⁶

These arguments were offered by the YWCA to counter the traditional teachings of St. Paul who argued that women's place in the church was to remain quiet and subordinate to men. YWCA women, who felt that such a position devalued women's abilities and their potential contribution to the church, stressed that Christ himself had been the first to recognize women's special ministry. While they never argued women's right to serve the church as preachers and ministers, they nevertheless used Christ's teachings and the story of Mary and the resurrection to win recognition of the value of women's special qualities, to provide women with new opportunities for service, and to enhance their importance to the church.

* * * * *

Although scattered in different cities and able to meet only once or twice a year, the new national executive of the YWCA accomplished a good deal in the remaining five years of the nineteenth century, managing to lay the foundation for the emergence of a genuine national movement in the twentieth century. The bulk of its work during this early period consisted mostly of correspondence with the World's YWCA, the International Board and International Committee, the YMCA, the World's Student Christian Federation and other international Christian bodies. Considerable lobbying

was done to persuade the local associations that in view of the existence of a Dominion YWCA, they ought properly to sever all ties to the American bodies. In 1897, Canadian affiliates of the International Board still included Halifax, Charlottetown, Hamilton, Kingston, Montreal, Quebec, and Toronto.¹⁰⁷ Montreal was the last to withdraw in 1902. Those locals which had not already done so were also instructed to modify their constitutions in accordance with the new basis, restricting the privileges of voting and office-holding to members of evangelical churches. Considerable assistance was also provided to the locals. Correspondence received from the latter suggesting "the great need of literature in connection with the Dominion Association," a request was made for a Canadian page in the World's Quarterly; when that request was denied the decision was taken to initiate publication of a Canadian organ.¹⁰⁸

A concerted effort was made to break down the isolation of the locals by means of systematic visits by members of the national executive. At the 1895 Convention, Bertha Wright was appointed first National Travelling Secretary, assigned "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."¹⁰⁹ 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," Wright was forced to resign as her salary could not be guaranteed.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the national executive reported in 1898 that every local association had been visited during the previous two years by either the president or another member of the executive.¹¹¹ These visits provided publicity that helped to legitimize the work of the struggling

locals or to generate public support in communities where a YWCA did not yet exist. In 1895, the citizens of Galt, Ontario, were addressed by Adelaide Hoodless and Bertha Wright on the subject of the YWCA's "Work Among Young Women," explaining the changing conditions that made YWCAs necessary, clarifying some misunderstandings about the nature of the work, defining the qualities of the ideal young woman, and emphasizing the importance of women to the home, the church, and the state.¹¹² Accomplished on a slim budget of \$380.59 in 1896¹¹³, the national work was financed almost entirely by gifts from members of the executive, particularly Mrs. John MacDougall of Montreal.

The most challenging and significant task facing the new Dominion YWCA in the first years of its existence was the unification of a group of disparate and autonomous bodies, some of which had been functioning independently for decades, into a cohesive movement whose members were conscious of their participation in a larger national and international whole. This task was attempted and to some extent accomplished largely through the holding of national conferences in Hamilton (1896), Peterborough (1898) and London (1900). Reporting to the Peterborough conference in 1898, the members of the National Executive Committee urged the local branches to support the Dominion association and to conceive of the YWCA's work in terms that extended far beyond the boundaries of their community.

We believe that the power of the national association lies in the strength of each local association, on the principle that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. We have striven to strengthen our weakest links and have sought in each town to divert the interest aroused by the National organization into the channel of the local association. We trust, that now each association and each individual member may feel it a privilege to share in the work of extending the association in our land, and also as God gives us opportunity in other lands also. As we report the "little done" our hearts are burdened with the "much to do" and the cities and towns of our country who need associations, and who turn to us to help them to win the young women for Christ. Conscious of our insufficiency we would ask your

earnest prayers that as an association in Christ we may stand shoulder to shoulder in the glorious work of extending the Kingdom of Heaven among young women of our land.¹¹⁴

These national conferences were attended, to the satisfaction of the national executive, by delegates from eight affiliated associations in 1895, thirteen in 1896, and eighteen in 1898, and offered many of these branches their first opportunities to benefit from the experience of YWCA workers in other Canadian cities. The program of the London conference featured, in addition to religious services, Bible study, and reports of the local associations, papers on a wide range of topics including diet dispensaries, boarding houses, domestic science, personal work, "The Responsibility of the College Woman", libraries, junior work, physical work, self-governing clubs, and "Canada's Day of Opportunity."¹¹⁵

Perhaps the most challenging task of all those that faced the executive of the new Dominion YWCA was to arouse in the isolated branches preoccupied with their local problems a sense of their participation in an international movement. While turn-of-the-century Canadian women reformers frequently addressed "the woman question" in international terms and spoke of an international women's movement that encompassed the globe, this aspect of the Canadian women's movement has been little studied by scholars.¹¹⁶ In the case of the YWCA, this context is particularly important, given that the YWCA was an international rather than an indigenous organization. The national conferences were the principle vehicle by which this "international consciousness" was inspired; newspaper headlines in Hamilton proclaimed the arrival of "The Y.W.C.A. Convention: Woman's Work for Woman Throughout the World."¹¹⁷ The reports of these conferences provide an opportunity to examine the way in which both British and American influences helped to shape the evolution of the YWCA in this country, and demonstrate that Canadian women were by

no means isolated from broader international trends and developments. The 1896 conference in Hamilton was treated to an address by Annie M. Reynolds, General Secretary of the World's YWCA, recently returned from a world tour of duty, on "How the Y.W.C.A. has Helped to Extend Christ's Kingdom." According to the report of Reynold's address in the Spectator, the Canadian delegates must have been impressed with the scope of the undertaking in which they were as yet admittedly humble participants.

After referring to the pride of belonging to the British empire, she said it was a more glorious thing to be a member of the World's Y.W.C.A. The association's representation had its strongest power in the Anglo-Saxon race; but it, nevertheless, was well represented in other parts of the world. She was now in Canada because the world's associations were united by a tie stronger than blood, language, history and song; a tie that endureth forever. The Y.W.C.A. work stood as one form of Christian citizenship and living...There were in all 5,000 branches, with a total membership of upwards of half a million young women all over the world. In every European country, except Russia, which was opposed to any form of association or unity, there were associations. In China, Japan, South Africa, even among the American Indians, branches were to be found.¹¹⁸

A speaker of Reynolds' calibre was not at all unusual at Canadian YWCA conferences. While the first convention in 1895 was a purely Canadian affair, succeeding efforts featured notable international figures. The 1896 Hamilton conference featured, in addition to Reynolds' address on the worldwide scope of YWCA work and Canada's own Lady Aberdeen on "Opportunities for Service," Effie Price of Chicago, a graduate of Wellesley College and secretary for the International Committee, speaking on "College Life and the Influence of Christian Young women," and the well-known and highly respected Grace Dodge, founder of the New York Working Girls' Clubs.¹¹⁹

In 1896 Canada became the fifth active member of the World's YWCA, following Great Britain, the United States (represented by the International Committee), Norway and Sweden. This step signified the acceptance of the Canadians into a larger community of

women who were highly conscious of their evangelical mission to the women of the world. L.J. Tritton, World's YWCA president, offered to the 1896 conference "our hearty congratulations, and our earnest assurance of affectionate interest in every portion of your past and future labors" and stressed the deep bond of a common evangelical faith that would help to overcome the difficulties and distances impeding their work:

To us as women workers, living at great distances, and engaged in most extended and diversified work, the Apostolic desire often comes forcibly:--"I had many things to write...but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face." But perhaps it is these very distances and diversities--our great apparent difficulty, which lead us so much to look to Him who is near to us each, on either side of the ocean, for guidance and control...And is it not our own personal belief in the Son of God, our own and the world's Redeemer, that make it possible for us to suffer for His sake, if by so doing even one, perhaps, obscure sister-soul may be brought to share in the salvation which has made us glad?¹²⁰

* * * * *

The delegates present at the first meeting of the Dominion

YWCA adopted a constitution stating that the object of their new organization was "to unite in one central body all organizations existing and those to be formed in the future for the purpose of Y.W.C.A. work, viz:--The promotion of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social condition of young women; believing that the more intimate knowledge of one another's work, will result in larger mutual sympathy, greater unity of purpose and plan and therefore in more effective action."¹²¹ More eloquently, one of its principal founders described this new body as "an organization whose aim is to develop the highest type of womanhood, both for the home and the Master's service, and lead young women to realize their duty to God and to themselves, as well as to provide opportunities for acquiring the necessary knowledge to fit them for whatever their line

of action may be."¹²² The formation of the Dominion Association signified the existence of a vision of activity by Canadian evangelical women on an unprecedented scale, and provides evidence of women's participation in the development of a Canadian evangelical nationalism in the late nineteenth century. The founders of the Dominion YWCA hoped to convince church women used to organizing on a local basis that by uniting and coordinating their efforts, they could influence public affairs on a national and even international level. Both nationalist and religious arguments were used to justify the formation of the Dominion Association, membership in which required Canadian locals to withdraw from their established American affiliations. Canadian women were urged to support an organization of their own which would allow them to affiliate with the new World's YWCA, and thereby participate in the global crusade to evangelize the heathen, as Canadians rather than vicariously through their membership in an American body. They were also encouraged to support a Canadian body which would maintain strong links to the evangelical churches, as there was a prevalent sentiment that the commitment of the American YWCA to "true Christianity" was somewhat suspect.

Furthermore, the formation of the Dominion YWCA signified the growing consciousness of Canadian YWCAs of their participation in and links to an international movement of women. The Canadian hosts of an international YWCA conference in Montreal in 1897 were greeted by Mrs. R.A. Dorman, President of the International Board:

Though living under different flags we are all under His banner of love, and in your welcome to us we feel this touch of universal kinship and hear some notes of that grand symphony of peace that shall fill the whole earth when Jesus reigns. It is in His name that we are associated together. We are often reminded that the Young Women's Christian Association is the oldest institution organized by women for the help of women. It is the pioneer in all religious and philanthropic work. It is the leader in educational effort

for self-supporting women. Its platform is the broadest yet occupied by women.¹²³

The Dominion Association's newly-elected president, Adelaide Hoodless, proclaimed confidently in her address to the first biennial conference of Canadian YWCAs, "We will be the greatest and strongest group of Young Women ever formed. I mean of women, by women and for women."¹²⁴ Yet the relationship of YWCA women to the Canadian women's movement remained ambivalent, for founders of the Dominion YWCA subscribed to the view, not shared by all women reformers, that the interests of Canadian women lay in promoting the interests of the Canadian evangelical churches. They hoped to unite evangelical women in a concerted national effort that would use evangelical arguments to increase women's participation and influence in the public sphere and justify the spending of public money to provide services for working women. The Dominion YWCA was an institutional expression of evangelical nationalism and of a commitment to the ideal of Evangelical Womanhood.¹²⁵ By uniting Canadian local YWCAs into a distinct national movement of women, its founders hoped to win Canadian young women to this ideal and thereby to win the nation for Christ.

NOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, "Nationalism, Feminism and Canadian Intellectual History," Canadian Literature 83 (Winter 1979), p. 7. Recently, Trofimenkoff has answered this question in the affirmative, in her important work, The Dream of Nation: A Social and Intellectual History of Quebec (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982).

2. Ibid., p. 16.

3. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

4. For a useful introduction, see Veronica Strong-Boag, "'Setting the Stage': National Organization and the Women's Movement in the Late 19th Century," in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, eds., The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp.87-103.

5. Archives of Ontario, MS 561, Toronto YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1874.

6. On the formation of the first city YMCAs in Canada, see Murray G. Ross, The Y.M.C.A. in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), pp. 3-36. See also Harold C. Cross, One Hundred Years of Service with Youth: The Story of the Montreal Y.M.C.A. (Montreal: Southam Press, 1951).

7. Toronto YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1886; Toronto, Daily Mail, 20 February 1873, p. 4, 21 February 1873, p. 4. YWCA historians have designated as the first Canadian YWCA a short-lived effort in Saint John, N.B., that collapsed after only a few years under circumstances suggesting that conditions were not ripe for the formation of a YWCA. See Mary Quayle Innis, Unfold the Years: A History of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1949), p. 9; and Josephine Perfect Harshaw, When Women Work Together: A History of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 11. YWCA accounts written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries all identify the Toronto branch as the first Canadian YWCA.

8. Toronto YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1874.

9. Montreal Herald, 25 May 1874, p. 4; Montreal Gazette, 25 May 1874, p. 2; Montreal Star, 26 May 1874, p. 3; Montreal Daily Witness, 26 May 1874, p. 2.

10. Harshaw, When Women Work Together, p. 15. For a table of dates of organization, see Innis, Unfold the Years, pp. 227-230.

11. Carol Bacchi has identified the important role played by single women in the suffrage movement. See Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). The membership lists surviving in the annual reports of the Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa YWCAs list very few single women; it is probable that some of the women identified as "Mrs." were in

fact widowed. The evidence of twentieth-century photographs indicates that the vast majority of members of the Board of Managers were middle-aged; it is likely that nineteenth-century Boards conformed to this same pattern. The reports do not, unfortunately, identify members by their denominational affiliations.

12. Jennifer Stoddart and Veronica Strong-Boag, "...And Things Were Going Wrong at Home," Atlantis 1(1) 1975, pp. 38-44.

13. The activities and objectives of the student YWCAs will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

14. See, for example, Lee Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973); Jane Lewis, Women in England, 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Angela V. John, ed., Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England, 1800-1918 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985); Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Marjery W. Davies, Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Faye E. Dudden, Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).

15. Richard Allen, "The Background of the Social Gospel in Canada," in Richard Allen, ed., The Social Gospel in Canada (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975), p. 8.

16. This pattern of organizational development was not unique to the YWCA. On the similar evolution of "Canadian" branches of the Knights of Labour, see Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labour in Ontario, 1880-1900 (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

17. This account of the early British YWCA is drawn from Lucy M. Moor, Girls of Yesterday and To-Day: The Romance of the Y.W.C.A. (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., Ltd., 1911); Our Eighty Years: Historical Sketches of the Y.W.C.A. of Great Britain (London: Y.W.C.A. of Great Britain, 1935); and Anna V. Rice, A History of the World's Young Women's Christian Association (New York: The Woman's Press, 1947).

18. Quoted in Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 251.

19. Quoted in ibid., pp. 243-244.

20. On the work of the GFS, see Brian Harrison, "For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society, 1874-1920," Past and Present 61 (1973), pp. 107-138.

21. Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 26.

22. Quoted in ibid., p. 28.

23. Ibid., p. 22.

24. On Nightingale's attempts to redefine nursing, then on a par with domestic service, as a suitable occupation for women from "respectable" families, see Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work, and Anne Summers, "Pride and Prejudice: Ladies and Nurses in the Crimean War," History Workshop Journal 16 (Autumn 1983), pp. 33-56.

25. Quoted in Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 71.

26. See Suzann Buckley, "British Female Emigration and Imperial Development: Experiments in Canada, 1885-1931," Hecate 3(2) 1977, pp. 26-40; A. James Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1914 (London: Croom Helm, 1979); Susan Jackel, ed. A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914 (Vancouver and London: University of British Columbia Press, 1982); Barbara Roberts, "'A Work of Empire': Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration," in Linda Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 185-201.

27. Our Eighty Years, pp. 14-15. A series of articles by journalist William Stead in the Pall Mall Gazette helped to focus public attention on the question of protecting young women at this particular time, creating a climate favorable to the launching of the TAS. See Deborah Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England" Victorian Studies 21(3) 1978, pp. 353-379.

28. Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 86.

29. Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 58.

30. Ibid. On Shaftesbury and the English Evangelical Revival, see Kathleen Heasman, Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of Their Social Work in the Victorian Era (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), pp. 15-28.

31. Quoted in Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 71.

32. Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 11.

33. This account of the early American YWCA is drawn from Rice, A History of the World's Young Women's Christian Association; Mary S. Sims, The Natural History of a Social Institution--the Young Women's Christian Association (New York: The Woman's Press, 1936) and The YWCA--an Unfolding Purpose (New York: The Woman's Press, 1950); Elizabeth Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work Among Young Women, 1866-1916: A History of the Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States of America (New York: National Board of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the United States of America, 1916).

34. Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 38.

35. Moor, Girls of Yesterday, p. 83.

36. Quoted in Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 51.

37. On the early development of the student YWCAs, see Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work, Chapters 10 and 11; and Clarence P. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements: Their Origin and Intercollegiate Life (New York: Association Press, 1934), Chapter 12.

38. C. Howard Hopkins, John R. Mott, 1865-1955: A Biography, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 112.

39. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements, Chapters 1-5.

40. Ross, The Y.M.C.A. in Canada, p. 114; Richard C. Morse, History of the North American Young Men's Christian Associations (New York: Association Press, 1918), p. 188.

41. Quoted in Morse, History of the North American YMCA, p. 189.

42. Shedd, Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements, pp. 187-213.

43. Toronto YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1891, p. 15.

44. Tamara K. Hareven, "An Ambiguous Alliance: Some Aspects of American Influences on Canadian Social Welfare," Histoire sociale/Social History 3 (April 1969), p. 84.

45. This account of early WCA and YWCA conferences is drawn largely from Wilson, Fifty Years of Association Work, Chapter 13.

46. Quoted in ibid., p. 160.

47. Quoted in ibid., pp. 159-160.

48. Quoted in ibid., p. 162.

49. Women's Christian Association of Quebec, Ninth Annual Report, (Quebec: 1884), p. 15. [National Library of Canada, K-63-4].

50. Ibid.

51. Compare Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 36.

52. Montreal Daily Witness, 6 June 1877, p. 4.

53. National Archives of Canada, MG 28 I 240, Montreal YWCA Records, v. 38, Annual Report, 1878, p. 15.

54. Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette, 6 June 1877, p. 4. See also Montreal Daily Witness, 6 June 1877, p. 4; The Gazette, 6 June 1877, p. 4; Montreal Daily Star, 6 June 1877, p. 2.

55. Montreal Daily Witness, 6 June 1877, p. 4.

56. Ibid., 7 June 1877, p. 8.
57. Ibid., p. 4.
58. The Gazette, 6 June 1877, p. 4.
59. Montreal Daily Witness, 8 June 1877, p. 4.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Montreal Daily Star, 8 June 1877, p. 2.
64. The Gazette, 6 June 1877, p. 4.
65. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 38, Annual Report, 1878, p. 15.
66. Neil Semple, "Ontario's Religious Hegemony: The Creation of the National Methodist Church," Ontario History 77(1) 1985, pp. 19-42. See also William E. de Villiers-Westfall, "The Dominion of the Lord: An Introduction to the Cultural History of Protestant Ontario in the Victorian Period," Queen's Quarterly 83(1) 1976, pp. 47-70.
67. Toronto YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1889, p. 14.
68. Quoted in Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 44.
69. University of Guelph Library, Archival Collections, Hoodless Family Papers, "First Vice-President's Address to the Dominion Association," Adelaide Hoodless, 1895.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Fundamental Principles of the Young Women's Christian Association," American Committee of YWCAs, 1902.
73. Quoted in Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 42.
74. Hoodless Family Papers, Clipping, "The Situation in Canada: To the Editor of The International Messenger", 1895.
75. Quoted in Sims, Natural History, pp. 24-25.
76. Ibid., p. 25.
77. Rice, History of the World's YWCA, p. 50.
78. Ibid., p. 54.

79. David F. Burg, Chicago's White City of 1893 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), p. 239.
80. Cheryl MacDonald, Adelaide Hoodless: Domestic Crusader, (Toronto and Reading: Dundurn Press, 1986), p. 28.
81. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 9, Minute Book, National Executive Committee 1895-1905, "A Brief History of the Dominion Young Women's Christian Association," Miss E.K. Price, 1897.
82. Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), p. 74.
83. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 15.
84. The Globe, 8 December 1893, p. 2. Letters of approval were sent by branches in Halifax, Kingston, Quebec, Ottawa, Belleville, and Winnipeg, regretting that they were unable to send delegates.
85. Toronto Daily Mail, 8 December 1893, p. 2.
86. Hoodless Family Papers, Clipping, "First Vice-President's Address to the Dominion Association," Adelaide Hoodless, 1895.
87. Ottawa Journal, 23 January 1895, p. 7.
88. Hoodless Family Papers, Clipping, "The Situation in Canada: To the Editors of The International Messenger," 1895.
89. Ottawa Journal, 23 January 1895, p. 7; Daily Citizen, 24 January 1895, p. 8.
90. Daily Citizen, 24 January 1895, p. 8.
91. 24 January 1895, p. 8.
92. Hoodless Family Papers, Clipping, "First Vice-President's Address to the Dominion Association," 1895.
93. The text of the Paris Basis read as follows: "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." YWCA of Canada Records, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 1895-1905, Constitution, Article II.
94. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in London, England in 1846 by representatives from many countries and denominations to provide "a rallying ground for those in all lands who hold fast to the fundamental truths of the Gospel." Over the course of the nineteenth century, its supporters defined their mission as one of ever greater importance "in the presence of a gross superstition which seems to be reviving in

many directions, and the growth of a cold, anti-Biblical criticism which aims at assailing the Word of God and destroying the very foundations of the Faith." YWCA of Canada Records, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 1895-1905, pamphlet, "Evangelical Alliance. Its Basis, History and Aims," (London, Evangelical Alliance, 1910). See Appendix I for the basis of the Evangelical Alliance.

95. Ibid., v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 5.

96. "As these organizations bear the name of Christian and are engaged directly in the Saviour's service, it is clearly their duty to maintain the control and management of all their affairs in the hands of those who profess to love, who publicly avow their faith in Jesus the Redeemer as divine, and who testify their faith by becoming and remaining members of evangelical churches. 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." Ibid., v. 44, "Constitution of Young Women's Christian Associations in Cities and Towns of the Dominion of Canada," (Toronto: Dominion Council of Young Women's Christian Associations, ca. 1902).

97. Montreal Daily Star, 15 October 1897, p. 7.

98. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 24.

99. Ottawa YWCA Records, Board of Directors Minutes, 13 April 1895.

100. National Council of Women of Canada, Report, 1894, "Report of the London Local Council," p. 90, as quoted in Strong-Boag, Parliament of Women, p. 78.

101. Strong-Boag, Parliament of Women, pp. 78-79. See also Mitchinson, "Aspects of Reform," pp. 285-286.

102. National Council of Women of Canada, Report, 1895, p. 208, as quoted in Mitchinson, "Aspects of Reform," p. 285.

103. National Council of Women of Canada, Report, 1895, p. 31.

104. As the editor of Woman, Her Character, Culture and Calling (Brantford: 1890), Austin was known for his liberal views on women. The YWCA's endorsement of his position came some years before his expulsion from the Methodist church for his heretical views on spiritualism. On Austin's career, see Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 69-78.

105. Ottawa YWCA Records, The Friend of the Friendless, vol. 4, no. 6, October 1892.

106. Peterborough, Daily Examiner, 5 October 1898, p. 5.

107. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 38, Annual Report, 1897, p. 40.

108. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 14 January 1897, 7 March 1898.
109. Ibid., v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 16.
110. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women's Gazette, November 1901, p. 9.
111. Peterborough, Daily Examiner, 7 October 1898, p. 5.
112. Galt, The Reformer, 1 March 1895.
113. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 6.
114. Peterborough, Daily Examiner, 7 October 1898, p. 5.
115. London Advertiser, 8 October 1900, p. 6.
116. One suggestive example is Deborah Gorham, "English Militancy and the Canadian Suffrage Movement," Atlantis 1(1) 1975, pp. 83-112.
117. Hamilton Spectator, 9 September 1896, p. 1.
118. Ibid., p. 8.
119. Ibid., 5 September 1896, p. 4, 11 Sept 1896, p. 8.
120. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 79, Annual Report, 1896, p. 48.
121. Ibid., v. 9, National Executive Committee, Minutebook, 1895-1905.
122. Hoodless Family Papers, "First Vice-President's Address to the Dominion Association," Adelaide Hoodless, 1895.
123. Montreal Daily Star, October 15, 1897, P. 7.
124. Quoted by Susan Witter, "Women as Achievers in Canadian History: Focus on Adelaide Hoodless, 1857-1910," (YWCA of Canada, 1979).
125. For a discussion of this ideal, see Anne M. Boylan, "Evangelical Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century: The Role of Women in Sunday Schools," Feminist Studies 4(3) 1978, pp. 62-80.

CHAPTER 3

THE "GIRL PROBLEM": THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY YWCA DEFINES ITS MISSION

Nineteenth-century Canadian city YWCAs represented a response by evangelical women to the "problem" of the city. It was the belief of YWCA women that many of what they perceived to be the ills associated with urban life--unemployment, intemperance, crime, immorality and irreligion--could be mitigated or even eliminated if Christian women such as themselves, drawn from the major Protestant churches and the families of the leading business and professional men of the community, turned their attention to the welfare of the largely female poor and of the young single working woman living away from home. This conviction can be situated in the context of a critique of urban life that developed from the third decade of the nineteenth century, transcending national boundaries as increasing numbers of middle-class commentators turned their attention to the problems posed and the possibilities proffered by rapid urban growth.¹ The optimism of the early part of the century turned to anxiety as growing fears pertaining to sanitation, disease, birth rates and death rates were increasingly "linked to the belief that the big cities undermined the bases of religion and morality, that they militated against stable families and other forms of primary social control, and that they manifested far more than their fair share of vice, crime, and the propensity to revolt."²

Nineteenth-century evangelicals identified cities as "the decisive battle-ground between civilization and religion."³ As "potent determining factors of moral progress" and "the radiating centres of national life," moulding the character and social customs

of the rural districts, their influence could not be ignored.⁴ Yet even evangelical clergymen who were among the severest critics of the city's moral failings, sometimes exhibited a certain hopefulness that the same conditions that spawned a variety of social ills could ultimately lead to the redemption of the city's godless inhabitants. It was with good reason, they pointed out, that Jesus commanded the disciples to "begin at Jerusalem," and evangelical reformers were urged to "capture and hold the cities for Christ, as the vital strategic points of His advancing Kingdom."⁵ YWCA women brought to bear on this task a unique female perspective. Part of a broader attempt by middle-class women reformers to "domesticate" the nineteenth-century city, they attempted to counter the corruption of women, children and the family order by the urban environment, to provide a female alternative to the masculine culture of Canadian cities, and to create a base from which they could promote values conducive to the protection of women's physical, moral and spiritual purity, and to the moulding of working-class family life in accordance with the ideal of "evangelical domesticity."⁶ Their activities serve to challenge popular tradition which holds that women played no significant political role in cities until the 1960s, and suggest the need for an expanded definition of urban "politics" that will take into account the activities of women.⁷

According to the founders of YWCAs in nineteenth-century Canadian cities, it was women, and particularly the young working woman between the ages of about seventeen and twenty-five, who would one day achieve the redemption of the city. Women were thereby made central to the task of urban reform and to the challenge of winning the cities for Christ. As YWCA women frequently pointed out, young women were consistently neglected by the churches, reformers, and charitable organizations whose tendency to define the needs of young men, children and the truly destitute as more important, and of more significance for the future of the city, often led them to

overlook young women altogether. Challenging this oversight, YWCA women argued that the welfare of young women was an issue that ought to concern every citizen. Young women were not merely important—they were in fact "God's own cornerstones," the very foundation of the urban community. As the mothers of tomorrow, they would establish the moral standards of the future generations and would thereby determine what kind of community the city was to become. The "country girl" newly arrived in the city served for YWCA women as the symbolic embodiment of the traditional "rural" values of industry, piety, thrift, honesty, and self-sufficiency. More than any other young woman, she offered hope for the future and the possible redemption of the urban community. With ambiguous results for the young women of nineteenth-century Canadian cities, YWCA women attempted to draw public attention to the problems faced by young women in the city and helped to justify the spending of public money on services and facilities that had previously been available only to young men. Given that they also defined the task of assisting and protecting young women as "women's work," suitable for respectable middle-class matrons, they succeeded in opening up unprecedented opportunities for "Christian women" to engage in fundraising, administration, and a variety of organizational tasks, and most importantly to articulate publicly their perception of the "problem" of the city, its implications for women, and women's place in the urban community.

By the end of the nineteenth century, YWCA women were defining the resolution of what was increasingly becoming known as "the girl problem" as their particular mandate.⁸ This "problem" was the result of major social and economic changes taking place in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada that were having an important impact on the life course of young women, increasing numbers of whom were leaving the parental home to seek out new employment and educational opportunities in

the interval between school-leaving at approximately age fourteen and marriage, generally occurring in the mid-twenties.⁹ In the perilous environment of the Canadian city, many of these young women were, to the great distress of the founders of the YWCA, living independently, vulnerable to temptation and unsupported and unsupervised by family, community, and church. YWCA observers noted the "startling facts" revealed in the 1901 census, which indicated that in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and Halifax, "more than one in every nine of the population is a wage-earning woman in factory, shop or in domestic service."¹⁰ Unprecedented numbers of young women were thus experiencing a significant period of relative economic and sexual independence, unknown to their mothers and grandmothers, and the implications were profoundly disturbing. As one YWCA worker in Peterborough explained the problem:

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[sic] a peculiar fitness for--the ability to be home-maker.¹¹

Fearing that the experiences of employment, higher education, and living independently might result in a substitution of material values and "selfish" personal ambition for women's traditional close ties to home, family and church, the founders of early YWCAs were convinced of the urgency of their self-appointed task of shepherding young women through a difficult and potentially dangerous period of their lives by providing a substitute for parental and religious influences through practical assistance in the wholesome environment of a "Christian family home." The prevailing circumstances, they believed, made 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."¹²

According to recent studies by Canadian historians, YWCA fears of a growing "girl problem" reflected a very real increase in the numbers of young women flocking to urban centres and entering the paid labour force in ever increasing numbers.¹³ A growing demand for domestic servants to service the homes of the prosperous new middle-classes led many young women to abandon the family farm for employment in the city where the demand for their labour consistently exceeded the supply.¹⁴ Domestic servants were treated as preferred immigrants, ranking in importance with farm families and single male farm labourers, and were actively recruited by federal and provincial governments during the nineteenth century. Between Confederation and the 1930s, one quarter of a million women entered Canada as immigrants stating their intended occupation as domestic service.¹⁵ The expansion of the factory system required a supply of cheap unskilled labour, much of which was supplied by young women. In Montreal, the commercial capital of Canada in the latter part of the century, women workers swelled the ranks of employees in the garment, tobacco, and shoemaking industries, and by 1881 made up thirty-seven percent of all industrial workers within the city limits.¹⁶ In the Maritimes, the daughters of farmers and craftworkers from declining outports, made up a substantial portion of the massive population loss experienced in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, causing the Wolfville Acadian to lament in 1892: "our country girls have of late years become inspired with a large measure of self-reliance and an evident disposition to ignore the old fashioned notion that their only or best destiny was to marry, and as a consequence have sought employment in the factories of Canada and the United States."¹⁷

By the end of the century, smaller numbers of women, generally from the native born and better educated population of young women, were seeking entry into retail sales, offices, and the service industries, all of which were undergoing rapid expansion.

Surveying the conditions of female employment in Ontario in 1892, Jean Thomson Scott observed that "women seem as fitted for [office] work as men, and have proved as competent where the work was not too severe."¹⁸ In these new occupations, "the feminine domestic virtues of politeness, patience, obedience, and physical grace...made girls attractive," while from the perspective of young women they offered higher wages and higher social status.¹⁹ By 1900, the majority of the surly and uncouth young men who were at first employed by the telephone companies had been replaced by more polite and compliant women.²⁰ Schoolboards, too, found it to their advantage to replace men teachers with lower paid women, and over the course of the nineteenth century, young women came to dominate the expanding occupation of teaching.²¹ To take advantage of these opportunities, growing numbers of young women were coming to the city to attend the proliferating normal schools and business colleges. For the fortunate few, there was also the possibility of a university education and entry into the professions.²²

By the end of the nineteenth century, the result of the increased educational and employment opportunities for women was a substantial increase in the population of young women who lived in Canadian cities. Suzanne Cross has observed that "by 1900 Montreal was the home of thousands of women whose place of birth was in rural Quebec or the British Isles. The demand for female labour had drawn them to the city, and they had made the transition to a totally new environment."²³ Significantly, according to Cross, young women were not only moving to the cities of Quebec, but they were doing so in greater numbers than men. While there were fewer women than men in the province as a whole, women outnumbered men in the cities, a fact that Cross attributes to the employment opportunities for women in domestic service and the expanding manufacturing sector. Nor was Montreal unique in this respect. Claudette Lacelle, in a

study of domestic servants in Toronto, Quebec, Halifax and Montreal from the 1820s to the 1870s, has also discovered that young women between fifteen and thirty were more numerous than young men of the same age, "témoignant ainsi de la présence de nombreuses jeunes femmes de la campagne travaillant à la ville."²⁴ Most worrisome, however, to nineteenth-century observers of the "girl problem," was the fact that many of these young women were living independently. Beth Light and Joy Parr have noted that despite the transformation of Canadian cities being effected by industrialization and immigration at the turn of the century, living alone was an uncommon state for Canadians of either sex, and social conventions continued to require that young persons should be housed in a family setting. "But by the early twentieth century, more young women were challenging convention by taking up rooms in boarding houses in town and going away from home to work or to school...The sight of young women outside the home, [in] the streets, the factories, and the lecture halls was profoundly unsettling for many Victorians--and the more the range of young women's activities broadened, the more censure was levelled at a life outside the discipline of family or some surrogate for kin."²⁵

The pattern of organization among early Canadian YWCAs, as discussed in the previous chapter, ensured that their programs and policies would reflect the concerns of middle-class evangelical women, and in particular their ambivalent attitude toward the Canadian city as both a place of opportunity and a place of danger for women. On the one hand they recognized that cities did provide women with significant opportunities to improve their standing in the world through education and advances in employment that were not available in the rural districts. YWCA women acknowledged that some women did have to support themselves, and frequently dependent family members as well, and that not all of them were able or suited to take employment as

domestic servants. Given the emphasis placed by middle-class evangelicals on the virtues of initiative, industry, and self-dependence, YWCA women felt obligated to assist young women who displayed these traits and to argue that Canadian cities owed them the same kinds of support that were available to young men through the YMCA. Sharing the evangelical perception of the city as a den of vice and crime, however, they tended to focus on the potential moral and spiritual pitfalls of city life, rather than its more positive aspects, and emphasized above all, the duty of more experienced and worldly matrons to protect the naive new arrivals. "Innocent and trusting as many are, few know the dangers surrounding them in a large city and experience has taught us that nothing should be neglected to protect these young women whose 'price is far above rubies.'"²⁶ Viewed through the eyes of middle-class evangelical women, the Canadian city was a dangerous place where sharks, ruffians, and white slavers congregated at railroad stations, brothels were disguised as respectable lodging houses, misleading advertisements for well-paid employment entrapped the unwary, the bright lights of commercialized entertainments beckoned, and a life of prostitution, the fate worse than death, awaited those who took an unsuspecting false step. This perception of the city and its dangers for women shaped the policies and programs of Canadian YWCAs as they developed over the course of the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

* * * * *

To their efforts to resolve the "girl problem" of the late nineteenth century, YWCA women brought a wealth of experience accumulated in more traditional types of Christian benevolent work, experience which was to prove highly significant for the types of programs developed by nineteenth-century YWCAs and for the way that these

programs were perceived by young working women and the public at large. In fact, for much of the nineteenth century, most Canadian YWCAs lacked a distinct focus on work for young women, and where such work was undertaken, its objectives were frequently reminiscent of the parish work undertaken by evangelical women in the early part of the century. The Saint John YWCA, for example, undertook "the mutual spiritual improvement of its members, the systematic circulation of suitable Religious Literature, the regular visitation of the poor and suffering, and the promotion, whenever and wherever possible, of the knowledge and love of Christ Jesus our Lord."²⁷ Even the Toronto YWCA which, in concerning itself with "the temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women who are dependent upon their own exertions for support,"²⁸ conformed more closely to the pattern of what was to become "YWCA work," found evangelist Thane Miller's appeal for a boarding house for young women too limiting.²⁹ After a mere five years in operation, its founders proudly reported that their work had expanded to embrace "visiting and caring for the aged, the sick, the poor and the fallen,"³⁰ and that in recognition of this range of activities (and in order to avoid offending "some of the older ladies on the board of Directresses"), they had incorporated as a Women's Christian Association rather than a YWCA.³¹

During the 1870s and 1880s, inmates of Toronto hospitals, prisons and the House of Industry were visited by representatives from the WCA. In 1878 the Gaol Committee established "The Haven", a prison gate mission and lodging house for women recently discharged from prison. In 1886, as a joint venture with the Relief Society and the Women's Temperance Union, the WCA opened the Girls' Industrial Institute "for the training of girls in useful occupations, and intended to afford the same advantages to young women as are open by the Y.M.C.A. to young men."³² The Montreal YWCA, undertaking a similarly wide range of benevolent activities, had, by 1880, hired a Lady

Missionary to the Seamen and opened a Diet Dispensary "to provide suitable nourishment for the sick, free to the poor, and at a reasonable price to those able to buy, but not able to prepare the delicate food necessary for an invalid."³³ A Young Ladies' League also visited hospitals and the Women's Jail. A School of Cookery was organized in 1895, followed by an Industrial Laundry and Training School in 1896 which, it was reported, "though now only in its infancy, will yet become a power in Montreal, for the comfort and well-being of the rich as well as the poor."³⁴ Members of the Quebec Women's Christian Association engaged in hospital and district visiting, ran a flower mission to the sick, held an annual entertainment for the poor, undertook to "reach and rescue the fallen" by visiting "dens of iniquity," and opened a coffee room "which sought to keep the masses from seeking pleasure and amusement in places where both soul and body was endangered, by providing for the tavern a suitable and attractive substitute."³⁵ This pattern of work was not followed, however, by YWCAs founded in the 1890s, particularly those in western Canada which responded to the beginning of large-scale immigration. Rather than engaging in relief work to the poor, they tended to specialize in providing Travellers' Aid services for new arrivals, receiving financial support from their local governments in recognition of their efforts.³⁶

Suggestive of the motives and assumptions that underlay YWCA charitable work in the nineteenth century was the Toronto WCA's program of district visitation--the "friendly visiting" of working-class families in their homes to encourage church attendance and to dispense relief in the form of clothing and fuel, an undertaking that received recognition from the Toronto City Council in the form of a \$200 annual grant as early as 1878.³⁷ Between 1875 and 1880, the members of the Mission and Relief Committee systematically divided the city into seventeen districts; 300 to 400 families

were visited weekly by two ladies from the 80-100 volunteers coordinated by the Committee.³⁸ The Relief Society, according to its constitution, was intended "to obtain and dispense assistance for the really needy; to investigate all cases of distress reported; to discourage a pauper spirit by helping people help themselves; and undertake the moral and spiritual improvement of those assisted."³⁹ Disclaiming any support for "emotional" or "indiscriminate" charity, YWCA relief workers, emphasized that those whom they assisted, large numbers of whom were women with children, "would rather starve than beg, and hesitated to receive help although the effects of want could be seen in their reduced condition, even to the extent of fainting."⁴⁰ YWCA women's interventions in the lives of the poor frequently revealed considerable class prejudice, taking the form of a lack of respect for the dignity of those they assisted and a profound ignorance of the realities of working-class life, such as the grossly inadequate wages which required that all family members contribute to the family economy.⁴¹ In 1891, a Committee of Young Women formed by the Toronto YWCA, inspired no doubt by a moralistic and somewhat hysterical campaign by Toronto reformers to remove child vendors from the city streets, attempted to "rescue" the news girls from their "dangerous employment." Displaying a remarkable self-righteousness and insensitivity, the committee complained that despite "several nice teas" featuring hymns and "words of truth," as well as visits to the children's homes, "almost every mother had some excuse for keeping her girl at a work which brought money to the home, but at the same time endangered the moral and spiritual welfare of her child."⁴²

The approach of the Toronto WCA's Relief Committee to the problems of the poor combined, like that of most nineteenth-century Toronto charities, "the tenets of Evangelical Protestantism and Manchester Liberalism."⁴³ Not unique to Toronto of

course, but characteristic of Victorian philanthropy in Britain and North America, this approach emphasized the inevitability of poverty, the possibility of distinguishing the "deserving" from the "undeserving" poor, and the responsibility of Christians to assist the deserving poor as religious individuals or through private voluntary associations.⁴⁴

The evangelical approach to philanthropy that characterized the YWCA in Toronto and other nineteenth-century Canadian cities tended to attribute poverty to the moral failings of the poor and to encourage the view that it was rooted in the sinfulness of the heart. The Montreal YWCA commented in 1884: "Sin and suffering being attributes of fallen humanity, there is, and while time endures, will be, a necessity for benevolence."⁴⁵ In the context of an international debate over the dangers of "indiscriminate almsgiving" and the possibility that public relief contributed to the "pauperization" of the poor, YWCAs stressed their commitment to "systematic charity" and "scientific philanthropy." Members of the Montreal YWCA's Visiting Committee commented on the difficulties of the work of "friendly visiting":

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.⁴⁶

In undertaking activities of this nature, Joey Noble has argued, YWCA women helped to "provide for their class as a whole methods of interpreting the disturbing phenomenon of urban poverty...[and]...to develop organizational forms for classifying the lower orders."⁴⁷

Like most nineteenth-century evangelicals, YWCA women increasingly looked to the children of the poor for the ultimate solution to the problem of poverty, frequently quoting Christ's injunction, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."⁴⁸ The Montreal YWCA was the pioneer among early Canadian branches in developing what was called "preventive work among children" aimed specifically at the children of the poor. Its efforts were reported extensively at YWCA international conferences, and visitors from YWCAs across North America came to study and learn from Montreal's example. Three principal types of "preventive work"—day nurseries, kindergartens, and training schools—were initiated between 1875 and 1900, developed primarily for working-class children under twelve. Underlying these programs were assumptions that the origins of crime, delinquency, and unemployment were rooted, not in poverty, but in the inadequacies of working-class family life, or, more specifically, in the sinfulness, shiftlessness, and intemperance of working-class parents. The advantages enjoyed by middle-class children were attributed to the virtues rather than the income of their parents. In appealing to Montreal's middle-class matrons to support "preventive work" by giving their time and money, the YWCA asked them to consider their own "precious ones in their sheltered homes, breathing an atmosphere of purity, and environed by all that parental love can offer. Forget not the children of those who dwell in hovels, set in the midst of sin, with their heritage of evil."⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

It was the intention of these preventive programs to compensate as much as possible for the perceived deficiencies in the upbringing of working-class children.

Beginning in 1881, the Montreal YWCA's Helping Hand Society undertook "to teach the poorer class of children sewing in plain under garments, and so make them useful to those hard-working mothers who have not time to instruct them themselves."⁵¹ A Day Nursery was opened in 1886, in response to a remark by a visiting lady missionary who "wished there were a place where working women might leave their children when they went out to work by the day, as the children were exposed to so many dangers during the absence of the mothers."⁵² Studies of the experience of Montreal working-class families suggest that parents turned to charitable services such as those offered by YWCAs only after they had exhausted all other options, but even in their desperation they did not passively relinquish all control over their children to the ladies of the YWCA.⁵³ The Day Nursery Committee reported that it had intended "to have every child bathed each morning, clean clothing belonging to the Institution, put on, and removed again at night, but we find that discretion must be used in this matter, some mothers seeming to have a firm and rooted objection to water and clean clothes."⁵⁴ The Montreal YWCA's Kindergarten, the first opened in that city, 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. Kindergarten workers hoped that supervised play would foster the symmetrical development of body, soul, and spirit, and that indelible impressions left by specially-designed games, talks, pictures, and songs would 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."⁵⁵

The Montreal YWCA's childrens' programs all emphasized preparation for motherhood and for future employment in domestic service, endeavouring in the process "to make Duty synonymous with Desire."⁵⁶ According to Montreal YWCA workers, instruction in table-setting, cooking, plain-sewing and bed-making reportedly proved "very helpful in the formation of these children's characters, causing them to be industrious, neat and clean,"⁵⁷ and promised to solve both the problem of unemployment and the perennial "servant problem" plaguing the middle classes. Potential financial supporters of the Montreal YWCA's "preventive programs" were asked to consider whether "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 [whether] 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."⁵⁸ In similar terms, YWCA supporters were warned of the possible consequences, both ominous and unjust, should the welfare of these children remained neglected. "Left to vicious companionship, with none to offer the helping hand or kindly word of counsel, they grow up to be criminals, and we hold them accountable for their evil deeds."⁵⁹ While the necessity of "preventive work" was obvious to the leaders of the Montreal YWCA, they were resigned to the fact that they would receive little cooperation from working-class parents, noting that "the advantage to be obtained in sending their children to a Day Nursery or Training School will only become apparent to our working mothers after long and strenuous endeavor. They seem to look upon efforts of this kind with dark suspicion, especially anything connected with a lavatory."⁶⁰

As these activities of the Montreal branch suggest, underlying the YWCA's approach to charitable programs such as district visitation and relief, Kindergartens, and day nurseries, was a moralistic approach to charity. The circumstances of the poor were

blamed not on low wages and structural unemployment but on the deficiencies of working-class family life. While women and children tended to be viewed as the victims of irresponsible and shiftless men, working-class mothers too were criticized for failing to uphold high moral standards within the family. YWCA women demonstrated a great faith that the problems of the poor could be solved if the pattern of working-class family life could be brought into conformity with their own notions of "evangelical domesticity," and if working-class women could be convinced of their responsibility for the redemption of their families. In engaging in this redemptive work, YWCAs adopted much of the rhetoric and the methods of the promoters of "scientific philanthropy." From their contact with this movement, which was "destined to exert a strong influence on the social reforms of the Progressive era,"⁶¹ YWCAs learned some important lessons about the proper administration of a charitable enterprise that would have a significant impact on their programs for working women which evolved over the last three decades of the century. Working women's programs, too, would stress the importance of efficiency and sound financial management, of encouraging "self-dependence" rather than "pauperizing" the poor, of distinguishing the "worthy" from the "unworthy", of having a specific mandate and avoiding duplication of the efforts of others, and finally, of emphasizing "preventive" measures that would eliminate poverty over the long term.

Nineteenth-century Canadian YWCAs viewed their relief efforts and children's programs as appropriately women's work, in keeping with traditional notions of women's responsibility for caring for the sick, the young, the elderly, and the needy. Yet as some historians have argued, the arguments used to justify these programs reveal little evidence of any "gender consciousness," or sense that YWCA women identified as women with those that they were trying to assist.⁶² This characterization of early YWCAs,

however, is not entirely accurate, being based on only one aspect of YWCA work in the nineteenth century, and entirely overlooking the existence of programs for "fallen women," a term used by Victorian reformers to refer to "women suspected or guilty of sexual delinquency, especially prostitutes" but often "expanded to include other kinds of deviance from the norms of the middle-class and 'respectable' working class--including poverty, dependence, transience, illness, and out-of-wedlock pregnancy."⁶³ The founding of shelters for prostitutes by YWCAs in several Canadian cities took place in the context of international crusades by middle-class reformers for "social purity" and for the abolition of "white slavery," an organized international conspiracy that was believed to kidnap women for the purposes of prostitution.⁶⁴ Demands for reform measures to prevent the sexual exploitation of women began in Canada in the 1860s and peaked in the 1880s, resulting in the passage of considerable legislation between 1869 and 1892. According to Constance Backhouse, nineteenth-century Canadians, "divided over whether to treat prostitution as a 'necessary evil' or as the leading example of male sexual coercion", developed three approaches to the problem of prostitution--regulation, prohibition and rehabilitation.⁶⁵ During the 1860s and 1870s, advocates of the rehabilitation approach established shelters and prisons for women in Toronto, London, Hamilton, Halifax, Saint John, and Montreal. Despite the discriminatory aspects of this approach, which Backhouse points out, it nevertheless represented a refusal to accept the characterization of prostitutes as the vicious and corrupt tempters of men who must remain permanently beyond the pale of respectable society. In its work with prostitutes,[†] the YWCA adopted this rehabilitation approach; YWCA women believed that prostitutes could be not merely rehabilitated but redeemed.

The most organized and significant efforts in the field of YWCA "rescue work" in the nineteenth century were undertaken by the Toronto branch which, very early in its history, established a Gaol Committee whose efforts were directed to persuading youthful offenders to enter the Magdalene Asylum at Yorkville "where, 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."⁶⁶ In 1878 the Gaol Committee opened "The Haven", a Prison Gate Mission and lodging house for women recently discharged from prison to provide former prostitutes and those vulnerable to entering prostitution with a few weeks of religious instruction and domestic training. In the face of criticism from money-minded citizens who accused it of duplicating the work of the Industrial House of Refuge and the Home of the Good Shepherd, the Toronto YWCA justified its efforts in characteristically evangelical terms stressing the urgency of the situation.

....the fact that vice is alarmingly on the increase is apparent to every one who thoughtfully observes what is transpiring behind the scenes in life's great drama. Never in the world's history was such a glamour thrown around sin; never was vice presented in such a multitudinous variety of forms, or in so fair a guise; and never before were the emissaries of Satan so unwearied in their efforts to entrap unsuspecting victims. Christians must be correspondingly assiduous in their efforts to "rescue," to "save," if the world is to be "quickly" won for Christ.⁶⁷

Other criticism was encountered on the grounds that the class of women entering the Haven was "almost incapable of reformation, and certainly not without a long course of reformatory training" and that without evidence of a long period of probational service "respectable householders could not be prevailed upon to give employment to fallen women in their families." In reply, the YWCA insisted that "many Christian families in town and country are willing, nay anxious, to receive our lodgers into their homes as servants."⁶⁸

In the beginning, the Toronto YWCA was optimistic that the work of the Haven might be extended "until every friendless, deserted, fallen woman in our city, desirous of a better life, might find at least, a temporary shelter within our lodging house."⁶⁹ Residents were recruited into the home by means of visits to houses of ill-repute, religious services in the jails, and the holding of Midnight Missions. After several years in operation, some measure of success was claimed: "more than a score of instances might be cited of poor fallen ones, picked up from the lowest depths, who, without any training, but the few weeks of kindly treatment and spiritual instruction received in the Haven, are now occupying honorable positions as house servants, nurses, seamstresses, etc., in pious families, and not a few are honest wives and mothers, close sheltered in the warmth and brightness of their own firesides, and more than one is rejoicing in a change of heart."⁷⁰ By 1889, the Haven had been enlarged to accommodate seventy-five women and was receiving a yearly grant of \$900.00 in support of its work from the city. For the previous year it reported four hundred admissions from the Mercer Reformatory, gaol, Police Court and the street. Suggestive of the circumstances that prompted women to enter the Haven was the report that seventy-five per cent of the residents were deserted wives with babies.⁷¹ There were indications, however, that shelters would never permanently resolve the problem of prostitution as prostitutes were reluctant to enter them. Those with "loving hearts and kindly strengthening hands" were advised to persevere.

Followers of Christ must seek out the wanderers; must pursue them with fleet footsteps over the dark mountains of sin; must watch for them at the midnight hour, under the glare of gas-light, or at the early dawn; and when one has been found, she must be taken up rejoicingly--joy in earth and Heaven--in the strong arms of love and faith, and carried to a place of safety.⁷²

Yet the Haven, despite its appeals, also found it difficult to recruit respectable matrons prepared to undertake such work which, although done for the glory of God, was

regarded by many as disreputable, distasteful, and discouraging. For the most part, then, the "wide chasm, deep and dark, [that] yawns between the open doors of our 'Asylums' and 'Shelters' and the fallen of our sex"⁷³ remained unbridged.

A similar evolution occurred in the case of the Ottawa YWCA whose founding in 1892 was a direct result of the failure of efforts by Bertha Wright, member of a prominent Ottawa family, to resolve the problem of prostitution in that city. In her privately-printed reminiscences, Wright recounts the story of a series of experiments in the field of rescue work that led, over a period of seven years, to the founding of the YWCA. Beginning in 1885, Wright and her young women's Bible class undertook evangelistic work with children and held Sunday morning hymn services for the female prisoners at the County Jail. A year's experience with these women convinced them that "little permanent good could be effected owing to the fact that when their term of imprisonment expired, did they desire to do better, the bar-room and house of vice stood wide open, while every respectable home and means of earning an honest livelihood were closed and barred against them."⁷⁴ On establishing the Home for Friendless Women, Wright and her helpers, like the founders of the Haven, were advised that "the respectable citizens of Ottawa would not support such a hot-bed of vice," that they would be unable to manage such "vicious creatures," and that this was a most unpopular work that was "most unbecoming for young women to undertake."⁷⁵ As at the Haven, inmates were recruited from the police court, the prison gate and "dens of vice", the latter visited by a Bible woman who "led to the Home a number of the inmates, who were too intoxicated to know where they were going," and included many "poor broken-hearted motherless girls who have been more sinned against than sinful" and large numbers of "respectable women and children who have been deserted by faithless husbands."⁷⁶

In her memoirs, Wright lashed out at the respectable citizens of Ottawa who preferred to ignore the existence of prostitution and at the male law-makers who victimized young girls but continued to be welcome in church and in society. In so doing, she asserted the right of church women to speak publicly about a subject of which respectable women were supposed to have no knowledge, and to voice their critique of the double standard of sexual morality.

Too long have public prejudice and perverted modesty silenced the church, the state, the press, from giving revelations which would shake society at the Capital to its very foundation.

The time for silence, for timidity, for false modesty for prudishness has long since passed, and those who hear the deep wail of anguish, and see the unutterable woe, which comes up from the abyss of moral corruption in our midst, are in duty bound to speak out....

Gay, giddy thoughtless girls are being ensnared in dens of infamy and shame, which are not only tolerated but patronized by the law-makers of this guilty land, and by whom, alas! they are being ruined as effectually and irrevocably "as one, who, for caprice might burn a priceless diamond into a chip of carbon, from which condition all the chemists in the world can never recover it."

That the deliberate author of a ruin such as this should be entrusted with the responsibility of a legislator--nay worse--should be permitted to come to the Lord's table and be received into the society of the good and the pure, is a sin and a shame.⁷⁷

While such views were undoubtedly shared by other women involved in YWCA work in other Canadian cities, this strong language was not characteristic of YWCA rhetoric. It is significant that Wright chose to express these sentiments in her privately printed memoirs. In the extensive writing that she did as the president of the new Ottawa YWCA beginning in 1892 she was constrained, as were all YWCAs, by the fear of alienating male financial support. More typical was the statement from the report of the Haven reassuring those who may have suspected the YWCA of harbouring radical notions on the subject of sex reform. "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."⁷⁸ The challenge posed to male sexual dominance by nineteenth-century YWCAs was thus a limited one; powerless to change the sexual behaviour of middle- and upper-class men, they turned their attention to the victims of the double standard.

For nineteenth-century evangelical women, the "fallen woman" had a powerful symbolic significance. She represented the results of young women's increased independence in the context of a perceived weakening of family life, decay of traditional morality, and waning influence of orthodox religious institutions.⁷⁹ As "illegitimate" pregnancy became more unacceptable and traumatic than it had been in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, "the late nineteenth century drama of 'ruined' girls served middle-class women as both prescription and critique."⁸⁰ Efforts to rescue fallen women were rooted in evangelical women's fears of the city as a place of danger for women, where railroad stations were frequented by ruffians and white slavers, where brothels posed as respectable lodging houses, where misleading advertisements promised well-paid employment, and where the bright lights of commercial entertainments beckoned to the unwary. Yet as Marian Morton has pointed out, "however exaggerated by Victorian sensibilities and rhetoric, these fears for the fallen women were grounded in the very real economic and sexual vulnerability of thousands of women in the growing city."⁸¹ YWCA rescue work was an attempt by middle-class evangelical women to bridge the barriers of age and class by assisting women who were perceived as being victimized by men. Yet influenced by the maternalistic rhetoric of women's prison reform, they adopted the model of the mother-daughter relationship to mediate class divisions between women, an inappropriate choice given the number of their recalcitrant "daughters" who were themselves deserted wives and mothers.⁸² As Carolyn Strange has argued, maternalism

as an ideology "justified and perpetuated fundamental inequalities between classes and genders; indeed, it could do little else since it had grown out of middle-class conceptions of the separate spheres."⁸³ As a strategy for rehabilitating prostitutes, "this most trying and embarrassing of all Christian work"⁸⁴ enjoyed only limited success. While the belief that "fallen women" could be redeemed by the efforts of Christian women was widely promoted in nineteenth-century novels, the YWCA's conviction that evangelical religion and domesticity could suffice to provide the women with the basis for a fresh start in life, appears naive, given recent findings that at the turn of the century half of Toronto prostitutes were formerly employed as domestic servants.⁸⁵ And as Strange has pointed out, maternal sympathy and supervision contributed little to resolving problems such as abusive husbands, limited educational and employment opportunities, low wages, and alcoholism. Yet nonetheless, rescue work did represent an attempt by YWCA women ^{to} arrive at an understanding, limited and ambivalent though it may have been, of the unique problems of women in the city. For better or for worse, they would bring this perspective to bear on the problems of the respectable young self-supporting woman who increasingly occupied their attention.

* * * * *

From the very first YWCAs had been distinguished from other older women's charities by the attention they paid to young working women resident in the city, a group not traditionally designated as an appropriate target for benevolence or deserving in any way of public assistance. In the view of YWCA women, their programs for working women, such as educational classes, employment bureaux, and boarding houses, were closely linked to their provision of relief to the poor and their attempts to rescue women from prostitution. In keeping with their commitment to "scientific

philanthropy" and "preventive" measures, they were convinced that efforts to assist the young woman who was both respectable and self-supporting, and desired to remain so, would in the long run alleviate much suffering and contribute to the eventual resolution of the problems of poverty, unemployment, and prostitution. Surely, they argued, "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."⁸⁶ In any case, as a visitor from Sydney, Australia, observed to a YWCA gathering in Montreal, this very different type of work ultimately yielded much more satisfactory results: "It is a very arduous and disappointing work to try and lift up the fallen and save them. It is so much better to prevent and save them from falling."⁸⁷ Over the course of the last three decades of the nineteenth century, these sentiments came to express the dominant approach to YWCA work as efforts at relief and rescue were gradually abandoned in favour of preventive programs for the working woman.

The Young Men's Christian Association, which invariably preceded the arrival of the YWCA in nineteenth-century Canadian cities, had already demonstrated the effectiveness of arguments that religious and educational programs for young men could serve both to prevent crime and unemployment and to exert a beneficial influence on the future leaders of the community. An investment in the welfare of young men struggling to succeed in the world through hard work, initiative, and the avoidance of moral transgressions, was an investment in the future of the community, the YMCA argued convincingly.⁸⁸ YWCA women saw no reason that a similar strategy should not work for them, frequently enquiring rhetorically: "It has been said, and truly, that the future of...the great Dominion of Canada depends upon her young men. Is not this equally or to

a greater extent true of our young women?"⁸⁹ Yet YWCA women were careful not to appear to challenge the ideology of separate spheres which assigned to men dominance in the public realm of business and politics and to women responsibility for the home. In advocating publicly-funded programs and services for young working women, they adapted the YMCA's arguments by emphasizing the importance of young women as the mothers of the future generations, those who would shape the moral and religious standards of the community.

...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.⁹⁰

As a solution to the problems of the nineteenth-century Canadian city, the YWCA proposed to mould a new generation of young women, prepared to play a more active role in the community yet committed to domesticity and the tenets of evangelical religion. By the end of the century, they had defined the resolution of "the girl problem" as the exclusive mandate of their organization and claimed the field of preventive work with young women as properly subject to their jurisdiction by virtue of their extensive experience and superior expertise.

From the 1870s to the 1890s, one of the most important preventive strategies promoted by Canadian YWCAs was vocational education for young women. In many cities, the YWCA pioneered classes in commercial subjects and home economics, contributing to the emergence of a distinct female curriculum in Canadian schools in the early twentieth century. The YWCA's interest in vocational education as a potential solution to the girl problem derived from its extensive experience in assisting young women to find suitable and respectable employment and its consequent awareness of

the hardship that unemployment could cause. Characteristically, however, YWCA women viewed the problem of unemployment not in structural terms but as a manifestation of deficiencies in the individuals who made up the workforce. YWCA employment bureaux, established by several branches in the 1870s and 1880s, attributed unemployment among young women to a lack of training. "One of the most frequent and difficult problems" with which it had to deal, the Quebec YWCA commented, was "that of unskilled labor." The chief difficulty was "not one of capacity, but of training" and was often aggravated by the "indefiniteness of purpose" from which many women suffered.⁹¹

YWCA women were particularly sympathetic to the plight of the educated young woman from an impoverished middle-class background who was forced to support herself and perhaps dependent relatives as well but lacked marketable skills. They were highly critical of the tendency of middle-class girls' education to emphasize "ornamental" accomplishments such as music and fancy needlework, and adopted the position, still controversial in that sector of society from which the YWCA derived its financial support, that young women from all classes ought to receive an education that would prepare them to earn a living. This position was stated in terms that simultaneously asserted women's capacity for employment yet demonstrated that the YWCA was not contributing to the girl problem by advocating that women pursue a career for its own sake.

The vicissitudes of the last few years have shown the expediency of providing every girl, whatever her station, with a means of support, not necessarily for lucrative employment, but as something to fall back upon if thrown upon her own resources, or for the benefit of others...It is now generally admitted that women are not incapacitated by nature from pursuing high and noble attainments without departing from their natural sphere, and the exercise and development of the talents God has given would do much to prevent the aimless drifting into hapless connexions, so often the precursor of endless misery and pauperism.⁹²

YWCAs stressed that in advocating vocational education for women they were simply hoping to prevent the suffering attendant upon financial and possibly moral tragedy, and encouraged their middle-class supporters to consider the future of their own daughters, should they encounter similar circumstances. The fearful possibilities, they hoped, would generate support not only for vocational education for women but also for the YWCA. "Fathers and mothers! if the daughters whom you cherish so fondly and guard so tenderly, were removed from your protecting care, and compelled to seek a livelihood, alone, in a strange city, where all the ordinary avenues of remunerative labor are over-crowded with eager competitors, and the pretty accomplishments which won so much admiration in the home circle, totally eclipsed by brilliant rivals, would you not feel thankful for any vicarious interest? Would you not gladly accept the protection of the Women's Christian Association?"⁹³

Much of the YWCA's interest in the question of women's education in the 1870s and 1880s undoubtedly derived from its familiarity with the circumstances of impoverished British gentlewomen. In Britain during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the situation of these "redundant" women, having no prospects of employment or marriage and therefore dependent on the charity of relatives or the public, was an issue that sparked a great deal of public debate over women's education.⁹⁴ Some of these women hoped to improve their prospects by emigrating to Canada, the Montreal YWCA reporting in 1881 that it was apparently becoming well known in England and Ireland, having received many enquiries from women wishing to settle in Montreal and seeking situations as housekeepers and governesses. Regarding the prospects for such women, the Employment Committee reported, "We regret to state that the remuneration offered is in many cases not at all adequate to the work that is required. Domestic servants and working women ask and easily obtain high wages, but governesses have to accept a

mere pittance of a salary."⁹⁵ It concluded reluctantly, "We have thought it best not to encourage such classes to emigrate, as we cannot find employment for those in our own country."⁹⁶

The YWCA's position that young women ought to be trained to fill a variety of useful occupations was not popular in view of the perennial "Servant Problem" that plagued its middle-class supporters, many of whom were inclined to argue that "no girl need be without employment when servants are in such demand." YWCA workers, in response, carefully pointed out that "there are many who from delicate health are unable to fill laborious situations, and others are unfitted by reason of their home-training to become domestics, having been delicately reared and well educated, whom unforeseen circumstances have compelled to seek some employment by which to live."⁹⁷ In 1886, to encourage debate on this subject, Mrs. John Macdougall of the Montreal YWCA sponsored an essay competition on the subject of "The Education of Girls with Some Definite Aim in Life" open to "any young lady over 14 attending a ladies' school." The prize was awarded to Miss Florence Crow who argued that young women should be given an education that would enable them to earn a living in case they were compelled by sudden reverses of fortune to support themselves.

Men are independent. They expect from earliest youth to earn a living. Girls are taught to depend upon others, and upon what will be left them by parents or relatives. Is not this a slur upon woman? Does she acknowledge herself so inferior to man? Is she to be sent forth to the world with unstored mind or unpractised hand? Surely not. 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 favors 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.....⁹⁸

It is significant that the prize was awarded to an essay that did not justify women's education with reference to the principles of "scientific philanthropy" but referred

directly to the dignity and autonomy of women. This suggests that in private at least some YWCA women were distinctly sympathetic to the views of British feminists on the education question. Yet such arguments could not be voiced publicly for fear of adding to the disheartening but frequently encountered criticism that the YWCA was contributing to, rather than resolving, the girl problem. "Strange to say," reported the Toronto YWCA in 1883, "what opposition we meet is chiefly from women, who say that we are encouraging girls to work at other things who ought to be servants."⁹⁹

The conservatism of many of its supporters may account for the extreme discretion with which the YWCA introduced courses in commercial subjects and the female trades of dressmaking and millinery during the 1870s and 1880s. The first classes in English and Book-keeping appeared in the late 1870s, with Phonography (Shorthand) following in the early 1880s. Between 1888 and 1892, classes in dressmaking and millinery were introduced for those who wished to enter these occupations and for those working women who wished to make their own clothes. By 1891, the Montreal YWCA reported classes in "Millinery, Dress-fitting, Typewriting, Shorthand, Book-keeping, French, Elocution and Singing, the first five studies being most in demand."¹⁰⁰ Apparently the introduction of "useless" ornamental classes generated some criticism, to which it was responded that "many a young woman who had spent her evenings walking the streets, picking up dubious companions, had been attracted to the association by the choral and music classes, and the French and German had wonderfully aided many another to fill positions they would never have been able to occupy otherwise."¹⁰¹ Yet there is virtually no record of any public discussion of the advisability of courses preparing young women for entering business life. By the 1890s, an intense ideological debate raged over the suitability of women for clerical work, with opponents arguing "first, that 'woman's nature' was not suited to clerical work; second, that women were

physically incapable of such work; and third, that women were taking jobs away from men."¹⁰² If YWCA women discussed these questions, they did so privately. No explanation or justification for business courses was put forward at annual meetings or in the published annual reports prepared for the edification of potential financial supporters. There was, of course, no need to promote or justify such courses to working women. With regard to the American situation, John Rury has noted that commercial training was the one example of a response to consumer demand for vocational education, rather than the result of a campaign by reformers and educational authorities.¹⁰³ Certainly there is ample evidence to suggest that young women from the native-born and relatively well-educated population regarded employment in commercial occupations as superior to domestic service and factory work, and probably required little encouragement to attend these classes.¹⁰⁴

The absence of public discussion of the YWCA's pioneering efforts in the field of commercial education was in marked contrast to the fanfare accompanying the introduction of courses in domestic science, or home economics, the "*pièce de résistance*" of YWCA Educational Departments in the 1890s. Interest in domestic science as a suitable female alternative to the manual training classes being promoted for boys was widespread in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵ While some educators viewed domestic science as something suitable to occupy the attention of girls while the boys were being provided with industrial training, others viewed it as "a reform movement...aimed at eradicating the overcrowding, poverty, disease and potential for social unrest associated with rapid industrialization and urbanization."¹⁰⁶ In Canada, educational authorities and women reformers were aware of the new currents of thought coming from outside the country and of the existence of experimental schools for the training of teachers in some major American cities. The YWCA, however, was the first

to take practical steps toward the introduction of domestic science into Canadian schools, establishing its own schools of domestic science in Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal during the early 1890s. Historians have extensively documented the role played by Adelaide Hoodless, President of the Hamilton YWCA which founded the first School of Domestic Science in Canada, in the campaign to introduce domestic science into the Canadian school system.¹⁰⁷ Yet the YWCA's involvement in domestic science education did not result solely from Hoodless's initiative. It grew rather from the YWCA's previously existing commitment to "scientific philanthropy," from the experience of its employment bureaux with attempts to resolve the "Servant Question," and of course from its extensive consideration of "the girl problem" and growing interest in the development of preventive measures. YWCA domestic science classes were simultaneously an attempt to influence the character of working-class family life with a view to eliminating poverty and intemperance, to resolve the servant problem, and to persuade the young women of all classes, facing an unprecedented range of options, that their rightful and most rewarding duties still lay in the home.

YWCA employment bureaux, which prompted much of the organization's interest in the cause of domestic science, catered mainly to domestic servants; those considering factory work were advised that domestic service was a "more suitable and healthy employment".¹⁰⁸ Most branches combined their employment bureau with some sort of accommodation for servants seeking a situation, although the Toronto branch, undoubtedly not wishing to offend its supporters by seeming to encourage servants to leave their positions, was careful to note that it did not receive those who had left their places "without sufficient cause."¹⁰⁹ Montreal, typically, secured a Servants' Room in 1881 where "motherly counsel and advice" was "received very kindly and thankfully by some, and with indifference and impertinence by others."¹¹⁰ In 1886, it

opened the Working Girls' Rooms and Boarding House where servants were offered "board and lodging at a cheap rate and a quiet resting-place to recruit[sic] in when weak or overworked."¹¹¹ From the YWCA's perspective, its employment bureaux combined the advantages of protecting young rural women from "the misleading character of some of the servants' registries in the city"¹¹² by screening prospective employers, and of providing a place where middle-class women could apply for a servant in exchange for a small fee, usually twenty-five cents. Yet nineteenth-century YWCAs were more than self-interested suppliers of domestic servants for the middle classes. Their interest in the welfare of the servant herself was genuine, if moralistic and patronizing, and they were readier than most to argue that Christian mistresses ought to assume their share of the blame for the existence of the servant problem and even for the fact that many women entered prostitution as a result of employment in service.

All Christian women cannot go out to the highways and hedges to seek the erring, but all Christian wives and mothers can engage in the work of elevation and prevention. A large class of girls from the country find homes in our families as servants, these come frequently from comfortable farm houses, are simple and credulous, ignorant alike of city ways and city dangers, can we wonder that they soon learn that the street is brighter and more attractive than a cold, dark kitchen, or a colder and more comfortless sleeping room. A gentle smile, a sympathetic word, a kind enquiry, the loan of an entertaining book, are small things, and would not much inconvenience a true Christian mistress, and yet, the want of them has crowded on to ruin many a bright young girl.¹¹³

Yet despite the YWCA's attempts to urge "all ladies who employ domestics to give them a more honorable place in the social scale," its efforts to mediate the servant problem met with little success. Christian mistresses proved less than cooperative, prompting the Ottawa branch to remark that "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."¹¹⁴

Domestic science, YWCA women rapidly became convinced, would remedy the servant problem by "professionalizing" domestic service, attracting a "better class" of women into service and encouraging employers to treat them with more respect. Domestic science, they hoped, would bridge the "one insurmountable caste distinction left us in Canada from the innumerable ones of by-gone days."

It is not higher wages, more privileges, better food that will solve the problem now disturbing the peace of many homes in our city. It is removing from this branch of work the badge, not of service, for that is honourable, but of serfdom. If we would make the position of those who serve in our homes as honourable as those who serve in the shop or factory, the situations we have to offer would be more eagerly sought for than the vacancy in shop or factory. Many young girls who are now earning hardly enough to pay for their board would gladly exchange for the better pay and more comfortable room and board of the average domestic servant were it not for the "disgrace" of going out to service.¹¹⁵

Disappointingly, from the perspective of the YWCA, domestics proved singularly reluctant to devote their precious afternoon or evening off to upgrading their qualifications by attending a class at the YWCA. As historians have noted, the growing reluctance of many young women to enter the ranks of domestic servants in the latter part of the nineteenth century was more than a question of status.

"Professionalization" as a solution left untouched the questions of long hours, excessive supervision, lack of privacy and isolation from peers that loomed large in the minds of many young women anxious to experience some of the more pleasant aspects of life in the city.

Rather than abandon the cause of domestic science education altogether, however, YWCAs expanded their efforts to reach a broader spectrum of women. Toronto offered classes to women who wished to train as professional cooks and domestics but also promised to "give to the working mothers and sisters in our midst an opportunity to learn how to buy cheap joints and how to cook them so as to make palatable, savory and

nourishing food at small cost."¹¹⁶ The Montreal YWCA opened a School of Cookery in 1895 offering one class for servants and one for shop and office girls, "its chief object being to teach the poorer classes habits of thrift and economy, and incidentally, having classes for ladies as well."¹¹⁷ YWCA women were among the first to put forward the argument that all young women, even those from the most prosperous and educated of backgrounds, ought to be trained in the duties of the household, anticipating many of the justifications for enshrining domestic science in the curricula of the public schools in the early twentieth century. On opening its school of domestic science in 1893, the Ottawa YWCA attacked what it regarded as the artificial distinction between useless and useful work.

Who has not met with the woman of great mental culture whose poor head was so stuffed with declensions and conjugations that she could not tell salaratus from shortening, nor how to baste a roast without a needle, if she tried. For some unaccountable reason society draws a very fine distinction between work that is degrading and and work that is ennobling. According to the popular notion a lady may crochet a mat for a lamp to stand on, but she may not clean the lamp; she may paint on china, but she may not wash the china; she may embroider frills for a dress, but she may not make the dress; in fact the line seems to have been drawn between work that is useful and work that is useless, the former being regarded as degrading while the latter is considered quite in keeping with the position of a lady. This false sentiment the Association seeks to remove in giving labour its true dignity, by including in its work those branches which enable young women to become true housewives and mothers, at the same time affording them that self reliance which is necessary for self support.¹¹⁸

In 1896 the offer of the Hamilton YWCA to teach domestic science to a class of public school girls in order to demonstrate the practicability of domestic science instruction was accepted by the Hamilton School Board, a project that became a model for reformers and educators in other Canadian cities. In 1897, YWCAs in Ontario were certified by the provincial government to train the first domestic science teachers until such training was taken over by the normal schools and the MacDonald Institute in Guelph. While the National Council of Women probably formed the most powerful and effective lobby for

domestic science education in the schools, the pioneering efforts of the YWCA in the actual provision of practical instruction undoubtedly contributed in no small measure to the success of the campaign.

The YWCA gained considerable favourable publicity and public support in the 1890s as a result of its experiments in the field of domestic science education. Nevertheless, there were strong indications that the middle-class church-going public who formed the bulwark of support for local charities were somewhat puzzled by the idea of an institution for respectable working women. The conviction remained that such women simply did not need charity, and that the YWCA's "preventive measures" represented a turning away from the traditional Christian women's work of rescuing the fallen. In 1894, at the fifth annual meeting of the Hamilton YWCA which was directing the bulk of its efforts to promoting its school of domestic science, its General Secretary Anna C. Helm lamented that "the faithful workers have had much prejudice to combat, much misunderstanding to encounter, and many difficulties to surmount."

No little blame is attached to us because we are not doing the rescue in connection with our own legitimate work, but a little thoughtful consideration will show the impossibility of combining the two. People have said to us, 'I thought you professed to be governed by the spirit of Christ. Is it Christ-like to turn your back upon those other young women who have made shipwreck of virtue, and refuse them a helping hand back to a life of purity and self-respect again? No, not Christ-like, perhaps, and we wish it were far from otherwise, but, so long as social customs and demands remain as they are, experience has taught us that such work must be always distinctive and special, and must come within the scope of mission and rescue work.'¹¹⁹

The difficulty of combining the traditional benevolent activities of rescue and relief with programs for the respectable working woman, which increasingly represented the main thrust of YWCA work, was an issue that preoccupied Canadian YWCAs until the end of the century by which time virtually all branches had abandoned the older programs.

Until that time, considerable confusion reigned about the mandate and objectives of the organization, causing difficulties for YWCA women with their clientele of working women and with their middle-class financial supporters. Nowhere was this conflict more obvious and more problematic than in the case of the YWCA boardinghouse.

* * * * *

The boarding house for "self-supporting" and "self-respecting" young women was the primary preventive strategy developed by the YWCA to resolve the problem of young women in the city. It reflected the perception of evangelical YWCA women that this "problem" consisted largely of the moral threat to the rural innocent posed by the iniquitous environment of the late nineteenth century Canadian city. Using maternal rhetoric and imagery that reflected both class prejudice and a strong conviction that Christian women had an obligation to those of their own sex, YWCA women promoted their boarding houses on the grounds that women outside the locus of the family were in imminent moral peril and that the primary requirement of working women in the city was a substitute for the Christian family home they had supposedly left behind. After five years in operation, the Toronto YWCA justified its boarding house in these terms:

Each year shows us more and more the great necessity there is for such a place. Young and inexperienced as many are who come from their homes to seek to better themselves in a larger town, and numerous as are the temptations thrown in the way of young women, it becomes every woman who has either a mother's or a sister's heart, to seek in every way to shelter them. This the Women's Christian Association is striving to do, by providing a boarding house where young women can feel some of the comforts as well as such necessary restraints as are found in every well ordered family.¹²⁰

The YWCA boarding house was an attempt by middle-class evangelical women to recreate, after a fashion, certain aspects of their ideal of family life, and to state

their commitment to evangelical domesticity as a solution to the both the problem and problems of the working woman.

As a public institution for respectable women, a phenomenon that was unfamiliar to the residents of Canadian cities in the late nineteenth century, the YWCA boarding house required many years and much effort on the part of its female founders before it gained the acceptance that YWCA women believed it deserved. By the second decade of the twentieth century, as will be shown in Chapter Four, this institution was perceived by businessmen, boosters, social reformers, and the local churches as a requirement for every modern progressive community, ranking in status with the public library and YMCA. The nineteenth-century years, however, were a daunting period when the very concept of the home was attacked by observers on all sides. The report of the Ottawa YWCA in 1892 included the following eloquent and revealing lament.

Like Kindred societies in other cities, the Association needs time 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 and difficulties meet the weary canvasser as she goes from house to house collecting for the new building.¹²¹

Although much effort had to be expended by YWCA women to raise funds for the purchase of buildings and property, it is arguable that in the nineteenth century even

more determination and persistence was required for the task of explaining and defending their objectives.

YWCA boarding homes catered to young women under the age of twenty-five and gave preference to those newly arrived from the country who were believed to be most in need. The new Toronto branch in 1876 reported its objects as "to provide suitable accommodation and a comfortable home for young girls coming from different parts of the country, who require shelter or permanent protection against the dangers and temptations consequent on leaving the parental roof to earn a livelihood in the city."¹²² In 1884, Toronto quoted rates of \$3.00, \$2.50, and \$2.00 per week, according to the size of the room, daily accommodation for fifty cents and bed and breakfast for twenty-five cents.¹²³ Few factory or industrial workers boarded at YWCAs in the nineteenth century, the majority of residents being drawn from the traditional female trades of dressmaking and millinery and from the newer "white-blouse" occupations of teaching, clerical work and retail sales. Where religious affiliations were reported, the boarders appear to have been representative of the major Protestant denominations. The Ottawa boarding house, for example, reported sixty-four permanent boarders in 1898. "10 are teachers and governesses, 26 students, 8 civil servants, 2 stenographers, 2 bookkeepers, 2 are in business positions, 5 dressmakers, 5 milliners, 1 tailoress, 1 machinist and 1 bookbinder...31 are Presbyterians; 20 Episcopalians; 10 Methodists, 2 Baptists and 1 Plymouth Sister."¹²⁴ This profile varied occasionally according to local circumstances. Boarders at the Quebec YWCA boarding house, given the small size of the Protestant community in that city, reportedly included the "old and young, the educated and the ignorant, the fairly prosperous and the wholly destitute."¹²⁵ During the 1880s, some branches adopted the practice, soon to become an important feature of

YWCA boarding houses, of providing accommodation during the summer months to "ladies travelling alone, and desiring to remain a short time in the city."¹²⁶

YWCA women frequently described their institution as a Christian family home and conceived of the relations between the staff and residents in the same terms that characterized the relations between members of a family. Despite the absence of any male father figure, the Quebec YWCA was able to state that "our ideal of what this Home should be is, that it shall take the place as far as possible, of the home where the father and mother preside."¹²⁷ Primary responsibility for creating the home environment and providing a substitute for parental supervision fell to the matron, usually an older widow judged to be of suitable character and hired by the Board of Managers to live in the home. The Boarding Committee of the Ottawa branch reported in its first annual report that "the family consists of 1 teacher, 7 students, 1 book-keeper, 1 house-keeper, 1 dress-maker, 2 servants and 'The Mother.'" This home reportedly had "no rules beyond what would govern an ordinary Christian home,"¹²⁸ yet as was the case in other cities those rules could sometimes be very strict indeed and in some cases must have contributed to a distinctly institutional rather than homelike ambiance. Admittance to a YWCA boarding home required character testimonials, including one letter from a clergyman, and residents whose attitudes or behaviour proved unsuitable were occasionally asked to leave. Boarders at the Toronto YWCA were subjected to rules which required them to attend church on Sunday and evening prayers each night in the home, to keep their rooms neat and clean and refrain from visiting the laundry or kitchen without permission, to receive their visitors in the sitting room rather than in their own rooms, to invite one female friend for Christmas dinner, and to be in each night by ten o'clock with lights out at eleven.¹²⁹ Boarders at the Quebec YWCA were expected to assemble for breakfast and prayers at seven o'clock,

and to be in each night by nine o'clock except by special permission; lights were turned out at ten o'clock. Residents were responsible for making their beds and keeping their rooms neat, the latter being subjected to a daily inspection by a member of the Board of Managers.¹³⁰ The Matron at the Quebec branch was instructed to supervise prayers with "the inmates" every morning and evening, to be "especially careful" that no "spiritous liquors" entered the home except by a physician's orders, and to "examine the persons and boxes of inmates on first entering and leaving, and superintend a thorough ablution."¹³¹ This approach to the management of working women's homes won the endorsement of the Toronto Telegram in 1876. "No doubt the necessary discipline of the Home may be a little chafing to any who may entertain the too common but dangerous doctrine of a 'young woman's freedom'; but early hours and subjection to rightful authority will not harm but help those who in the formative years of life are laying the foundations of the womanhood of after years."¹³²

Establishing a boarding house was an expensive proposition for nineteenth century women's charitable organizations, which typically relied on such traditional female methods of fundraising as bazaars and pink teas.¹³³ The YWCA's objectives, however, required the purchase of a centrally-located property, convenient to the workers in the downtown business district who made up the clientele of YWCA boarding houses. In 1892, the Ottawa YWCA advertised its new rooms at 98 Albert Street as "centrally located, being almost opposite to the City Hall and but five minutes walk from the Parliament Buildings, Normal School and Post Office."¹³⁴ A YWCA's first undertaking was generally the lease or purchase of a suitable boarding house, usually requiring extensive renovation and refurbishing. Despite efforts to solicit donations of labour and materials both from local businesses and from supportive women's organizations such as the WCTU or church women, a boarding house required a considerable outlay of

funds and an ongoing struggle to meet the mortgage payments which meant that a YWCA could not survive on traditional sources of income. YWCAs consequently became more dependent than many smaller women's societies on the financial support and good will not only of church authorities and the congregations of local evangelical churches but also of local politicians and the business sector. Such support did not always come easily. In fact, YWCA Boards of Managers were required to expend considerable energy justifying their undertaking in terms with which these groups could identify, and explaining what many apparently found to be an extremely problematic concept--a women's institution which claimed not to be a charity and which catered to respectable working women.

YWCA women found it necessary to educate their potential supporters about the conditions under which working women lived, and to present those conditions in a way that would generate the required sympathy and financial support. The Toronto YWCA, lamenting the heavy expenses incurred by its boarding house in 1889, commented: "It seems a pity when so much is done to rescue the fallen, that our sympathies do not go out more to help those who have never gone astray, but who have many a temptation thrown in their way, against which they bravely fight."¹³⁵ YWCA descriptions of working women's problems constituted some of the earliest attempts by women reformers in Canadian cities to draw public attention to the situation of working women. In 1892, Bertha Wright, attempting to initiate a branch of the YWCA in Ottawa, directed a plea to the comfortable citizens of that city for a boarding home for the hundreds of "sewing girls, shop girls, clerks, students, who, having left the parental roof to seek employment or educational advantages in the city, need a home and mothering."

Think for a moment of the hardships, the loneliness, the need, of this class. Their limited means drives them to seek out the cheapest boarding house to be found, where a small, close, ill-ventilated room is taken and shared with two or three others to lessen expense. Hastily dressing in the morning they hurry to their uninviting breakfast. Unrefreshed they go out to their long day of toil or study. Evening finds them worn and weary, perhaps nervous and irritable as well. How shall they spend the evening? They have no good books, no pleasant and innocent recreation lies within their means. They are too weary to work, and they must have change. What wonder if many spend the free hours on the streets or in places of questionable amusement where undesirable acquaintances may be formed. Sunday comes and if no one invites them to church or Bible class they spend it idly lounging in their close little room, perhaps reading dime novels, or with such companions as can be found only in cheap boarding houses.

These and many other circumstances made it most desirable that self-supporting young women should have a Home, where love and sympathy would greet them, and where they could be mothered and shielded from temptation.¹³⁶

Such descriptions of the problems faced by working women were highly coloured, of course, by the concerns of the middle-class evangelical women who produced them. Given that the employers of these young women were among those respectable citizens to whom YWCAs directed their appeals for financial support, it is not surprising that accounts of living conditions rather than working conditions figured more prominently in YWCA reports. Similarly, frequent references to the problems of living on low wages did not imply a direct attack on low wages but reinforced an appeal to assist the young woman struggling to remain "respectable" on those wages. Wright's account reflects both the evangelical preoccupation with personal morality that made an issue of reading dime novels on Sunday, and a more generalized concern on the part of middle-class reformers with the moral standards of working women.¹³⁷ It also, of course, poses the "problem" of the young woman in the city in such a way that the evangelical domesticity proffered by the YWCA boarding house appears the obvious and appropriate solution.

Nonetheless, the respectable Christian citizens of nineteenth-century Canadian cities did not immediately embrace the YWCA boarding house as a worthy idea that was in their interest and consequently deserving of their support. YWCAs were required to

explain repeatedly that working women often simply did not have the resources to find respectable accommodation. "The question has been asked, Why should we be expected to assist in keeping up a home for milliners and others who can afford to go to an hotel? Our answer is, There are very few, if any, of those who come to us who can afford to go to an hotel."¹³⁸ To the frequent accusation that the YWCA was "nothing more than a cheap boarding house" the reply came that "It is a cheap boarding house--cheap enough to be within the reach of all; but it is a great deal more: it is a protection for strangers, as many a young girl coming from a distant land and knowing nothing of Toronto can testify. It has all the restraints of a well-ordered Christian home and no effort is spared...to procure situations for those in search of them."¹³⁹ This accusation produced a particularly eloquent defence from the Montreal YWCA which argued that its "cheap boardinghouse" contained the best features of a school and a convent but was greater than both.

...it is a Christian home, a centre of pious culture, where the blessing is invoked at table, where at the setting of the sun this sisterhood may be seen on bended knee, and you may catch the echo of many voices praying 'Thy Kingdom come', or perchance that cry of the weary heart, 'Not my will, but Thine!' It is here that young women from widely separated homes form one family. Here you may meet the girl who stands first at the Normal, the High, or the University, or that other, who, from behind desk or counter, waits with a smile all day, and veils exhaustion with an interested word while you hover in indecision over cut glass, or cloisonne, French cambric, or India mull. Believe me, they deserve just such a home as this. All the more surely that they so nobly earn the money that pays for such.¹⁴⁰

YWCA boarding houses were accused of contributing to the problem of "pauperization" by discouraging self-reliance and encouraging dependence upon the public purse among the population of working women. The Quebec YWCA pointed out that its boarding house was quite in keeping with the principles of charity organization and scientific philanthropy. "This is not a charity in the ordinary acceptance of the word, any more than a College or University endowed by public grants and bequests, the great object of

the Association being to help those who are able and willing to help themselves, and to prevent voluntary dependence by promoting industry and self-reliance."¹⁴¹

The question of the charitable status of the YWCA boarding house was apparently a thorny problem for it recurs frequently in the organization's published reports. In keeping with the modern approach to charity, YWCAs did not wish to appear to be giving out "something for nothing" yet to turn away a destitute young woman in genuine distress would have been to abandon the most fundamental objective of their organization. The result was that even while emphatically and publicly denying that they were a charitable institution, most YWCAs supported or partially supported young women who could not pay their board, particularly in times of illness or unemployment, and maintained a fund for emergencies such as buying a railroad ticket for a young woman who wished to return to her family. The Quebec YWCA reported in 1881:

The regular charge for boarders is two dollars per week; sewing-girls and others who go out by the day, fifty cents per week; those who pay nothing are required to render some equivalent in work...During the year there have been 43 inmates; of these 8 have paid the full amount; 18 have paid partially, generally at the rate of \$5 or \$6 per month; the remainder have been unable to pay anything. 14 of these have been strangers, respectable, yet destitute and friendless, to whom this institution has been indeed a refuge.¹⁴²

Apparently such admission policies caused considerable confusion since YWCAs were required to explain them so frequently. "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."¹⁴³ The YWCA most emphatically did not wish to be associated in the public mind with older charitable institutions such as refuges and houses of industry both for fear of alienating potential supporters who regarded those

institutions as mere drains upon the public purse, and for fear of driving away its clientele of respectable working women who did not wish to be perceived as charitable cases.

Ridding themselves of the stigma of charity was not the only problem YWCAs encountered in attempting to shape their image as a worthy institution deserving of public support. Most branches in the late nineteenth century were plagued by a prevalent image of their boarding houses as shelters for women of ill-repute. The Toronto YWCA on many occasions denied emphatically that it was 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."¹⁴⁴ In attempting to promote itself as an entirely new type of public institution, one that catered to respectable women, the YWCA repeatedly found itself faced with a long-standing prejudice among its supporters that public institutions were filled with the destitute, the shiftless, and the immoral. Reluctantly it was forced to conclude that its boarding houses would never be rid of the stigma of charity and rescue work so long as these programs were all conducted under the auspices of the same organization. As early as 1881, the Toronto branch attempted to distinguish publicly between its rescue, relief, and boarding house programs. "We wish it to be distinctly understood that this boarding house is a home only for respectable young women who are earning a living for themselves in Toronto. And although the Mission and Relief and Haven Committees also belong to the work of the W.C.A., they are entirely separate from this work, and are under different boards of management."¹⁴⁵ Ten years later, it reported that the Haven had separated for legal reasons having to do with holding property but

undoubtedly it was recognized that such a separation would be to the distinct advantage of the YWCA.

Yet the organization had also to avoid appearing as if it were abandoning the principles of Christian charity as the Hamilton YWCA discovered when it encountered criticism for directing all its efforts into its new School of Domestic Science. Not organized until 1889, the Hamilton branch had had the opportunity to benefit from the experience of older branches, particularly Toronto, with combining boarding houses and refuges under the auspices of the same organization. It was thus familiar with the problems that could be encountered in trying to combine the two types of work and like other branches organized after 1890 simply elected not to undertake rescue work. As the editors of one Hamilton newspaper explained on behalf of the YWCA:

...as we understand it, the present design is not to provide a refuge for fallen women, or a reformatory of any class. The work of reclaiming the unfortunate is one of the noblest that can engage the attention of philanthropists; but it is not the work which the ladies who now ask attention to their plans have undertaken. Their scheme is, and necessarily must be, wholly distinct from any work of reclamation. The two cannot be united. For if fallen women were admitted to the rooms of the Young Women's Christian association, respectable young women would be driven away.¹⁴⁶

This explanation highlights another factor less frequently mentioned in YWCA records but significant nonetheless. YWCAs had not only to please their financial supporters. They had also to cater to at least some extent to the concerns of the respectable working women whom they wished to attract. The latter, having no particular interest in the principles of scientific philanthropy, simply did not wish to be associated in any way with an institution associated with charity or fallen women. The YWCA's abandonment of rescue work was as much an acknowledgment of this reality as a move in the direction of scientific philanthropy. By the end of the century YWCAs expressed their hopes "that others will be found to labor in other fields where also the harvest is

ready," and problem cases were increasingly turned over to newer organizations such as the Salvation Army which specialized in such work.¹⁴⁷

Between 1870 and 1900, the YWCA more and more frequently expressed its commitment to the respectable self-supporting young woman and to the preventive approach to the problem of the young woman in the city. "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."¹⁴⁸ One of those most committed to this shift in the YWCA's emphasis was Bertha Wright of Ottawa who had experienced for herself, in founding the Home for Friendless Women, the limitations of rescue and reform. She became, as a result, the driving force behind the formation of a branch of the YWCA in Ottawa, to be dedicated to the task of prevention. At the laying of the cornerstone of the new Ottawa YWCA building in 1892, Wright elaborated on her understanding of YWCA work.

...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.¹⁴⁹

As Wright's statement indicates, however, the shift to preventive methods by no means implied that the YWCA had abandoned the maternalism that characterized its rescue work. The mother-daughter relationship continued to be viewed as the most appropriate model for mediating relations between the for the most part older middle-class volunteers of the YWCA and their clientele of young working women. In a discussion of the subject "How Shall We Work Effectively as Members of the Y.W.C.A.?",

"A Member" of the Ottawa branch, who may have been Wright herself, chose to define the nature of YWCA work as "soul mothering." Noting that "some relationship must be established between ourselves and those whom we would help," she proposed that that relationship was most appropriately conceived in terms of "Motherhood! Not the symbol but the synonym; the elemental quality of the Y.W.C.A. work...Here the "potential motherhood in each true woman's heart," may find utterance."¹⁵⁰

As this confident statement of maternalism suggests, YWCA women may have committed themselves to a new type of work with young women but they had not necessarily adopted new and appropriate attitudes. They wished to attract the young woman who was independent, self-reliant, and self-respecting, and stressed over and over to their financial supporters that such a young woman, because of these very qualities, deserved public assistance and should not be regarded as an object of charity. There is, however, some surviving evidence suggesting that YWCA women themselves were not infrequently guilty of that very offence. As middle-class evangelical women they brought to YWCA work a considerable legacy of experience in charitable and rescue work and had adopted a certain manner of behaviour toward the objects of their benefaction. Some of them apparently found it difficult to abandon it, as suggested by the contents of a letter from an outraged boarder received by the Toronto YWCA's Board of Managers in 1874, not long after the opening of the boarding home.

Ladies, I regret to have to trouble you with any complaint from me as regards this Institution but it were better you should hear them openly from me than to hear from others. I came here with the expectation of finding a Kind and Christian home but at present it cannot take that name. It is a libel on the word Christian. For where there is no Kindness to the sick or suffering there is no love of God. We have a blessing asked at meal times and prayer in the evenings but they are mere forms I think for were they true sentiments of a Christian heart, you would be treated half kindly or even with respect, but as it is we who pay our [\$3.00 per week] are treated as though we were taken of[sic] the streets and should be thankful for even a crumb of Bread. I am not one who has just left my mother's knee

but have taught school for five years and of course make allowances for all boarding houses, but I never was treated by servants as I am by those who call themselves Ladies. I was glad when I heard of this Institution being opened and supposed many could avail themselves of such good protection and a Christian home.¹⁵¹

Women such as this were resentful of patronage and less amenable to being treated condescendingly than were the more desperate recipients of public relief and the destitute mothers and children who sought shelter in YWCA refuges. During this difficult transition period, however, YWCA women had much to learn about how to treat their new clientele. If they believed that their attitudes were merely expressive of their well-intentioned maternal concerns, it is apparent that their "daughters" frequently thought otherwise.

In 1876, a minor scandal erupted at the Toronto YWCA when, on the day before the organization's third annual meeting, The Globe had the temerity to publish a caustic editorial attacking the behaviour of the YWCA's Board of Managers. The Globe raised the question of why such a "praiseworthy institution" as a boarding house accommodating sixty women averaged not more than twenty boarders in a city the size of Toronto, and attributed the lack of demand to "the it is to be hoped unintentionally offensive bearing of some of the lady managers to the boarders."

A good many young women of the most respectable character and education who have thankfully gone to this establishment, and have been very willing to pay the charges and conform to the regulations, have very speedily left, and why? Because some of the lady visitors have treated them as if they were mere gutter children; have come in upon them at all times in their bedrooms without even the formality of knocking--when they were undressed--intruding in this way upon their privacy without saying, "by your leave"; have catechized them in the most patronizingly offensive manner about all their antecedents, as if they had neither sense, education, nor the slightest delicacy of feeling; have bored them with "goody" insignificant tracts and the most elementary religious instruction, as if they had been little girls who had been reared in practical heathenism, instead of having had, as in many cases was the fact, religious advantages equal to their own; and have talked about them to one another and in the

hearing of the objects of their patronage in a way most galling to girls of some education and intelligence.

The editorial concluded with the observation that "with a little more kindness and a little less patronage" the boarding house "would be as it ought to be--always full, instead of being, as it is generally, more than half empty."¹⁵²

Needless to say, this devastating attack by the editors of The Globe resulted in an outpouring of indignation at the annual meeting, expressed not by the ladies themselves, who were too modest to address a mixed gathering from a public platform, but by their gentlemen supporters who were authorized to speak on their behalf. In defence of the YWCA, the speakers pointed out that no mention was made by The Globe of the "unwearied and untiring" efforts of the ladies and that "it would have been wiser for the writer of that article to have placed himself in communication with the lady managers, and ascertained whether or not the charges were true." In other words, "it was possible for the Globe as well as the Pope to be mistaken." Some gentlemen tried to make light of the issue by assuring the audience that the article was in fact "the best thing that could happen to the Association" since "it made people think and talk about the institution." Rev. Dr. Castle amused the audience by suggesting "they were under very great obligations to their excellent friend THE GLOBE for its generous advertisement of the institution."¹⁵³ Protesting, in response, that "we ought to put sackcloth upon our loins and sit in dust and ashes", the editors of The Globe remained unrepentant for having caused "such a flutter in the dovecots."

Who does not know that women--aye, ladies--can be insufferably offensive to sister women--can sniff and condescend, and patronize and "good woman" them to the very top of their bent, and all the while never dream that they are doing anything but the most exalted work of benevolence and mercy, on which heaven and earth should gaze in silent admiration and wonder--nay, for which their "sisters" should be grateful to all eternity?...to fancy that any one living in this actual world could deny the possibility of such a thing as we mentioned, and could give a general guarantee that all the ladies

connected with the Toronto Women's Christian Association are incapable of hurting any one's feelings, either consciously or unconsciously, is too absurd.¹⁵⁴

As the editors of The Globe pointed out, the YWCA did not really respond to the substance of its criticism and showed no willingness to scrutinize the behaviour of its board members, implying that the actions of Christian women were beyond reproach by virtue of the nobility of their motives. As a result, YWCA boarding houses during the nineteenth century never served more than a tiny fraction of the population of working women in any one city and seldom reported being filled to capacity. It would be many years before YWCA women, despite their insistence that their institution was not a charity, were willing to abandon entirely the role of the Lady Bountiful.

By the end of the century, there was a growing recognition within the YWCA that the working women with whom it came into contact "were a peculiar class and required great tact in handling."¹⁵⁵ Increasingly it was acknowledged that the behaviour of some lady members was a problem, and YWCAs in some cities began to rethink their attitudes and modify their rules and requirements. Mrs. J.F. Stevenson of Montreal addressed a YWCA gathering in Hamilton in 1896.

...these young people do not come to us as they would go to a school or college, ostensibly to be taught, and they are on their guard lest 'the liberty of the subject' should be unduly interfered with. They are naturally tenacious of what they consider 'their rights', and woe betide the rash individual who seeks to coerce or patronize them, however kindly and justifiable her motive. 'I pay for my board,' explained one of these girls in extenuation of her conduct, and 'I am not going to be lectured and preached to, as if I were at an eternal prayer meeting.' I quote this rather ungracious sentiment, as it is typical of the view in which many a young woman regards the Y.W.C.A.¹⁵⁶

As this statement indicates, even the most "progressive" elements among the YWCA's leadership found it difficult to rid themselves of their tendency to patronize working women. Mrs. Stevenson, after all, continued to believe that the YWCA would win the

working woman's affection by providing "a Christian Home, with bright and attractive surroundings, loving care, and motherly superintendence of every inmate." A strict interpretation of "motherly superintendence" would continue to plague YWCA boarding houses into the twentieth century. The Victoria YWCA was compelled to close a home in 1901, being unable to induce working women to board there. At the opening of a new home in 1908, it was admitted that "former efforts to establish such an association had failed, perhaps through too rigid discipline. The girls should feel that the rooms were a home where they were free to enjoy themselves in any innocent way."¹⁵⁷

Considerable energy was expended by YWCA women in defending their organization from the wide range of charges they encountered, and a certain sense of discouragement is, not surprisingly, occasionally evident in their accounts of their work. In an uncharacteristically caustic tone, the Ottawa branch, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, complained that "the knowledge that the prominent Christian leaders in the city of Ottawa were sufficiently interested to even become acquainted with the work, and suggest plans and methods by which the Association could better adapt its work to the needs, would mean much to those upon whom the burden rests. Criticism, joined to knowledge of the work and aims, is a wonderful stimulant when the dose is given in palatable quantities."¹⁵⁸ In Montreal in 1897, Mrs J.F. Stevenson addressed similar remarks to a gathering of delegates from YWCAs all over North America, indicating that the problem was by no means limited to Ottawa.

...our great foes are the spectators. For one who will do anything, fifty will look on and criticise. Methods will be challenged, earnestness derided and results denied...Yet work of this kind is not a leap in the dark. It succeeds. There are delays, there are testing times, there are disappointments, heavy and cruel, but it succeeds nevertheless.

YWCA workers were advised to be strong in their faith--"be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not

in vain in the Lord"¹⁵⁹--and to keep before them always "the one great purpose for which we as an Association exist, namely, to help women."¹⁶⁰

The nineteenth-century YWCA boarding house was an excellent example of "female institution building," the separatist strategy characteristic of North American feminism in the decades from 1870 to 1930.¹⁶¹ Female institutions emerged from the middle-class "women's culture" of the nineteenth-century, which placed a high valuation on female friendships and on the primacy of women's relationships within the family, particularly the mother-daughter bond.¹⁶² This discussion of YWCA boarding houses suggests that YWCA women drew on their own experience of that relationship and viewed it as an appropriate vehicle for overcoming the barriers between women who were divided by age and by class. Their efforts to recreate family relationships in an institutional setting were, however, frequently unsuccessful and their adoption of the role of "mother" resented by their clientele of working women. The self-respecting self-supporting woman recruited by the YWCA, particularly if she had been independent for a number of years as in the case of the teacher who protested her treatment at the Toronto YWCA, was sometimes reluctant to resume the role of "daughter." As Carolyn Strange has noted in the case of women's prisons, however, where very young and inexperienced women were involved the relationship between matrons and inmates often did develop along the intended lines with a genuine affection resulting; it is reasonable to assume that a similar phenomenon sometimes occurred in YWCA boarding homes.¹⁶³ The boarding house expressed the commitment of YWCA women to maintaining the ideology of separate spheres and to their belief that the home and family provided the most suitable environment for women. Yet YWCA arguments for a publicly funded institution managed by women also rejected that aspect of the ideology of separate spheres which devalued women's contribution to the community and which defined young

women's needs as less important than those of young men. The YWCA boarding house may be placed in the context of a wider attempt to create "a separate, public female sphere" which, Estelle Freedman has argued, "helped mobilize women and gained political leverage in the larger society." The experience of YWCA women clearly demonstrates the limitations of that strategy so long as women remained excluded from genuine economic and political power. Nonetheless, as Freedman suggests, "at certain historical periods, the creation of a public female sphere might be the only viable political strategy for women."¹⁶⁴

Despite their commitment to improving the position of women, however, YWCA boarding houses remained rooted in certain class-bound assumptions that inevitably limited their effectiveness. Approaching "the girl problem" from the perspective of middle-class evangelical women, the YWCA undoubtedly exaggerated the extent to which young women were becoming independent of their families. In a recent study of Montreal working women between 1861 and 1881, Bettina Bradbury argues that unlike working-class men who had to seek work for wages for most of their lives, working-class girls and women, "unable to earn sufficient wages to survive independently, alternated between wage labour and domestic labour while spending most of their lives dependent on the wages of a father or husband."¹⁶⁵ As with their efforts at preventive work with children, YWCA women revealed a fundamental ignorance of the working-class family economy. It was not in fact the case that the majority of working women were unprepared to assume their domestic duties. Given girls' lower wages, Bradbury has argued, it made more sense for working-class families to send their sons out to work while the girls "served an apprenticeship in the reproduction of labour power--in babysitting, sewing, mending, cooking and shopping."¹⁶⁶ YWCA women's obsessive concern with protecting the friendless rural

innocent may have been somewhat misplaced, given recent findings that the majority of working women, the daughters of the urban working class, continued to live in a family setting. The evidence presented to the Royal Commission on the Relations between Capital and Labour suggested that few women workers in the 1880s could afford to board out. Most lived with their families who continued to rely on their income, an arrangement that worked to the advantage of employers since it allowed them to pay women lower wages.¹⁶⁷ Bradbury's study of Montreal women confirms similar observations by YWCA women that "those who tried to live alone found it virtually impossible...and some finding no other way to make ends meet turned to prostitution." According to Bradbury, however, increasing numbers of women actually became more dependent on their families between 1861 and 1881, with the number of those living independently as boarders or domestics declining from fifteen to five per cent.¹⁶⁸

Particularly significant is the refusal of YWCA women to consider young women adequately "protected" from the dangers and temptations of city life simply by virtue of the fact that they lived in a family setting. YWCA women remained profoundly convinced of the inferiority of working-class family life, the inadequacy of working-class parents, and the failure of both to measure up to the ideal of evangelical domesticity promoted in the YWCA boarding home. Bertha Wright, in advocating a YWCA boarding house for Ottawa, made it clear that she had in mind a clientele far larger than the population of new arrivals from the country districts and that she was convinced of the ability of such an institution to meet the needs of girls in a way that their own parents could not.

It is a lamentable fact...that there are hundreds of lonely hearts, in this city of mothers and homes, who have never realized the sweetness of either; not that they are motherless, but unmothered, nor homeless but without the comforts and joys of a true home, young women who crave that love and its demonstration, which is so lacking in many of the so-called

homes of our working girls. Anxiety and hard work seem at times almost to deaden natural affection in many parents, and cases have frequently been met with where girlish confidence has been repelled by those whom they call mother. To them, home has no depth of sacred meaning, it is a mere boarding house which offers no brighter attractions than very ordinary table fare, and a bed with the children.¹⁶⁹

Believing that they were acting out of maternal interest and a commitment to women, and convinced of their ability to define the needs of all women, YWCA women promoted their ideal of evangelical domesticity as the solution to the "problem" of all young women in cities everywhere. "Girl nature is essentially the same the wide world over. Those who throng about us are girls with the same affections, interests and longings as the girls at our own firesides; as such we must plan for them, pray for them, counsel them and embrace them in patient and loving sympathy."¹⁷⁰ While it was not unusual in this period for middle-class women to assume their right to speak on behalf of their lower-class "sisters," women of the evangelical YWCA may have been especially prone to such presumption. Zealous evangelicals could be, and often were, as Sandra Sizer has noted in the American context, blinded to the consequences of their actions by their own rhetoric emphasizing the creation of a purely religious community of feeling transcending the mundane concerns of class. "The notion that deep in their hearts all people were essentially the same--and if they were not, they were evil, insane, or otherwise perverted--concealed the fact that it was only a particular group of people who thought and felt that way. The rhetoric could be employed to create a community which claimed no political or structural ties, while in fact being deeply implicated in social and political identities."¹⁷¹

* * * * *

By the 1890s, as most Canadian YWCAs turned away from the traditional women's benevolent activities of rescue and relief to focus more narrowly on the welfare of the respectable working woman, their range of programs for the latter expanded beyond the boarding house, employment bureau, and educational classes. Increasingly YWCAs spoke of their desire to promote the "four-fold development" of the young Canadian woman, implying that attention should be paid to her intellectual, social, and physical, as well as spiritual, well-being. This shifting emphasis resulted in an expanded range of programs introduced in the 1890s including "noon rest", "physical culture", and Travellers Aid.¹⁷² The Ottawa YWCA described the range of its activities in 1898:

The work is comprised under four heads, viz: Religious, Educational, Social and Physical. The Religious work includes Evangelistic meetings, Bible and training classes for Christian workers. The Educational includes classes in any branch of mental culture, as well as classes in cooking, sewing, mending, millinery, dressmaking, &c. The Social work includes the reading room, boarding department, entertainments and employment bureau. The Physical, Classes in Physical Culture.¹⁷³

As one American visitor described this new expanded vision of YWCA work, it seemed "like a wheel; the centre is Christ, and from it there diverged numberless forms of activity for the physical, mental and spiritual good of young women."¹⁷⁴ This broader mandate by no means implied a rejection of the YWCA's aim of winning young women for Christ but was rather a change of strategy, a recognition that "the subject of religion should [not] be constantly dragged forward, over 'hedge and ditch,' as it were." The latter approach, as one worker warned, could have one of two results. "Either you will disgust those whom you desire to win, or you will make them into first-class prigs and hypocrites."¹⁷⁵ The YWCA's commitment to a four-fold program constituted an attempt to cater more directly to the tastes and concerns of working women and to respond to the proliferation of commercialized amusements in turn-of-the-century Canadian cities

which not only competed with the YWCA but threatened to undermine everything it hoped to achieve.¹⁷⁶

During the 1890s, the YWCA expanded its commitment to educational classes, with most branches establishing an Educational Department separate from the School of Domestic Science, where one existed, and offering courses in an ever-widening range of subjects. The Montreal YWCA claimed that between 1889 and 1896, three thousand young women had taken advantage of its classes in "shorthand, bookkeeping, French, elocution, singing, drawing and painting, physical culture, demonstration classes in cookery, classes in millinery, plain sewing, dressmaking, reading, and spelling, arithmetic and geography."¹⁷⁷ YWCA reading rooms expanded in some cities, including Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Halifax, Kingston, London, and Hamilton, into full-scale lending libraries and were regarded as an important attraction that would help to draw women into the building where they could be made acquainted with the benefits of membership. Readings were carefully selected to conform to the YWCA's conception of an ideal young womanhood, as the Ottawa branch made clear in soliciting donations for its new library in 1893.

...we require a long line of books of travel, history, poetry, hygienic philosophy, and every other philosophy, domestic science, and every other science, and 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. Good magazines we will need also, and newspapers of the right stamp, for our young women must keep up with the questions of the day.¹⁷⁸

Despite the attempt to restrict their holdings to suitably "uplifting" works that would not offend evangelical sensibilities, YWCA libraries nonetheless expressed a commitment by evangelical women to women's right to improve themselves through

study, and a rejection of ornamental education which enshrined uselessness and vacuousness as ideals toward which women should aspire. "What nonsense that so noble an expression as 'strong-minded' should have become a synonym of reproach. It is the offset of 'weak minded,' and to be weak minded is the greatest calamity that can fall upon a human being. Recognizing this fact, the Association aims at affording our young women opportunities for mental culture in classes, lectures, library and reading room."¹⁷⁹

Reflecting a new attention to the physical condition of young working women, YWCAs in the 1890s began introducing classes in "physical culture," a feature that rapidly proved extremely popular with working women and became one of the association's biggest drawing cards. "Do they not need it, to stand the wear and tear of a business life?", asked the Montreal branch, referring to its 150 pupils attending gymnasium classes in 1891.¹⁸⁰ Working women, whether or not they shared the YWCA's concern with their physical improvement, answered in the affirmative. In view of a continuing controversy over the suitability of such activities for women, they stressed carefully that their aim was "not to make girls athletes, but to help in developing bodies that shall no longer be a drag and burden; to strengthen weak muscles and stimulate girls to realize the advantage of a vigorous, healthy physique."¹⁸¹ In justifying this new attention to the physical fitness of working women, the Montreal branch reminded its financial supporters that "a working girl's health is her capital...And if the comfort of the community is in any degree dependent on the fitness of its working girls for their work, (as you will be all willing to acknowledge it is) then in serving them we have done good service to the public."¹⁸² YWCA women themselves, however, hoped for other results from the new physical culture classes which afforded new opportunities to befriend working women. In a paper on "The Spiritual Work of the Y.W.C.A.," one YWCA

worker advised "all members who long for opportunities of influence, to join the gymnasium class, and there await the Master's bidding."¹⁸³

Also in the 1890s came a heightened attention to the growing numbers of female travellers and immigrants, and the launching of Travellers Aid programs. The Quebec YWCA was first, in 1887, to hire a woman to meet single female immigrants disembarking from ships and trains, for the purpose of combating the "nameless traffic in every city which aims to secure systematically and persistently, its victims from among these strangers."¹⁸⁴ The Travellers Aid Society, an international phenomenon in which the YWCA played a prominent part, "formed, by a system of printed cards, by correspondence by local workers, a protective belt for their respectable self-sustaining young women, which extended from port to port round the world." The Travellers Aid services offered by YWCAs in Canadian cities had five principal objectives: "1st. To outwit evil agents who would deceive the innocent. 2nd. To keep the girls from drifting into low boarding or lodging houses. 3rd. To accompany to addresses those who we think require such care. 4th. To investigate advertisements which are placed in newspapers of small towns and which the girls bring with them. 5th. To prevent girls who are waiting over for trains from making chance acquaintances." YWCA Travellers Aid workers in the 1890s reported considerable success, particularly with those women arriving from long trips, often in the middle of the night, "without money, without friends, ignorant and foolish." "The glare and strangeness of the city was bewildering, vice was the bolder for the darkness, every one seemed to know where to go except herself. Men, men, everywhere--Oh, how good to see a woman approaching, to hear a sympathetic voice, to feel a friendly hand and know that whatever complications had arisen in her case, she was safe and under loving care."¹⁸⁵

During the 1890s Toronto, Hamilton, and Ottawa all introduced "noon rest," the precursor of the twentieth-century YWCA cafeteria, which made available a room at the YWCA for working women to use during their lunch break. The Hamilton branch reported at its fifth annual meeting in 1894:

The dining room was enlarged in order to establish a new feature of the work--a noon lunch or dinner. Previous to this a small room had been used, where young women could bring their lunch and purchase a cup of tea, but this did not meet the idea of a comfortable midday meal, so arrangements were made whereby a good hot dinner was provided for 10 cents, under most attractive and homelike surroundings, where members of the association are allowed the use of the parlor, piano and reading matter during the noon hour.¹⁸⁶

The introduction of noon rest by YWCAs in the 1890s was indicative of the organization's growing interest in the problems of working women, expressed in a refrain that would be repeated frequently in the twentieth century, that YWCA women had an obligation to inform themselves about the conditions under which working women lived. At the 1891 annual meeting of the Toronto YWCA, members were informed that "the scanty earnings of young girls and women generally, made it impossible for them to provide respectable clothing and safe boarding places from their unaided earnings. The duty of upright Christian women to make themselves acquainted with the facts in their own city, so as to support only those stores which paid their assistants a fair self-supporting salary, was forcibly set forth."¹⁸⁷ The 1890s also witnessed the first serious attempts by Canadian YWCAs, which until then had concerned themselves largely with domestic servants and workers in the downtown business district, to reach out to the "factory girl." The Toronto branch pioneered in such efforts, sending invitations to workers at several factories to attend classes and Bible readings in 1887. In 1895 Toronto established the first YWCA extension branch in a factory district, featuring a boarding house, cafeteria, and mothers' meetings. Responding to an enquiry from YWCA workers in other cities as to "the best means of reaching the

girls of the working classes," the Toronto branch explained its success: "A practice was made of sending flowers to the factory girls, and eventually, when they had been won over to some extent by these donations, texts would be attached to the bouquets, and the girls gradually drawn within the good influences of Christian example and teaching." According to this account, this treatment resulted in the majority of those approached becoming "Christian girls and members of the association."¹⁸⁸

In the 1890s, YWCA women tentatively voiced for the first time a new conception of their organization as a vehicle to bring together young women of all classes. No longer was the YWCA to be merely a means of preventing working women from straying from the path of righteousness. Its ideal of evangelical womanhood was increasingly promoted as applicable to the daughters of the middle class and necessary to rouse them to a sense of their responsibilities to other women. This was clearly the intention of Bertha Wright in campaigning for a YWCA for Ottawa.

Too long has the slavery of folly and fashion, the sleep of indifference, the death of worldly pleasure possessed many of our Ottawa girls. It is high time that they should awake to the realities of life and its solemn duties and sublime possibilities. The greatest need of this age is Christian women not butterflies.¹⁸⁹

Adelaide Hoodless, promoting the concept of the YWCA to the citizens of Galt, Ontario, explained that "the associations consisted of the self-supporting girl and the young women of leisure. One object of the work was to do away with class prejudices and make caste less distinctive among women."¹⁹⁰ This commitment to bridging class barriers between women by forging a new cooperative relationship between them was to come increasingly to the fore in YWCA work in the early twentieth century. The fundamental distinction between the working woman and the "young woman of leisure" was not, however, seriously questioned.

By the 1890s, the redefinition of YWCA work to exclude traditional benevolence in the form of relief and rescue and to cater to the "four-fold" needs of the young women of all classes had significant architectural implications, reflected in a heightened preoccupation with the building itself. The leased rooms and converted boarding houses of the 1870s and 1880s were increasingly viewed as inadequate for the requirements of the YWCA's new mandate, as branches found themselves with parlours too small for club meetings, dining rooms too small to serve non-boarders, basements too small for the much-desired gymnasium or school of domestic science, and an insufficient supply of bedrooms to meet the growing demand for accommodation at the boarding house. The complaint of the Montreal YWCA in its 1889 annual report was typical of most branches of the time: "We have greatly felt the need of more commodious quarters...Extensive alterations and repairs are needed--to quote the words of one of our fellow-workers, 'We want the front wall thrown out, we want more room at the back, and we want the very roof raised for more rooms nearer Heaven.'" ¹⁹¹ Following the example of the YWCA, and of YWCAs in some of the larger American cities, Canadian branches began the construction of buildings specifically designed and constructed to suit their new requirements. In promoting a YWCA for Ottawa with a building of its own, Bertha Wright made explicit the links between the design of the facility and the "purpose of its founders that it should be a grand agency in moulding and fashioning the character of the ideal woman."

This object the association contemplates working out in the establishment of an ideal home with clean, well ventilated sleeping apartments and attractive dining room ready to provide every physical comfort; with library, reading rooms, and class rooms, thus affording to many who would otherwise remain mere toil-worn machines, the opportunity of becoming thinking, reasoning, social beings; with a bright large hall where Bible Classes, Gospel meetings and Prayer meetings can be held, and weary souls pointed to the rest that is so sweet to the toiler; with an employment office through the agency of which situations can be obtained; with a well equipped gymnasium where students, sewing girls, and others with

sedentary occupations can secure healthy exercise and physical regeneration, and with Committee rooms having facilities for carrying on such benevolent work as a Diet Dispensary, Flower Mission, Dorcas Club, &c.¹⁹²

In 1890 the Toronto YWCA became the first branch in Canada to undertake the construction of its own building, purchasing an Elm Street lot for \$9,400 and embarking on a project estimated to cost \$36,000. When opened in 1892, the impressive three-storey brick structure featured classrooms, meeting rooms, parlour, gymnasium and dressing room, dining room and kitchen, laundry, offices and about fifty bedrooms.¹⁹³ The new facility was intended to allow for a major expansion of activities.

...in addition to our boarding house there will be a pleasant reading-room and library with a large parlor for the use of all young women who are earning their own living. There will also be a class formed for teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, dressmaking and cutting by chart. A gymnasium will be fitted up for the use of those who need the exercise as a rest, or for physical development. We also hope to form a class for singing.¹⁹⁴

Construction of similar facilities began in other centres such as Ottawa and Montreal later in the decade. As will be shown in Chapter Four, this development had significant implications for the evolution of the YWCA as a women's organization and as a lay evangelical society.

* * * * *

The work of the city YWCAs was designed to address the problems of young working or lower-middle-class women who were employed in Canada's cities in the last decades of the nineteenth century. However, from its inception, the YWCA as an organization had defined its mandate as extending to all young women. In the late nineteenth century, the YWCA extended its influence to young women from backgrounds more

privileged than those reached by the city YWCAs through the YWCA student movement. YWCA women believed that even among young women on college and university campuses, the "girl problem" existed. However, it was believed to manifest itself in a different way in the case of the college girl and therefore required a different response. The increasing prominence of student YWCAs and YMCAs in Canadian student life in the late nineteenth century reflected both the growing adult interest in organizing the leisure activities of young people and the prevalence of the belief that the vulnerable adolescent years presented the ideal opportunity for the evangelization and conversion of young people. Influenced by the new adolescent psychology popularized by the American, G. Stanley Hall, Canadian religious leaders became increasingly convinced that the freshness and vitality of youth could be harnessed in the interests of world evangelization and the preservation of Christian ideals in Canada. More and more they turned their attention to young people and to the creation of new organizations on their behalf, including Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavour, and Young People's church groups.¹⁹⁵ The student YMCAs and YWCAs developed out of the students' own desires for a means of uniting in Christian fellowship but they were strongly encouraged by adults who hoped to harness the students' energy and enthusiasm for larger purposes.¹⁹⁶

The principal threats that were believed, by observers of the "girl problem," to face the college student were of a religious and intellectual nature rather than moral and physical. College students, particularly those who had come from outside the city, experienced an unprecedented degree of religious freedom. "On Sabbath mornings there is no stern parent to march them out to Church, rain or shine, no small sisters or brothers to whom they must act as shining examples, no home minister looking to them to take their part in Church work as the worthy daughters of their parents. Here they

are independent of all such claims."¹⁹⁷ During this particularly formative period in her life, the college woman was exposed to people who had not necessarily shared her sheltered upbringing in a Christian home, and to new ideas, with the result that her mental horizons were considerably widened. "She is bewildered at the sweep of subjects which are touched upon in her hearing, ideas are introduced to her which before she did not dream of, those about her discuss subjects with which she never before had to do, everything is new and large."¹⁹⁸ While the author of "The Queen's Girl as a Religious Character," appeared to believe that such experiences would result in a deepening of the religious life of the woman student, there were others who feared that "the temptation is towards intellectual and social selfishness," and in their view, "the only contra-influence [was] the Y.W.C.A."¹⁹⁹

Many women reformers and women's organizations in the turn-of-the-century decades believed that the new generation of college women had an important role to play in the cause of reform, offering a combination of professional skills, high moral standards, and a womanly capacity for nurturing, healing, and teaching.²⁰⁰ Among those who shared this view was Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General, who lent her patronage to the YWCA as well as to a variety of other women's organizations promoting the cause of social reform. In 1894, she advised the women students of McGill University "that women have a definite life-work for which they must be prepared and disciplined as well as men are for theirs, and that if they are not thus prepared and educated, it is not only the individuals that suffer loss, but their homes and their country."

We are living in times when the most sacred questions of the family are unreservedly discussed, and the faith which so many of us have been brought up in is being doubted, reconstructed or rejected...The chief danger in any country lies in the lives of those whose education has taught them to subordinate work to pleasure and ease, who make conformity to fashion

their standard of conduct and morality...If higher education is not to be a delusion or a sham, it will turn out women whose true culture will enable them to create in society, as well as in the family, a leaven of thought, of action and morality which will act upon all classes of the community purifying and elevating our whole national life.²⁰¹

YWCA women and their supporters believed that their organization had an important role to play in ensuring that Canadian colleges and universities did turn out women of "true culture" by providing the woman student with "a safeguard against those dangers which her increased sphere has brought."²⁰²

The first Canadian student YWCA was organized at Albert College, Belleville, Ontario, in 1886 and was followed in rapid succession by branches throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes in other universities and colleges, ladies' colleges, and normal schools. YWCAs were also organized for hospital nurses in Kingston and London. Three branches were founded on the University of Toronto campus for women students attending Victoria College, University College and the Women's Medical College. By 1900, twenty-five student YWCAs had been organized, the first western branches appearing in that year in Winnipeg.²⁰³ Unlike the city YWCAs, student YWCAs resulted from initiatives taken by women students. Although they were encouraged by the college authorities and often sponsored by the wife of the President of the university, student YWCAs were organized and run by women students on their own behalf. Structured much more democratically than the city YWCA, student branches lacked the powerful entrenched volunteer Board of Managers; a small executive committee was directly answerable to the membership. Adopting the constitution already in use by student YMCAs, student YWCAs insisted on the evangelical membership test, requiring attendance at an evangelical church as a requirement for membership in the YWCA. From the point of view of college students wishing to unite in a Christian organization, the YWCA was a highly appropriate vehicle because it already had an established

reputation as a Christian organization specializing in the needs of young women. Its principal advantage was its interdenominational membership basis that promised to unite rather than fragment all the Protestant students on campus, a particularly important consideration in coeducational institutions where the numbers of women students were generally already small.

The rapid spread of student YWCAs to every major campus in the country indicates their popularity with women students. Shortly after the formation in 1896 of the Dalhousie YWCA, the first women's society on campus, the Dalhousie Gazette reported that "the meetings are well attended and the membership list comprises nearly all the lady students."²⁰⁴ The case of Dalhousie suggests some of the reasons for the popularity of the student YWCA, especially in coeducational institutions. An article on "Coeducation in College," appearing in the Dalhousie Gazette in 1899, observed that women were first accepted into Dalhousie in 1881 and over the course of the next eighteen years most of the more than forty graduates took honours in some subject.

When it came to the question of amusements for the girls, however, there was a different story to tell...In things intellectual there is a strict basis of equality...but girls are not admitted to most of the college societies, to the gymnasium, nor, on account of traditionary[sic] custom, to the reading room...To an American girl who has had the experience of a woman's college where her interests were primary, and amusements were ordered for her benefit, where clubs and societies and gatherings were her right, the substitutes provided for a Dalhousie girl seem poor and cold and uninteresting.²⁰⁵

The organization of a student YWCA went some way toward remedying this situation for women students even though the resources of the YWCA were generally inadequate in comparison with its male counterpart. By 1886, for example, the student YMCAs at the University of Toronto were able to raise sufficient funds for a building of their own.²⁰⁶ No student YWCA was able to offer women students more than a room in which to meet but nevertheless the YWCA's role in the social life of women students was

significant. Women medical students at Queen's expressed their regret at being so busy with lectures that they were unable to attend the weekly YWCA meeting. "We cannot help feeling the loss, as our Y.W.C.A. is the chief bond of union between the girls."²⁰⁷

The most important social event of the year for the student YWCA was the holding of the annual reception to welcome new students to the campus in the fall. The Queen's branch reported in 1891 that "all the lady students of both Colleges were in attendance, and the sceptical ones who feared the lack of the male element would be seriously felt soon discovered their error, and frankly acknowledged that girls were nicer than boys to talk to anyway."²⁰⁸ YWCA members often met new students at the train station and assisted them with finding suitable lodgings. However, most of the socializing among women students that took place under the auspices of the YWCA occurred in a more overtly religious context, many of the branches starting out as Bible study or missionary groups. The program of the Toronto University YWCA, as reported in 1896, was typical of most student branches.

The meetings are held every Wednesday afternoon from 5 to 6 o'clock, and consist of Scripture reading, singing, prayer, and discussion of the prescribed topic. Missionary meetings are held the first Wednesday in each month, when we try to have a missionary or some one interested in mission work, address the society. This year, a new feature has been introduced in the shape of a monthly Gospel or consecration meeting, in which each of the girls is expected to take part. Also every Wednesday, before the meeting, there is a missionary class for the study of matters connected with the spreading of the Gospel. Besides this, there are every Sunday afternoon, at several of the girls' boarding houses, personal workers' classes, for Bible study.²⁰⁹

Nineteenth century student YWCAs, by and large, took little interest in "the social question," although a few undertook benevolent work, such as providing relief in the form of clothing to poor families in the city. By the 1890s, Bible study formed an increasingly important part of the program of the student associations, reflecting the

new interest in historical and critical methods of Bible study.²¹⁰ Although by the turn of the century some branches were advocating a broader ideal of "the development of perfectly symmetrical womanhood in Christ Jesus" that included emphasis on a student's social and intellectual development, the stress during the nineteenth century was mainly on evangelism and personal piety.²¹¹

Foreign missions occupied a prominent place on the program of nineteenth-century student YWCAs, reflecting the growing interest of the Canadian Protestant churches in the mission field in the second half of the century.²¹² North American missionary efforts, as several historians have noted, were "tinged with imperialist overtones" as missionaries convinced of the superiority of their religion and their civilization attempted to win converts both to Christianity and to western culture.²¹³ Within the Protestant churches, those most affected by missionary fervour were the evangelicals whose belief in the importance of the conversion experience carried with it a sense of duty to offer every individual the opportunity to convert. Students were deeply affected by the revival campaigns of Dwight L. Moody and other American evangelists during the 1880s, and Moody's challenge to students to answer the call of foreign missions led directly to the founding of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM) in 1888. Under the leadership of John R. Mott, the new international and interdenominational movement, composed of the student YWCAs and YMCAs, the American Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance and the Canadian Intercollegiate Missionary Alliance, adopted as its motto "the evangelization of the world in this generation".²¹⁴ Many missionaries were recruited from among the ranks of the student YMCAs and YWCAs and these organizations contributed significantly to the popularizing of foreign missions.²¹⁵

As women, members of student YWCAs were particularly susceptible to the call of the foreign field. They shared the interest exhibited by many Canadian churchwomen in the work of foreign missions and the condition of women in heathen lands, studying avidly the religious beliefs and customs of other countries, reading missionary biographies, and whenever possible listening to addresses by missionaries on furlough.²¹⁶ A talk on the "Claims of Foreign Missions on us as Women and as College Women" caused McGill students "to realize more fully than ever before how much each one of us was responsible for the evangelization of our sisters in far-off lands."²¹⁷ For aspiring professionals, however, a career as a missionary opened up possibilities of independence, travel and adventure that were otherwise inaccessible to middle-class women while still allowing them to appear, both to others and to themselves, appropriately respectable and self-sacrificing.²¹⁸ Student YWCAs were very conscious of their responsibility to recruit students for the mission field, and most contained a small nucleus of Student Volunteers. By the end of the century, as one-third of student volunteers leaving for the foreign field were women, they believed that the outlook was highly encouraging.

The great importance of the work lies, first, in its direct effect on the lives of many young women. The appeal to obey Christ, even though He ask a life-service in a heathen land, brings many a student to see her real relation to Jesus. For some this is the revelation which brings them to accept Him as absolute Master. To others already willing to do His bidding, the simple message is a help in learning their relation to the work of the Kingdom of God. The importance of the work is shown also in the fact that God is constantly using these efforts to call, equip, and send forth women-students to the multitudes of heathen women who are inaccessible to any, save sisters.²¹⁹

One investigator for the Student Volunteer Movement reported that on Canadian and American campuses in 1897, the only organization working in this field was the YWCA, and where it was not yet in existence, "the religious work among the students is in most cases neglected altogether, or desultory and inefficient."²²⁰

Thus the objectives of the student YWCA movement were very different from those of the city YWCA. As the Toronto University YWCA reported in 1896: "We try in the Y.W.C.A. to provide for the religious needs of the college girls, especially of those who are boarding in the city, and we hope to influence them for good, and to arouse in them aspirations for the higher and nobler service of God, which will continue with them all through their after life."²²¹ By the end of the century, the YWCA was only one of a number of influences encouraging the woman student to turn her skills and talents to the ends of charity and Christian benevolence. "A Queen's Girl" exhorted her fellow students in 1899:

It is the girl who does not need or does not care for money who can use her talent in the best and most satisfying work ever given to mortals--that of human benevolence. Never in the history of mankind has so much money, time and talent been expended on the poor, suffering and ignorant throughout our own country and in fact in far distant lands. The best, the richest, the most intellectual of our women have arisen to do this work, and we have "University Settlements," "Working Girls' Clubs," "Coffee Rooms," etc., etc., all presided over by women who have given their lives to the labor of love. Let us then think more seriously of the work there is for each of us. We must plan ahead.²²²

Advocates of the presence of the YWCA on Canadian campuses were confident that women would continue to play a prominent part in the leading religious and moral movements and that "doubtless the Women's Christian Associations of our Colleges will furnish able leaders among women for such work."²²³ Optimists were hopeful that college graduates would retain their ties to the YWCA throughout their lives, and that they would one day bring their skills and commitment to the Boards of Managers of the city YWCAs.

* * * * *

The first Canadian city YWCAs reflected a middle-class, female, and evangelical perspective on the "problem" of the late-nineteenth-century Canadian city. As unprecedented numbers of young women entered the labour force, lived outside the parental home, and travelled from city to city, YWCA women helped to define and draw public attention to the "girl problem" that they viewed as an important and overlooked component of the larger problem of the city. In viewing the self-supporting young woman as symbolic of the declining strength of traditional "rural" values, the family, and the churches in Canadian cities, particularly among the working classes, YWCA women shared a perspective that was held by many members of their class. In drawing attention to the "girl problem" as an issue arising out of the independence of the young woman and the threat posed to her moral standards by her experience of the urban environment, the actions of YWCA women reflected evangelical preoccupations that they shared with both female and male reformers in the temperance and child welfare movements. Yet in defining the "girl problem" as one that ought to concern the churches and "leading citizens" of every major Canadian community, and as one that required resolution by women, the YWCA represented an attempt by middle-class evangelical women to place their concerns on the agenda of the larger urban reform movement and to make women central to the process of reforming the Canadian city.

Attacking the "girl problem" as it was perceived to exist in the late-nineteenth-century Canadian city required the creation of a new type of public institution for women. During two decades of experimentation with various approaches to dealing with this problem, YWCA women drew on the legacy of nineteenth-century benevolent work by evangelical women. Electing to focus on "preventive" work for the "self-supporting and self-respecting" working woman, which they had concluded could not be combined with "rescue work" or traditional charity, YWCA women sought a

solution to the "girl problem" that drew on their experiences as middle-class evangelical women and reflected their perceptions of the dangers of the urban environment. They believed strongly in the redemptive capacity of the home environment and in the importance of the mother-daughter bond, and in their boarding houses attempted to create a female institution that embodied their ideal of evangelical domesticity. The creation of such an institution, requiring construction of buildings and the purchase of property, was not within the resources of traditional women's charities, and involved YWCA women in the tasks of fundraising, administration and public relations to an unprecedented degree. During this difficult early period in the YWCA's history, the organization encountered both a lack of enthusiasm for its efforts on the part of working women who sometimes expressed a certain resentment of their role as the "daughters" of the YWCA, and much criticism from the sectors of the public upon whom it depended for financial support.

Associating public institutions with the shiftless, the immoral, and the degenerate, the middle-class public had difficulty in conceiving of an institution for respectable women and in grasping what the objectives of such an institution might be. By the end of the nineteenth century, the YWCA had defined its mission but it had yet to win the recognition it sought as the single organization with recognized jurisdiction over the field of work with young women.

NOTES - CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 4

THE YWCA AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CITY:

THE LOCAL YWCAS MATURE, 1900-1920

In 1914, an editorial in the Hamilton Times noted that women, "the natural reformers of the race," were playing "an ever-increasing part in securing the betterment of society" and were "taking foremost part in all the movements that make for social advance." In fact, it added, "the city owes to these women's organizations a large debt of gratitude for excellent service performed."¹ While a relatively extensive literature on Progressivism and urban reform in the first two decades of this century now exists in Canada, women's organizations have not received the attention warranted by their participation.² Marlene Stein Wortman has observed, with respect to the American literature, that most studies of Progressive reform, by focusing on male reformers, have equated Progressivism with a drive for efficiency and professionalization, and have ignored the feminine components of the Progressive ideology, which account for many of its apparent contradictions. Urban progressivism, she argues, embodied not only the values of businessmen and male professionals "but also the domestic feminist's preoccupation with making the city, as a physical and social environment, conform to the demands of an ideal home environment." In this way women reformers "sought to enhance the status and authority of women in society by placing the priorities of the family order above those of free enterprise."³ The majority of Canadian studies of women reformers in the early twentieth century have emphasized this strategy of maternal feminism, situating the activities of urban women's organizations in the context of the women's movement but less frequently in the

context of the larger Progressive movement for urban reform with which the women's movement was intimately connected. The result has been an absence of studies focusing directly on the relationship between women reformers and the men with whom they cooperated in a variety of campaigns and crusades on a wide range of issues. Indeed the impression has been created that such studies are perhaps unnecessary as no significant differences in their motives or concerns are likely to be found.

Despite the fact that female Progressive reformers belonged to the same social class, and frequently the same families, as male urban reformers, it does not follow that their objectives were identical. Women's perspectives on the city and their experiences of the urban environment differed from those of men, and their vision of the city, and of the ideal city in particular, reflected that experience.⁴ As Wortman points out, for example, both businessmen and women reformers committed to the cult of domesticity shared an abiding faith in efficiency.

Yet despite the similarities in the outlooks of progressive men and women, there were important differences in their conceptions about the city which became translated into differences in policy orientation. Domestic reformers wanted to make the city a home and a social community, and they directed the bulk of their energies into projects that would strengthen the physical, social and moral order of the neighborhood. Corporate and professional progressives conceived of the city as primarily a business and cultural center.⁵

Notwithstanding their differences, male and female urban reformers could and did cooperate, although the nature of this cooperative relationship has yet to be explored thoroughly. Carol Bacchi, in her study of the English-Canadian suffragists, was the first Canadian historian to address this important issue directly, concluding that "as members of the same social elite, the women shared the same fears and generally favoured the same reforms as the men."⁶ Recently, the first efforts at a revisionist approach have challenged this conclusion, suggesting that more attention be paid to the

differences in the approaches of male and female reformers and particularly that historians be more sensitive to the ways in which the rhetoric of women reformers was sometimes shaped by their need to gain male support and placate their critics.⁷

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, YWCA women, because of the increasing emphasis they placed on providing working women with buildings and expensive facilities such as gymnasias and swimming pools, developed a close relationship with their counterparts in the YMCA and local businessmen and politicians upon whom they depended for financial support. In this case, it will be argued that despite a shared fundamental support for the class structure underlying the emerging¹ urban order, and for their own privileged position in it, these men and women differed in their vision of the city, in their ideas about women's place in the city, and in their understanding of the purpose of a YWCA building. While businessmen and boosters could support the idea of such a facility because it was compatible with their commitment to progress, growth, and obtaining maximum returns for the investment of charitable dollars, YWCA women viewed their building as a female refuge from an inhospitable male environment and a base from which they could attempt to modify that environment in the interests of women. Yet to win the support of the businessman, the YWCA had to present itself as sharing his concerns for "efficiency" and "sound business management." YWCA leaders believed that young women, being equally important to the future of the urban community, were entitled to the same services and assistance provided to young men, but they were forced to appeal to male chivalry and self-interest to achieve their goals. Their relationship with Canadian businessmen and boosters thus suggests that the assumption of an identity of interests between male and female urban reformers in the early twentieth century may in fact be misleading.

During these two decades the YWCA, originally evangelical as much as female in outlook, developed a heightened consciousness of itself as "an Organization of women, by women, for women," not a charity, creed or club, but "a Comradeship based on the democracy of a common faith."⁸ Having, by the turn of the century, definitively established its mandate as "preventive" work for young women, it was also clear about how this mandate differed from that of other organizations working on behalf of women in the city.

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.⁹

At the same time, however, YWCA women became increasingly aware of the complex links between rapid industrial and commercial growth of Canadian cities and "the woman problem." It was imperative, argued Caroline Macdonald, General Secretary of the Ottawa YWCA at the beginning of the century, that women, who were best able to "understand one another," should "awaken to the interests of their own sex [because] the problems which affect them affect the whole community."¹⁰ Noting that "things are changing for women," the Montreal YWCA elaborated further in 1916: "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."¹¹ The female approach to women's problems, as developed by Canadian YWCAs in the early twentieth century, required the creation of a distinct female institution embodying a vision of female community and reflecting middle-class women's perceptions and experience of class and

gender. Drawing on their own experience of female networks rooted in ties of kinship and friendship, and on the model of the women's club as a vehicle for uniting the efforts of women for the purpose of effecting change, YWCA women aspired to create a great "democratic sisterhood" that would overcome class barriers, uniting working women, college women, and "women of leisure" in a campaign to "serve" the larger community. Embedded in this conception of "service" was a commitment to challenging and changing aspects of the urban environment that were perceived to be detrimental to the interests of women.

The first two decades of this century marked the real beginning of the era of YWCA building in Canada, which continued until the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The YWCA's new desire to be all things to all women implied not only a greatly expanded range of programs and services to be provided to a broader spectrum of the local female population, but also a commitment to the purchase of properties and the construction of buildings on a vastly increased scale. While the YWCA of the late nineteenth century had consisted of a boarding house and, with luck, some classrooms and a meeting room, its counterpart in 1920 did not consider itself worthy of the title of a YWCA without at least a gymnasium, swimming pool, cafeteria, and clubrooms. Larger cities required several residences and extension branches in different parts of the city. The enormous sums of money required to finance such undertakings increased the organization's need for public support. Lacking direct access to capital and political power, YWCA women who undertook to finance and construct their own elaborate and expensive facilities had no choice but to court and cooperate with local businessmen and politicians, and in so doing to address themselves to the men's concerns, frequently different from their own. During these years YWCA work was characterized by tendencies toward specialization and professionalization, an increased concern with

fundraising and administration, and a heightened commitment to efficiency, accountability, profitability, and the employment of sound business methods. As a result, the organization's commitment to the ideals of Christian service to the community, sisterhood, and meeting the changing needs of modern women in all aspects of their lives sometimes suffered from neglect and sometimes conflicted with the YWCA's desire to avoid offending supporters in the business community and the evangelical churches. It is ironic that this increasingly dependent relationship evolved during the very period when the YWCA achieved a genuine consciousness of itself as a women's organization committed to advancing the interests of women in the city. The case of the early twentieth century city YWCA is an example of the important role played by women in the Progressive movement for the reform of Canadian cities; it also illustrates clearly the limited capacity of separate female institutions to influence the course of urban growth and development given their ultimate dependence on the support of men.

A Changing Membership and An Expanding Mandate

The two decades from 1900 to 1920 were the period of the greatest growth in the history of the Canadian YWCA, as branches were formed in rapid succession in most major Canadian centres. Early in the century, a flurry of activity in Ontario produced new branches in St. Thomas (1903), Sherbrooke (1904), and Stratford, Berlin and Paris (1905). The burgeoning settlements of western Canada, anxious to cement their status as self-respecting cities, hurried to establish YWCAs of their own, with Brandon, Moose Jaw, Calgary, and Edmonton all being organized in 1907, Regina and Saskatoon in 1910, and Prince Albert in 1912. Medicine Hat and New Westminster followed in 1913. The war years produced no noticeable loss in this momentum, giving rise to new YWCAs

in Niagara Falls, Woodstock, Nelson, Guelph, Swift Current, Parry Sound, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, and Charlottetown. Finally, in 1920, branches were organized in Moncton, Yarmouth, Owen Sound, Perth, Port Arthur, and Windsor.¹² Overwhelmingly, this unprecedented activity by the YWCA was reportedly prompted by the greatly increased numbers of young Canadian women entering the workforce and travelling from city to city. Frequently contained in justifications of the need for the YWCA in this period was a new emphasis on the combative and cutthroat world of work in the city, a world in which women were now more than ever before active participants.

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.¹³

During the years of the Great War, it was not infrequently claimed, as in Edmonton, that "the dangers of the war zone were no more real to the young men than the dangers of this city today to the young women."¹⁴ Hon. George P. Smith used this argument to argue that the city of Edmonton had to provide a new YWCA building "if it had any respect for itself at all." Supporting his position, Emily Murphy recounted a number of relevant anecdotes, in one of which she claimed that "one young girl who came down from the north, a girl educated by the Sisters in a convent at Grouard, went mad after two days experience in Edmonton."¹⁵

In 1904, the Board of Directors of the Winnipeg YWCA expressed its concern about the number of young women coming into the city in search of employment, many of them having "no definite idea of what kind of work they would be suited for, and obtaining situations that they were not trained to fill consequently had become very careless and

indifferent, and had no idea of any way of improving themselves, and not having any friends or persons to interest themselves in their welfare it was not to be wondered at these girls were losing their self-respect."¹⁶ Increasingly YWCA women, in their appeals for public support, commented on this phenomenon in less judgmental terms and made a more sophisticated use of statistics on the numbers of working women in Canadian cities to win support for their work. Reference was frequently made to census data indicating that an ever increasing proportion of the population was made up of working women.¹⁷ In 1909, the Vancouver YWCA appealed for funds for a new building to feature a boarding house, dining room, Travellers' Aid department, employment bureau, and educational and religious departments. This appeal was based on the fact that there were more than 6,000 wage-earning women in the city who needed its services: domestics, 1440; clerks and saleswomen, 1250; bookkeepers and stenographers, 1200; tailoresses and dressmakers, 450; waitresses, 450; laundresses, 390; teachers, 360; factory workers, 270; trained nurses, 200; telephone operators, 100.¹⁸ YWCA women made no claim to endorse this development nor did they claim that their services in any way encouraged or made it easier for women to enter the labour force. They suggested in fact that "whether such a state of affairs is to be deprecated or not can be left to the theorist to decide."¹⁹ Marshalling this "objective" evidence for the benefit of those who claimed that their efforts were encouraging young women to leave the parental home, YWCA women stubbornly insisted that "the facts remain and must be coped with."²⁰

Coping with "the facts" led the YWCA, during this period, to develop a greatly expanded conception of its place in the lives of Canadian working women. In addition to housing and education, which had been the major preoccupation of city YWCAs in the nineteenth century, working women's recreation became a major issue in the early part

of the twentieth century and a central focus during the war years. Increased attention was also paid to the harmful effects of the conditions faced by women in the workplace, and a range of new programs was developed to counter and alleviate those effects. Anxious to secure their position as the organization most closely identified with the interests of working women not only by the Canadian public but by working women themselves, YWCA women stressed that they had to work their way "into every part of the young woman's life...[by] 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."²¹ In 1917, the Ottawa YWCA confidently stated its intention to provide:

Friendship for the lonely;
Fun and Recreation for the Tired;
Physical Training for the Would-be-well;
Home-like Residence for the Away-from-Home;
Vocational Training for the Inefficient;
A post for the Unemployed;
Education for the Ambitious;
Domestic Science and Art for the Home-Loving;
Home Training for the Bride-to-Be;
A Religion that fits the Every-day Life of every girl.²²

This expanded commitment translated into the provision of cafeterias, gymnasias, swimming pools, Travellers' Aid services, summer camps, and clubs, in addition to the more traditional employment bureaux, educational classes and boarding houses. It was accompanied by a new commitment to reach all the young women of the community, not merely the population of working women, to unite them all in "a great democratic sisterhood."²³ As one YWCA worker declared in 1903, "So long as one young woman in our cities is not living up to the highest possibilities in Jesus Christ, the Young Women's Christian Association has work to do."²⁴

As the YWCA's base of financial support broadened beyond the members of the congregations of local evangelical churches, it was increasingly obligated to avoid appearing that it was an organization for "Christian women" only. If it expected to win the endorsement of the larger community it had to appear to be serving all the young women of that community. The homeless friendless girl in imminent moral peril, while still figuring prominently in YWCA rhetoric, no longer sufficed as sole justification for the work. Citizens who did not necessarily share the evangelical Protestant agenda of the YWCA had to be assured that they would in some way benefit directly from supporting this organization. Conducting a campaign in 1920 for \$100,000 "To Safeguard the Girlhood in Winnipeg," the YWCA promised to provide a whole range of services to "the Girl in the City," in addition to providing the College Girl with "an Opportunity for Christian Leadership," and the Foreign-Born Women with "a Doorway to Canadian Ideals and Institutions." To each of these young women it promised "the same kind of Opportunity, Activities and Responsibilities which give her an equal chance with all other Girls; to bring forth the best in everyone and to offer the Greater Opportunity for Service to Humanity." The Vancouver YWCA loftily promised to make itself "a great preventive and constructive agency in the community," one which would render young women "able to take their part worthily in the work of the world," and to contribute "to the enrichment of succeeding generations."²⁵ In exchange for their financial support for the YWCA's efforts on behalf of the young women of the community, the citizens of Winnipeg were offered "a Happier, Healthier Womanhood for your Daughter or Sister; a Happier, Healthier Womanhood for the Girls of Winnipeg; and therefore, because Happier, Healthier Womanhood a Better City, a Better Province and a Better Nation."²⁶

The issue of membership generated considerable discussion during this period of the YWCA's history, with most of that discussion centering on the questions of who should

be a member and what sorts of rights and privileges did membership imply. Continuing with the tiered system of membership that most branches adopted in the latter part of the nineteenth century, most YWCAs had a small number of honorary and sustaining members, the latter limiting their involvement to financial support. Early in the twentieth century, a new category of junior membership was introduced by many branches to encourage adolescent schoolgirls, as prospective Board and committee members of the next generation, to take an interest in the YWCA. The majority of YWCA "members" during these years were not the clientele of working women, the associate membership, but the active membership composed mainly of older married volunteers. This latter group was the only category invested with the right to vote and hold office. Given that many branches amalgamated the various categories when reporting the size of their "membership," it is difficult to know how to interpret the resulting figures. In a "Statistical Report of City Associations" published by the Dominion Council of YWCAs for 1914-15, the largest "total paid-up memberships" were reported by Montreal (2,101), Toronto (1,808), Winnipeg (1,396), Vancouver (1,180), and Ottawa (1,165). All other branches reported memberships of less than one thousand. A total membership of 15,822 was claimed for the entire country, with 989 junior members reported separately.²⁷ It is impossible to determine what percentage of this "membership" consisted of young women. What is certain, however, is that a substantial population of working women, which in all likelihood outnumbered the actual associate membership many times over, made use of the YWCA's facilities and participated in many of its programs without ever becoming members.

There was much debate during this period about how to persuade young women to join the associate membership, and certain aspects of the program were therefore restricted to members in order to encourage them to take this step. The 1903 figures

reported by the Ottawa YWCA's Membership Committee were not unusual in the early part of the century: 18 sustaining members, 231 active, 40 associate, and 27 junior. The organization was, as the committee correctly observed, "not yet reaching all those who might be benefited;" the report expressed the hope that the following year would "see many more young women avail themselves of the library, reading room, night school, and other classes which membership affords." It is possible, however, that the warm invitation extended to the working women of Ottawa by the YWCA--"Come thou with us and we will do thee good."--may have deterred some of the prospective members.²⁸ It is also possible, as suggested by the following account of its fee structure offered by the Winnipeg YWCA in 1908, that many working women, despite the YWCA's claims, may have been deterred by the costs of membership and its accompanying privileges, for as YWCA women themselves frequently pointed out, many of the lower paid working women had absolutely nothing left from their meagre wages after meeting the most basic living expenses.

Any young woman of fourteen years of age, of good moral character, may become an associate member of the organization by the payment of one dollar a year...This one dollar a year entitles her to the use of the reading room, library and parlors, so that it will be possible for any self-supporting girl to feel that the building belongs to her, that she has a place in which she has a right to receive her friends, and make them feel at home. The other privileges of the building are open to her in so far as she is able to afford them, class fees being made as reasonable as possible. Fees for day classes which are for the benefit of the ladies of this city, are always much higher than for night classes, which belong primarily to the wage-earning woman. This plan enables the association to open its doors to all young women in every grade of life, rich or poor, at home or away from home, wherever they are.²⁹

The list of privileges confined to members varied from branch to branch but that advertised by the Ottawa YWCA in 1920 was representative; its members were entitled to use of the library and employment bureau, membership in the Monday Club, attendance at classes for additional fees, use of the lodging house register, use of a

correspondence table, good fellowship and helpful devotional exercises, members' days in the swimming pool, and the "best of all privileges--a share in this great co-operative organization of Women and Girls."³⁰ The YWCA's most popular attractions--the cafeteria, gymnasium, and swimming pool--were never, it appears, restricted to the use of the membership.

While the YWCA claimed during these decades to concern itself with the welfare of "all" young women without reference to religious affiliation, in fact its principal targets were Protestant girls, particularly those who had abandoned the denominational churches for such "new and fanciful cults" as Theosophy and Christian Science.³¹ Proselytizing among the young women of other religions was not officially encouraged; that it may have been unofficially practised is suggested by the action of the Bishop of Hamilton, who in 1906 was prompted to ban local Catholic young people from attending functions at either the YWCA or YMCA.³² In 1920, the Montreal YWCA resolved "that Catholic girls may become Associate members provided that they understand the basis of active membership to be Protestant Evangelical."³³ This position was fairly representative of the YWCA's position on Catholic girls and women. Its position on Jewish women, who are mentioned much less frequently, is unclear. The Extension Committee of the Berlin YWCA reported entertaining two groups of Jewish girls in 1916, but the Montreal YWCA resolved, on the other hand, "that Hebrew girls may not be admitted to membership in view of the fact that the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies undertakes to look after their own girls."³⁴ The limited statistics available suggest, however, that Catholic and Jewish young women could and did take advantage of gymnasium and swimming classes, and other activities open to non-members. This was not the case for the "colored girls" who also began to attract

the attention of the YWCA during this period. No statement or explanation of the YWCA's policy on race has surfaced in the course of this study, but surviving reports indicate the establishment of segregated programs by some branches. Hamilton held a separate class in physical culture in 1919, and Toronto established a "colored girls' branch" in 1912, which in 1914 was planning to open a school for its eighty-nine members to train them in domestic science.³⁵

The Professionalization of YWCA Work

The broadened program and mandate characteristic of city YWCAs in the early part of the century required that an unprecedented degree of attention be paid to the mechanics of administration. Those branches which had not already done so by the turn of the century were soon reorganized "on the departmental system of work," following the example of YWCAs in large American cities. A new stress was also placed on the importance of committee work, reflecting a growing tendency to delegate the management of various aspects of the work to an ever increasing number of committees. In 1901, the Ottawa YWCA reported having established Boarding, Educational and Domestic Science Departments with committees responsible for the employment bureau, library, membership, and evangelistic work.³⁶ By 1920, reflecting the broadening scope of city YWCA work during these two decades, the same branch listed the following committees: Finance, Social, House, Educational, Physical Training, Girls' Work, Travellers' Aid, Summer Camp, Lunch Room, Religious, and Hintonburg Branch.³⁷ Participation in more specialized aspects of the organization's work, much of which involved considerable administrative and financial responsibility, required from the YWCA volunteer an increasingly sophisticated understanding of business procedures and the principles of sound management and administration. During the second decade of

the century, the first training courses for the volunteer were offered at YWCA summer conferences. For her benefit, a rash of articles on "The Business Administration of a City Association," "The Value of the Summer Conference to the Volunteer Worker," "Responsibility of the Volunteer Worker," "Training for Efficiency in Religious and Social Work," and "The Administration of a City Association," appeared in the national magazine published by the Dominion Council.³⁸ In the nineteenth century, the YWCA had sought from its volunteer directors evidence of a strong commitment to evangelical objectives and a degree of social prominence that would help to bring status and financial support to the organization. While these qualities were still considered prerequisites in the early twentieth century, they no longer sufficed. Volunteer service with the modern city YWCA required a sound grasp of YWCA principles and methods.

Yet the YWCA did not always find it easy to recruit the growing number of volunteers needed to administer its increasingly complex facilities. YWCA women frequently noted that their appeals had to compete with other causes considered to be more worthy or more appealing to women's instincts, and that there was "vastly more being done...for children, young men, and the aged than for young women." In the face of this situation, they appealed to the "thoughtful woman...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."³⁹ In appealing to the "leisured women" of Vancouver, the YWCA stressed that it needed the support and cooperation of women from many spheres of life.

The experience of older women should be supplemented by the enthusiasm and more modern viewpoint of younger women. Women from the professional and business world, as well as women from the home can

effectively co-operate in the many activities of the Association. The home woman is of especial value. She views the problems touching young women from a normal standpoint, she knows the community in which she lives in a personal way, and by her example can influence many of those with whom she is daily thrown in contact. The Y.W.C.A. offers women of leisure such a variety of work calling for such manifold gifts, that an unlimited number of volunteer workers could be commanded.⁴⁰

Yet difficulties remained and the numbers of volunteers recruited seldom sufficed to meet the need. As YWCA women noted, their ideal 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."⁴¹ While this hypothesis will require future verification by community studies of women's organizational networks, the impression created by the coverage of women's organizations in newspapers and magazines in a number of Canadian cities, is that the YWCA lacked the social prominence of some of its "competitors," notably the Local Councils of Women and chapters of the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire. The fact that the YWCA's strong evangelical convictions, and a significant Baptist component among its own leadership, precluded the holding of elaborate balls and social functions may have worked to its disadvantage in this respect.

Because of the increased scope of the YWCA's activities and the requirements of the physical premises which had to be kept open during days and evenings every day of the week, YWCA volunteers came increasingly to rely upon a paid staff to attend to much of the day-to-day management of the work. The minimum requirement of most branches was a matron and staff of domestics for the boarding home, a Travellers' Aid worker to meet the incoming trains, and with luck an office secretary. The crucial member of the staff, however, was the trained General Secretary, a college graduate who had gone for a year or two of training at one of the several YWCA training schools in the United

States and who had generally been referred to the local association by the Dominion Council. The arrival of a trained secretary not infrequently transformed the nineteenth-century boarding house into a modern YWCA with a number of thriving departments. The Hamilton YWCA reported that on the arrival in 1911 of Miss Mackenzie, a secretary with twelve years of experience with the Brantford YWCA, it had consisted of only a small boarding house and gymnasium. During her nine-year term Miss Mackenzie played a prominent part in several building and financial campaigns which saw the opening of a new building and a pool, launched a Travellers' Aid service, and formed a number of clubs and Girl Guide companies.⁴² In larger cities with the resources to hire more staff, several secretaries were acquired to administer the various departments. The Winnipeg branch in 1914 employed a General Secretary, Business Secretary, Household Science Director, Physical Director, and Extension Secretary.⁴³ Adding to the secretary's importance as manager and executive director, was the expectation that she should represent "the ideal woman" and that her personality should wield "great influence among the girls."⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵

As Wenonah Marlatt remarked on her experience with the Victoria YWCA, the work was often "baffling in its variety. During the first month, I have been called upon to act as a Matrimonial agent, I have been fearful of having to appear in Court in a wage

question, and I wonder I have not more grey hairs when I consider the soaring prices of food."⁴⁶

The organization and expansion of YWCAs in many Canadian communities was constantly hindered, however, by the fact that these trained ideal women were very hard to come by, and the Dominion Council was bombarded with requests for secretaries that it was unable to meet. As the Winnipeg branch noted in 1921, the answer to the question "What does a secretarial position in a local Young Women's Christian Association demand to-day?" went a considerable way toward explaining the lack of efficient workers. Despite the fact, they claimed, that "many splendid young women" were "willing and anxious" to enter the employ of the YWCA, they were "so often offered long hours, heavy responsibility, short holidays, relatively low salary" for this essential work.⁴⁷ A report published in the Edmonton Journal in 1920, written in response to accusations that "the Y.W.C.A. have a big staff of women who have nothing to do but hold down a fat job," noted that the General Secretary was paid less than an experienced stenographer but worked seven days a week often until after midnight without the stenographer's regular hours and holidays. "The number of times in a month she is able to have a meal at one sitting without being called either to the telephone or to speak with some one could be counted on the fingers of one hand." An Edmonton physician was quoted as saying that "these 'Y' women are the worst people for killing themselves with work," and the report further suggested that "to tell more might arouse the factory act enforcers, or perhaps the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."⁴⁸ This report was not, however, an outraged call for the improvement of the secretary's working conditions but an expression of approval of her dedication and commitment to her work. Such praise for the secretary's contribution was distributed with great munificence by YWCA board members. At the 1918 annual meeting of the

Winnipeg branch, the president typically "spoke in glowing terms of the self-sacrifices of the secretaries and staff in general," and later that year proposed that the same secretary be nominated for the Victoria Cross for her "faithfulness and strenuous work" during the "trying weeks" of the Spanish influenza.⁴⁹ There was little or no discussion, however, of attempts to improve conditions or reward the secretary with time off. Under the circumstances, the frequent references in the records to the resignations of secretaries due to illness, breakdown in health, or "the strain that the work has placed upon her" are highly significant and hardly surprising.⁵⁰

There is also evidence in the records of considerable conflict between this new professional worker and the board members who were, in her opinion, often "hopelessly ignorant of Association methods."⁵¹ Despite the demand for the secretary's training and skills, board members were sometimes unwilling to respect her judgment. As one Hamilton member noted, the secretary's job was sometimes a thankless one, and boards were often guilty of leaving "everything in the hands of the secretary who, when anything went wrong, was always to blame, and when all went along smoothly, was not noticed."⁵² The City Department of the Dominion Council was prompted in 1904 to offer "Practical Suggestions" to both parties in how to get along. Board members were reminded that "the General Secretary has a social as well as an intellectual and spiritual nature, that by nature and education she is a member of refined society, and by her strenuous work needs an occasional social relaxation." Secretaries, on the other hand, were advised: "Don't stand on your dignity," "Don't get into a habit of criticising the Board," and "Don't get discouraged. It is not temperamental and so excusable: it is sinful." Both parties were admonished not to forget that they were "workers together with one another and with God."⁵³ Part of the explanation for this difficult situation seems to lie with the Board members' conviction that the woman professional should

pursue her vocation as if it were a religious calling; this perception of early women's professions caused problems not only for YWCA secretaries but also for female social workers.⁵⁴ While the YWCA secretaryship was enthusiastically promoted to college and high school students as one of the most rewarding occupations open to women, the requirements of the work were such that the secretary was expected to have no other life.⁵⁵ As one critic 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."⁵⁶ At the 1919 national conference this issue had still not been resolved. The question of hours and salaries was discussed, and it was recommended "that secretaries must have time for some individual life aside from the association's work."⁵⁷ Because of the YWCA's failure to confront and resolve these issues, the number of applicants for positions with the YWCA was never sufficient to meet the demand.

Those women who did take up YWCA secretaryships, however, had a significant impact on the way in which the work evolved in the early twentieth century, bringing as they did a training in "girl psychology," the conditions of "girl life," religious education, and business principles and modern methods of fundraising and administration. Such skills were increasingly needed by the YWCA as it found itself in the position of having to negotiate a complex set of demands coming from several directions. Programs had to reflect the middle-class evangelical woman's perception of the city as a physically and morally perilous environment for women and had to address what constituted in her view the most pressing needs of working women. They had also, however, to attract the working woman and address her concerns; such a woman could not be exposed to the beneficial and protective influence of the YWCA if she were not first persuaded to enter the building, and her perception of her needs frequently

differed significantly from that of the YWCA Board and particularly from that of the local churches, whom the YWCA could not afford to alienate. At the same time, the financial supporters upon whom the whole operation depended had to be convinced that these same programs justified the spending of public money. Concerned neither with spreading evangelical morality throughout the community nor with the welfare of working women, this group required convincing evidence that YWCA programs were profitable, or at least self-supporting. The professionalization of YWCA work reflected the increasing complexity of the task of meeting these often conflicting demands, which now required an unprecedented degree of attention to the "marketing" of the organization to a variety of interests.

The Boarding House

Many of these conflicting demands and expectations are evident in discussions of the YWCA boarding house, still, in the early twentieth century, one of the most important elements of the YWCA's strategy for resolving the problem of the young woman in the city, and the one with which the organization was most frequently identified in the public mind. Typically, the purchase or construction of a residence marked the genesis of a YWCA; all other departments followed after the boarding house, perceived as the immediate priority, was operational. This need was considered particularly acute in the burgeoning cities of Western Canada where women reformers regarded the shortage of housing available to women as a crisis. One English traveller, E. Pullen-Bury, author of From Halifax to Vancouver, reported being met by a YWCA representative in Edmonton in 1911:

These invaluable institutions for women are to be found throughout Canada in every fair-sized town--In the west, conditions are still so crude that not only does the present passenger traffic exceed available hotel

accommodation, but cheap quarters for women are as difficult to procure as in the east.⁵⁸

The Calgary YWCA was reportedly launched as a result of an incident in which a young woman arriving alone in the city at night was forced to resort to knocking on doors to ask for a room. After midnight, she knocked at the door of a Mrs. John McDougall who took her in and the next day recruited three other women to begin canvassing for a YWCA residence.⁵⁹ Publishing "some interesting facts" about working women in 1918, the Edmonton YWCA estimated the total of "unattached women" in that city at 2,200. This figure included students, travellers en route to destinations elsewhere, and workers in factories, laundries, stores, offices, hotels, restaurants, banks, newspapers, schools and hospitals. The number of women improperly housed, "i.e. housed under conditions injurious to economic efficiency and to physical, mental, and moral well being" was conservatively estimated at 400. This situation was declared to be "a menace to the young girls." "A menace to young girls is a menace to the nation, and should not be permitted to exist so long as we aim to make this a real[sic] worth while city."⁶⁰

Justifications of the need for YWCA residences were similar to those advanced during the nineteenth century, with the principal target being the new 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."⁶¹ Most homes during this period established a strict policy of allowing young women to remain in residence for a period of from one to three years, depending on the demand for the rooms, and in some cases it was also ruled that priority should be given to those earning the lowest wages. During this period, central residences accommodating up to two hundred boarders were built in some of the larger

cities, but there was simultaneously a tendency to open several smaller residences in various parts of the city. As the Vancouver branch explained in 1911: "Small Boarding Homes capable of accommodating about thirty young women, with a main building for the Public Department, is generally conceded to be the ideal system of carrying on Association work."⁶² This policy ensured that more young women would be able to find housing close to their place of work, and helped to separate the boarding house from the other public programs in order to ensure privacy and a more homelike environment for the residents. An important feature of the boarding home in this period was an increased emphasis placed on accommodating "transients." In the nineteenth century, this group had consisted mainly of domestic servants between situations, but the early twentieth century saw a great increase in the number of middle-class women travelling for pleasure during the summer months, many of whom sought accommodation at the YWCA. Despite the prominence accorded the boarding department by the YWCA, however, it never served more than an infinitesimal proportion of the population of working women in Canadian cities. Figures from twenty-seven homes reporting to the Dominion Council in 1915, indicate a total of 21,982 women accommodated during the previous year with 12,106 of these being transients.⁶³

While YWCA boarding houses did achieve a much greater degree of acceptance and respectability with the public at large than had been the case during the nineteenth century, they were nonetheless periodically plagued with some of the same criticisms that had haunted them during their earlier years. As late as 1920, the YWCA was still having to defend its refusal to undertake the rescue of the fallen. The Edmonton YWCA explained that its home aimed "to keep the surroundings of girls pure and right and healthy. Vicious girls are not allowed to contaminate other girls, and they should not be. They are sent to different rescue homes."⁶⁴ The Ottawa branch on the other hand

was criticized for sometimes taking in women who were "past the age of needing protection." This policy was defended as falling within the mandate of the YWCA on the grounds that these were often "cases of the saddest kind", women who had been ill and used up their savings, and needed help to make a new start.⁶⁵ Also encountered were occasional charges that such homes were unnecessary given that working women could quite well afford accommodation in hotels or boarding houses and had no claim to be supported at public expense. "As the serpent crept into Eden, so even here in Edmonton there are maligners of our Y.W.C.A., narrow-minded, short-sighted, last century people, who persistently complain that our association is no more than an up-to-date boarding house for well-paid girls."⁶⁶ More common, however, were charges that YWCA homes charged exorbitant rates and thereby excluded the very working women who were most in need of their services. In 1911, a letter written to a Hamilton newspaper charged that women earning \$4.50 per week were paying \$4.00 for board at the YWCA, and protested the fact that character references were required. The YWCA replied that the writer was obviously not familiar with their work, given that nobody paid "anything like such a percentage of their wages." The actual charges, it was claimed, ranged from \$2.75 to \$4.00 per week and were based on ^a girl's wages. With respect to the question of references: "Parents were sending their girls to the institution feeling confident that they would be placed in good surroundings, and if every girl who applied were accommodated regardless of her reputation and habits the place would not be regarded with such confidence by the parents of the working girl."⁶⁷

The Winnipeg YWCA in 1914 reported hearing frequently "the criticism that no girl can enter our Homes unless fully able to pay her way." Explaining that "the general public does not approve of our keeping any but very moderate or low wage girls in our Homes, so that we are not permitted to charge high rates for board," the Executive

Committee responded that no young woman who was unable to pay was turned away so long as a bed was available.⁶⁸ Yet working women themselves did not necessarily perceive the YWCA as a place to which they could turn when in need. At a 1917 meeting of the Girls' Club of the Central Congregational Church of Winnipeg, the question "Where may a girl without money or friends go to obtain a night's lodging" was the subject of heated debate. Some members took the position that "the Y.W.C.A. always expected one to pay," while another argued that girls with funds were sometimes turned away because of a lack of vacancies. It was also alleged that the YWCA residence allowed "girls well established in business and social circles" to remain too long in the institution. A stenographer reportedly remarked that "the Salvation army could always be relied upon to give shelter to a destitute girl."⁶⁹ Feeling compelled, needless to say, to publicly refute these charges, the YWCA declared that "while a girl is expected to be responsible for her room and board,...at no time has any girl been refused entrance because of lack of funds." Undoubtedly wary, however, of incurring the wrath of financial supporters who might be prompted to charge the management with dispensing charity or engaging in fiscal irresponsibility, the committee added that it was to be "plainly understood" that no girl was "encouraged to stay at the Y.W.C.A. in idleness."⁷⁰

Criticisms of the homes came sometimes from within as well as from outside the institution itself. In 1917 three residents of the local YWCA boarding home sent a letter of complaint to the Hamilton Spectator, which duly reported:

The writers state they are compelled to work from 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 in the evening in order to make a wage that just enables them to pay their board at the Y.W.C.A. and furnish them with the barest necessities of life. They say that recently their board was raised at the Y.W.C.A. to \$4.50 a week and they are compelled to buy their own soap for laundry privileges. In addition there are fines for going into the building after 10:30 in the evening. Complaints are also made as to meager quantities of food

supplied and extra privileges enjoyed by some who have plenty of money to pay for them and who could afford to live in private apartments.

The YWCA Board replied that these complaints were unfair, explaining that the fines were necessary to pay for keeping a maid on duty at night, that arrangements were made for girls who couldn't pay, and that there were no special favours. At its next meeting, the Board reportedly received a letter of support from the other residents of the home who denounced the three complainants as "female cads."⁷¹ Most complaints by the residents were not voiced in so public a manner, and it is difficult to determine whether such dissatisfaction with the service was common. That criticisms were made, however, is suggested by oblique references in the official reports, as in this example from Winnipeg: "We are glad to say that during the past year, most of those living in the Homes have shown appreciation of what is done for their welfare and there have not been as many discouraging features in the work as is sometimes our lot to encounter."⁷² The conduct of residents who did not meet the YWCA's standards of behaviour was occasionally a problem as well. A letter was sent by the Victoria Board in 1917 to "some unruly girls" in the home, advising them that unless they conformed to the rules they would be asked to leave.⁷³ At the same time, however, one national secretary advised 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."⁷⁴ The lamentation of one Vancouver secretary in 1918 was undoubtedly echoed by many of her counterparts in other cities: "It is not easy to reproduce the essentials of the home life of an ordinary household, in a family of upwards of 80."⁷⁵

Notwithstanding the difficulties with critics both within and without the institution, the demand for accommodation in YWCA boarding houses was much greater than it had been in the nineteenth century, when questions were raised by The Globe, it will be recalled, about why they were half empty. During the early part of the twentieth century, the YWCA boarding house in most Canadian cities never suffered from a lack of applicants. While reports from large American cities tended to suggest that where working women were presented with a range of housing alternatives, they preferred to forego the supervision of a YWCA boarding home, the indications are that in Canadian cities they did not have many options. Branches in all the principal Canadian centres reported turning away women on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. The situation was viewed as particularly serious in Prairie cities by 1910, and in the two years following the cessation of the war, YWCA secretaries spoke frequently of a national housing crisis. The Hamilton secretary reported the situation in that city as "nothing less than a tragedy." Observing that the prevailing rates were "terrific," she elaborated: "I doubt if there is a room with board, to be had anywhere for less than \$7 or \$8 a week. Rooms are all at least \$3.50 or \$4, without meals. The average rate girls have to pay for meals is 25 cents for breakfast, 40 cents for luncheon, and 25 cents for supper." Residents whose time limit of three years in the home had expired, were reportedly returning to the YWCA "in tears" after a futile search of the city.⁷⁶

According to YWCA reports, the working woman who was concerned about maintaining the appearance of respectability was particularly hampered in her search. "She may hesitate to seek shelter in a hotel, and if she looks for a boarding house she is eyed askance, and all sorts of questions asked her; questions which no one would ever think of asking a young man."⁷⁷ The discriminatory practices of "landladies and boardinghouse keepers [who] prefer male boarders as a rule, for financial and other reasons," were frequently mentioned.⁷⁸ To combat this situation, many YWCAs

maintained a register of inspected boarding houses to which the "overflow" from their own homes could be referred. Hamilton reported that many of the most suitable homes were located too far from women's places of work, and that most landladies didn't want the bother of providing meals.⁷⁹ The Vancouver YWCA inspected boarding houses for cost, heat, light, cleanliness and especially for sitting-room privileges. A house was most emphatically not suitable if a girl was expected to receive callers in her bedroom.⁸⁰

Travellers' Aid and the Campaign Against White Slavery

One of the principal motivations for the establishment of YWCA boarding house inspection and referral services was the hope that they would help to eliminate "the great danger faced by many young girls in finding themselves inmates of boarding or rooming houses which are run for immoral purposes."⁸¹ If young women were simply turned away and left with nowhere to go, it was believed that they could fall prey to the "bad men and harpies" who were looking out for them.⁸² In the early twentieth century, as in the nineteenth, YWCA women and their supporters viewed their residences as an integral part of a broader campaign to eliminate prostitution and white slavery. An anecdote by Nellie McClung, prominent Alberta suffragist, reformer, and supporter of the YWCA, bears recounting in full because it clearly illustrates the theory of how the boarding house functioned with respect to this broader campaign. This story was told in 1917 when the Edmonton YWCA was appealing for funds for a new residence, having reportedly turned away 322 women in the previous year because of a lack of space. According to McClung, this was an appropriate time to tell a story that demonstrated the need for such homes and was suggestive of the reasons that the

Edmonton home had been founded in the first place. A Methodist minister's wife, in this tale, was inspired to visit a local brothel by the urgings of a visiting evangelist; there she received a message from one of the prostitutes to deliver to the YWCA.

"No, thank you, Madam," said the girl quietly, "you need not pray for me--it is too late; praying for me should have been done two years ago, when I left my home, near Vegreville, and came to Edmonton to find work. I did not want to leave home, but the crops had been frozen, and even mother needed clothes. I was sure I would get along well--for I could work, and besides, I knew about the Y.W.C.A. and how kind they are to strangers. Only for that, mother would not have let me leave, I know...On the train I met a man who was kind to me, and warned me of the dangers of the city, and was pleased when I told him I was going to the Y.W.C.A. He said they would look after me very well there, and find me work too....When I got to the 'Y' on Elizabeth Street and First--I had written down the address--they had no room for me...girls were sleeping on cots in the hall. The matron was sorry, and showed me where there was a respectable boarding house, where I could spend the night, and asked me to come back for meals, and she would find me a place. She had a sweet face and called me 'dear.' The boarding house was only two blocks away, and I walked down the street toward it. Then I met the man whom I had met on the train. He was sorry to know they had no room for me at the 'Y'...He said the boarding house was not a good place for me--all sorts of people went there...But he had a friend who was very good to girls, and always ready to help a girl, and she wouldn't charge me a cent, either. So I went with him, and he brought me here. I've never been out since...At first I fought and tried to get away. Now I know it is no use--who would take me in now?" The minister's wife protested, "You can be saved yet, if you want to. There are plenty of people who will help you. I'll help you." The girl's face brightened for a moment and then darkened back to its passive dullness. "No, lady, it's too late for me; don't bother about any of us here, we're dead--but go back and tell the matron never to let a girl leave, even if she has to let her sleep in a chair; or sit on the steps; or stand up all night. Tell her never, never, never to let a girl go; and tell the women to get bigger places to shelter the girls; they need it so badly. Surely if the women knew they would do something!"⁸³

As the anti-prostitution movement gained ground in Canadian cities during these two decades, the YWCA was able to capitalize on aroused public sentiment to gain support for its homes. Public appeals attempted to exploit maternal solicitude, male chivalry and even local boosterism, as in the case of one Winnipeg fundraising pamphlet in 1920: "Let it not be said of Winnipeg that one girl ever went astray because there was no place where she could find the protecting influence of a home; and let us all unite to

make the Winnipeg Y.W.C.A. the Greatest Y.W.C.A. in Canada. Let us make it possible for every girl who comes into our midst--who needs a home and mothering care--to find it at the Winnipeg Y.W.C.A.--the HOUSE WITH A SOUL."⁸⁴

According to John McLaren's recent analysis of the evolution of Canadian prostitution law, a number of factors combined in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century to produce, in Canada and internationally, a new eruption of white slave hysteria, the first having contributed directly to the founding of the Travellers' Aid society in the 1880s. The new wave of organized activity to combat white slavery was launched by the First International Congress for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic in 1899. A new concern with the abduction of British women to brothels in Europe and the Middle and Far East injected xenophobic and racist overtones into the earlier white slavery fears. As McLaren explains, these overtones led to fears in Britain about the integrity of the race and the decline of the Empire, and in North America to "obsessions about the undermining of traditional Anglo-Saxon and Protestant values by the wave of new immigrants."⁸⁵ These fears were further fed by theories that the declining health of national populations, and particularly of the working classes, was the direct result of sexual excess and venereal disease, both associated with prostitution.⁸⁶ The revitalized concern for white slavery led to, and was in turn stimulated by, an extensive literature produced mainly in the United States which utilized lurid anecdotes and staged photographs to win support for legislative measures against prostitution.⁸⁷ This literature, as well as a number of investigations undertaken to document the existence of organized vice in American and Canadian cities and newspaper accounts of reported instances of white slavery, contributed directly to growing public support for YWCA Travellers Aid services.⁸⁸ Introduced by a few branches in the 1880s and 1890s, Travellers' Aid services at local docks and railroad

stations became an integral department of YWCA work in most locals in the early twentieth century. The Vancouver YWCA explained the need for kindly matronly women to greet the new arrivals on the grounds that the chaotic conditions often left young women incapable of acting in their own best interests. "The noise and confusion upon the arrival of the steamers at the wharves of the large cities is very great. Young girls finding themselves in the midst of this are apt to grow nervous and excited."⁸⁹

YWCA TA services were set up at the time of "a sustained campaign in various Canadian cities by the reformers and their allies to have the prostitution laws enforced and institutional prostitution suppressed."⁹⁰ The efforts of YWCA Travellers Aids and secretaries contributed to this campaign, in which women's organizations played a significant part, and the organization in turn benefitted from the recognition given to these efforts in the form of grants of money from municipal and provincial governments. In fact, the YWCA was increasingly viewed by Canadian social purity reformers in the early twentieth century, chiefly because of its TA services, as the organization taking the most direct and concrete action to prevent young women from falling into white slavery. In Winnipeg, where the need for the service was viewed as critical, the YWCA received financial support for its Travellers' Aid from twenty-six churches, local business firms, and the CNR, GTP and Midland Railways.⁹¹ This financial support was particularly critical for the YWCA given that Travellers' Aid services generated no income at all but required considerable expenditures for salaries, the printing of literature, and the maintenance of an emergency fund to assist the destitute and stranded. Without government support, Travellers Aid had to be funded by the profits of the cafeteria or boarding house. It is highly significant that whenever the YWCA conducted financial or building campaigns, the contributions of its Travellers' Aid workers to the fight against white slavery, which in fact constituted only a small

fraction of the programs and services provided by the city YWCA, received far more than their fair share of media attention. YWCA women only infrequently wrote or spoke publicly about the sinister machinations of white slavers, although they took the existence of such for granted. At certain times, however, and particularly during YWCA financial campaigns, other proponents of anti-white-slavery measures expressed their support for Travellers' Aid in the form of sensational newspaper editorials and reports making lurid insinuations about the goings on at local docks and railroad stations. One account published in the Hamilton Times, at the height of the white slave scare and during a \$75,000 YWCA building campaign, predicted dire consequences if the shortage of accommodation at the YWCA, which was reportedly forced to turn away at least ten women a week, was not remedied.

Just think of the facts for a few minutes. A girl comes into the city from the country. She is tired of the monotony of country life, and, as so many are, is attracted by the glare of the city where she thinks she can earn so much money, can dress in the fashion, and have more enjoyment. Or maybe her father is dead and she has younger brothers and sisters. She desires to help them financially and thinks she can more readily do so if she obtain[s] work in the city, which looks so very easy a matter when at a distance. Buoyed with hope though with heavy heart, she sets forth upon her new road. She arrives in the city, and knowing nobody, were it not for the assistance of the Y.W.C.A. she would look around her, bewildered maybe by the noise and bustle of the city. A devil in human form sees her plight, such friends[sic] are always on the qui vive[sic] for country girls, and can, by reason of their experience, immediately spot what they consider may be fish for the net they cast. The girl is approached, and with guileless look and plausible tongue, the well-dressed stranger feigns great interest in and sympathy for her welfare. A livery is called, and very very often the girl is lost to all who have known her. To her heart-broken mother, to her sorrowing brothers and sisters, the one bright girl, the angel of the home, is buried in oblivion, and is henceforth naught but a slave of the most heartlessly cruel taskmasters that ever the world has seen. She is merely an atom among the seething millions of the cold, cold world: and the monster who so artfully has enticed her into his web, grins sardonically and waxes fat on the price of her soul's ruin. Picture a girl who has left the old country, landing in Canada--this fair country of ours--hoping to make a way for herself in life, sucked into the abyss of degradation and torturing despair, just because the Christians of our country have not spared a few dollars to aid such an organization... 72

Such accounts of prostitution in Canadian cities absolved local businessmen and politicians of any responsibility for its existence, and allowed financial supporters to view themselves, in contributing to the support of YWCA Travellers' Aid services, as chivalrous knights coming to the rescue of innocent maidens in distress. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that such services continued a trend begun in the nineteenth century and were not a direct by-product of an obsessive preoccupation with white slavery on the part of YWCA women. Many of the "dangers" they believed that women travellers faced were much more prosaic and at the same time more threatening because of their prevalence, than druggings and abductions from railroad stations.

YWCA Travellers Aid services reflected a conviction prevalent among social purity reformers that there was "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 young woman who had grown up in the city was expected to have developed a healthy suspicion of strangers and some knowledge of the dangers she faced. The "country girl", however, was in a much more vulnerable position: "...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."⁹³ As John McLaren has correctly noted, Canadian social purity reformers were reluctant to attribute the entry of young women into prostitution to sexual abuse or economic exploitation, both of which implicated members of the respectable middle classes; he suggests that they preferred to attribute the attraction of prostitution for young working-class women to the moral failings of the latter, particularly their greed and desire for fashionable clothing.⁹⁴ The rhetoric of YWCA Travellers' Aids, however, while often suggesting a certain flightiness or shallowness on the part of many young women, consistently

emphasized loneliness, rather than greed, as the principal factor in the susceptibility of women to the approaches of strangers feigning concern for their welfare.

Many young girls came here from the over-crowded cities in the Old Land, lured hither by the reports of higher salaries and other advantages. They had started away from the home nest bravely enough; some had left sisters and brothers and sometimes a mother's loving care, but they had meant to do so much for them all. Then the loneliness and the strangeness surrounded them, and all bewildered with misery, they knew not where to turn, whom to trust, or where to go. Often at this time came to them their great temptation. Is it any wonder that some of the weaker fell?⁹⁵

In literature written for the benefit of YWCA staff and volunteers during this period, prostitution was linked much more frequently with loneliness, lack of female support, and low wages than with abductions by white slavers. While not directly attacking low wages or the existing system of industrial production, such writings did imply at least obliquely that respectable Christian businessmen did have some responsibility for the existence of prostitution in their city. They also implied that abolition of the double standard of sexual morality would make women less vulnerable to victimization by unscrupulous men--the seducer as well as the white slaver. Given this perception of the problem, the proffering of "motherly" solicitude and assistance by the Travellers' Aid appeared to offer a promising solution to the problem of young women being "led astray" immediately upon their arrival in the city. In 1910, joining the ranks of YWCAs providing Travellers' Aid services, the Hamilton branch reported that "at the present time there are two officers in Toronto, four in Winnipeg, four in Montreal and one in a large number of the smaller cities."⁹⁶ These Canadian officials, linked with their counterparts in Britain, the United States, and even beyond, 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."⁹⁷

The increased activity concerning the white slave issue, manifesting itself in a number of Canadian cities in the form of vice investigations, lobbying for legislation, and attempts to close down red-light districts by coalitions of male and female purity reformers provided a new impetus for YWCAs to undertake Travellers' Aid work. At the opening of its new building in 1910, the Hamilton YWCA pledged to "combat what is comparatively an organized effort to lead young women astray." That an organized traffic in young women existed in Hamilton, the YWCA had no doubt, having received such assurances from a reliable and respected authority. "Many of the leading persons in the recently formed Moral and Social Reform Committee have come across the trail of this movement from time to time, until it is now practically established that it really does exist in this city."⁹⁸ Typically, the Vancouver YWCA advised any doubters that if they needed proof, they had only to look about them for evidence of the white slavers' activities. "We have only to read the columns of our daily papers to realize the dangers that surround our girls on every side. That there are evil influences and the emissaries of evil we know, to deny this is absurd."⁹⁹ As McLaren has noted, it is difficult to place too much faith in the reliability of the evidence presented to document the existence of white slavery, because so much of the debate took place at the level of generality. "In this era and later, there was a good deal of 'as everyone knows,' or 'as we read almost daily in the newspapers,' and little concrete fact. This is surprising because the collection of statistics was by then well developed, and common in many other spheres of social investigation."¹⁰⁰

In Hamilton, "two lady detectives employed by the government" to investigate conditions found evidence, not included in the newspaper report, of "more white slave trafficking...than in any other city of its size in the whole of America--not Canada, but America." The consternation produced by these allegations generated considerable

public support for the efforts of the Hamilton YWCA's new general secretary to establish an organized Travellers' Aid service. Her remarks indicate that whether or not such a traffic actually existed in Hamilton, belief in its existence was placing considerable limitations on the activities of many young women.

When I first 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.¹⁰¹

In a similar fashion, the citizens of Edmonton were informed at a public address by Mrs. (Rev.) E.E. Marshall, appealing for funds for the Travellers' Aid department of the YWCA, that the white slave traffic not only existed in Edmonton but was "going on under our very eyes...whether we wish to know it or not." Edmonton, she explained, had a population of self-supporting women estimated at between 300 and 500 with "scores and scores of girls coming from rural districts and outlying towns absolutely ignorant of the ways of city life." With such ideal conditions, agents of the white slave trade had been placed at every station watching for these girls and only the previous year "no fewer than seven young pure Swedish girls were intercepted at the Strathcona Station by these agents and led to live a life of shame." Her remarks, the Evening Journal reported, made "a profound impression" upon the audience.¹⁰²

Most of the justifications offered by YWCA women in support of their TA work had, however, little to do with white slavery but reflected the very real hazards of travel in the days before American Express, overseas telephone calls and inter-branch banking. Setbacks to even the most well-organized plans were a frequent occurrence, as

Travellers' Aid workers regularly explained to members of the public who did not understand the need for such services:

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.¹⁰³

The new Hamilton Travellers' Aid and her assistant reported in 1913 that "There were 3,989 girls and women helped at the depots; 343 accompanied to destinations; 206 taken to Y.W.C.A., and 28 sick and crippled looked after."¹⁰⁴ Nor did Travellers' Aids, contrary to the impression created by white slave rhetoric, confine their efforts to young single women. As the Montreal branch explained, this work could not "be confined to any class, sex or condition, for all alike demand and receive assistance. Lost children, lost parents, lost husbands, lost wives, lost baggage and lost tickets are frequently found, to the untold joy of the seekers."¹⁰⁵ Branches across the country reported having assisted a total of 27,000 cases in 1913 alone.¹⁰⁶ Occasionally a more sensational case was reported in the local newspapers, as in 1921 when a Hamilton mother, "half crazed with sorrow and shame," turned to the local TA worker for help. Her daughter had become a "dope fiend" who had "maniacal fits," in one of which she had revealed the names of five vendors of drugs in Hamilton. Explaining her request for the YWCA's assistance, the mother reportedly said, "If I cannot save my own girl...I want to save some other girl from hell."¹⁰⁷ Most assistance rendered to travellers was much more prosaic. By undertaking such "preventive work", however, the YWCA claimed to combat white slavery "day after day in a quiet unobtrusive way." As a fundraising pamphlet published during a Winnipeg building campaign explained, "If the little girl had

fallen victim to the man and later was rescued, the papers would be full of it--but, thanks to the good Samaritan, she did not have to go the depths--but instead of that was sent to the House with A Soul, the Winnipeg Y.W.C.A."¹⁰⁸

Faced with some opposition to the spending of public money to assist women who were immoral, based on the assumption that they would not otherwise be in need of assistance, YWCA women placed a great deal of emphasis on the helplessness and innocence of the young woman traveller in order to gain support for their efforts. As Annie L. Skinner, President of the Vancouver YWCA explained, "I know that there are many people who will declare that a girl, with no tendency to evil, can always take care of herself; that, in fact, there is little danger for such. I also know that this is a mistaken view. Sometimes her very innocence and ignorance of all evil, places her in the greatest peril."¹⁰⁹ Paradoxically, however, the surviving anecdotal case reports left by YWCA Travellers' Aids suggest that they were much less concerned with the hazards posed by the proverbial white slaver than by encounters with eligible and attractive young men. As Deborah Gorham has argued in a study of the British social purity reformers whose actions led to the establishment of the international Travellers' Aid network, much of the evidence suggests that young women were not necessarily "passive, sexually innocent victims."

What the rhetoric of protection obscures is that those whom the reformers sought to protect did not behave as if they saw themselves as their would-be protectors did. Although the social purity reformers did not like to admit it openly, it seems fairly clear that the majority of young girls who were prostitutes had not been drugged or physically coerced but had chosen to be prostitutes. A much larger number of girls and young women had illicit sex not for gain but out of personal inclination.¹¹⁰

While Travellers' Aids in Canadian cities probably did not believe that female travellers would be drugged and abducted by the population of local males who gathered at railroad stations, they did fear, probably with some justification, the activities of

thieves who would steal women's money, and insincere flatterers who would steal their virtue with false declarations of love and promises of marriage, leaving them at best destitute and at worst pregnant. What they had difficulty envisioning, however, was the possibility that some young women might in fact know their own minds and judge their own behaviour according to standards that were not identical to those of Travellers' Aids but in their view were just as valid.

Because of the nature of TA work, which often required much more than "Kindly help" and was not for the bashful or faint-hearted, Travellers' Aids, like the boarding house matrons and unlike many of the the city secretaries, were middle-aged women, apparently widows, who were judged suitably Christian and maternal in character. As the Vancouver YWCA reported: "The quick eye of the T.A. Secretary often sees cause for interference. Situations arise requiring tact, judgment and courage, but the experienced worker is usually equal to any emergency."¹¹¹ Excerpts from reports of YWCA Travellers' Aids suggest the lengths to which they were prepared to go in the name of protection.

...a man and young girl, evidently from the country, were leaving the depot, and on the Travellers' Aid worker inquiring if they were related, was told it was no business of hers, and although they were not related he was going to take her out to dinner, show her the city and look after her until they continued their journey on the same train going west. The worker objected, and as he was so persistent asked the girl if she wanted to go with a man whom she had only spoken to in the train. Finding she was really anxious to go, our worker followed them right to the street. He being somewhat afraid of a fuss, finally relinquished the girl and her baggage, when she was taken back to the station and cared for until train time.¹¹²

A similar case was reported by the Montreal TA as particularly "appalling from a moral point of view":

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.¹¹³

The Vancouver YWCA reported regretfully in 1916 that it had adopted the new national TA badge and discontinued the gray uniform of the TA worker having discovered that "the modern girl does not care to accompany anyone who looks 'institutional.'"¹¹⁴ Given the ingratitude of many of their charges under these circumstances, YWCA TAs were heartened by occasional expressions of appreciation for their solicitude. One probably unrepresentative young man, "apparently ashamed of his behavior," was reported as having returned to approach the Winnipeg TA after she had dissuaded him from taking a female fellow-traveller to lunch: "You're all right lady! you Y.W.C.A. women do good work and I'm sure when my young sister comes to the city you will give to her the help she may require."¹¹⁵ As for the young woman herself, "later, when she really understands WHAT she escaped, words will not be adequate to express her joy."¹¹⁶ One railroad official, however, expressed his appreciation with an observation that probably did a good deal to brighten the spirits of disheartened TA workers. "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."¹¹⁷

Although the study of social purity movements has not been well developed in Canada, in comparison with Britain and the United States, the implication of the existing body of work is that the goals of purity reformers concerned about prostitution and white slavery reflected class interests, for example by protecting property values from depreciation and employers from being held responsible for the low wages that

made prostitution attractive. The white slave hysteria, it is suggested, was actually the product of displaced fears aroused by the prospect of declining middle-class Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony in the face of waves of "foreign" immigrants. Most recently, legal historians have demonstrated convincingly that the efforts of purity reformers to accomplish their objectives by legislative means, in the end resulted in the increased harassment and exploitation of prostitutes, the supposed victims of organized vice and white slavery.¹¹⁸ What such accounts do not adequately explore, however, is the fact that the battle against white slavery in Canadian cities was fought by coalitions representing the business sector, the churches, women's organizations, and other reform agencies. Such a characterization, consequently, may not fully represent the complexity of motives and the full range of fears that produced this frenzied burst of activity. The rhetoric generated by and in support of YWCA Travellers' Aid services suggests, for example, that an additional factor contributing to the volatility of the white slave issue may have been the fear and ambivalence of middle-class women about what they perceived as the vulnerability of women in a male environment. It is also possible that the white slaver, a creature of many guises, also embodied fears of what evangelical women in particular viewed as predatory and exploitative male sexuality. In this context, their maternalistic and patronizing attempts to protect young working-class women represented not only a desire to prevent the latter from expressing their sexuality but also a genuine identification with their welfare. Their frequent expressions of horror at the fate of the white slave victim are suggestive of the way in which many middle-class women active in this issue may have in fact experienced their own sexuality in situations where they were highly vulnerable because of their own economic dependence. This interpretation is not offered with a view to replacing those that have already been advanced by Canadian

historians, but simply to suggest that specific examination of the motives and concerns of women's organizations like the YWCA may add another dimension to our understanding of the white slave question, purity reform, and urban reform in general.

Adult Education

From the 1870s, the YWCA had expressed its commitment to providing young women with educational opportunities; after the opening of a boarding house, the establishment of an Educational Department was generally the second undertaking of a nineteenth century YWCA. In the twentieth century, this commitment to education deepened and was more directly linked to the right of women workers to seek to advance their position in the workplace. In 1907, one of the Dominion Council's staff of travelling national secretaries, speaking in Victoria, claimed that "in Canada there are more young women enrolled in the educational classes than there are in our universities, in fact [the YWCA] is an evening college for business young women."¹¹⁹ The history of the fields of adult and vocational education in Canada is virtually uncharted territory at the present time. We know remarkably little about the educational opportunities that were available to the young woman in the early twentieth-century Canadian city who had passed the age of school-leaving but who wished to pursue further studies for the purposes of self-improvement or improved employment prospects. Careful examination of the limited records left by the YWCA suggests, however, that the above claim on behalf of that organization may not have been unduly exaggerated.¹²⁰ During these two decades, YWCAs in cities across Canada continued the work begun by their educational departments in the nineteenth century, pioneered classes in a number of new areas including English classes for "foreign" girls, domestic science classes to teach immigrant domestics housework on "the

Canadian plan," and citizenship training to prepare women to assume their new political responsibilities. By 1920, boards of education in some cities had begun to offer night classes accessible to working women, but until that time, the YWCA offered the only available opportunities for many women to learn Arithmetic or Dressmaking or Shorthand. As the YWCA became increasingly concerned about the conditions under which women worked, it became more and more committed to education as a means by which individual women could improve their situations. As evangelicals who espoused an ethic of hard work and self-improvement, YWCA women felt particularly drawn to assist working women who identified with those values. As the problem of unemployment loomed larger in Canadian cities, the YWCA, in response, was one of the first institutions to promote the new field of "vocational guidance."

The importance of education in the modern world is a theme that recurs frequently in the records of YWCAs in Canadian cities between 1900 and 1920. "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."¹²¹ As the Hamilton YWCA explained in proposing to expand its educational offerings in 1913, "There is a demand to-day for skilled labor and no one can spend one day in the business office without realizing to the fullest extent the necessity for a thorough training in the practical things of life."¹²² Education, YWCA women believed, tended to "develop concentration, self-control, determination to succeed"; this could be "tested out in life itself." The majority of young women with whom they came into contact were having to make their way in life "without the advantage of long years in school" because of "adverse circumstances"; the needs of this group were being ignored by educational institutions.¹²³ If some of those young

women were prepared to work during the day and take classes at night, the YWCA's position was that such ambition on their part was "to be commended and should be encouraged."¹²⁴ At a time when many members of the middle-class public disapproved of the entry of young women into the business world, particularly given the perpetual shortage of domestic servants, the YWCA insisted that those women who chose to do so deserved the same assistance that was offered to young men by the YMCA.

As with the boarding houses and most other departments of YWCA work during these decades, the principal targets of educational programs were women working in white-blouse occupations, a deliberate policy that was rooted in the YWCA's concern with its public image as an organization for self-supporting young women.

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.¹²⁵

The YWCA's educational departments offered two types of classes for working women. "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."¹²⁶ The first category, while certainly important, had 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 latter classes also proved most popular with working women themselves, as explained by one 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."¹²⁷ By 1920, most of the basic courses such as arithmetic and basic literacy skills had been dropped, the Winnipeg YWCA noting in 1916 that because of "the splendid system of night classes under the auspices of the Board of Education," many of its classes were no longer required. Under these circumstances YWCAs continued to provide classes in subjects specifically requested by the membership. Winnipeg offered, in addition to gymnasium classes, "First Aid and Home Nursing; Dressmaking; English for foreign-speaking girls; Shorthand and Music, Vocal and Piano."¹²⁸ In 1916, Vancouver, also by request of the members, provided a similar assortment of classes in non-vocational subjects, including dressmaking, cooking, China painting, piano, singing, elocution, first aid and home nursing.¹²⁹ The popularity of the latter two subjects during the war was noted by a number of branches, Ottawa enrolling 375 to 400, in addition to the usual numbers of students in 1915, "the gain being that many more girls are better fitted to serve their home and loved ones, under the desire that they might some day go to the front, to wait on the soldier and sailor lad."¹³⁰

Once the young women were enrolled in its classes, the YWCA was not about to ignore the "great field of opportunity" they presented. The classroom situation, as part of the YWCA's larger strategy of influencing working women to identify with its religious, moral, and social objectives, provided a chance "to develop and transform many, many lives." Hence, much 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."¹³¹ Education promised to help the young woman who wished to do so, to improve herself in all aspects of her life, not merely by advancing her employment opportunities. As one Edmonton leader explained in 1920, "the Y.W.C.A. encourages the

girl to improve herself through proper reading, hearing good speakers and learning to appreciate beauty at first hand." In this way, the work of the educational department was linked not only to the YWCA's larger industrial strategy but also to its position on the whole question of recreation. "The 'Y' leads the girl to see that the whole of life must be spent in her own company and only the educated woman is good company for herself. Her treasure house is filled. She does not need to be always rushing to the movies or from one place to another for recreation."¹³² Libraries continued to be regarded as important adjuncts of the Educational Department, but there was a new consciousness that self-improvement had to be made more appealing to the modern working woman, that YWCA women had to "put ourselves in the place of the woman who frequents our rooms."

Supposing you were a tired woman, worn out with a day of typewriting in an office, or with standing in a shop behind a counter, trying to keep your temper and look sweet while the ladies of leisure were shopping, or weary looking after the children who were all cross at once, and supposing you dropped into the Reading Room of the Ottawa Y.W.C.A., would you find just the refreshment which soul and body require and a new uplift to life?¹³³

Meeting the needs of the working woman meant, in this case, not necessarily providing what YWCA women knew were really the "best" magazines, but "more books and more bright magazines with short stories that a girl could read in the few minutes she has to rest."

During these two decades the Educational Department's definition of self-improvement was also broadened to include the encouragement of an interest in civic affairs and municipal reform, with a view to winning the next generation of women to a sense of women's responsibility for "civic housekeeping". As the YWCA's membership was drawn from a broader section of the population of young women, among whom were "girls of leisure" who undoubtedly included daughters of YWCA Board

members, the Educational Department sought to recruit and train women who would one day qualify for Board membership. In a marked departure from the policies of the nineteenth century, it was expected that YWCA girls would one day become YWCA women. In 1913, the Winnipeg YWCA introduced a lecture course entitled "Know Your City," its objective being "to promote a more intelligent interest in our city problems." Those who attended were treated to addresses by prominent speakers, including two ex-mayors of Winnipeg and a provincial immigration official, on "Civic Administration," "Social Service," "City Planning," "City Finances," "Water Supply," "Health," and "Immigration".¹³⁴ Vancouver held a similar course of lectures in 1916 covering City Government, Health and Social Service Work, with the addition of a Social Workers' Union formed to gain "an intelligent understanding of the conditions influencing young women...and the most practical methods of cooperation."¹³⁵ The earliest efforts by the YWCA to encourage young women to take an interest in municipal issues and social reform were predicated on the assumption that in their later life they would address these questions through their involvement in women's voluntary associations, the YWCA among them. With the war years, came, however, a conviction that women should and would soon be exercising their influence in a more direct manner through the suffrage, and that it was incumbent upon the YWCA to provide the necessary training to ensure that such influence was exercised in a responsible manner. As the Victoria YWCA reported in 1917: "Our educational committee has realized they cannot work along the plans of before the war, that new methods must be found, that the girls of the country may work in unity to its glory, and to the readjustment which this war makes necessary. We have come to a time when every girl is a citizen in the making, and they must understand problems of citizenship." The Victoria YWCA, in response, launched a series of lectures on "questions of the day."¹³⁶

YWCAs were among the first institutions in Canadian cities to address the question of providing education for non-English-speaking immigrants. One of the most active branches along these lines was the Winnipeg YWCA which in 1908, in explaining the need for a new building, announced its plans to introduce classes for the foreign girls. Noting that many of the new immigrants were suffering from loneliness because of their inability to read even newspapers or magazines, YWCA women, with well-intentioned condescension, emphasized their potential to learn: "some even show intelligence enough to appreciate our standard authors. Although they may be able, after a few months, to converse in the English language, one could hardly expect them to read our books without being taught."¹³⁷ Many YWCAs during this period, including Winnipeg, continued to provide instruction in domestic science despite the fact that this subject had been largely taken up by the school boards. YWCA employment bureaux continued to encounter a demand for domestic help that they were unable to satisfy, and it was hoped that a solution to this problem would materialize from the provision of domestic science instruction to the new immigrants, particularly those originating from the British Isles. In proposing a domestic science classroom for its planned new building, the Winnipeg YWCA explained that people were asking about the "old country girls" coming to western Canada: "Why do they not give better satisfaction?"

The answer is simply this. They are trained along special lines in the old country while here the demand is for general service. For instance, a girl may be a good parlormaid, housemaid, nurserymaid, or a good cook, and be not at all satisfactory when asked to do general housework. If she could have even a little practical training it would save her many an unhappy hour and soon make her really valuable in the home.¹³⁸

Educational classes for immigrant women during this period laid the basis for the significant efforts of the YWCA during the 1920s and 1930s in the campaign to "Canadianize" the immigrants. By 1920, the Winnipeg YWCA already viewed itself, and particularly its Educational Department, as integral to the broader objectives of

encouraging immigrant women to assimilate to "Canadian Ideals," and incorporating this group into the YWCA's larger goals for the young women of Canada: "To the Foreign-Born Women [the YWCA] means a Doorway to Canadian Ideals and Institutions, where the Workers speak her Language; where she can learn to Keep House on the Canadian Plan; where she can be Guided to the Right Job or to Training which will fit her for the Better Job and where she can learn the English Language and so swing wide-open the door to Mutual Understanding between her and her Canadian Sisters."¹³⁹

As YWCAs became increasingly conscious during these decades that factory workers remained largely outside their influence, the perceived requirements of this group, too, began to be addressed by educational departments. In this case, classes concentrating on preparation for entry into a high school were initiated, prompted by the conviction that efforts should be made both to counter the "deadening" influence of the factory environment and also to help ambitious young women to escape from that environment altogether.

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.¹⁴⁰

Failing to confront directly the needs of the factory system of production for a large pool of unskilled and low-paid labour, YWCA educational departments addressed the problems of unemployment and low wages among factory workers as if they were capable of resolution by providing training for the workers. The YWCA's commitment to education reflected in part the conviction of its leadership, few of whom had ever experienced the workings of the labour market at first hand, that virtue, on earth as in

heaven, was invariably rewarded. Underlying their assumption that education could advance the interests of working women was an assumption that employers were essentially fair-minded people who valued and recognized hard work and individual initiative. Whether in the factory or in the office, a worker who improved her skills and productivity, in the view of YWCA women, deserved recognition in the form of promotion and higher wages, and would surely receive it. Their solution to the problem of the woman in an unskilled low-paid job was to offer her the training that would gain her a more attractive position and place her in a position to demand higher wages. "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."¹⁴¹ Undoubtedly the YWCA's efforts along these lines did assist many upwardly mobile working women, particularly from among the native-born Canadian population, to move into the higher status service occupations that many working women found more attractive than factory or domestic work. What this strategy never confronted or even acknowledged was that the vacant places of those women would quickly be filled by younger workers or by immigrants who lacked the social and educational advantages that would allow them to move into white-blouse occupations. Nonetheless, it represented a significant assertion of the woman worker's right to advance her position and, should she be required to support herself for a lifetime, to ensure her own economic security.

Extension Work

For the duration of the period from 1900 to 1920, YWCAs in Canadian cities remained primarily identified with their clientele of downtown workers in the expanding service industries. The first tentative efforts to link the YWCA with industrial workers had been made in the 1890s and this trend continued in the early twentieth century, in view of the increasing public visibility of this group and the YWCA's wish to be identified as the primary agency responsible for all young women workers in the community. Some of the services for downtown workers, such as boarding homes and clubs, were duplicated in factory districts, and in many Canadian factories, YWCA religious services, exercise classes, and hot lunches constituted the earliest experiments in welfare capitalism. Opposition to this work from both employers and employees had to be overcome by the YWCA secretary, but judging by the amount of discussion generated by this obviously controversial department of YWCA work, some of the most significant opposition came from within the organization itself. During this period, considerable pressure was exerted on the city YWCAs by the organization's national and international bodies to become directly involved with the issues of most importance to working women, such as wages, working conditions, and organization.¹⁴² There is little evidence in surviving local records, however, to suggest that much significant activity along these lines actually occurred.

Extension Work, that department of the YWCA responsible for carrying the work of the organization into factories and working-class residential areas, was launched in 1895, when Toronto became the first Canadian YWCA 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.¹⁴³ One of the principal purposes of Extension Work

was to make the YWCA known to workers who were unaware of its existence and to invite them to participate in programs in the main building. The Winnipeg YWCA's Visiting Committee visited one factory a week in 1900 "for the purpose of inviting the girls there to some bright social evening in the rooms." In 1904, two staff members visited several factories one Saturday "and had been able to speak personally to as many as 70 girls and found them so interested."¹⁴⁴ In 1916, the Berlin, Ontario, YWCA reported putting up posters advertising educational classes and social events in local factories.¹⁴⁵ As most branches quickly discovered, however, it was not sufficient, if the YWCA wished to make itself truly accessible to industrial workers, to simply invite them to travel to the downtown building in their time off. The Ottawa YWCA explained its decision to open 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.¹⁴⁶

Some of these extension branches, including one opened by the Vancouver YWCA in the East End, and by the Winnipeg YWCA in the North End, incorporated many of the features of the settlement house movement, including Kindergartens and mothers' classes.¹⁴⁷

From their usual small beginnings serving tea and cocoa to working women during the noon hour, extension branches gradually took on a wider range of activities, duplicating some of those offered in the main building for downtown workers. After visits to seven factories and the holding of several social functions for the workers, the Peterborough YWCA reported opening a new branch in the south end of the city in 1912.

The managers of the several factories have expressed their approval of a Branch Y.W.C.A. for the industrial girls, and it is hoped this is but the beginning of a large work. Each noon tea, coffee or cocoa will be served to the girls bringing their lunch boxes. There will be a rest room and reading room. The house will also be open evenings for club meetings, social and reading circles.¹⁴⁸

Most of the earliest YWCA industrial programs emphasized the primacy of the organization's religious objectives. Of its noon visits to factories in 1913, the Winnipeg Extension Committee reported: "A Service of Song was the principal feature of the noon gatherings, with usually a Bible story or short messages of inspiration."¹⁴⁹

A typical noon meeting was described for the benefit of YWCA leaders in The Young Women of Canada in 1907:

...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.¹⁵⁰

By 1914, the Winnipeg YWCA was providing "neat dust caps" at cost to workers at two factories and had introduced "individual towels" in a third. Also offered were books for noon reading, social events and musical evenings, teas, classes in Embroidery, Home Nursing, Sewing and Cooking, and a series of public lectures on "Eight Famous Women of History."¹⁵¹

The majority of the residents of downtown YWCA residences were students, teachers, and women employed nearby in the business district. Few were factory workers, for the simple reason that the homes were located too far from the factory districts, and thus would have entailed considerable time, and more importantly expense, for workers travelling to their places of employment. Given the low wages earned by many factory workers, it was judged by YWCA women that this group was

particularly in need of the type of facility offered by their organization. To meet this perceived need, branches in some of the larger cities established separate boarding homes for factory workers in working-class residential 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. The need for the home was explained in this way.

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.¹⁵²

It was the experience of the Vancouver YWCA, however, that such accommodation was neither demanded nor required by factory workers, most of whom lived at home with their families. In 1913, this branch closed an East End residence for thirty workers opened only the year before, having reached the conclusion that a much more suitable project would be the opening of "bright and commodious club rooms, where through wholesome recreation and entertainment, and interesting educational classes and clubs, we could meet their physical, mental, social and spiritual needs."¹⁵³

Early discussions of industrial work were attempts to convince skeptics within the YWCA 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 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.¹⁵⁴

YWCA leaders were encouraged to consider that they owed their privileged position and material comforts to the labour of the industrial girl. As one of them explained, "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."¹⁵⁵ Doubters had 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.¹⁵⁶

While some manufacturers were reportedly suspicious of the YWCA's motives in attempting to gain access to their premises, many responded with outright enthusiasm, undoubtedly preferring the YWCA secretary to the union organizer. The Hamilton YWCA reported in 1904 that three manufacturers had purchased a total of 180 membership tickets to allow their employees to attend YWCA classes.¹⁵⁷ When the Toronto YWCA undertook an industrial survey of the city in 1919, its representatives visited 270 factories, "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."¹⁵⁸ 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."¹⁵⁹ Historians documenting the history of welfare capitalism have demonstrated that in these two decades, many businessmen displayed considerable support for industrial social work, which also attracted many if not most of the graduates of the new schools of social work. The welfare movement, it is argued, was "rationalized as humanitarian," but had the two additional goals of creating "a new, improved, loyal workingman," and "a labor force so contented that it would have no desire to unionize but, rather, would trust management to look out for its best interests."¹⁶⁰ While there is no question that YWCA secretaries viewed themselves as acting in the interests of working women, rather than as agents of management, employers were quick to recognize that programs such as those offered by the YWCA could certainly work to their advantage; many in fact instituted such programs independently of outside help. By the 1930s this experiment in welfare capitalism, in which the YWCA was an important participant, had come to an end as workers rejected the paternalism of the programs and preferred to take their benefits home in the form of higher wages.¹⁶¹

In social reform circles in early twentieth-century Canadian cities, the YWCA's Extension or Industrial Departments were the principal provider of services for the industrial worker and of information about the living and working conditions of women

struggling to survive on inadequate wages. Although the YWCA's perspective reflected its evangelical concern with the potential moral implications of low wages, the organization did perform a service by drawing public attention to conditions that many of their financial supporters would have preferred to ignore. YWCA secretaries explained to the respectable citizens of the community that it was neither just nor Christian to condemn the moral standards of the factory worker without attempting to understand the conditions under which she lived. Low wages, monotonous work, and a lack of opportunity for "wholesome" recreation, they explained, made it impossible for her to conform to the standards of behaviour expected by the city's more affluent middle-class citizens. YWCA secretaries, many of whom had undergone training in the new fields of sociology and social service, believed that they had a responsibility to educate the Canadian middle-class public about the 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 soil 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.¹⁶²

Such poignant accounts of the plight of the working woman undoubtedly had the effect of pricking the middle-class conscience in many cases, but they were far from constituting a challenge to the exploitative practices of employers or a demand for higher wages. Their principal effect was undoubtedly to generate public enthusiasm and financial support for the efforts of the YWCA, rather than to bring about any significant change in the conditions faced by working women.

Cafeterias

YWCA's during this period were most comfortable with strategies that functioned as a kind of "damage control," minimizing the hardships caused by low wages wherever possible and helping as many women as possible to survive these conditions preserving their respectability and their health intact. A significant innovation that proved one of the most attractive features from the viewpoint of the working woman and a highly profitable investment for the YWCA was the introduction of full-scale cafeteria service after the turn of the century, building on the "noon rest" programs begun by some branches in the 1890s. The stated object of the YWCA cafeteria 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."¹⁶³ The need for such a service, in the view of YWCA workers, 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."¹⁶⁴ The cafeteria itself, ubiquitous in contemporary Canadian cities, was at the beginning of the century a phenomenon that few people had encountered. When the Winnipeg YWCA proposed to

include as a feature of its planned new building "noon lunch on the cafeteria plan," some explanation for members of the public was required.

There are many distinct advantages in this system, and in associations where both plans are in use, girls prefer the cafeteria to the dining room with service. They can serve themselves more quickly and thus be able to use more of the noon hour for rest or recreation. Then less room is required when this plan is used, and it will readily be seen that doing away with the necessity of paying for table service, enables the management to provide better food at more reasonable prices.¹⁶⁵

To maintain the tradition of "noon rest" for workers in the downtown business district, the Winnipeg cafeteria was to be provided with an adjoining rest room with couches and easy chairs, and YWCA women congratulated themselves that they were thereby making a significant contribution to alleviating the onerous conditions many workers, particularly those in retail sales, faced on a daily basis. "It is the testimony of many girls who are employed in positions where they stand continually during working hours that they have been saved from physical break-down because of the Young Women's Christian Association Rest room, where they could lie down for fifteen minutes, a thing that would have been impossible could they not have taken the rest during the lunch hour."¹⁶⁶

Despite the references to the cafeteria's contribution to the "uplift" of working women, its principal advantages from the perspective of the YWCA were eminently practical. As the Montreal branch explained: "The cafeteria offers the most natural way of coming in contact with those who are not in the least likely to go to church or use the Association for other purposes."¹⁶⁷ Use of the cafeteria did not require a YWCA membership and so drew many women into the building for the first time, where it was hoped that staff and volunteers would be able to strike up a friendly acquaintance with many of them and make known to them the privileges and benefits that membership entailed. By serving an evening meal, the cafeteria made the night classes offered by

the Educational Department accessible 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 women's clubs which met for dinner at the YWCA where they remained for their evening meeting and other social activities. But the cafeteria's possible effect on the organization's membership statistics was not the only factor that was considered. In inaugurating this new department, one secretary noted, "the first question usually asked is, 'How much money can we make from it?'"¹⁶⁸ As the Winnipeg branch explained to skeptical members of the public, "this department is one of the association's largest sources of income and wherever tried has never failed to meet expenses."¹⁶⁹ Certainly the Vancouver branch, whose cafeteria seated 80-90 working women and served 400 meals per day, reported enthusiastically that "in February, 1909, the income from the whole Association was less than the returns from the dining room alone in January, 1912."¹⁷⁰ One secretary advocating the introduction of the cafeteria cautioned YWCA workers that in addition to the potential profits, they had to consider "the number of young women to whom it will be of service, the quality of food to be served, the sanitary conditions of preparation and serving, and the welfare of employees."¹⁷¹ But it was not only YWCA workers who supported the cafeterias primarily for their material benefits. The throngs of young working women who frequented them, whatever they may have thought of the uplifting environment, were ready enough to complain when they were not happy with the quantity or quality of the food. The House Committee of the Victoria YWCA unconsciously commented on their priorities when it reported "that there had been a falling off in the number of diners since the curtailment of the bread and butter, but after coming back to a certain extent, to the old order of things, the number was gradually coming back to what it was before."¹⁷²

Physical Culture and Hygiene

Classes in "physical culture" constituted another popular and profitable innovation adopted by most city YWCAs in the early twentieth century. During this period, the YWCA was one of the major advocates of physical training, exercise, sports, and dress reform for women. The lack of a gymnasium was frequently the principal reason for undertaking the construction of a YWCA building; the first buildings to be equipped with such facilities were constructed in the 1890s. By the second decade of the century, every YWCA aspired to the possession of its own gymnasium to be followed where possible by a swimming pool. In most Canadian cities young women had access to no such facilities other than those offered by the YWCA. One study of women's sports in Toronto between 1910 and 1920 has demonstrated that the YWCA was the only place in the city where working women who could not afford membership in a private athletic club could learn to swim or participate in organized team sports.¹⁷³ On appealing for public funds for a new wing to be added to its existing building, the Ottawa YWCA noted as "a matter for serious consideration" the fact that in 1902 there was "no properly equipped gymnasium in the city of Ottawa for the use of young women."¹⁷⁴ The Winnipeg YWCA, planning to include a swimming pool in its proposed new building, spoke of the need for "plunge baths," given the large numbers of drowning accidents and the constant demand from "so many English girls and women who have been accustomed to this kind of bath."¹⁷⁵ The editors of the Peterborough Evening Examiner observed in 1918 that the YWCA's new pool provided "the first opportunity that the girls and young women have been given of learning the useful art of swimming. It is a shameful confession to make that it has been necessary to wait until the enterprise of the Y.W.C.A. could provide an indoor bath before such an opportunity was given."¹⁷⁶

On opening the new gymnasium of the Hamilton YWCA in 1910, its president Mrs. P.D. Crerar commented that "this new adjunct to the association was a sure cure for those who were wont to faint or swoon at the least little thing."¹⁷⁷ Justifications for the provision of "recreative and health-giving exercise" by the YWCA emphasized that many young women were thereby "enabled to keep themselves in a condition which fits them for the most effective service."¹⁷⁸ The Ottawa YWCA argued that its gymnasium would "prove a vital influence in our city."¹⁷⁹

The Y.W.C.A. trains the girl of to-day to appreciate and care for her body that the women of to-morrow may have her heritage of perfect health. The welfare of the country depends upon those who are physically fit to carry on its daily work. National life and home life are inseparable. Their strength and success are determined by the women. In the club room and gymnasium the 'Y' teaches the girl that to be physically fit she must obey the fundamental laws of health and learn the value of fresh air, day and night, regular bathing, drinking plenty of water between meals, regular meals, proper hours of sleep and systematic exercising.¹⁸⁰

A 1908 article on "Physical Culture," published in The Young Women of Canada reported that interest in this field had been growing for more than a decade. The YWCA attributed this interest to the unhealthy conditions of life fostered by modern industry, which required that one part of the body be over-developed at the expense of other parts. "To maintain a harmonious and healthy condition of the whole physical system there must be a proper relation between the various activities...The keen competition that has arisen in all fields of endeavor, especially in business, forces people to live at a rapid rate and demands an expenditure of nervous force out of all proportion to the supply."¹⁸¹ In the case of women workers in particular, YWCA literature often emphasized that long hours of sedentary employment in factories and offices were producing physical damage that would jeopardize their future capacity to bear healthy children. These conditions, however, were accepted as an inevitable part of modern life, and YWCA Physical Departments advocated a solution that placed the

onus on the individual worker to restore her "vital capacity" and thereby make herself fit to function productively under these conditions. In putting forward such arguments, the YWCA and other women reformers have been harshly criticized by some modern historians for promoting exercise "as a vehicle for the preservation of traditional values rather than a manifestation of liberation."¹⁸² Such a presentist position, however, neglects to consider the context in which these arguments were developed. In the case of the YWCA, the funds for these expensive facilities had to be solicited from people who saw no reason that working women should selfishly enjoy themselves at the expense of the community. The Ottawa YWCA's suggestive response to this position was that in building up her body, the working woman was "not wholly selfish, for is she not fitting herself to more fully pay back her debt to the human race, and ensuring the health and physique of the future race? 'Society is not best served by human wrecks.'"¹⁸³ Such an argument was undoubtedly more successful in raising dollars for swimming pools than any demand for the "liberation" of working women.

Most YWCA Physical Departments emphasized training in drills with wands and Indian clubs, but were also strong advocates of instruction in the Swedish system of Physical Culture.

In the Swedish system the aim is to develop the body into a harmonious whole under the perfect control of the will, the mind having to govern every exercise. The aim is also to make the carriage graceful and easy, yet each part is only developed in proportion to its corresponding agent. The exercises begin with the most simple, and progression is gained as strength warrants. As a result, pupils are stronger physically as well as mentally.¹⁸⁴

In introducing the Ling System of Swedish Gymnastics in 1915, the Vancouver YWCA explained that this system relied upon the word of command rather than music. "Greater attention is given to the actual performance of each movement, and the whole series of lessons being arranged to exercise each individual muscle group."¹⁸⁵

Gymnastic displays to which proud relatives and other members of the public were invited were regularly held by YWCAs at the close of the classes in the spring. One such display held in Winnipeg in 1914 featured a Grand March, Dumb Bell Drill, Vaulting the Horse, Ribbon Dance, Indian Dance, and Jumping.¹⁸⁶ Regularly reported in the local press, these events helped to publicize the work of the Physical Department and to gain support for the YWCA during financial campaigns. Another major event in the year's schedule was the holding of swimming examinations. The Hamilton YWCA reported with satisfaction in 1920 that its pupils were to receive twenty-five awards from the Royal Life Saving Society. The examiner, a Mr. Peake from Toronto, declared that "it was the most proficient class he had ever examined."¹⁸⁷ The range of activities offered by YWCA Physical Departments gradually increased during this period, including in Winnipeg in 1917, "formal and corrective gymnastics, light apparatus work, folk and interpretive dancing, games and swimming for all ages, together with the teaching of the principles of healthful living."¹⁸⁸

The reference to the latter feature of what the Winnipeg YWCA was by then calling its Department of Hygiene and Physical Education, reflects an increasing emphasis being placed on instruction in the principles of hygiene, a combination of moral and physiological education. As early as 1908, physical culture was held to incorporate, in addition to exercise, "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."¹⁸⁹ Good health was linked closely with behaviour and attitudes, as Mrs. S.R. Russell of the Edmonton YWCA explained in her exposition of the importance of a "cheerful outlook on life."

The woman who walks along with head erect, chest high and a bit of sunshine in her face sends an infectious wave of cheer by the wayside that makes everyone better for her living. A happy, contented spirit reacts upon the digestion while grouch and worry tightens the muscles, hinders the flow of the digestive juices and impairs one's efficiency.¹⁹⁰

Mrs. P.D. Crerar, president of the Edmonton YWCA in 1910, took the opportunity presented by the opening of the new gymnasium to urge "the young women to be careful of the company they kept and especially to steer clear of the young men who smoked cigarets to excess and were in the habit of hanging around taverns."¹⁹¹ During the war years, the spreading use of cosmetics became an issue of concern to instructors in YWCA physical departments. In 1920, the Spectator reported in an article entitled "Attack Planned on Powder Puff" that Hamilton YWCA girls were "manifesting an anti-cosmetic attitude." "The blush box, the powder puff, the eyebrow pencil, the stick which induces cherry lips--and indeed, all the other weapons in the arsenals of the beauty(?)--seeking maiden--are in danger of becoming the object of attack by a large section of the girlhood of the community." Also rejected was a popular hairstyle that involved an arrangement of the hair in two large puffs on either side of the head, denounced by critics as "'cootie garages'--those strange protuberances which render the female of the species earless." Winnifred Parker, Hamilton General Secretary, observed that "the cosmetic habit was growing at an alarming rate" and that "so many of the girls who use cosmetics do it so innocently, never realizing what impression they create." Even the youngest girls, she noted, were plastering their faces with "stuff of the components of which they were absolutely ignorant."¹⁹²

YWCA Physical Departments were headed by secretaries who had taken specialized training in this work; some were graduates of the first university training programs in physical education. These athletic young women attracted considerable attention in the press and apparently achieved the status of minor celebrities in some communities.

Two of the most well known were Annie Beaton of the Hamilton YWCA and Mary Beaton of the Toronto branch. The Hamilton Spectator reported: "The Beaton family, to which these two sisters belong, have been for several generations all professional swimmers, their grandfather and father both having been directors of the public baths in Edinburgh, Scotland, where these ladies also had their training."¹⁹³ Mary Beaton, photographed at work by Toronto journalist William James shortly after her hiring in 1910, was considered newsworthy in her own right as a qualified instructor and author of The Complete Swimmer, impressing the citizens of Toronto with several exhibitions of lifesaving and fancy diving.¹⁹⁴ Olga Ekwurzel of the Winnipeg YWCA also attracted the notice of the press, the Telegram publishing a lengthy account entitled, "What Physical Education Has Done for Me," of her "story of a hard fight for life against desperate odds." Diagnosed by doctors as having only months to live as a result of an unidentified intestinal ailment, Ekwurzel was brought back to health and vigour by a regimen of healthy diet and exercise, an inspiring example to the girls of Winnipeg.¹⁹⁵ In many branches, the physical directors worked in close cooperation with local women doctors who examined each candidate for a YWCA gymnasium class and in some cases provided instruction in hygiene and physiology. In 1916, Dr. Mary E. Crawford of Winnipeg offered three Health Talks on "Headaches," "Signs and Prevention of Infectious Diseases," and "Hygiene of Special Systems."¹⁹⁶ These women doctors were staunch advocates of physical activity and dress reform for women on the grounds that inactivity, poor diet, and lack of oxygen due to tight clothing made women sick, with serious consequences for themselves, for society, and for the future generations.

The majority of women habitually live on from one-half to two-thirds of the normal supply of oxygen, on account of their manner of dress and the habit of breathing suggested by it. Consequently women have one-half the vitality and resistive power that is naturally their due. The result of this in lessening the sum of outputting power in our civilized lands and the loss to the children of our nation is beyond computation.¹⁹⁷

YWCA doctors and physical directors were among the leading advocates of "sensible dress" for women to allow greater freedom of movement and freedom from the pain of tight lacing and tight pinching shoes. "Have your skirts short enough to allow you to walk freely, not so heavy that you feel them a load," advised Dr. Jennie Gray.¹⁹⁸

Despite the moralistic emphasis in YWCA literature on the duty and responsibility of working women to fit themselves for motherhood and greater productivity in the workplace, the Physical Department attracted thousands of women, more than any other single department, into YWCA buildings during these decades. As the Winnipeg branch explained in 1908, "No phase of association work appeals more strongly to the business woman than the gymnasium."¹⁹⁹ Citing the example of Toronto, Winnipeg claimed that a YWCA could expect to count half the proceeds from the Physical Department as profit.²⁰⁰ Hamilton noted in 1920 that "Not only has it become profitable from the financial standpoint, but in popularity the swimming pool heads the roll at the local institution."²⁰¹ In 1914, the Winnipeg YWCA reported that of 763 pupils enrolled in its educational classes, 420 were registered for the gymnasium. "In the morning classes were married women; in the afternoon, teachers, newspaper women and others, and in the evening young women employed during the day; Saturday mornings were given up to the children; and Saturday evenings to the employed girls' free class."²⁰² Some of this popularity was undoubtedly due to the YWCA's efforts to link good health with physical attractiveness, a matter that perhaps concerned young working women more directly than their capacity to contribute to the healthy development of "the race." "Are you too fat? Are you too thin? Come and get right in the Y.W. Gym," invited a Winnipeg YWCA gymnasium program in 1914.²⁰³ Announcing "Here's Chance for All to Become Beautiful," the Winnipeg press reported that in addition to the usual hygiene lectures at the YWCA, Dr. Mary Crawford would speak on facial beauty, and Olga Ekwurzel would

"illustrate exercises for reducing a double chin, strengthening the neck, brightening the eyes, producing a smooth and robust skin, heavy eyebrows and many other matters of deep interest to women."²⁰⁴ The success of the Physical Department also resulted from the fact that YWCA physical directors were fundamentally supportive of working women's right to enjoy themselves in physical activity, although they seldom stressed this point out of consideration for the concerns of their financial supporters. Asked the question, "Does she need this department?," the Winnipeg YWCA explained, "It is difficult for one who has never had the experience to realize what delight it is to the young woman occupied during all the working hours of every day with the monotonous round, often all day in a position which develops only one set of muscles, to have a place where she can give every muscle full swing."²⁰⁵ The popularity of the programs suggests that many working women, who undoubtedly attended these classes simply because they enjoyed them, would have agreed with this answer.

Summer Camps

Closely linked to the work of the Physical Department and sharing their commitment to health and physical exercise as a form of wholesome recreation were the summer camps introduced by most Canadian city YWCAs in the early twentieth century. It was in fact in the 1890s that some branches first obtained the use of summer cottages, usually on loan from a member of the executive or a generous supporter, that were run as "day camps" for YWCA members. From the beginning these cottages proved highly popular with the membership and were regarded by many as an ideal solution to the problem of the working woman who could not afford to sacrifice any 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, 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.²⁰⁶

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, Ontario. In 1913, the Vancouver YWCA closed its East End hostel, recently opened for the benefit of industrial workers who, it was soon discovered, all lived at home with their parents and so did not need a residence. For these young women, a summer camp seemed a much more suitable and attractive means of meeting their needs. In its first year of operation, the camp at Whytecliffe accommodated 150 vacationers in addition to 130 day guests.²⁰⁷ Most cities reported having to turn away many would-be campers because of a lack of space. In recognition of the fact that factory wages were too low to permit many workers to take time off for a holiday, most branches did try to provide individual financial assistance to those who were deemed most in need.²⁰⁸ In Vancouver, for example, local women's organizations including the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire and some church auxiliaries contributed to a fund for workers who had been ill and needed a rest before returning to work.²⁰⁹ By 1912, YWCAs in Montreal, London, Toronto, Winnipeg, Brandon, Calgary, and Vancouver had leased or purchased camps that offered vacations to hundreds of working women in two-week shifts throughout the summer. The Winnipeg YWCA's Beach Bungalow accommodated fifty campers at rates of five, seven or nine dollars per week, plus special week-end rates, for "vacation days" of basketball, tennis, walks, hammocks, boating, and bathing.²¹⁰

The promotion of summer camps providing the opportunity for purposeful recreation in a country setting accorded well with the YWCA's position that many of the ills of modern society stemmed from the growing influence of the city, and the fact that a

large segment of the population had become disconnected from traditional "rural" values by living in an environment where the "artificial" had replaced the "natural." Associating city life with hierarchy and class divisions, many YWCA women expressed the hope that camp life would provide an opportunity to experience a more "democratic" form of community life. One of the earliest and most active advocates of YWCA summer camps was Mary Edgar who became the Dominion Council's first School Girls' Secretary in 1911 and who championed the right of both the high school girl and the "little working sister" to "her chance to enjoy the common-wealth of the fields and the woods."²¹¹ Observing that "modern industry had cruelly and hopelessly closed in thousands from a world of beauty, which interprets God for rich and poor alike," Edgar pointedly suggested that YWCA women themselves were, in ways that were not always clear to them, "personally responsible for these complex problems of life." As the Dominion Council's unofficial poet-in-residence, she expressed her views in characteristic fashion:

I have shut my little sister in from life and light,
For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair...
Locked from sweets of summer and the wild spring air.
I who ranged the meadowlands free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my little sister till her playing time is done;
Oh my little sister, was it I?--was it I?²¹²

Answering in the affirmative, Edgar and others argued that the YWCA had an obligation to provide working women with an opportunity to experience a holiday at camp, and that such an undertaking was quite consistent with other YWCA programs, providing an opportunity for wholesome recreation away from the temptations of the night life of the city. Working women's camps were relatively unstructured, in comparison with those for school girls,²¹³ and featured team sports, picnics, hikes, boating, swimming, and tennis. An organized program of religious activities, beyond daily prayers and

Bible readings, was not emphasized by camp leaders, not only because it would have made the vacation less appealing to working women but also because it was considered unnecessary. Espousing a type of "evangelical Pantheism,"²¹⁴ Mary Edgar argued that "in a thousand ways the Out-of-Doors is interpreting God," and that the experience of contact with "Nature" was in itself conducive to an awakening or intensification of religious feelings. "I believe in the faith of the flowers,/I believe in the Rock and sod,/For in all of these appeareth clear/The handiwork of God."

The introduction of summer camps promised to contribute to the resolution of one of the most serious dilemmas facing the YWCA, in that they would help to retain the links that had been established with working women over the winter months. Relying largely on the efforts of volunteers, who liked to take their holidays in the summer, many YWCAs completely closed their buildings, with the exception of the boarding department, during the summer months.²¹⁵ Working women who were attracted to the YWCA by the gymnasium, swimming pool, or social events, often drifted away during the summer and the work of establishing contacts with working women had to begin again in the fall. The Vancouver branch, in purchasing its Whytecliffe camp at a cost of \$5,000, hoped to hold the interest of its 170 gymnasium pupils over the summer months by providing this opportunity for rest and recreation.²¹⁶ Increasingly, YWCA secretaries concerned with the recreation question argued that if the organization was serious about reaching the working woman and meeting her needs, it was not appropriate to abandon her during the summer. Mary Edgar suggested that the summer camp might revolutionize the YWCA's whole program by promoting an increase, rather than a winding down, of activities at the very time when young women were facing some of their most serious temptations.

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 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.²¹⁷

After a few years of experimentation with the full-fledged summer camp, an option that could satisfy only the small number of working women who could afford to leave the city, there was a renewed demand for the "day camp" arrangement of the early summer cottages--"an Outing Park within reach of the city would prove a boon to hundreds of machinery-fagged girls throughout the long summer evenings and might be made possible in co-operation with other organizations."²¹⁸ The Winnipeg YWCA operated, in addition to its Beach Bungalow at Boundary Park, a city camp at Ravenswood which offered board for \$3.50 and \$4.00, Thursday picnic teas for ten cents, Saturday afternoon picnics, the option of private picnics, and a day of rest with a Twilight Song Service on Sunday.²¹⁹

Of all the YWCA's recreational activities that purported to bring women together, the summer camp was probably the most truly democratic. Other programs, such as clubs, tended to divide women, as a means of most effectively "meeting their needs," into groupings based on age, occupation, nationality, race, and marital status. At the camps, however, some of these divisions were largely overcome. The Vancouver YWCA commented on this phenomenon in 1913: "It is interesting to note the different occupations represented by the campers. Stenographers, bookkeepers, school teachers, governesses, music teachers, trained nurses, telephone operators, clerks, waitresses, dressmakers, milliners, hairdressers, women engaged in photography, domestic workers and students all mingled in the greatest friendliness."²²⁰ It was in the opportunity

that the camps provided for the development of female friendships, not only with the other working women but also with the YWCA secretaries, most of whom were young women like themselves, that YWCA women placed their principal hopes for beneficial results from the summer camps. Given their assumption that fashionable clothing was one of the principal indicators of divisions between women, it was expected that such friendships would surely overcome class and occupational barriers between women and would distract them from thoughts of men and shallow amusements. A greater degree of intimacy between YWCA staff and working women than that fostered by services such as cafeterias was expected to provide opportunities for informal talks touching on some of the broader concerns of the YWCA.

...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...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.²²¹

It is highly questionable, of course, that many working women experienced this degree of personal transformation as a result of their experience at a YWCA camp. What is not in question, however, is the fact that summer camps for working women were among the most successful of the YWCA's innovations in the field of recreation and proved highly popular with the membership. The evidence of photographs taken by women who attended the camps suggests, furthermore, that the campers associated their experience with fun and friendship and genuinely enjoyed their opportunities to participate in sports and outdoor activities to which many or most of them did not normally have access. Those who chose to document their camp experience with the inexpensive box cameras increasingly accessible to working women, created images of picnics, swimming and boating, reading on the beach, hiking, and the costumed skits and

pageants that were always a feature of camp life. The laughter and relaxed physical and emotional intimacy so evident in these photographs suggests that while some working women may have preferred to remain in the city with their men friends, others shared the commitment of YWCA women to female friendship and placed a high value on the camp experience.²²²

Recreation as Reform

The whole question of recreation had enormous implications for YWCAs during these decades and, as the Montreal YWCA noted in 1915, raised some fundamental questions about the organization's ultimate objectives. By 1914, it was reported, while the western associations were swamped by the task of receiving and housing the thousands of new arrivals in their communities, the older more established locals of eastern Canada had reached a turning point in their development. The dilemma they confronted was not unique to YWCAs in Canada.

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?²²³

As in the nineteenth century, the Canadian associations opted to follow the example of the American YWCA and in so doing firmly committed themselves to a conception of the YWCA that implied an elaborate physical complex as well as a united movement of Christian women. Tackling the recreation question meant that actual alternatives had to be provided, thus requiring the construction, purchase, and administration of swimming pools, gymnasias, summer camps, and club rooms, and drawing the YWCA ever

deeper into fundraising and other distinctly non-spiritual activities. While rooted in a critique of the urban environment as inhospitable to women, the YWCA's solution to the recreation problem ironically drew it into a closer dependence on male financial support.

In a pioneering and perceptive study of working women's leisure in turn-of-the-century New York, Kathy Peiss has placed the efforts of the YWCA and other agencies to reform the pattern of working women's recreational activities in the context of a larger process of cultural change. In the transformation of leisure that occurred during the passage from Victorian culture to modernism, she finds evidence of "a redefinition of gender relations, what might be called the shift from homosocial to heterosocial culture."²²⁴ Undermining traditional homosocial patterns of working-class recreation, where leisure was linked to mutual aid and male culture, the new commercial recreations "fostered a youth-oriented, mixed-sex world of pleasure, where female participation was profitable and encouraged." For many young women, particularly the daughters of immigrants, "cheap amusements" came to embody American urban culture, "particularly its individualism, ideology of consumption, and affirmation of dating and courtship outside parental control."²²⁵ In these new circumstances, Peiss explains, the behaviour of working women in their leisure hours became a matter of great concern to certain segments of the middle class.

Reformers imbued the everyday pleasures of working women with a moral reading that linked cheap amusements to promiscuous sexuality and heterosocial relations. The image of the flashily-dressed working woman, joking and flirting with men, spicing late into the night, enjoying a new-found sense of social freedom, resonated uncomfortably within the middle-class public.²²⁶

In YWCA literature on the recreation question, fears of the possible implications of this unprecedented behaviour by young women were frequently expressed: "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?"²²⁷ Contained in such expressions of maternal concern is a recognition of both the autonomy and the vulnerability of the young woman as contacts between young people increasingly occurred in unsupervised public spaces.²²⁸ In their own way YWCA women recognized that, as Peiss explains, "Public halls, picnic grounds, pleasure clubs, and street corners were social spaces in which gender relations were 'played out,' where notions of sexuality, courtship, male power, female dependency, and autonomy were expressed and legitimated."²²⁹ To address this disturbing new situation, the YWCA's strategy for dealing with the recreation question emphasized the creation of alternative recreational spaces in a safe female-controlled environment. In so doing, they "extended women's sphere into the threatening urban environment," and hoped thereby to "uplift and purify the social relations between the sexes."²³⁰

At a time when Canadian cities were amply provided with taverns and dance halls, YWCAs consistently drew public attention to the fact that for the self-supporting young woman trying to survive on wages that were insufficient even for the necessities of life, opportunities for "wholesome recreation" were minimal or non-existent. Evangelia House, a Toronto YWCA settlement for young women, reported in 1903 that "Toronto, a city of homes, has not many social attractions for the business girl or woman, outside of the church social, theatre or vaudeville."²³¹ In 1915 in Halifax a similar situation was noted.

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.²³²

Often accompanying this type of observation was the clear implication that the urban community discriminated against its young women in the matter of the provision of recreation. On the opening of the new Peterborough YWCA building in 1905, it was noted that "To the male portion of the community, is offered a much more varied choice of places to which they may retire for rest or recreation when it becomes necessary, than is usually afforded the fair sex."²³³

In the view of YWCA women, working women were handicapped in the matter of recreation, as in housing, not only by low wages in comparison with those earned by men but also by their need to be concerned with maintaining the appearance of "respectability." Not all working women, of course, were concerned with respectability, or perhaps defined this quality in terms that were not shared by the YWCA. Nonetheless, for some women in occupations such as teaching, stenography, or retail sales, conformity to middle-class standards of respectability was a condition of employment, and to fail to abide by these standards could easily jeopardize both their social and economic standing. For these women the YWCA felt a particular sympathy, and an obligation to educate the public about the difficulties in which they were placed by the absence of suitable recreational opportunities.

...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.²³⁴

Where recreational opportunities were limited to the frequenting of saloons or public dance halls, such women often had no option but to sit in their rooms, a situation that contributed to their unpopularity with landladies. One male observer who moved to Regina after the First World War recently recalled that "there were no girls. They were just starting to work in offices, they operated the telephones, worked in cafes and in some of the stores. But they disappeared out of circulation at 6 o'clock and you never saw them again until the next day. Talk about a man's world!"²³⁵ The YWCA did not challenge the categorization of women as "nice" and "not nice" that placed real limitations on the actions of all women, but rather took the position that this situation was most unfair and that the respectable working woman deserved the sympathy and support, in the form of opportunities for wholesome same-sex recreation, of the Christians of her community.²³⁶

During these two decades, the YWCA's position on the question of what constituted suitable recreation underwent considerable modification. At the turn of the century, a "hard line" position held that recreation had to be provided in a form that was morally and spiritually uplifting. "Social entertainments for the mere purpose of having a good time will accomplish nothing; but if held with a view to producing an all-round character that Jesus Christ may be glorified, the results will be permanent."²³⁷ In the face of the changing tastes and requirements of their clientele, however, YWCA women were forced to rethink this position, and by 1915 it had been conceded that "all normal young life calls for and must have recreation and relaxation in some form or other." It was

sufficient, therefore, that the YWCA should attempt to give "a healthy tone" to evening amusements with the result that "many pitfalls would be avoided and a higher standard of womanhood attained."²³⁸ The YWCA's concern over the question of recreation came to the fore during the war years when, it was argued, "there never was a time when greater moral danger confronted the girls of our large cities." The heightened danger resulted from the fact that so many young women had entered the workforce and were living away from their homes. It also resulted from a certain "spirit" in young women induced by the wartime atmosphere.

There seems to be a spirit of restlessness abroad and this was expressed the other day by a young girl who said, "If only we could go overseas too and do some thing worth while!" and this restlessness is being shown in many other ways which are causing alarm. The home seems to have lost its hold in countless numbers of young girls and they spend their after-work hours walking the streets, going to movies, dance halls and cafes. "Looking for something to turn up," as one fifteen year old girl expressed it. There is also the infatuation for khaki which has led many girls to lower the standard of womanhood and recklessly toss away the age-long ideas of modesty and purity.²³⁹

A 1918 newspaper article arguing for the support of the local YWCA in Halifax where large numbers of soldiers were stationed, 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."²⁴⁰ In response to this perceived crisis, some of the more progressive branches responded with bold new measures to provide mixed recreational opportunities. In 1916, the Halifax YWCA reported on the success of its experimental Sackville Girls' Club, the only such club in the country, patterned after wartime clubs organized in Britain. It had an average nightly attendance of 51, with sometimes as many as 200 young women in an evening. While most YWCA clubs met only once a week, the Sackville Girls' Club featured a seven-day program, on the grounds that only in this way could it compete with other attractions: Monday - "a homey social time in front of the open fire," Tuesday -

educational lectures, Wednesday - games, Thursday - gymnasium class, Friday - supervised dancing, Saturday - Red Cross Day, Sunday - religious services. The great success of this club, in comparison with other YWCA efforts, was attributed to the fact that both men and dancing were permitted.²⁴¹ Other branches took note of Halifax's success and some followed suit. Montreal in 1918 announced the opening of a new Recreation Centre where girls could take their men friends any evening of the week and "be sure of finding something interesting in the way of music, games, reading and companionship."²⁴²

Yet for all the pressure of wartime conditions, mixed recreation was not embraced with enthusiasm by most locals, many of whom were reluctant to deal with the issue at all. A 1914 editorial in the Hamilton Times argued for support for an addition to the YWCA's new building, but suggested with some delicacy that the YWCA would do well to pay more attention to the matter of young men.

Would it be too much to say that the social side would be better cultivated were the rooms thrown open at times to the brothers and cousins and other young men, so that they could get acquainted the one with the other? There are few young girls who do not look forward to matrimony as the crowning event of their lives, and some opportunities should be presented them to help them achieve their laudable ambition.²⁴³

YWCA's that did not provide a special room in their building for the entertaining of men friends were criticized for contributing to the problem of young people on the streets. "Instead of being able to stay indoors at night, they are forced to seek their enjoyment outside, and this is, in many, many cases, the beginning of the end."²⁴⁴ In response to such prodding and to demands from the membership as well, some Social Departments began to experiment with mixed parties. In 1914, the Montreal YWCA held a Halloween party with the YMCA men which was attended by 525 guests; "two or three little romances have resulted from this party, a sign that we are doing good in more ways

than one."²⁴⁵ In an even bolder venture, the Winnipeg YWCA reported in 1921 that "On several occasions groups of girls have held private parties for their girl and boy friends, in one of our club rooms. All we ask in such cases is that a chaperon be present and that the guests leave the building before midnight."²⁴⁶ Yet such measures were not representative of all YWCAs across the country, particularly those in smaller more conservative communities. As late as 1920, the Victoria YWCA's Social Committee reported that it was considering a suggestion "that the Y.M. and the Y.W. exchange civilities and occasionally have a social together."²⁴⁷ Such a tentative step toward addressing the question of mixed recreation undoubtedly posed little threat to the vendors of commercial recreations in that city.

A great deal of the difficulty faced by the YWCA in dealing with the recreation issue derived from its need to satisfy a number of groups and interests with varied positions on this whole question. Particularly thorny was the problem of dancing. To modern young twentieth-century women, especially of the wartime and post-war generation, dancing appealed probably more than any other form of recreation, and YWCAs had to confront the fact that without steps to satisfy the desire for dancing, their Social Departments would soon lose their clientele to the public dance halls. Yet those same social departments had to confront opposition to dancing not only from conservative elements within the active membership but also from the local churches; as "handmaiden to the churches," the YWCA could hardly afford to alienate the support of those institutions. The whole question proved extremely difficult and is suggestive of the increasing complexity of the YWCA's relationship to its clientele and to the larger community during these years. In 1911, a dispute erupted at the Peterborough YWCA between the Gymnasium Committee, whose members had to be persuaded to withdraw their resignations, and the Board which cancelled a social dancing class introduced as

part of the gymnasium schedule. In this context, the dancing would have involved female partners only, but even so the Board did not feel that such an activity could be sanctioned on the premises of the YWCA. Explaining that the issue was not the validity of dancing as an amusement but its relationship to the YWCA, the Board justified its action: "We were reminded that we had a certain duty to discharge for the Christian public of Peterboro[sic]. We are responsible for the maintaining of certain ideals and principles. Would the advertising and teaching of dancing lower these standards?"²⁴⁸ The difficulty with the dancing question continued through the war and into the 1920s. As late as 1924, the Hamilton YWCA was plagued with controversy, when a local Baptist pastor denounced the "Young Women's Commercial Association" for holding public dances and abandoning its spiritual origins.²⁴⁹ A short time later the wife of a visiting evangelist expressed her concern for the young women of Hamilton in terms that were undoubtedly representative of the anti-dancing faction. "What chance have they got when even the Young Women's Christian Association here in your city is having dances for girls and starting their souls on the road to hell. They should take the word 'Christian' out of that name. It is a mockery to God. It is shocking, appalling to see girls dancing in the Y.W.C.A., kicking their feet up in the air with dresses up to their knees. Mothers, don't send your girls to dance halls or to the Y.W.C.A. if they are going to dance there."²⁵⁰

The failure of the city YWCAs to adequately address the question of mixed recreation was also a reflection of their commitment to the creation of a woman-centered alternative. To resolve the problems of working women, the middle-class women of the YWCA looked for solutions derived from their own experience and based on models with which they were familiar such as women's friendships and kinship networks and the more formalized women's clubs.²⁵¹ Canadian

historians have thoroughly documented the extent to which women reformers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries employed images of maternalism and the home as models for urban women's sociability. As Kathy Peiss has noted in her discussion of the reform of working women's recreation in New York, however, "reformers were even more strongly influenced by another aspect of nineteenth-century women's culture, sisterhood."²⁵² Yet many young working-class women in the early twentieth century, drawn to the new heterosocial urban culture that they perceived as "modern," rejected this call to female solidarity as "old-fashioned." Their response foreshadowed a similar "decline of female intimacy" that was experienced by middle-class women beginning in the 1920s.²⁵³ "Modern" young working women did not necessarily share the opinion of YWCA women and other reformers that many of their problems derived from the fact that they were victimized and exploited by employers and other men. For the middle-class proponents of sisterhood, however, an appropriate response to these problems was, as Peiss suggests, the creation of "places to find womanly support, mutual aid, and practical advice. They believed that working women would respond to the shared experience of gender despite class and ethnic differences."²⁵⁴ Identifying the larger environment with competition, exploitation, and predatory male sexuality and noting the absence of anything that could be identified as female public space, YWCAs and the founders of working women's clubs created what they hoped might become "spaces for working women where ideals of womanhood, purity, domesticity, and sisterhood might flourish in an otherwise harsh and coarse urban environment."²⁵⁵ By providing opportunities for same-sex friendships and the fostering of sisterly bonds in a safe female environment, YWCAs attempted to create a "wholesome" alternative to the vexed problem of commercial recreations.

A Great Democratic Sisterhood

From the turn of the century, Canadian city YWCAs tried to shed their associations with nineteenth century charity and benevolence, and their image as an organization of leisured ladies acting in the interests of working women. In the early twentieth century a new note appeared in YWCA rhetoric emphasizing that the organization was intended for the benefit of all women, not merely those who were the traditional recipients of charity. As the Vancouver YWCA explained in 1918: "It is not a charitable institution, nor is it an association of one group of women working in the interests of another group. Rather, it is a great sisterhood, banded together in the spirit of responsibility, fellowship and service for the benefit of all."²⁵⁶ For the first time, the YWCA began to claim that the "girl of leisure" fell as much under its jurisdiction as the young self-supporting woman, and that within the organizational framework provided by the YWCA, all young women could be brought together in an unprecedented democratic and cooperative relationship.

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."²⁵⁷

By 1920, YWCA women no longer hoped merely to protect and uplift working women but to win them as their allies in the cause of Christian social reform, and viewed their organization, with its objectives that promised to benefit all women directly, as a vehicle for overcoming the hitherto insurmountable barriers of class.

YWCA women were not the only middle-class feminists to embrace the concept of "sisterhood" in the early twentieth century. This term was also used, with comparable

vagueness, by the Women's Trade Union League, founded in 1903.²⁵⁸ Like the YWCA, WTUL women believed that a mutual commitment to "sisterhood" would allow middle- and upper-class women and working women to unite for the achievement of common objectives within the same organization.

They usually used the term to convey the idea that social class was less important than gender for understanding a woman's status. The primary social dichotomy was a sex distinction rooted in differences between women and men, not a distinction between classes. Women, some members [of the WTUL] argued, shared distinct emotional qualities: they were more gentle and moral than men, more sensitive and responsive to human needs. Members also argued that women, regardless of class, could empathize with one another because they belonged to an oppressed social group.²⁵⁹

Despite a similar use of the rhetoric of sisterhood, however, there were significant differences in the ways that WTUL women and YWCA women conceived of this concept and in the objectives that they hoped a united sisterhood could accomplish. The WTUL was much more explicitly committed to addressing the issues of working conditions and organization, to allowing working women to define their own needs, and to creating a truly democratic organizational structure. Nonetheless, as Dye has argued, its members met with only limited success and "discovered that it was considerably easier to make verbal assertions of sisterhood than it was to put the ideal into practice."²⁶⁰ The YWCA's conception of sisterhood was much more limited, revealing a much less developed understanding of the significance of class differences and a weaker grasp of the problems that women faced as workers. Robin Miller Jacoby, significantly, has noted the existence of a certain tension between the WTUL and the YWCA in New York because of the latter's lack of support for women strikers.²⁶¹ The city YWCA, despite its adoption of the rhetoric of sisterhood, was unable to overcome its heritage of maternalism and was more interested in winning working women to the cause of the women's movement and Christian social reform than in converting middle-class women to the cause of women workers.

The principal strategy by which YWCA women hoped to foster sympathetic contacts between women of different classes and to transform their organization into a "democratic sisterhood" united for mutual benefit and for the reform of Canadian cities was the introduction of working women's clubs. The first industrial or working girls' clubs were introduced into the Canadian YWCA following the 1910 Berlin conference of the World's YWCA, where Canadian leaders learned of American and British efforts in this field. Unlike other YWCA programs such as educational classes, residences, and summer camps, the clubs were organized around the premise that the most effective way of "meeting the needs" of working women was to divide them into small groups according to age, occupation, race, nationality, and marital status. Accordingly, YWCAs came to offer clubs for a wide range of groups including school girls, domestic servants, factory workers, British immigrants, girls of leisure and young married women. 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," the clubs were to be organized on a strictly "self-governing" and non-sectarian basis.²⁶² The Montreal YWCA, one of the most active branches in this new field, explained the nature of its club work in 1918:

The Y.W.C.A. in Montreal has over seven hundred girls in clubs, about three hundred and fifty of these being girls under eighteen. These clubs are made up of girls from schools, stores, factories, munition plants, etc., each group is self governing and works out its own programme in co-operation with the club leader. Those things are included which may help towards the all-round development of the individual girl, such as games, outdoor activities and parties, story hours, health and hygiene talks, sewing classes, social service in various forms, Bible study and character building talks. Though these clubs represent many different groups of girls they do not differ in their fundamental need which was recognized by the Master long ago when He said: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."²⁶³

On a much smaller scale in the same year, the Peterborough YWCA reported the organization of two clubs--the Athena Club of business girls which met Tuesday evenings for a club supper and gymnasium work, and the Silver Link Club for workers at

the Auburn Woolen Mills.²⁶⁴ By 1920, Peterborough had hired Jean Thomson to act as Industrial and Club Secretary; she reported a varied program that featured swimming as the main attraction but that also offered talks, Bible Study, gymnasium classes, a basketball league, sewing, cooking and parties. Under her direction a Recreation Committee was formed, composed of representatives from the residence, gym classes, stores and factories, whose purpose was to develop a recreational plan for the young women of the city. Noted Thomson: "The thing that seems to us most encouraging is the fact that we as girls have through our recreation committee especially, worked and played together and so made a step in advance towards the time when all girls will work together for the betterment of other girls and the community."²⁶⁵

The activities of YWCA working women's clubs, despite their designation as self-governing, were closely supervised by the General or Industrial Secretary who had her own ideas about what the clubs were intended to accomplish. As one secretary explained in 1916:

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.²⁶⁶

Methods of organized play were intended to develop in the members such character traits as trust, self-confidence, patience and a sense of fair play, and to inspire the club as a whole to undertake social service projects such as "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 cities."²⁶⁷ Typically, the Winnipeg YWCA reported in 1914: "The 'Be Glad Club' of industrial girls have tried to live up to the

name they chose and to reach out to other girls. At Christmas, baskets of fruit were sent to girls in the hospitals, clothing to two needy families and 50 greeting cards to girls who were spending their first Christmas in Winnipeg."²⁶⁸

Despite the fact that YWCA secretaries themselves warned against playing the part of the "Lady Bountiful," patronizing and condescending attitudes toward working women and their interests occasionally surfaced in discussions of club work.²⁶⁹

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.²⁷⁰

There is little evidence in the records to suggest that any of these YWCA clubs discussed issues directly affecting the members as working women, such as wages, working conditions, or the organization of workers. Mrs. S.R. Russell of Edmonton, outlining "The Aim and Policy of the Y.W.C.A." in 1920, explained that "the 'Y' insists on a square deal and proper business hours from employers to young girls and that the girls in turn render proper service to their employers."²⁷¹ Surviving records suggest, however, that most of the emphasis was placed on changing the behaviour of the employees, a fact that undoubtedly contributed to the willingness of many employers to allow the YWCA access to their premises and their workers. Charlotte Layton, General Secretary of the Peterborough YWCA which was active in a number of local mills and factories in 1920, commented on the need to teach girls to be dependable. "So many girls in all ranks seem to forget that their word should be as good as their bond. They promise to do a thing and then let any little thing interfere. There are very few girls upon whom we can really depend." In her view, YWCA clubs, classes, and parties were

"falling short of their aim if they do not fit those who join in them to be better all-round girls."²⁷² The Vancouver YWCA reported that its new Industrial Department had three hundred young women workers attending weekly club meetings, and that as a "fixed institution" of the organization, "it serves as an avenue for personal development, and also links the girls to constructive social movement. It develops leadership through its self-government; personal efficiency, through education; recreation and social responsibility, through service."²⁷³

During the First World War, a significant innovation introduced into Canadian city YWCAs was the Membership Council, composed of girl representatives from the various clubs and departments in the Association. The Membership Council reflected the beginnings of a marked shift in the attitude of YWCA Boards to the "girl membership," and a recognition that nineteenth-century maternalist attitudes were undemocratic and no longer appropriate for dealing with the "modern girl." The Council was intended, at least in theory, to integrate the clubs more fully into the organization and to bring the perspective of their members to bear on the formation of YWCA policy. By the war years, the distance between YWCA Boards and the membership 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."²⁷⁴ The Vancouver YWCA, inspired by the example of several American branches, was the first Canadian association to establish a Members' Council in 1916. Its stated purpose was to assist the Board of Directors by investigating the girl life of the community, by studying YWCA methods and considering how to make them more effective, and by encouraging a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the entire membership for

the work of the YWCA.²⁷⁵ The decision of many city YWCA Boards to establish Membership 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."²⁷⁶ In 1918, the Board of the Victoria YWCA put before the Business Girls' Club a proposal to form a Members' Council, to find out how the YWCA could meet the needs of the membership, "but chiefly from the view-point of the girl. It was realized that the Association often failed when it was most anxious to help, and it was hoped through the medium of this Council to learn the reason why this was so."²⁷⁷ Despite the recognition of the problem, however, YWCA Boards tended to restrict participation in the Councils to active members, or full members of evangelical churches, "in order that the great underlying purpose of the Association may be conserved and forwarded".²⁷⁸ This move ensured that Board members would hear from that segment of the YWCA's clientele that most identified with the organization's larger objectives, and undoubtedly limited the extent to which Members' Councils helped to implement any real democratic reforms within the YWCA. Their very existence, however, represented an acknowledgment of greatly changed circumstances and the need for adaptation if the YWCA was to survive.

Another YWCA innovation during these two decades was the Girls' Auxiliary, an attempt to recruit and involve "girls of leisure" in the work of the YWCA. Operating on the assumption that working women were incapable of determining their own needs and reluctant to encourage them to organize on their own behalf, city YWCAs attempted to recruit the young women who, they believed, were in a position to assist working women by virtue of their educational and social advantages. Jean Thomson of the Peterborough YWCA explained in 1920: "I feel that I am voicing the opinion of the girls when I say that our clubs are helping us make a bigger contribution to life. There is no

longer any doubt that women are needed in industry and if industrial women are to come into their own they must have the understanding friendship and backing of all women."²⁷⁹ More and more the YWCA attempted to present itself as a meeting place for the young women of all classes to come together to learn from their contact with one another. "The Association ought to be the connecting link between the girl with time and ability, and the girl with long hours and limited opportunities."²⁸⁰ For the first time, the YWCA argued that the "girl of leisure," too, needed its attention.

It is not the working girl who is the object of charity, it is the girl of leisure...[who] needs the Young Women's Christian Association to meet her needs; also a common meeting ground where she may rub up against natures of greater independence than her own; where the women in business may interpret to her the conditions of the industrial and commercial world, where her sympathies may grow broader as she learns to respect intelligence and true worth in women of various environments; that the things all women have in common are many more than the things they have not in common.²⁸¹

As an attempt to create this link between the young women of the community, a number of city YWCAs established Girls' Auxiliaries, in which young "girls of leisure" learned to organize social and recreational activities for young business women, thus gaining first-hand knowledge of the latter's economic problems as well as training in social service methods and principles. The Vancouver YWCA reported in 1911 that its Girls' Auxiliary of about forty members served tea every Wednesday to the club for business girls under sixteen who met after work for a gymnasium class and club meeting. This new departure on the part of the Vancouver branch resulted from a feeling on the part of its Board members "that the experience of older women should be supplemented with the enthusiasm and perhaps the more modern viewpoint of younger women."²⁸² The members of the Auxiliary, it was reported, were "girls of leisure who are not satisfied to drift through life filling their days with fruitless things, and now they are tasting the joy of real achievement."²⁸³ Board members anticipated that all the parties

concerned, including the YWCA, would benefit from this new arrangement: "In the Auxiliary they are receiving a training which is preparing them for the larger work of the Association, and which, we hope, will make them, in due time, valuable members of the Board of Directors."²⁸⁴

While the YWCA's rhetoric increasingly stressed the bringing into mutual contact of young women of all classes, that contact was in no way intended to challenge the reality of the class divisions that determined the different nature of their lives. "What better ideal can be set before young women than that of banding together for mutual benefit, the experiences of one reacting upon those of another, and developing an all-round character which shall promote sympathy and appreciation of one another, and which shall make for true womanliness in whatever sphere of life each may be placed(my emphasis)?"²⁸⁵ The city YWCA's vision of itself as a united democratic sisterhood failed to challenge the reality of significant age and class divisions within the organization. The YWCA's leadership continued to presume that the "woman of leisure," by virtue of her "broader perspective" and "advantages," could best "help" the working woman by acting on her behalf rather than by standing behind her, and that the older woman, embodying the wisdom of age and motherhood, knew best the real needs of youth. In the YWCA's vision of sisterhood, each woman had her "place," as revealed in an illuminating tale, intended to illustrate the association's "ideal of membership," told at the annual meeting of the Victoria YWCA in 1917.

There stood a house by the side of the road and over its doorway were the words: "Life more abundant." Down the road came a girl: she was brisk and well dressed, but in her face were gathering lines of restlessness and discontent. She stopped; she read the words, and pondered; then because she was the kind of girl who found out things for herself, she knocked. The query came from within: "What do you want?" "I want life more abundant." "What can you give for this good gift?" "I cannot give much," she said. "I am earning my own living. I can only give a small amount." While she wondered within herself another girl came along. She had been hurrying

down the road to the factory in the distance. She stopped: she read the words, and knocked. Again the same query and response. "I cannot give much: my hours are long, my wages small, but I want something more in my life." Next a young woman alighted from an auto, and seeing the wondering girls she joined them. She knocked and asked the question, and to the same reply she made her answer: "I can give much money and all the time I have at my disposal." They were joined by a college girl with her books on her arm, and bright face betraying the ambition to do many wonderful things. Next came a girl with a handkerchief on her head. She was wandering along rather sadly looking for familiar objects. She stopped, but could not read the words. An older woman joined the group: she read the words, she knocked, and to her query received the same answer. Then because she had lived longer in the world the solution came to her. "I know, girls. I know how to get 'Life more abundant.' We must all give of our gifts. This capable business girl must teach this less fortunate sister her methods of efficiency. This girl from the factory must lend a hand to this stranger in our midst, and from both of them we must learn habits of thrift and perseverance. You my dear," turning to the college girl, "have had opportunity to drink deep of the world's store of learning. Teach this girl to speak the language of this country, and you" to the girl of leisure "must have stored up much of pleasure which you can impart to others and in planning for and leading them in their pleasure and in doing unto others as we would have them do to us, we partake of the good gift, Life more abundant."²⁸⁶

As this tale reveals, the YWCA's twentieth-century vision of "sisterhood" had a distinctly maternal cast and did not acknowledge the oppressiveness of class distinctions between women nor challenge them in any serious way. Despite a stated belief in women's common interests, and claims that women had much to learn from one another, the YWCA sought to unite women to act on an agenda that had been defined by middle-class women. The commitment to "a great democratic sisterhood" remained, during this period, largely rhetorical.

Buildings

During these two decades the YWCA's expanding mandate and its increased commitment to be all things to all women were reflected in the growing importance of the physical complex that was to facilitate the emergence of this urban sisterhood. YWCA workers placed a great deal of emphasis on the fact that in many communities

their building represented what was in effect the only existing public space expressly reserved for women. On the opening of a new building in Hamilton, "the best of its kind in Canada," it was observed that "the many privileges and advantages offered by its various departments, to women of every class and calling in the city should be eagerly sought after and accepted, and a great and widening influence for noble upliftment and usefulness should go out among the women of the city with the association as its fountain-head."²⁸⁷ In most cities, the YWCA building was the central meeting place of local club women, being the only location to meet the criteria of affordability and respectability. Organizations such as Local Councils of Women, Chapters of the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, and various other women's service, literary and religious organizations frequently made use of the YWCA building; Ottawa reported twenty-three outside organizations in 1920, including the Local Council of Women, National Council of Women, Central W.C.T.U., Y.W.C.T.U., Ottawa Women's Club, Ottawa Graduate Nurses' Society, University Women's Club, and Florence Nightingale Club.²⁸⁸ Rental fees paid by these organizations were an important source of revenue for the YWCA, and many of these groups also expressed their support for the YWCA's work by furnishing its rooms or stocking the shelves of the library or the linen cupboard. In many communities the YWCA functioned as a type of "women's centre," as reported by the Vancouver branch in 1919:

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.²⁸⁹

The Ottawa YWCA claimed that 147,054 girls and women took advantage of its building in some way, in 1920, 1,100 of whom were members.²⁹⁰ Despite these claims, however,

it does not appear that the building served all groups of women equally. There is no evidence to suggest that any organized working women, other than the working women's clubs, used the building. Those working women who came to the YWCA did so individually to attend classes or use the cafeteria. The majority of this group, it appears, were workers in the new white-blouse occupations; there are frequent references to the fact that among the city's population of working women, large numbers of factory workers in particular were unaware of the existence of the YWCA.

The evidence of existing photographs suggests that many of the YWCA buildings constructed at the beginning of the century were impressive and well-furnished structures. Indeed, one secretary warned of the danger of having buildings that were, as in the case of many YMCAs, "too elaborate, more like men's clubs...A building too elegant will drive the girls we want to help away from us instead of attracting them to us. Let us have moderate and modest ideas about what our buildings should be."²⁹¹ Surviving photographs of the buildings were taken for publicity and fundraising purposes, often being sold as postcards, and are unfortunately confined to views of the exterior and the more public parts of the building, such as the dining room, reading room, or reception room.²⁹² They do suggest, however, a concerted attempt to recreate aspects of a more "homey" environment through the use of such "feminine" touches as lace curtains and plants; much emphasis was also placed on the significance of fireplaces. Information about the unphotographed sections of the buildings may be gleaned from the detailed descriptions of the new facility that often appeared in the local newspapers on the occasion of the opening of a new YWCA building or wing. One such description was published in the Hamilton Spectator on the occasion of the opening of a new YWCA building in 1915, "an important event of deep significance in the life of the womanhood of Hamilton." Featured in this building were a marble entrance hall and

staircases, oiled pine floors, a rotunda and reception room with oak walls and oak and leather furnishings, a stage for theatricals, a swimming tank with shower baths, dressing-rooms and three electric hair dryers, domestic science and dressmaking rooms, a gymnasium, a laundry, a reception and reading room for residents, an oak-furnished dining room for three hundred, bedrooms to accommodate over two hundred boarders, a roof garden, house phones on each floor, and for "the last word in bathroom-ology," two bathrooms on each floor containing provision for the use of curling tongs and an automatic electric light to heat an iron.

Each room contains a pretty white iron bed with snowy linen coverings and warm Scottish plaid comforter, a commodious new oak dresser, a small table and chair, and a clothes closet fitted with roller for skirt hangers, and towel bars. A little medicine chest has also been inset in the wall in every bedroom. The bedrooms on the rear of the building are all fitted with fireproof windows and frames. The rooms throughout the building are furnished with cream blinds and fancy lace sash curtains.

The Spectator reporter noted that there were "several features that on first acquaintance would seem to point to unnecessary financial outlay" but concluded that, all things considered, "it behooved the directorate to build not for a day or a few days, but with gifted foresight as to the potentialities of the association."²⁹³

Interestingly, the Hamilton YWCA, on the occasion of the opening of this new building, was forced to defend itself against charges made by lady visitors that its rooms were "altogether too fine and expensively furnished for working girls" and that it was "a much more beautiful and elaborate home than any of the girls living in the institution were accustomed to, or any that they would go to in future years as their own." With reference to the residence, the secretary explained that the rooms were simply furnished and were decorated by the girls themselves. As for the other features, "Surely a constant supply of hot and cold water ought not to be termed an extravagance?" The more lavish features of the building were rather feebly justified

on the grounds 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. Apparently some criticism of the swimming pool as a frivolous extravagance was also voiced by the lady visitors, since the YWCA felt compelled to explain that "the physical and swimming pool equipment which is for the benefit of all girls has been installed solely for the purpose of making girls fit for their daily round of duties whether it be in their own homes or out earning their own living." The General Secretary, obviously having reached the limit of her patience with the visitors, 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." "When I hear a woman condemn anything as being too good for a working girl," she continued, "I always feel inclined to inquire into her antecedents."

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.²⁹⁴

Despite the criticism levelled at the Hamilton building, however, the facilities in most Canadian cities were as a general rule regarded by YWCA workers as inadequate and unsuitable. The annual reports produced during this period are filled with complaints about the premises, and newspaper reports detail the handicaps under which YWCAs frequently had to function. In 1901, the Ottawa branch lamented the shortage of space available to the public department: "There are no class rooms and no gymnasium,

notwithstanding which fact, there were carried on during the fall and winter months, a monthly average of 72 classes in physical, educational and religious work."²⁹⁵ It also responded to the perennial accusation that the YWCA was a "fashionable boarding house" with the comment: "we wish it was, and then perhaps things would be better arranged and we would not have to have the laundry work done in the Kitchen where the meals for forty people are being cooked, and where the patient, long-suffering maids have to take their meals wherever they can get them."²⁹⁶ The Edmonton Board reported in 1917 that the boarding house was constantly having to turn away applicants, an inexcusable state of affairs in a city such as Edmonton. "The girls' club room, the only place they have to hold gatherings of any kind, is, as most of the women's societies who hold meetings there, know, a mere apology for a club room, a boarded-up building, exceedingly cold in winter, without foundation, and depending for heat on a couple of small stoves." Invariably these accounts emphasized the great good that the YWCA was accomplishing under enormous handicaps and speculated that untold benefits would accrue to the community if the organization were properly equipped. "What the girls would accomplish if they had a real club room, if they had a gymnasium, and reading room, a rest room, is hard to foretell!" The typical solution proposed was a straightforward one. The Edmonton Board, having "no intention of resting on its oars" merely because the debt had been cleared, announced its plans to launch a campaign for a new building.²⁹⁷

Financial Campaigns

Fundraising for the building became during these two decades, the principal responsibility of YWCA Boards of Directors as the trend to the construction of specially commissioned and designed buildings, begun in the 1890s, accelerated. The

history of some branches during these years is virtually a record of their struggle to finance and construct their own building. Nor did the achievement of the goal of a new building mean that the work was over. In 1908, less than two years after the Vancouver YWCA opened its new facility, its president told supporters at the annual meeting: "I would like to bring before you all our great need for the extension of our building. For this we shall need from \$15,000 to \$18,000. We require more dormitories, more classrooms and a gymnasium to bring our association up to the standard existing in even less prosperous towns than Vancouver."²⁹⁸ Given the perceived need for extensions, new wings, gymnasias and swimming pools, the process of fundraising and construction during these decades was virtually unending. So great was the scale of construction that nineteenth-century methods of fundraising were no longer adequate. Early branches were financed largely through the efforts of the boards of directors, chosen for their personal prestige and social contacts, who collected subscriptions of small amounts ranging from one dollar to ten dollars. Their duties included the regular canvassing of local businesses, neighbourhoods, and the individual members of congregations of local evangelical churches. This tedious work was carried on quietly, without publicity, and on a year-round basis. It was supplemented by innumerable bazaars, teas, garden parties, lectures, musicals and rummage sales. When all else failed, a member of the board of directors, or her husband, could usually be counted on to rescue the YWCA from financial embarrassment in a temporary crisis. Such methods of fundraising were characteristic of female philanthropy in the nineteenth century and were capable of generating surprisingly large sums of money.²⁹⁹ Yet given the dramatic increases in the value of real property held by Canadian YWCAs in the early twentieth century, these methods no longer sufficed and were replaced by the more modern and "scientific" short-term financial campaign.³⁰⁰

During these transitional decades between the demise of traditional religious philanthropy and the rise of the Community Chest movement, charity remained in private hands but relied increasingly on support from the corporate sector, as the churches lacked the resources to cope with large-scale urban social problems, and municipal authorities were reluctant to undertake direct involvement in welfare and relief work.³⁰¹ New methods of fund-raising were pioneered in these years and the YWCA, drawing heavily on the experience of the YMCA, was one of the first to make use of techniques later adopted by most other voluntary agencies and the Community Chest movement. Outstanding among these new techniques was the short-term financial campaign under the direction of leading businessmen, a method pioneered by the YMCA in 1905.³⁰² Following the successful and much publicized Canadian Patriotic Fund and Victory Loan campaigns during the war, short-term financial campaigns became the accepted means of fund-raising for local charities. The short-term or "whirlwind" financial campaign was a city-wide blitz that relied heavily on the support of the local press and was "characterized by the careful organization of teams of canvassers to collect the money, the selection of prospective contributors, their cultivation by means of carefully planned publicity, their solicitation over a short period of time--usually a week--daily meetings for reports of canvassers, and the use of skilful tactics to keep up the enthusiasm of public and canvassers alike."³⁰³ YWCA financial campaigns with slogans such as "Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow" or "A Building for Her" became the favoured method of augmenting building funds and succeeded with the support of local businessmen, boosters, and the daily press.

The participation of leading businessmen in these campaigns was part of a broader movement to separate philanthropy from religion and to make it more "businesslike," "efficient," and "scientific," that is, to avoid waste and duplication of efforts and to

emphasize measures that would prevent, rather than relieve, pauperism.³⁰⁴ Some of these businessmen were themselves members of Protestant evangelical churches, sharing the YWCA's religious objectives, and acting out of strong convictions of their duty to the community.³⁰⁵ For such men, wealth implied Christian stewardship and an obligation to prove themselves worthy of the privileges they enjoyed. Support for philanthropic endeavours was a way to demonstrate publicly their worthiness. It was also a way to discourage government involvement, and by the 1920s, many businessmen "looked on private philanthropy as an important bulwark of the system of free enterprise for, if charity became the prerogative of the government, it would mean the welfare state or socialism."³⁰⁶ Participation in fund-raising campaigns for local charities gradually became obligatory for the heads of leading firms and was enforced by a variety of pressures exerted by family, friends, business associates and social peers. Such worthy activity could also be highly advantageous, as businessmen learned during these years, because it could facilitate the career of the individual and provide valuable free publicity for the firm. Philanthropic activity provided a means for the upwardly mobile to make valuable business and social contacts and also provided local firms with a chance to evaluate the talents of some of their junior men. As the number of agencies seeking assistance for their particular cause multiplied, businessmen had an interest in becoming involved in philanthropy in order to coordinate it. One of their concerns was to eliminate overlap and duplication of efforts, thereby reducing the demands made upon their own pocketbooks. Philanthropic businessmen encouraged a "scientific" approach to giving that fostered "self-dependence" rather than further "pauperizing" the poor. Unlike the earlier ideology of religious charity, which promised that the giver would be rewarded in the next world, the attitude of the businessman was determined by his expectation of some benefit in the present.

In its attempt to present itself as an enterprise worthy of the support of the philanthropic businessman, the YWCA relied heavily on its "elder brother," the YMCA, for advice that was freely dispensed and invaluable. The YMCA, dominated by prominent business leaders, "enjoyed the not unjustified reputation of having the most effective money-raising organization in many Canadian communities"³⁰⁷ and had a great deal to say to its younger sister on the subject of "scientific philanthropy." E.M. Thomasson, Provincial Secretary of the YMCA for Ontario and Quebec, explained to the readers of The Young Women of Canada in 1909 the difference between "investment" and "indiscriminate charity." Given the large number of requests from the rapidly growing number of philanthropic agencies, Christians had an obligation not to give indiscriminately but to treat every gift as an investment by considering whether the agency was "encouraging poverty" or "fostering independence".

It is safe to say that there are thousands of alms-seekers not only existing on the misguided, sentimental, milk-and-water-charitable inclinations of Christian people, but they are both by example and reproduction rapidly increasing the number. This army of worthless humanity is growing, but why? Because the Christian people have not risen up in the might of their co-operation and demanded that this class of parasites be made to work and support themselves...The sooner this army of parasites is either aroused to an honest endeavor, or eliminated by the "law of the survival of the fittest", the more rapidly will Christ's Kingdom be extended.

The YMCA and YWCA were, in his view, the two organizations leading the "struggle to establish right thinking on this most important subject," offering a "final solution" rather than "temporary relief" by "appealing to the spirit of self-respect and adhering to the principles of supplementing efforts honestly put forth." Their policies recognized 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."³⁰⁸ Another YMCA staff member instructed the YWCA that, like any commercial enterprise, it ought to have a "clearly apprehended and

well defined purpose." Correct business methods, he noted, required a policy that was comprehensive, practicable and progressive, a definite and adequate plan, thorough organization, sufficient staff and budget, and a complete system of record-keeping and accounting. Disapproving of the traditional female approach to fund-raising, he advised that "'rumage[sic] sales,' 'pink teas,' or 'fowl suppers' are not the right way," and that a YWCA ought more appropriately to rely on "membership fees, rentals and contributions from interested persons in response to a direct appeal for liberal support of a worthy organization doing effective work."³⁰⁹ The best way to raise money, in other words, was to ask for it.

One YWCA secretary noted that "soliciting money is not our forte," and was often "the hardest thing to ask women to do," given that they liked to do everything "except raise money."³¹⁰ Undoubtedly for this reason, the more traditional methods of fundraising criticized by the YMCA continued in use, particularly in smaller communities, until well into the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the bulk of YWCA building funds were raised through financial campaigns. A typical YWCA building campaign was launched by the Edmonton branch in May 1920, following years of complaints about insufficient accommodation for travellers and working women and inadequate meeting facilities for local club women.³¹¹ In announcing the impending campaign for \$150,000, the Edmonton Journal proclaimed, "Men Get Real Opportunity to Help the Girls." For the benefit of prospective financial supporters, an architect's drawing of the "Proposed Edmonton Gift to Y.W.C.A." accompanied a glowing description of the planned new facility.

For all its imposing outside appearance the inside is a marvel of sheer comfort and hominess which will appeal to every living woman. There are for instance: 192 single bedrooms in the building, and the girl spending her days in the turmoil of business life will find a haven of rest there in the evening. There will be one place in the world which she can call her own,

and whose door she can close on a troublesome world. Each floor has two bath-toilet rooms. An infirmary is provided for the sick with special arrangement to simplify their care. The dining room seats one hundred persons without crowding, is well lighted and well ventilated. A spacious lobby with fireplace, a library, reading room, sitting rooms and an assembly room, provide for the social life. Class and recreation rooms, gymnasium and swimming pool will serve the recreational needs of the girls, and large wide verandahs will be a boon on summer evenings.³¹²

For good measure, several photographs of Edmonton's decrepit facilities, which included a converted barn, were contrasted with the fine new building of the Calgary YWCA. The Journal featured articles on the inadequate housing of working women and the work of the YWCA staff, as well as detailed coverage of the daily progress of the campaign.

The Edmonton campaign was launched with a major public rally featuring "'real' speaking" by James Ramsay, M.L.A., Mrs. Nellie McClung, Mrs. Emily Murphy, and Hon. George P. Smith on the value of young women to the community and on the dangers that beset them in Edmonton. On Mother's Day, seven Methodist, six Presbyterian, and three Baptist churches agreed to have special sermons preached on women's work and to allow representatives from the YWCA to address the congregations.³¹³ Under the direction of campaign manager Will J. Green, General Secretary of the Edmonton YMCA, the city was divided into forty districts to be covered by teams of male and female canvassers, the latter responsible for the residential areas, the former for the business district. Seventy of Edmonton's most prominent citizens--team captains, members of the campaign committee and the YWCA board--posed for a Journal photographer following an organizational luncheon. The illustrious gathering included some of Edmonton's most active clubwomen and female reformers, and wives of the city's leading professionals, businessmen and politicians. The male campaign workers included several mayors of Edmonton, a former premier of Alberta, a former Lieutenant Governor, the city health officer, the director of the YMCA, members of the Rotary

Club, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade and school board, a bank manager, a president of a grain company, and businessmen who were prominent in real estate and wholesale or retail trade.³¹⁴ The highlight of the first day of canvassing was a flight in an airplane by Mrs. G.H.V. Bulyea, President of the YWCA and wife of the former Lieutenant Governor, who dropped twelve free memberships over the city. Several benefits were also held. The Rotarians and Kiwanians challenged the advertising section of the Board of Trade to a baseball game whose proceeds were donated to the YWCA fund, and the Hudson's Bay Company staged five performances of its historical pageant, "The Romance of the Hudson's Bay Co. From 1670 to 1920," featuring "full-blooded treaty Indians." As a result of this campaign, Edmonton's "Building for Her" was opened in 1922.³¹⁵

The backing of the local press was obviously crucial to the success of YWCA building campaigns, and it was generally forthcoming. YWCA annual meetings, conferences, entertainments, and public meetings featuring out-of-town speakers were regularly covered in the press, sometimes with copy supplied by the YWCA itself. During building campaigns, in particular, extensive coverage of the organization, its history and its work supplemented accounts of the dangers that life in the city posed for women. Editorials with titles such as "The Y.W.C.A. Enterprise," "The Claims of the Y.W.C.A.," and "A Worthy Appeal" were a regular feature of campaign coverage.³¹⁶ The increasingly supportive stance of the daily press during these decades marked a significant shift from the nineteenth century when the YWCA was frequently criticized or ignored altogether. The change in attitude was perhaps best illustrated by the Hamilton Spectator. In a small 1889 item headed "Chippie Chasers Beware," the Spectator warned the (male) citizens of Hamilton that one hundred ladies interested in organizing "a sort of feminine Y.M.C.A." had recently met at the YMCA building to sing

"Rescue the Perishing" and to "take into consideration what action can be taken to counteract the alarming prevalence of immorality among young girls in the city as the result of the flourishing dance halls, etc."³¹⁷ In 1918, however, the Spectator's editorial "Help the Y.W.C.A.," advising support for a \$40,000 debt-clearing campaign, sympathetically explained the problem of the "friendless girl in the big cities" who needed "an adequate substitute for home."

The salaries they ordinarily receive are not large, and the problem is how successfully to meet their necessities without incurring financial shipwreck. Without benevolent organization and public support it could not be done, and that is why the Y.W.C.A., which undertakes this very work, has so just and strong a claim upon everyone who is not indifferent to the physical and moral well-being of Canadian womanhood.

The YWCA, it concluded, was a "noble cause" that was "of direct benefit to the welfare of our own city and citizens."³¹⁸

The considerable newspaper coverage that YWCA fundraising campaigns generated in the early decades of this century constitutes, for the most part, the only remaining direct evidence of campaign activities. Analysis of this coverage reveals that YWCAs, with the aid of the YMCA and a select group of supportive businessmen, developed a strategy to "sell" their objectives to the business community. Certain aspects of the YWCA's work, those that were consistent with its presentation as a "community service," were emphasized at the expense of others, notably its commitments to the equal moral standard, to overcoming class barriers between women, and to forging an alliance of women dedicated to Christian social reform. Campaigners presented the YWCA's mandate as the provision of practical assistance and services to all young women, and the upholding of a model of "true Christian womanhood" that promised to benefit the entire community by training a new generation of good mothers, workers, and citizens. Addressing the businessman's distrust of religious charities, the

campaign coverage stressed that YWCA practices conformed to the standards of sound business management, and indeed, that the YWCA was not a religious charity at all. YWCA campaigns responded to the prejudice of many businessmen against funding any sort of program or service for women, pointing out that not only could an enterprise such as the YWCA be managed successfully by women, but that it was to the advantage of businessmen to support it. These and other themes were common to campaigns waged across the country for the construction, expansion or extension of YWCA facilities.

One of the first tasks of YWCA campaign workers was to deal with the businessman's ignorance of the YWCA and skepticism about its purpose. Many who were unfamiliar with the YWCA regarded it as simply another obscure and transient local charity, no more worthy of their support than the ladies' aid society of a local church. YWCAs were urged to combat this misapprehension that their organization was a "local equipment only."

In this age of wide publicity and scientific advertising, it has become a problem for the local Association...to place before the businessmen of a community a large enough conception of the Young Women's Christian Association as a movement. Busy businessmen will give attention to large things that appeal to them, based on a conception of a national or international programme, and will give but superficial attention to an organization that presents a purely local appeal. We must advertise the Association as such.³¹⁹

To assist in this objective, one of the Dominion Council's staff of national organizing secretaries was often sent to help a local branch undertaking a major financial campaign. Her task was not only to assist with the work of campaign organization but also to present the YWCA in a series of addresses at public meetings as having a long history and as forming part of a national and international movement of women. The implication was that no progressive community would want its young women to be left out of such a movement.

YWCA campaign workers stressed that their organization represented the best in modern scientific philanthropy, having a specific mandate and field of expertise, encouraging respectable young women to become and remain self-supporting, rather than a drain on the community, and promising to elevate the religious and moral standards of the entire city. To those who did not believe in supporting charities, it was carefully explained that the organization and those who used it paid their own way.

We would like to take this opportunity of correcting the impression some people have that the Y.W.C.A. is a charitable organization. It is true the Association does a great deal of charitable work, but it is able to do this largely through the unity of its members. The revenue for the general work of the Association is derived from membership, class and gymnasium fees, and from returns from the dining room and boarding home. All charges are within the reach of self-supporting girls, who are thus enabled through co-operation, to secure advantages and privileges which no one of them alone would be able to afford. For the extension of the activities of the Association and for carrying on the work of the Employment, Immigration and Travellers' Aid Departments (which bring practically no revenue) we depend on grants from the Provincial Government and the City Council, supplemented by public subscriptions.³²⁰

At the same time, however, the campaign literature also claimed that the YWCA would never turn away a young woman who was destitute and genuinely in need of protection. The net effect of the YWCA's programs, it was said, was to encourage "self-dependence" on the part of working women, and not to "pauperize" or encourage dependence on the public purse. Campaign workers stressed that the YWCA sought help with capital expenditures, not operating costs. "The money is not wanted as a stop-gap. It is not asked with the idea of doing the same thing over again next year and the next....As a business concern it is conducted on business principles and it pays."³²¹ Campaign literature addressed itself directly to the businessman's obsession with the state of the YWCA's finances by publishing statistics on the value of the property, the amount owing on the mortgage, sources of income, outstanding debts and similar details. Businessmen were advised not to assume, despite the fact

that the YWCA was managed and operated by women, that its financial appeals were in any way the result of inefficiency or bad business practices. Supporters, in fact, frequently expressed their amazement at the administrative competence of the YWCA ladies. The YWCA, the campaign literature reiterated, was "a good business proposition."

Recurring in every speech and every advertisement during a YWCA campaign was the theme of the vital role that women played in determining the moral standards of the community. Young working women required protection and deserved assistance above all because they were future wives and mothers. In YWCA campaigns, businessmen were encouraged to think of their contributions to women's protection as an investment in the future of the community. "Can there be any better investment of money than that which will provide the best conditions for the upbuilding of true Christian womanhood?"³²² Rev. Murdoch McKinnon of Knox Church, Regina, gave the most eloquent expression to this argument in a sermon supporting the local YWCA building campaign in 1911. "Money invested in a Christian institution making for health, comfort and development of our young women and for the welfare of future homes will give better and more lasting dividends than the best turn over that real estate can effect."³²³ To encourage the businessman to contribute his dollars to the YWCA, campaign supporters also stressed that young working women were playing an increasingly productive role in the economy. Typically, a Winnipeg columnist observed in 1920, "More and more women workers are coming to the city--all to meet the need of industrial and business expansion. To a very considerable extent the immediate prosperity of the city depends upon these women."³²⁴ The Moncton Daily Times called young women "a big economic factor" who required, to assist them in shouldering their responsibility for "developing the nation's resources":

Right living conditions
Good food
Knowledge and training in the laws of health
Real recreation
Friends
Training in citizenship
International relationships
Leadership
Co-operation.³²⁵

Campaigners stressed the ways in which membership in the YWCA's working women's clubs could foster diligence, honesty, punctuality, and other virtues that all businessmen valued in their employees, and urged employers to support the YWCA's welfare work, given that it was "far too well established to need argument that welfare work among employees pays their firms in actual dollars."³²⁶

Despite their best efforts to educate Canadian communities as to the value of their young womanhood, YWCAs frequently lamented the fact that although their work was similar to that undertaken by the YMCA for young men, "the interest displayed in many Canadian cities is not the same in connection with these organizations."³²⁷ In many cities during this period YWCAs were forced to rely on the generosity of the local YMCA for the use of its gym and pool, as the men's organization was invariably better equipped. YWCA secretaries sometimes exhibited a certain jealousy of the lavish facilities available to the men's organization, although this was generally expressed rather obliquely in discussions of their hopes for the YWCA. In 1907, the Ottawa General Secretary congratulated the local YMCA on its "splendid success" but pointedly expressed her conviction that "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."³²⁸ With respect to their relationship to the YMCA, YWCAs were in an awkward position since they depended so heavily on the men's goodwill both for use

of the facilities and for support during fundraising campaigns. Thus they were reluctant to attack the men's organization outright or to risk alienating public support with accusations of unfairness to young women. Mrs. G.V.H. Bulyea, wife of Alberta's Lieutenant Governor and honorary president of the Edmonton YWCA, addressed this subject with some delicacy on opening the new building in that city.

Men and women everywhere are glad to aid an association which helps to build up to Christian manhood sons and brothers and prospective husbands, knowing that in a few years these will take their places as the heads of homes and the rulers of the land; and the better the man, the better the type of manhood, the better will be the moral and social atmosphere...There does not seem to be the same enthusiasm abroad over our work, and I have wondered if it is because we, though supposedly the weaker part of humanity, are after all paradoxically considered so good and strong and self-reliant that we do not need the protective influences of a bright cosy home such as this, or that we do not need aids for the development of the physical life, and the moral and mental sides of our character. Or is [it] that our work is not understood.³²⁹

Not infrequently, the YWCA found it prudent to link its work publicly with that of the YMCA and with the moral standards of young men, particularly in appeals for support for its efforts in the field of recreation. In proposing to establish a recreation centre for young people "to have a good time under the right supervision and...all sorts of clean, healthy sport," the YWCA enquired of the citizens of Winnipeg: "Do you want to compete with old General Temptation and 'fall in' with General Cheerfulness and rout the army of Permanent Grouch, Loneliness, Calloused Hearts and Thoughtlessness?" If so, the rejoinder came, "remember in helping the girl we help the boy, for you cannot have bad girls and good boys--nor bad boys and good girls--and so in giving to this cause you help both."³³⁰

The columnist responsible for "Over the Teacups," a women's column that appeared regularly in a Winnipeg newspaper during the First World War, did not feel herself constrained by the same considerations as the YWCA and spoke a good deal more

forthrightly about what she perceived to be the injustice of the existing situation. In advocating public support for the YWCA's annual \$5,000 financial campaign, she was no doubt giving voice to views that many YWCA women held privately but were reluctant to express so directly.

I sometimes think the women's institution suffers from over modesty. They might take a leaf from the association across the way where life just seems to be one campaign after another. Frankly I never have been able to see why the young men had to have ten times as much as the young women to start out with, and ten times as much ever since to keep them going...The men as a usual thing get one-third to one-half again as much pay as the young women, therefore the men's institution should not have to the same extent the problem to face of having to deliberately cut rates to make possible the caring for some girls whose salaries do not permit of anything but a minimum board bill. All along the line the Y.W. has to meet this sort of thing...If the principle of equal pay for equal work prevailed I would not advance this argument for a moment...People only have so much to give, and with the Y.M.C.A. forever asking, it means that some other institution must be slighted, and just naturally being alike in name and identical in purpose, the Y.W. comes in first for the slighting...I know something of the splendid management of the Y.W.C.A. of this city and take off my hat mentally to every woman on the board and to each and all of the secretaries. It is not fair that they should always be called upon to scrimp and save and break their hearts over neglected work which they have not the funds to prosecute.³³¹

The problem of differential funding and public support was aggravated during the war years when the Canadian public became obsessed with the welfare of "our boys." The Ottawa YWCA observed in 1917: "As our noble, valiant boys overseas are first and foremost with every one, both in thought and action, and with patriotic effort everywhere it is not to be wondered at, if we feared the work of the Young Women's Christian Association, being local work, might lapse into insignificance."³³² The citizens of Hamilton were asked to consider the needs of "the girl he left behind him" who was working hard and making many sacrifices in hospitals, Red Cross societies, offices, factories, and stores. "She is independent and she is proud, but heaven only knows how badly in need of help she often is and what a Vimy ridge she has to struggle

through alone."³³³ The rate of construction of buildings and additions slowed drastically during the war and the temporary reduction in the number of immigrants from overseas to some extent eased the pressure on YWCA residences. Most branches had to content themselves with attempting to maintain existing programs "for the duration." They expected, however, that the Canadian public would make amends for the neglect suffered during the war years. "The business girls who are doing their bit in offices, stores, factories, have hitherto been unconsidered in the general scheme of things. They made little fuss about it during the long war years, but were willing to sacrifice that they might be able to give as the need arose. They asked nothing for themselves. But now their turn has come..."³³⁴

Embedded in every YWCA financial campaign was a direct appeal to male chivalry which both acknowledged that the women's activities were dependent on male good will and financial support and attempted to relate the work of the organization to male interests and concerns. In Moncton in 1920 a meeting held at the City Hall to discuss the establishment of a YWCA, attended by 600 people including 400 young women, drew attention to the fact that the city had "no cheap boarding house for young girls; no self-served cafeteria; no swimming pool; no public rest and reception room; no gymnasium."³³⁵ An ad in the Daily Times pointedly enquired: "Suppose you were a girl and worked all day, Mr. Man, would you like only to have a bedroom to live in, and that to cost so much you couldn't buy good food? Will you help the girl who is starting out and give towards a Young Women's Christian Association for Moncton, Mr. Man?"³³⁶ When the Hamilton Board was forced to give notice to ten residents who had been in the city for longer than two years to make way for newer girls, it was reported in the press that this had resulted in much "shedding of tears" and pleas that homes with private families or respectable boarding houses were all given over to young men. The

Hamilton YWCA sent out a request for one hundred "Andrew Carnegies" to step forward with \$1,000 each for a new building.³³⁷ The Edmonton YWCA, noting in 1921 that it had "very little to offer the wage-earning girl who is able and willing to pay for such privileges as the Y.M.C.A. gives to the young men," stated its "faith in the men of Edmonton that they will make it possible by their financial support to give the girls as fair a chance as they have given the boys."³³⁸ Campaign ads also encouraged the businessman to reflect upon the fact that the woman safeguarded by the YWCA could be someone dear to him personally. "Every man who has made good...owes it to his mother, wife or sister, and it is his duty to guard the womanhood of the nation..."³³⁹

Perhaps most successfully, YWCA campaign workers directed an appeal to local boosters who were advised to consider what would happen to their reputations and to the reputation of their community should they fail to support the YWCA. As Mr. R.M. Dennistoun, a member of the Peterborough YWCA's male Advisory Board, explained at the ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone for the new building in 1904: "...as the aims of the individual are shown by his deeds of self-sacrifice for those about him, so the community manifests in great measure the loftiness of the purpose on behalf of its constituents, its zeal for the welfare of humanity, its acquaintance with progress by the erection of buildings, dedicated to high purposes."³⁴⁰ Similarly, it was noted in the "Building and Real Estate News" of the Manitoba Free Press in 1908 that the growth of charitable institutions such as the YWCA indicated the prosperity of a city: "...the financial standing of the city is in a healthy state when busy men can devote a great deal of time, in addition to much money, to matters entirely beyond the realm of business activity."³⁴¹ Sensible businessmen, it was implied in YWCA financial campaigns, would surely not wish their community to be embarrassed by its lack of a splendid facility for its young women. "No association in western Canada offers as

poor accommodation to the business girls and the women travelling as our Edmonton association."³⁴² "Winnipeg will not justify its claim to be a city of large and liberal outlook unless it measures up to the demands of the ladies."³⁴³

YWCA campaigners argued that no city that wished to be regarded as an enlightened and progressive community could afford to be without a modern fully equipped YWCA building that would be "a credit and an adornment to the town."³⁴⁴ An Edmonton columnist observed astutely about the proposed "Building for Her": "The board of trade will probably have it depicted in its 'Boost Edmonton' literature, and it will be a noble addition to the lists of sights we have already compiled--the government buildings, the university, the Macdonald hotel, office buildings, schools, churches, memorial hall, and packing plant."³⁴⁵ The laying of the cornerstone or the official opening of a new YWCA building became a major public event, given full coverage by the press and honoured by the presence of prominent business leaders, municipal and provincial politicians and visiting dignitaries.³⁴⁶ All agreed with the sentiments of Hon. J.R. Stratton, who, on opening the new Peterborough YWCA in 1905, observed typically: "It should be a matter of great pride to our citizens to have in their midst such an Association and such a building...We all...desire Peterborough to take its place in future amongst the best cities in the Dominion, and the Y.W.C.A. building [will] remain as a monument to its enterprise and progressiveness."³⁴⁷ Alan Artibise has argued that an important component of the booster ethos during these decades was a myth of a shared sense of community that promoted "the notion that all classes and groups could be united on the basis of faith in the city, belief in its destiny, and commitment to its growth."³⁴⁸ The YWCA and its supporters appealed to this myth by claiming that their building heralded a new phase in the development of the urban community, indicating its prosperity, growing maturity and increased consciousness of its responsibility to all its citizens.

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The example of the city YWCA in early-twentieth-century Canadian cities illustrates some of the ways that women's organizations played a significant role in the movement for urban reform during those decades, and that female urban reformers had a distinct agenda for reform that reflected their experiences and concerns as women. Understanding women reformers in this way helps to explain some aspects of the larger Progressive movement that have been identified as contradictory. White slavery, for example, was only one of a number of issues that were identified and attacked by loosely-formed coalitions consisting of the churches, business interests, women's organizations, and other reform agencies. That existing explanations of the white slave hysteria in Canada do not adequately account for the prominent involvement of the YWCA nor accurately reflect its perception of the problem suggests that more complex and multi-dimensional explanations of such phenomena must be sought by historians. Most emphatically, it may not be assumed that women reformers necessarily shared the agenda of men of the same class, defining and perceiving problems in the identical fashion, simply because they cooperated on some of the same issues. YWCA women, who cooperated closely with the YMCA, business leaders, and local politicians, shared a commitment to urban reform but had their own understanding of what urban reform was supposed to accomplish. From their perspective, it was not limited to establishing "good government" and the "city beautiful," but was intended to change the urban environment and behaviour of its residents in ways that would benefit women, and to challenge those of its aspects that they perceived to be detrimental to the interests of women.

The YWCA's agenda for the reform of early-twentieth-century Canadian cities contained a critique of the urban environment as a reflection of male, rather than female, culture and values. YWCA women recognized, as have contemporary feminist urban historians, geographers, and sociologists, that public space was not neutral space, but was defined by men as male territory within which single women were legitimate targets for harassment. Their demand for the creation of a female-controlled public space within the city was rooted in their conviction that the urban environment was inhospitable to and often dangerous for women. It also constituted a challenge to the practice, common to all Canadian cities of the period, of valuing the welfare of the young men of the community much more highly than that of the young women with the result that limited, if any, public funds were being spent for the benefit of the latter. The involvement of the YWCA in the campaigns against prostitution and white slavery, as well as its attacks on the new commercial recreations, mounted, if in a limited and oblique way, a challenge to the double standard of sexual morality. As evangelicals, YWCA women could not countenance what today might be called the right to free sexual expression for either women or men, but within the limits of that evangelical framework, they identified and criticized the existence of male sexual privilege. They were among the first to develop and articulate insights that are now being explored by feminist scholars and activists, namely that women's relationship to the urban environment differs from that of men, and that that environment has been, and continues to be, created without taking women's presence and women's needs into account.

The Canadian city YWCA was one of the few organizations of urban women that included in its agenda the bringing together of all the women of the community within an institution of their own creation. It thus provides historians with not only a model

of an early-twentieth-century female institution but also an opportunity to understand how one group of women envisioned a female public space, an unprecedented phenomenon in the Canadian city, and how they conceived of relationships between women in this distinctly female context. The YWCA building, the first public building in most Canadian communities to be designed according to criteria established by women, adopted exterior architectural features and the imposing style of public buildings such as the library and YMCA. Within, however, its "homey" atmosphere represented an attempt by YWCA women to incorporate familiar elements of the domestic environment into this new public space, reflecting their evangelical belief in the capacity of the values of home and family to redeem the larger urban environment. Within their institution, and particularly in the boarding house, YWCA women, adopting their clientele of working women as their "daughters," attempted to create a "family" of women linked in a relationship modelled on the mother-daughter bond. This model proved problematic as modern young twentieth-century women demonstrated their increasing unwillingness to play the role of daughter and embraced the values of the emerging heterosocial urban culture. The evolution of the city YWCA during this period illustrates the way that one women's organization tried to weather the transition to the twentieth century by drawing on nineteenth-century middle-class models of female networks to create a new type of public institution that they believed could meet the needs of all women and function as a "great democratic sisterhood." The limitations of this vision as it was actually put into practice suggest that without being informed by a genuine understanding of women's different experience of class and the oppressiveness of class divisions, the concept of "sisterhood," rooted as it was in the experience of middle-class women, did not form an adequate basis for addressing the problems of working women.

What a study of the early-twentieth-century Canadian city YWCA clearly reveals is that historians cannot arrive at an adequate understanding of female reformers and their organizations by taking publicly articulated statements of their objectives at face value. Much more attention must be paid to the context in which arguments and objectives were formulated, and more sensitivity must be demonstrated to the very real constraints by which women were governed. What might be described as "the dancing dilemma" provides an excellent illustration of the way that the YWCA was frequently torn not only by conflict and dissension within its own ranks but also by its simultaneous need to satisfy the demands of its clientele of young women, maintain the support of even the most conservative local evangelical churches, provide what conformed to the standard of a "community service" to those who did not share its evangelical convictions, and conduct its operations on a businesslike basis. The case of the YWCA also demonstrates that in order to fully understand female urban reformers more attention must be paid to the nature of their relationship with male reformers. The YWCA developed a potentially radical critique of the urban environment that was subverted by its need to appease and placate its male supporters. An undercurrent of resentment of public discrimination against young women in the matter of funding and jealousy of the YMCA permeates YWCA records, but fear of alienating the male support upon which they depended prompted YWCA women to bury their resentment beneath appeals to male chivalry and profuse expressions of gratitude for male generosity. The public presentation of the YWCA's objectives was very much affected by its dependence upon male financial support with the result that, particularly during financial campaigns, its critique of the urban environment and commitment to uniting women in a sisterhood dedicated to the reform of that environment was muted and frequently absent altogether as the concerns of businessmen and politicians were addressed. Although it represented an attempt to bring the female values of the private sphere to

bear on the public sphere, the YWCA was pushed by its need to attain legitimacy in male eyes to adopt the values of the business community, as evidenced in its ever increasing preoccupation with efficiency and profitability, fundraising, administration, and public relations. There is a significant irony in the fact that the YWCA's vision of a great democratic sisterhood of urban women united in their own female public space depended so heavily on male support. The example of the city YWCA confirms the limitations of "female institution building" as a strategy for reforming the urban environment and the futility of attempts to create an alternative female public sphere in a context where women lacked any genuine access to political power and economic resources.

NOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. Hamilton Public Library, Special Collections [Hereafter HPL], Times Scrapbooks—YWCA, "Y.W.C.A. Work," 23 January 1914.
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3. Marlene Stein Wortman, "Domesticating the Nineteenth-Century American City," Prospects 3 (1977), p. 532.
4. See Gerda R. Wekerle, "Women in the Urban Environment," and Dolores Hayden, "What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work," both in Catharine R. Stimpson, ed., Women and the American City (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
5. Wortman, "Domesticating the Nineteenth-Century American City," p. 563.
6. Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). For a similar perspective, see Terry Crowley, "Madonnas Before Magdalenes: Adelaide Hoodless and the Making of the Canadian Gibson Girl," Canadian Historical Review 67(4) 1986, pp. 520-547.
7. Ernest Forbes, "The Ideas of Carol Bacchi and the Suffragists of Halifax: A Review Essay on Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918," Atlantis 10(2) Spring 1985, pp. 119-126. See also Diana Pedersen, "'Building Today for the Womanhood of Tomorrow': Businessmen, Boosters, and the YWCA, 1890-1930," Urban History Review 15(3) 1987, pp. 225-242, in which I have put forward some of the ideas developed in this chapter.
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9. National Archives of Canada, MG 28 I 198, YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1910, p. 169.
10. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1901-02, p. 17.
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13. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbooks 1912-1916, Clipping, The Globe, "The Work of the Y.W.C.A.," 7 August 1915.
14. Edmonton Journal, "'Building for Her' Drive Started at Mass Meeting; Work Begins in Earnest," 11 May 1920, p. 11.
15. Ibid.
16. Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 B37, Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 2, Board of Directors Minutes, 4 January 1904.
17. Hamilton YWCA Records, Clippings, "The Young Women's Christian Association," A.C. Macdonald, 1902.
18. University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections, Vancouver YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1909, p. 16.
19. Hamilton YWCA Records, Clippings, "The Young Women's Christian Association," A.C. Macdonald, 1902.
20. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Dominion Tie, June 1902, p. 41.
21. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, April 1914, p. 118.
22. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1916-17, p. 43.
23. Victoria, Daily Colonist, "Victoria Y.W.C.A. Plans and Does Much Work," 3 June 1917, p. 24.
24. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 290.
25. Vancouver YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1912, p. 15.
26. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, 8 April 1920, p. 11.
27. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, November 1915, p. 171.
28. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1902-03, p. 23.
29. Winnipeg, Manitoba Free Press, "Proposed Home for the Young Women of Winnipeg," 9 May 1908, p. 19.
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31. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, May 1918, p. 90. On the popularity of Theosophy in this period, see Michele Lacombe, "Theosophy and the Canadian Idealist Tradition: A Preliminary Exploration," Journal of Canadian Studies 17(2) 1982, pp. 100-118.

32. Hamilton YWCA Records, Clippings, "Ban Placed on Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.," 16 November 1906.
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34. Berlin/Kitchener YWCA, Minute Book, 2 May 1916; Montreal YWCA Records, v. 7, Board of Directors Minutes, 27 May 1920.
35. HPL, Herald Scrapbooks--YWCA, "Work of Y.W.C.A. For Past Year Was Reviewed," 21 May 1919; Toronto, The Globe, "To Train Colored Girls in Domestic Science," 23 May 1914, p. 8.
36. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1900-01.
37. Ibid., 1920-21.
38. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, February 1910, pp. 190-91; May 1910, pp. 233-35; September 1913, pp. 123-25; January 1914, pp. 34-43; January 1914, pp. 56-58.
39. Ibid., January 1910, p. 169.
40. Vancouver YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1913, p. 19.
41. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1910, p. 172.
42. HPL, Spectator Scrapbooks--YWCA, "Resignation of Miss Mackenzie Much Regretted," 27 March 1920. See also HPL, Herald Scrapbooks--YWCA, "Y.W.C.A. is to Lose a Valued Worker," 24 March 1920.
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49. Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 13, Clippings 1918, Manitoba Free Press, "Good Attendance Y.W.C.A. Annual," 6 February 1918; Board of Directors Minutes, 11 December 1918.

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51. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, November 1915, p. 177.
52. HPL, Times Scrapbooks--YWCA, "Y.W.C.A. Building Officially Opened," 13 April 1910.
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54. James Struthers, "'Lord Give Us Men': Women and Social Work in English Canada, 1918 to 1953," Historical Papers 1983, pp. 96-112.
55. For examples of descriptions of the YWCA secretaryship written in the form of vocational guidance for adolescent girls, see Edmonton Journal, 29 May 1920, Supplement, p. 7, "What Shall I Be? Answered for Girls: The Y.W.C.A. Worker," Caroline Weirich; and Ellen M. Knox, The Girl of the New Day (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1919), pp. 127-139.
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66. Edmonton Journal, "Edmonton Young Women's Christian Association," 13 January 1910, p. 4.
67. HPL, Times Scrapbooks--YWCA, "The Y.W.C.A. Denies Story of Charging Exorbitant Board to Inmates," 18 November 1911.

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79. HPL, Spectator Scrapbooks--YWCA, "Serious Problem Faces Local Y.W.C.A. Officials; Task of Securing Suitable Lodgings for Girls a Difficult One," 22 November 1919.
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81. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, June 1919, p. 112.
82. HPL, Times Scrapbooks--YWCA, "For the Girls," 1 March 1913.
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302. Murray G. Ross, The Y.M.C.A. in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), pp. 307-09.
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305. A revealing portrait of one such Canadian businessman in Michael Bliss, A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart., 1858-1939 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978). Flavelle contributed to YWCA financial campaigns, and his wife, Clara, served on the Dominion Council of YWCAs during the First World War.

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308. YWCA of Canada, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, April 1909, "Investment vs. Indiscriminate Charity," E.M. Thomasson, p. 59-60.

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311. Details of this campaign appeared in the Edmonton Journal, 24 April - 7 June 1920.

312. Edmonton Journal, "New Y.W.C.A. Building to Be Credit to Edmonton and Province of Alberta," 5 May 1920, p. 6.

313. Edmonton Journal, "Y.W.C.A. Sunday in Edmonton Churches," 8 May 1920, p. 9.

314. I am very grateful to Rebecca Coulter for generously undertaking to identify for me the principal participants in the Edmonton campaign.

315. Edmonton Journal, 24 October 1921, pp. 12, 16; 1 April 1922, p. 7.

316. Regina, The Leader, 14 March 1911, p. 4; Hamilton Times, 29 November 1913; Winnipeg Evening Tribune, 5 April 1920, p. 4; Winnipeg, Manitoba Free Press, 13 April 1920, p. 15. I found only one editorial that did not support funding the YWCA. The Saskatoon Daily Phoenix advised the city council not to approve a proposed \$5,000 grant to the YWCA on the grounds that the council had refused to support the Roman Catholic Grey Nuns hospital. The grant passed "without any opposition and not much discussion." 22 May 1911, p. 4; 23 May 1911, p. 5.

317. 18 March 1889, p. 4; 26 March 1889, p. 4.

318. Hamilton Spectator, 24 September 1918, p. 6.

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CHAPTER 5

A NATIONAL VISION FOR THE YWCA: THE DOMINION COUNCIL, 1900-1920

As described in Chapter Two, a national YWCA was founded because of a growing conviction held by certain of the locals that the Canadian YWCAs needed a central coordinating body firmly committed to the foundation of evangelical Protestantism. The task of mobilizing women in the struggle to create a new Canada in the image of Christ's teachings required, they believed, national direction by a Canadian rather than an American body. Given that the YWCA was rapidly organizing on the international level, it was also believed to be fitting that Canadian YWCAs should have representation through their own national body. Thus it came about that the inaugural meeting of the new Canadian YWCA was held in 1893, and by 1896 Canada had been accepted into affiliation with the new World's YWCA. By the end of the nineteenth century, the fledgling national executive had succeeded in organizing several conventions that brought together delegates from the city and student locals and exposed them to speakers of national and international calibre. Still, it cannot be said that the YWCA actually functioned as a national movement at the turn of the century. There existed no coordinated national policy on any major issue, nor even a coherent vision of what such a policy might be, and in any case no trained salaried national staff to carry it out. This situation changed radically over the next twenty years. Under the direction of the Dominion Council and its large staff of secretaries the YWCA achieved greater public prominence than ever before, came close to achieving its objective of recognition as the organization principally responsible for the welfare of young Canadian women, and formulated a national vision for post-war Canada.

As the city YWCAs struggled to deal with the problem of the girl in the city, expand their facilities and programs, and juggle the conflicting requirements of clientele and financial supporters, the Dominion Council sought to weld these disparate units into a cohesive national movement. Particularly in the second decade of the twentieth century, the national body frequently articulated the view that the preoccupation of the locals with building, fundraising, and administration was leading to a neglect of the "religious dimension" of the work. To the Dominion Council fell the task of ensuring that the YWCA's fundamental religious purpose was not lost in the effort to establish the organization's legitimacy as a "community service," and that the locals never lost sight of the religious ties that bound them together nor of their self-defined role as "handmaiden" to the churches. The function of the Dominion Council was explained at the YWCA's 1919 convention.

Our Association is symbolized by a wheel which holds together all the different branches, for each City and College Association is a spoke. The circumference of the wheel is...the Association Purpose travelling along the road of life. Then in the centre is the hub, which is small but essential. This is the Dominion Council which holds us all together. But this is no wooden wheel. We want to think of it as a living, electrified wheel, with the power of God working through it, and only so long as it is in touch with God can it do its full work.¹

An examination of the role of the Dominion Council in the development of the YWCA in the early twentieth century clearly reveals that its understanding of "the power of God" represented a significant shift from the nineteenth-century evangelicalism of the early Canadian YWCAs. With considerable prodding from the national body, YWCAs in this period began the process of modifying their traditional evangelical stance on moral questions in the direction of a broader concern with the social and economic conditions underlying such issues as recreation and venereal disease. The Dominion Council challenged the local associations to offer their assistance to the churches in responding to new issues of national significance, particularly immigration and the

"industrial question." Women's organizations, it was argued, had successfully addressed the problem of the city; they had just as important a role to play in resolving the larger problem of the nation. The YWCA, the National General Secretary pronounced in 1917, was "a movement to meet a spiritual, civic, and national need."² At the same time, the Dominion Council undertook the task of convincing the churches that the organized women's movement was an essential manifestation of the struggle to establish Christ's Kingdom on earth, and that "Christ's call to women [was] for a life of full development."³ In a very significant sense, the Dominion Council of YWCAs functioned as the principal link between the Social Gospel and the women's movement in early-twentieth-century Canada.

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After the new national executive committee had been in existence for only five years, the opinion was frequently expressed by some of the local workers as well as by members of the committee, that the organizational structure established at the first convention in 1895 was inadequate to meet the demands of the new century, and that there was a need for "a more organic union among Canadian Associations."⁴ "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."⁵ Decisive action was taken on October 4, 1901, when the work of the Executive Committee was divided into City and Student Departments and 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 Toronto."⁶ This development seemed to herald a new era in the history of the Canadian YWCA, prompting Caroline Macdonald, General Secretary of the Ottawa branch, to urge the local associations to support their new Dominion Council.

Never for a moment can we, as local Associations, forget that we are units of a great body of women standing for truth, nobility and righteous living among other lands. We are a large family scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and as our country develops, as it has and will continue to do, those of us who have had experience of the benefits derived from Association work in our own cities, will need to lift up our eyes and see what can be done to extend that influence throughout our beloved Dominion.⁷

Shortly after voicing this opinion, Caroline Macdonald joined the Dominion Council as its first National City Secretary, and in 1904 began a lengthy term of service in Japan as Canada's first Foreign Secretary. She and her colleagues on the Council laboured hard over the succeeding two decades to inspire the Canadian locals with this sense of their own national and international significance.

What is particularly striking about the role of the Dominion Council in this period is the fact that its views on most issues of concern to the YWCA may be described as consistently more liberal or progressive than those generally articulated by the city YWCAs. It is not immediately apparent why this should be the case. In all Canadian communities the YWCA was dominated by socially prominent women who included wives of leading businessmen, clergymen and professionals. This was also the case in the example of the Dominion Council, some of whose more influential members during this period included Mrs. Robert Kilgour, wife of a wealthy Toronto businessman; Mrs. L.A. Hamilton who was known for her active involvement in nearly every leading women's organization in Toronto; Mrs. Newton W. Rowell, wife of the leader of the Ontario Liberals; Mrs. H.P. Plumptre, wife of the Rev. Canon Plumptre; and Mrs. R.A. Falconer,

wife of the President of the University of Toronto.⁸ Given their greater wealth and influence, opportunities for travel, and frequent exposure to national and international contacts through the Toronto reform community, it is probable that these Toronto women were more frequently exposed to the latest currents of reform thought and practice than were YWCA women in Moncton, Saskatoon, or Victoria. In the absence of studies of local YWCAs that might help to shed light on the possibility that dominance by a particular denomination was a factor in determining the relative "progressiveness" of the views held by a particular branch, it is difficult to compare the denominational profile of the Dominion Council, if such could be determined, with that of the locals.⁹ A tempting hypothesis suggests the possibility of Methodist dominance at the national level. Yet at the very time that the Dominion Council was espousing its most progressive views on the industrial question, its two most influential spokespersons, who championed the views that historians have tended to associate with the Methodist Church, were Mrs. R.A. Falconer, National President and a Presbyterian, and Una Saunders, National General Secretary and an Anglican.

One possible factor contributing to the progressive influence coming from the national body may have been the much more significant presence and influence of the secretarial staff at the national level. Only the largest city associations, it will be recalled, had the resources to hire three or four secretaries specializing in the various departments of work; most branches could afford only one General Secretary. Yet even the presence of one such professional worker, trained in the latest methods and principals of YWCA work and "girl psychology," had often resulted in the expansion of programs, a more flexible response to the demands of the clientele with whom the secretary was in closer contact, and discussion of the problems of "narrow-mindedness" or "shallow vision" on the part of YWCA Boards. By 1919, the ratio of secretaries to

volunteers was far higher at the national than at the local level. By 1912, the national staff of six included a General Secretary, Foreign Secretary, School Girls' Secretary, Port Worker at Quebec, City Secretary and Student Secretary. But following a period of mushrooming growth during the war years, the Dominion Council's thirty-nine volunteer members were complemented by a staff of twenty-seven national secretaries and six foreign secretaries. While a few of these women, notably Una Saunders who following her retirement from the Dominion Council in 1920 served on the executive of the World's YWCA, were "career" YWCA secretaries, most were young women only recently graduated from college. They brought to the national organization a youthful perspective, liberal religious opinions, a commitment to maintaining up-to-date professional standards, and an enormous reservoir of talent, vitality, and new ideas.

The Dominion Council and its staff of national secretaries formed the principal link between the local YWCAs and the churches. They devoted much effort to linking the resolution of "the girl problem" with the interests and objectives of the churches, in the face of what they perceived to be the latter's neglect of the welfare of young women. In fact, they repeatedly proclaimed, the objective of remaking Canadian society according to the teachings of Jesus Christ could not be accomplished unless the role to be played by young women in this process were recognized and taken into account. "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."¹⁰

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."¹¹

In what the YWCA described as the dawning of "the century of young womanhood," attention was drawn to the fact that both God and man expected young women to uphold

the same standard of character in the face of vastly changed conditions. Under these circumstances the YWCA hoped to unite "with the churches to meet the economic and spiritual needs of the young women of to-day in a way they cannot meet alone."¹² The Dominion Council attempted to weld the local YWCAs, both the city and student movements, into a force for nation-building by strengthening the churches and by mobilizing women as an untapped reservoir of energy for the churches and for the nation. But they sought simultaneously to ensure that the process of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth included preparing women for the responsibilities of motherhood and citizenship, for a range of new occupational choices, and for the vastly increased participation of women both as volunteers and professionals in the new field of social service.

In presenting the work of the YWCA across Canada, the Dominion Council, to a much greater extent than the city associations which were promoting themselves as a "community service," emphasized the evangelical Protestant underpinnings of the YWCA's philosophy and objectives. "However many may be the differences in organization of the branches of the Association, yet all must accept a basis which conforms with the Dominion Council's affirmation of faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and takes as its purpose, to seek to unite all young women to work for Christ's Kingdom among other girls and women."¹³ Frequent references to the YWCA's evangelical basis constituted an attempt to reassure the organization's supporters within the churches, some of whom apparently expressed doubts as to what extent the YWCA was in fact a "Christian" organization rather than some sort of social club for young women. The difficulty lay in convincing such doubters that the multitude of services provided for young women by the YWCA, some of which did not seem to have any obvious connection with religion, did in fact constitute Christian work undertaken in

the interests of the churches. In stressing that YWCAs were bound together by their common religious purpose, national leaders emphasized that although "deeply founded on spiritual lines," the organization was "not narrow in its definition of the word 'spiritual.'" Most significantly, they argued that the interests of the churches could not be advanced by women who, although pious, were undeveloped in the other aspects of their lives. On the contrary, they argued, "Christ's call to women is for a life of full development, physical, intellectual and social as well as religious."¹⁴

Although the YWCA had claimed since the founding of the first city associations in the 1870s that one of its primary functions was to serve as "handmaid" to the churches, there lingered well into the twentieth century a perception on the part of some churchgoers that the YWCA was attempting to usurp the role of the church and that it was taking young women away rather than bringing them into the church. A good deal of this hostility was apparently the product of the YWCA's promotion of interdenominational cooperation at the community level. The responsibility for meeting such objections seemed to fall most frequently to the Dominion Council rather than to the local associations. In the pages of Woman's Century, a monthly publication of the National Council of Women, Mrs R.A. Falconer, the YWCA's National President, expounded at some length on the relationship of "The Y.W.C.A. 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. The Association does not assume the place which the Church alone should have, but it does claim to be the handmaid of the Church, and to ask for a very definite recognition within the Church of its place and power in the community.¹⁵

Meeting a frequently voiced objection that much YWCA work appeared to have little to do with religion, Falconer emphasized that the YWCA's purpose was "to give to each

young woman an adequate opportunity to know and follow the Christ." Other critics raised the question, "why cannot the Church do this without the Young Women's Christian Association?" Falconer's response was to argue that "to give some girls any fair chance to realize the Christ life they must be developed mentally and physically as well as spiritually" and that only the YWCA, with the combined resources of the denominations, had the equipment and facilities to accomplish this objective. The YWCA, moreover, was not only able to meet women as they came to church but was also in the position to go out to meet them in their "natural groupings" as they worked together or studied together in college. "The Association should be thought of as an outpost of the Church, as a manifestation of the Church and auxiliary to it, as an associating together of Christian women in order that present day needs may be met in the most efficient and economic way possible." A similar argument was voiced by Anna V. Rice, visiting speaker at the Canadian YWCA's 1913 convention and later historian of the World's YWCA. The church, she noted, had so much work to do that there was a great need for specialization. "In the great uncultivated fields of girlhood where hundreds upon thousands of eager, restless young women stand flushed with the light of the social and spiritual awakening of to-day on their upturned faces, there is need, oh, such need--for an organization like our own, equipped with wise and loving leaders, to make their interests its special care and so, with all the other forces for human uplift to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God upon the earth."¹⁶

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Canadian Protestant churches, particularly at the national level, came increasingly under the influence of that amorphous set of ideas, combining elements of traditional evangelical theology with philosophical idealism, biblical criticism, reform Darwinism and liberal progressivism that has been called the social gospel.¹⁷ The spread of the social gospel

in Canada had major implications for the YWCA, given that for several decades, it was the principal form of expression of that evangelical nationalism which had provided much of the impetus for the formation of the Dominion Council in the 1890s. In the light of the social gospel, traditional evangelical moral causes such as temperance and social purity, some of which had been perceived as issues of particular concern to women, were reinterpreted, infused with new vigour, and linked to newer issues of concern such as housing and child welfare. The precise ways in which social gospel teachings influenced the objectives and the activities of women's organizations, as well as the extent to which those organizations contributed to the development and spread of social gospel ideas in Canada, is as yet little understood by historians. The most significant body of work on the social gospel in Canada, that produced by Richard Allen, focuses on the development and dissemination of these ideas by a small number of male leaders, mainly clergymen, with little attention paid to the role of women or of lay voluntary associations. Recently, however, Allen has noted that "many women of the National Council of Women, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the suffrage organizations found in the social gospel a convenient vehicle for articulating reforms based on their maternal feminist creed."¹⁸ An examination of the activities of the Dominion Council of YWCAs in the first two decades of this century suggests that such was indeed the case.

Members of the Dominion Council subscribed to the principal tenet of the social gospel that God was immanent in the movement for social change or what was frequently referred to as the "social awakening." By inference, God was also in the women's movement. In the spread of social gospel ideas through the Canadian Protestant churches, the Dominion Council saw both an opportunity and a challenge for the YWCA. As the churches struggled to come to grips with a new conception of Christ's teachings

that required attention to the needs of mind and body as well as spirit, the YWCA could offer its superior expertise and place its resources at their disposal. Applying the teachings of the social gospel required resources beyond those available to any one church and intensified the commitment of many Canadian Protestants to interdenominational cooperation, to which the YWCA was also capable of bringing several decades of extensive experience. Faced with the challenge of social gospel teachings, the Dominion Council of YWCA sought to inspire women college and high school students to dedicate their lives to Christian social service. It attempted to infuse the city associations with the spirit of the social gospel, galvanizing them into leading public opinion on questions pertaining to immigration and industry, and into developing new and imaginative solutions to old problems in the fields of recreation and social purity. To achieve these objectives, new national departments responsible for Immigration, Girls' Work, Student Work, Recreation, Industrial Work, and Health Education were founded and staffed by the Dominion Council.¹⁹ All these new departments of YWCA work were undertaken with the objective of developing a coherent national policy on the girl problem in its various manifestations, and of ensuring, at the same time, that the girl problem was recognized both by evangelical women and by the churches--along with housing, temperance, and labour--as an integral component of "the social question."

* * * * *

In the period immediately following the creation of the Dominion Council when only two secretaries, City and Student, were available to undertake the task of visiting the local associations, the work of the Dominion Council was limited but significant. "Uniting as it does, the city and college Associations of the Dominion, the chief

function of the Council is to organize new Associations where needed, and to assist in the strengthening and developing of the work where already organized."²⁰ At the 1907 convention, attention was drawn to the fact that there were no YWCAs in a 2,000-mile stretch between Vancouver and Winnipeg where new cities had drawn hundreds of young women, some of whom, given the shortage of comfortable and safe boarding houses, were "forced to take quarters which proved morally ruinous."²¹ The Dominion Council, in response to this crisis, sent Susan Little, the National General Secretary, to organize new branches in Brandon, Moose Jaw, Calgary, and Edmonton. A visit from a national secretary, which invariably attracted the attention of the press, provided valuable assistance to local women trying to generate support for a local YWCA because it linked the local work to issues of national significance and the future of the nation itself. Susan Little addressed the interested citizens of Victoria in the course of her western tour:

Someone has said that the future of our country rests on the character of the young men, but is it not equally true that it rests on the character of our young women? The Psalmist chose, not at random, his simile when he said, that our daughters may be as corner stones. Full well he knew that a nation's righteousness rested largely on the characters of the daughters and mothers of the land.²²

Her address outlined the YWCA's fifty-two years of history, its spread to thirty-three countries and growth to a membership of 500,000, and its role as hand-maid of the Christian church, in addition to explaining the Educational, Physical, Social, Boarding House, and Spiritual Departments of YWCA work.²³

By 1914, the Dominion Council reported that the local associations were making increasing use of the national staff but that "there lingers a question as to what the function of such a staff is." In answer to this question, the work was described as:

...correspondence with other bodies with which we have national connection--the World's Young Women's Christian Association, the World's Student Christian Federation, the North American Student Council, and other societies in Canada; visits to colleges and cities, to bring the newest plans and policies, to advise as to fresh organization, occasionally to help to heal some sore spot...Greater publicity has also been given to the work in many centres by well-laid plans for the use of the visit of a National Secretary. Finance work and many sessions of committee, investigation into new possibilities for the Association, attendance at conferences both in Canada and The States, have all come into the day's work. A large amount of time is absorbed by the interviews and correspondence entailed in seeking to supply secretaries of all kinds for cities scattered throughout the Dominion, for so large a number of the candidates prove to be in some way unsuitable, and others must be sought for.²⁴

Liaison with international organizations through attendance at conferences was another of the functions performed by the Dominion Council and its staff who were expected to pass on the benefit of their experiences to the locals. The Halifax Herald reported that the 1919 annual meeting was addressed by E. Frances Jones of the Dominion Council on "The Association a World Wide Organization." "Nothing more colorful and graphic than her description of the great Y.W.C.A. Conference in Sweden in the year 1913 has been heard here ...There was an entire novelty in the shape of moving pictures devoted to picturing the activities of the Y.W.C.A. thruout[sic] the world. It was a striking and an effect[sic] feature and must have served to have deeply impressed all those present."²⁵ Interestingly, in 1909 the Winnipeg YWCA was addressed by Annie M. Reynolds, former World secretary, who observed that on the basis of her three world tours made on behalf of the YWCA, "she considered that Canada and the United States were the most progressive from a Y.W.C.A. point of view with Great Britain and Germany second."²⁶

In 1900, the Dominion Council launched publication of a national YWCA magazine, successively titled, The Young Woman's Gazette, The Dominion Tie, The Young Women of Canada, and The Association Outlook, intended for the edification of the local

leadership and staff rather than for the "girl membership." Containing reports from the locals, as well as conference and convention reports, it helped to inform the locals of the activities of their counterparts in other cities. It also featured articles on the principles and methods of YWCA work written by the national staff, as well as addresses on topics of interest by clergymen and representatives of the American, British and World's YWCAs, the YMCA, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, and other women's organizations. By 1912, it reported a total of eight hundred subscribers across the country.²⁷ Dominion conventions featuring national and international speakers, similar to those described in Chapter 2, continued to be held approximately every three years with a six-year gap between 1913 and 1919 because of the war. The principal function of these gatherings was to provide "a safeguard against provincialism, the great stumbling-block to progress."²⁸ In 1909, the Dominion Council introduced a new expedient, the annual summer conference in the Muskoka District of Ontario with the specific objective of linking the city and student movements. The first such gathering was attended by 202 delegates from twelve city and seventeen college YWCAs, in addition to guests from China, India, Japan, Africa, England, and the United States. The informal summer camp arrangement of the conference was thought to provide a unique opportunity for contact between the various components of the YWCA's leadership and membership. "The college student and the girl from the city shop, the business woman, the teacher, and the woman from her luxurious home, all a part of the Association, yet separated by the usual conditions of life, come closely together here."²⁹

One of the Dominion Council's principal functions was to assist the process of professionalizing YWCA work by providing the city associations with trained staff. In 1918, for example, the Dominion Council received forty-seven requests for workers from

twenty-one locals, and was able to fill twenty-four positions for "General Secretaries, House Superintendents, Cafeteria Directors, Assistant Secretaries, Office Secretaries, Travellers' Aid Workers, Physical Directors, Librarians, Girls' Work Secretaries, Extension Secretaries."³⁰ To meet the local demand for secretaries, the Dominion Council, with much less success than it would have wished, attempted to recruit college students to train as YWCA secretaries and to establish a Canadian National Training School in Toronto where potential secretaries would be trained not only in "practical things" but also in "Godliness."³¹ For most of this period, Canadian recruits were sent to the Detroit Secretarial Training School, and later to Chicago and New York. In 1914, the Dominion Council began its efforts to found a Canadian school with a ten-day training course that offered, in addition to Bible study and practical sessions including visits to factories and classes and meetings of the Toronto YWCA, lectures on following subjects—"The History of the Association Movement, Association Principles, the World's Work, and our Foreign Department, the Basis of Volunteer Work, the Opportunity for Service, the Personal Life of the Secretary, various branches of Association work, i.e., religious, educational, social and physical work, membership, extension and community work, the playground, self-governing clubs, economics, and membership, the training of volunteer and secretary, the relation of the Association to the Church and other organizations."³² Attempts to found a permanent Canadian school before 1920 were unsuccessful not because of a lack of demand for secretaries but because of a lack of applicants for positions, a situation that the Dominion Council blamed on the working conditions provided by the locals. "Despite the fact that local Associations report the need of trained Secretaries, yet the length of hours of service and the impossibility of making provision for sickness and old age on the prevailing low rate of salary account for the dearth of students to take a training course for Y.W.C.A. work."³³ Each City Board, it was recommended, "should accord to their secretaries that

position and that remuneration which will make it possible to place the Association secretaryship as a vocation before the most prominent graduates."³⁴

Despite the importance of its many functions in relation to the local associations, the Dominion Council experienced considerable financial difficulty in which it was not able to call upon the support of the locals with any degree of success. Until 1913, each City or College YWCA paid a yearly affiliation fee of three cents a member which amounted to only about \$550 a year, leaving the Dominion Council to gather the \$13,000 necessary for the salaries and travelling expenses of the national staff as well as rent for office space from private subscribers, mainly in Toronto. A commission appointed before the 1913 convention recommended that private subscribers in many cities be approached for half of the Dominion Council's budget, with the other half to come from the locals. City associations were requested to add four percent to their local budgets for the national work, and student branches to contribute forty percent of their membership fees.³⁵ In an article pleading the cause of the Dominion Council as "a national need," the local associations were urged not to regard the national body as competition for their funding. "To collect for the Dominion work as well as the local work does not detract from the plea that can be made for the close-at-hand Association, instead it often throws an interesting light on a local work, which standing by itself in isolation may seem both small and unimportant to those not vitally connected with girl life."³⁶ The outbreak of war in 1914 prevented this new scheme from being fully implemented, and in the following year it was reported that "the amount contributed by the thirty city Associations towards the upkeep of the National work has not been as large as we should like to see."³⁷

During the war, the work of the Dominion Council underwent an enormous expansion made possible by a budget that skyrocketed from \$15,000 in 1913 to \$109,000 in 1919

when "for the first time in our history, we were able to respond to the new calls without fear, and to add to our National Staff some women specialists who could be of real service to all our Associations."³⁸ Ironically this happy circumstance was attributable not to the support of the Canadian public or even the local associations, but to the assistance of the YMCA. As was the case for the city associations, the Dominion Council found that its fundraising efforts for a national work for young women did not meet with an enthusiastic reception in the early part of the war. In 1916, it reported: "The need just now is urgent. The great patriotic appeals throughout the country have caused a drop in individual subscriptions."³⁹ In contrast to the YWCA, the National Council of YMCAs was basking in public approval for its work with the troops in Canadian military camps and at the Front with the result that its wartime Red Triangle Campaigns were proving a great success.⁴⁰ 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."⁴¹ During the three-day Red Triangle Campaign held in Toronto, May 21-23, 1917, the work of the YWCA was presented as a service on behalf of "the women behind the men," or, in other words, as an essential part of the war effort, rather than as a manifestation of what could otherwise be perceived as a "mere" interest in the welfare of young women. Out of \$210,000 subscribed during this campaign, \$15,000 was turned over to the Dominion Council's National Service Department; a larger contribution of \$75,000 was awarded to the YWCA during the 1918 campaign.⁴² In surveying the YWCA's spectacular growth from 1913 to 1919, the Dominion Council emphasized that the foundations of the earlier work "made it inevitable that we should be appealed to as the body of women likely to devote ourselves to any new aspect of women's service."⁴³ Yet there is no question that without the assistance of the YMCA, given the Dominion Council's history of inadequate

funding, no coordinated national response to the war effort on the part of the YWCA would have been possible. The contributions from the Red Triangle Campaigns made possible the launching^{of} significant initiatives by the Dominion Council in the fields of Girls' Work, services to women war workers in agriculture and munitions, immigration, recreation, and venereal disease control. These efforts helped to win for the YWCA "a new place among the Social Service Movements of Canada, [and] an infinitely widened sympathy with our work on the part of the public."⁴⁴

Immigration

During the second decade of the twentieth century, the Dominion Council of YWCAs united with the Protestant churches in responding to "the immigrant problem," a response that was shaped, it has been argued, by a combination of nationalism, nativism and the social gospel.⁴⁵ The period from 1901 to 1911 had been the first decade in the history of the nation in which immigration exceeded emigration, with the numbers peaking at a recorded total of over 400,000 for the year 1912-13.⁴⁶ The YWCA particularly noted the unprecedented numbers of female immigrants--82,922 over fourteen years of age in 1912 alone.⁴⁷ The problem, however, was not merely one of numbers. Shifting patterns of immigration resulted in a decline in the percentage of the favoured British and American settlers, and of those of northwestern European stock, who were received with only slightly less enthusiasm. Instead unprecedented numbers of non-Protestant non-English-speaking immigrants from southeastern Europe were settling in concentrated numbers in western Canada where, it was widely feared by English-speaking Ontarians, they "might in the future play a vital or even a determining role in the life of the nation."⁴⁸ The YWCA's Dominion Council shared the

conviction of government, religious and reform authorities that the problem of the settlement and assimilation of these "foreign" immigrants was "one of vast proportions and fraught with the gravest possible consequences."⁴⁹ As one writer in The Young Women of Canada posed the problem:

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, Swedes, 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?⁵⁰

In responding to the plight of the immigrants, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches expressed their commitment to Christianity as a social religion, but this commitment, Marilyn Barber has argued, remained subordinate to their conviction that "it was their responsibility to ensure that Canada remain a British nation because the Anglo-Saxon race had developed the highest form of Christianity and civilization."⁵¹ In rallying to the support of the churches on this issue, the Dominion Council of YWCAs was asserting the right and obligation of women, as "a large part of the country's responsible citizenship," to assist Canada in "claiming her birthright as a nation" and to participate in this "science of nation-building."⁵²

In the large numbers of "foreign girls" entering Canada, "a huge field of work, as yet almost untouched by the Association,"⁵³ the YWCA saw an opportunity to expand still further its jurisdiction and the scope of its activities, and had no hesitation in proclaiming itself eminently qualified to undertake such a task.

There is surely no girl or young woman to whom the Association can render greater service than one who is (as most of these girls are) not only away from home and home influences for the first time, but who is in addition literally a stranger in a strange land; and there can surely be no

organization so pre-eminently fitted and equipped as this, with its national and world-wide organization, with its magnificent equipment, and with 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.⁵⁴

The YWCA's efforts in the field of immigration have been situated by Barbara Roberts in the context of a campaign to Keep Canada British that was motivated primarily by class and imperialist considerations.⁵⁵ Certainly there were close links between the Dominion Council, the British YWCA, and some locals in cities such as Vancouver which attracted large numbers of British immigrants, and their joint efforts to shepherd British women from England to Canada were often described as part of a larger "work of Empire." Yet for the most part the heavy involvement of the Dominion Council in immigration work, and particularly in the supervision of "foreign" immigrants, in the second decade of this century was explained and justified as an exercise in nation-building rather than empire-building. The latter branch of work was explicitly undertaken as an expression of the YWCA's commitment to the Canadian churches and to their goal of building a Protestant Canada. In immigration work, the Dominion Council saw an opportunity to demonstrate convincingly the YWCA's value as a "handmaid" to the churches by placing its resources and expertise in the service of the churches' campaign to "Christianize" the immigrants. "If...the local Associations get the support and cooperation of the churches, and then uphold the hands of the port secretaries by surrounding these stranger girls with helpful influences as soon as they arrive--then this work will prove to be the most valuable of all the Association activities, and will bring forth fruit many hundredfold."⁵⁶

A significant component of the churches' response to the immigration question was an educational campaign to inform their members about the background of the immigrants and the conditions they faced in Canada. "The immigrants became part of the study programme of women's groups, youth groups and Sunday Schools, and special

textbooks and study guides were published to introduce the immigrants to Canadians who had little knowledge of Europe or Europeans."⁵⁷ Similarly, the Dominion Council undertook to promote the study of the immigration problem among the members of the city and student associations, to arouse members to a sense of personal responsibility for the resolution of the problem, and to coordinate a unified national response by the YWCA. Like the churches, the Dominion Council found in the influential writings of James Shaver Woodsworth, Methodist minister and Superintendent of All People's Mission in Winnipeg, a powerful educational tool.⁵⁸ In 1909, an article by Woodsworth in The Young Women of Canada drew the attention of the local YWCAs' leadership to the fact that the immigrant problem existed in their own homes, in many of which "foreign" domestics lived a dismal existence.

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.⁵⁹

The Dominion Council of YWCAs endorsed and sold Woodsworth's books, Strangers Within Our Gates and My Neighbor, to the local associations, and welcomed Woodsworth as a regular guest at the annual YWCA summer conferences beginning in 1909 where he led study sessions on these works.⁶⁰

Reflecting the influence of Woodsworth and church literature on the immigration question, the YWCA promoted an understanding of the immigrants and their circumstances that, although advocating compassion and Christian fellowship, was

rooted in crude ethnic stereotypes and a profound conviction of the inferiority of non-Protestant religions. YWCA women accepted, for example, the existence of an imaginary line crossing the continent of Europe which divided the hardy, industrious, self-reliant, and thrifty northerners from the physically and morally inferior "races" of the south. Yet like Woodsworth they advised Canadians to consider that they, or their ancestors, were once immigrants too and that the new-comers were "for the time being out of their sphere and in need of our individual thought and care." The nativism of the YWCA and Protestant church response to the immigrants was tempered by the optimistic conviction that if assisted and rightly influenced the immigrants did not have to pose a threat to the future of the nation.

These people are transplanted from one country to the other; they have to take root. If they are not strong enough in character and purpose they will not, as a plant, just wither and die, but will drift on from place to place; perhaps will help to fill the ranks of the unemployed, or become a public charge, later to be deported; whereas, if they are helped and sustained on arrival, while they are still plastic and in a receptive condition, their future may be fixed along the lines that will make them take their rightful places as the country's greatest asset--human capacity.⁶¹

The principal strategy by which the "Canadianization" of the immigrants would be accomplished was the English class. "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."⁶² The failure of the public schools to reach adult immigrants only added to the importance of this department of YWCA work, according to a YMCA immigration worker, writing in The Young Women of Canada. He 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, concluding 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."⁶³ The YWCA, of course, took a particular interest in the young immigrant woman, and the Dominion Council, in its educational campaign on the immigration question, argued the position that "we, a Young Women's Christian Association, must consider our responsibilities for the women who come to us."⁶⁴ This interest was encouraged by Canadian immigration officials such as Bruce Walker, Commissioner of Immigration for Manitoba, who addressed the 1913 convention on the "foreign" immigrant. "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."⁶⁵

In concerning themselves with the welfare of the young immigrant woman, YWCA women believed that they could "help materially to mould and make good citizens for the Dominion."⁶⁶ In 1912 the Dominion Council entered the field of Immigration Work, establishing a distinct department overseen by a national secretary, in response to pressure coming from several directions. In 1911, it received an appeal for assistance from the Protestant churches and the local YWCA in Quebec which were overwhelmed by the arrival of 2,000 young women in that city each month from May to October.⁶⁷ Strong encouragement also came from the newly-formed National Council of YMCAs. A special meeting of the Dominion Council in 1912 was addressed by Mr. Lee, the YMCA Immigration Secretary, who advised the members that:

In female immigration, the Y.W.C.A. has an immense field. It is the organization most fully equipped, and while its organization is world-wide, its scope for work here is nation-wide...There is 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.

He spoke particularly on the contribution the YWCA could make to the problem of assimilating large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants of rural origins. "...it is as they stand on the quays, their voyage over, their train-journey not yet begun, that

the opportunity of influence is greatest. Then the mind of the immigrant is plastic, and for the first person who approaches in friendly spirit, it is the time of making a lasting impression." He proposed a three-pronged approach to the provision of immigration services. A Port Work Policy would involve protecting and advising girls, establishing a first point of contact with the YWCA, and cooperating with government officials and chaplains. An Inland Policy would involve the welcoming and visiting of the new arrivals in each community, the establishment of English classes, and cooperation with the churches. Finally, a Policy for the Country Districts which lacked a YWCA branch would involve the recruitment of volunteer corresponding members. The Supreme Objective of all these services, he stressed, should be "to conserve to the church and to the Y.W.C.A. of Canada the large numbers of young women coming to our shores."⁶⁸

The Dominion Council's entry into the field of Immigration Work was also an attempt to systematize and coordinate the existing local efforts on behalf of British immigrants. Since the 1880s, local Travellers Aid workers in some Canadian cities had maintained close ties with British emigration officials and the British Women's Emigration Association. Noting that "each branch of the Y.W.C.A. has its own special work to do," the Vancouver branch in particular claimed "the care of strangers" as its own from the time of its founding in 1897.⁶⁹ In 1905, its Immigration Department claimed to be closely allied to the United British Women's Immigration Society, also reporting that "our work is now fully recognized by the Provincial Government, and we are in communication with the Colonial Office in London."⁷⁰ Cooperating with the British Women's Emigration Association in bringing out seven parties of British women in 1906, the Vancouver branch reported that it was quietly and unostentatiously doing its share of "Empire building" by "spreading the influence of true Christian womanhood through this beautiful Province of ours."⁷¹ By 1907 there were complaints that its

building was inadequate for its efforts to accommodate and find employment for so many immigrants who, in addition to the British, now came "from all parts of Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Finland, Denmark, Italy and Turkey."⁷² Vancouver T.A. workers, in correspondence with YWCAs in other cities, also undertook to supervise the relatives of British immigrants already resident in the city throughout their journey by sea and across Canada, receiving for this work a small yearly grant from the City Council.⁷³ Eight hundred letters of enquiry from all parts of the world were answered by Vancouver T.A.s in 1904. Immigration and Travellers' Aid, they reported, "knows no nationality. We are sisters and comrades one to another all the world over for the sake of the Christ Who loved us all."⁷⁴

Vancouver, however, was exceptional in the attention that it devoted to the questions of the protection, reception, and settling of new immigrants. In many cities, this department of YWCA work was still peripheral and it was often the case that no Travellers' Aid worker was employed at all. 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.⁷⁵ During the summer of 1912, Miss A.M. Wingate, National Head of the British YWCA's Employment and Emigration Department, conducted a three-month tour of Canadian cities to investigate Travellers Aid and immigration services with a view to creating closer links with British immigration workers.⁷⁶ Following her return to England, Miss Wingate testified before the Dominions Royal Commission, a "fact-finding body concerned with ascertaining the possibilities for promoting greater links between the parts of the empire."⁷⁷ It was the purpose of the British YWCA's Employment and Emigration Department, she noted,

to screen emigrants, to inform them about conditions, to help them prepare for their new life, to protect them during their voyage, and finally, "to bring them into direct touch with the Y.W.C.A. of the place to which they are going, so that they may have the personal help they need, and a place where they can spend leisure hours and see friends." She reported that "We are now considering with the Canadian Associations a still more complete scheme of co-operation and protection."⁷⁸ Other British immigration workers and officials were also interested in the efforts of the Canadian YWCAs. Dr. E.C. Sparrow who had personally investigated conditions in Canada testified that he was "immensely surprised and delighted with the tremendous provision for the reception of girls," especially in Toronto which had nine YWCA centres. He highly recommended that girls leaving England should join the YWCA which was "well thought of, much used by Canadian girls, and rank[ed] high among Canadian institutions."⁷⁹

Many of the arguments used to justify the need for immigration services were identical to those which had been employed for many years on behalf of Travellers' Aid. There was, however, an apparent consensus among reformers and immigration officials that recent immigrants were considerably more vulnerable to the usual city dangers than were Canadian young women travelling from one city to another. Lucy Brooking, Superintendent of The Haven and Prison Gate Mission, described the "Conditions in Toronto" in 1911 that led some immigrants to enter rescue homes.

Take girls of normal intelligence, but homeless, unrestrained, in the case of emigrants, unaccustomed to the freedom of a new country, it goes like wine to their heads, 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, unwarned and unarmed, with no idea of the dangers in the way, they become an easy prey, often to some one "from home."⁸⁰

The reasons for the particular vulnerability of the immigrant were, however, a matter of some debate. Dr. Sparrow emphasized to the Dominions Royal Commission that, based on extensive interviews with immigration officials and social workers from a number of Canadian agencies, in his view "the character of most of the domestic servants arriving from England left a lot to be desired." "There are too many lazy or slovenly, careless or independent ones, as well as those actually delinquent."⁸¹ He particularly objected to the practice of placing immigrant domestics in isolated rural homes, arguing that "it is much better to send factory girls who have been used to towns, or a girl whose character is not very strong, and who is likely to be misled or anything of that sort, straight to the city where there is some Y.W.C.A. or centre of helpers, friends of girls, to take care of her."⁸² YWCA workers, however, presented a somewhat different view. Emphasizing the conditions on board ship, the different conditions of work in Canada, the problem of housing, and the lack of recreation, they testified that girls "failed" not for want of "character" but "for want of a little help, sympathy and encouragement in the first six months, and also for want of friends."⁸³ It was the goal of British and Dominion Council YWCA immigration workers to see that these wants were met in cities across Canada.

An additional factor behind the Dominion Council's desire to systematize YWCA Travellers' Aid and immigration services was the belief that was widely held among North American reformers that "foreign" immigrants were particularly susceptible to the machinations of white slavers. "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."⁸⁴ According to the testimony of immigration officials, police and social workers, many white slavers were immigrants themselves

who preyed on newly-arrived women of their own nationality, taking advantage of the latter's confusion, isolation, and willingness to trust one of their own countrymen.

...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--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.⁸⁵

This ensnarement of immigrant women, according to the Rev. J.G. Shearer, Secretary of the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada, was not difficult. "The true stories of demand and opportunity and success that the mails bear back to every land make the deception of victim and immigration officials, and Moral and Social Reform agents, alike easy."⁸⁶ Shearer recommended that as part of the global campaign to stamp out white slavery, Canadians prosecute those who were bringing girls into Canada for immoral purposes, proclaim the single moral standard for men and women, post warnings to young women travellers and immigrants, provide Travellers' Aid services, refer young women to safe boarding homes, and provide instruction to the young "in the purpose and problems and perils of sex."⁸⁷ The coordination and systemization of Canadian YWCA Travellers' Aid and immigration services beginning in 1912 was conceived as a significant contribution to "the Canadian Crusade."

The direct involvement of the Dominion Council in the field of immigration began with the hiring of an immigration secretary at the port of Quebec for the 1912 season. Her assigned duties were to meet all the incoming ships and "to help the great tide of immigrant women in their perplexities and inquiries." This included providing immigrants with printed messages of welcome containing "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," as well as cards of introduction to be given to the local secretary in cities having a branch of the YWCA.⁸⁸ In 1914, a permanent National Port Worker, Mrs. E.A. Burrington-Ham, was hired by the Dominion Council to undertake this work and for the next six years was highly influential in shaping the YWCA's national policy on immigration and Travellers' Aid. An Englishwoman herself, thereby providing a suitably inspiring example to immigrants according to one account in the press, Mrs. Ham brought to her job several years of experience in immigration work with some of the major steamship lines.⁸⁹ During her first six-month season at Quebec, she reported meeting 155 steamers, all from English ports, and distributing 3,300 pamphlets and 2,796 cards of introductions to local associations. Her experiences led her to draw certain conclusions about the objectives of this type of work.

My first insight into the work at the port made me realize many things. First: the great need of the girl for protection--which in nearly every case means prevention. Second: the conviction 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. Third: the conviction that 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.⁹⁰

By 1915 some degree of coordination had been achieved and the Dominion Council was able to report that twenty-two T.A. workers meeting trains in all the larger cities had

helped a total of 31,120 in the previous year, that a national T.A. badge had been adopted, that a network of corresponding members in the smaller towns had been established, and that warnings to young women had been posted in various railroad stations.⁹¹ Yet in Mrs. Ham's view, the significance of all this activity lay not in the numbers of women already reached "but in the awakening of the Associations to a sense of their responsibility for these strangers and to the consideration of policies which must be far-reaching in their results." The "forward policy" she envisioned would emphasize follow-up of the immigrants by employed officers and volunteers, the organization of clubs for English-speaking immigrants, and "English classes for the foreigners."⁹²

In 1916 Mrs. Ham undertook a tour of the western provinces and some American cities with a view to promoting and systematizing immigration services. In the course of this tour, Mrs. Ham ^{visited} reformatories, detention homes and immigration halls, addressed women's organizations and Boards of Trade, and interviewed mayors, chiefs of police, immigration officials, and three provincial premiers. According to her report, she emphasized the need for "closer co-operation between men and women" to re-organize the work throughout Canada and to make "the appointment and retention of Immigration officials one of efficiency rather than political prestige."⁹³ Her visits consistently attracted the notice of the press, providing her with an opportunity to expound on the nature of her work and the objectives of the YWCA. The Victoria Daily Times reported that Mrs. Ham was investigating the services for the reception and suitable employment of immigrants and was "urging on the various local Y.W.C.A. organizations the need of getting into touch with the newcomers before the girls get adrift."

So many of the associations...are not awake to the importance of getting into touch with the girls right at the beginning. There should be a travelers' aid secretary in every city, so that the Young Women's Christian Association can see for themselves that the girls who come here from the old country, or who are even traveling from one part of this country to another, arrive safely at their intended destination. We are also trying to follow up the girls after they arrive in the cities. We try to find out whether they are getting salaries which will support them, whether they are in surroundings that are good for them, and other things which may all effect their success and their happiness.⁹⁴

In Winnipeg, Mrs. Ham described at some length the work involved in meeting every ship bearing immigrant passengers coming into the four eastern Canadian ports. By this time, many of the immigrant ships were staffed by matrons who introduced Mrs. Ham to the young female passengers on their arrival. She also attended the medical and civil examinations of the immigrants and where possible gave "long personal talks to each one," supplying each young woman with a Travellers' Aid pamphlet and other essential information. According to Mrs. Ham's report: "The majority of the girls coming out on their own are British born...Rarely do I have a foreign-born immigrant girl. These usually come with their people. However, I am often called into council by such groups." Press reports of the system of follow-up being promoted by Mrs. Ham were favourable. As one Winnipeg account explained, cards were sent to the local secretaries or corresponding members with information about the arrival of a new immigrant, a visit would be paid and assistance provided, and cards sent back to Mrs. Ham describing the employment and wages obtained. "These cards serve not only to keep tab on the girls in case they need further help, but are a basis for advising other girls. 'If I find the wages are too low, I can call the attention of the local council of women to the circumstances and they investigate,' announced the energetic lady."⁹⁵

The work of YWCA port workers and the ship's matrons hired by the steamship companies reflected the conviction of immigration workers, particularly the women, that the plans for the recruiting and transportation of large numbers of immigrants had been

drawn up with male immigrants in mind. Consequently, in their view, the special needs of the women immigrants and particularly the need of the young women for protection and supervision had not been adequately taken into account. YWCA women viewed their organization as "specially suited to this kind of work at the ports, because it is one of the agencies responsible for coming Canadian womanhood, and because it embraces all creeds and races, while it stands upon the strong foundation of Christianity."⁹⁶

Government officials like Bruce Walker argued that immigration halls, police stations, and rescue homes were not appropriate environments for female immigrants. He suggested that the YWCA could make an important contribution to their well-being by providing receiving houses "superintended by shrewd, sensible women."⁹⁷ For the benefit of the delegates to the YWCA's 1913 convention, he described in some detail the circumstances of the voyage to Canada that placed immigrant women in jeopardy.

People are thrown together between Liverpool and Quebec for eight or ten days, who have never met before, but they are so very, very much together all day--when the weather is fine, on deck; when they are seasick, lamenting and consoling together; having all their meals together; thrown together in the cabins--what can this do but create a feeling of intimacy and friendship upon very slender foundation? Two young people of opposite sex have been brought into close contact, who know absolutely nothing of each other past, present and future; and that intimacy continues unchecked until the port is reached. On the decks at night they sit and talk--in the sheltered corners. Then is the time when some matronly women should come together and act, when some firm voice should say, "Too late--you go down stairs." This is the time when they should meet with an iron hand which will give to them the same protection they would have at home.

The railroad journey, in his view, was equally hazardous, bringing immigrant women to the end of their journey where, "in a strange city in a strange land, their 'only friend on earth' may turn out to be a released burglar, a runaway married man, or an absconder."⁹⁸ As in the case of regular Travellers' Aid workers, immigration workers reported many "happy endings" to their interventions and attempts at supervision, but more often than not the task was a thankless and discouraging one, according to Mrs.

Ham. "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."⁹⁹

As Mrs. Ham explained repeatedly on her tour, her goal was "to get every city to realize the importance of having a Travelers' Aid, and when the work is thoroughly systematized it will be possible to co-ordinate all the agencies that are now working along the same lines in some of the bigger cities and place it all under one organization."¹⁰⁰ This vision of a national Travellers' Aid Association, under the leadership of the YWCA, permeated the efforts of the Dominion Council in the field of Travellers' Aid and immigration during this decade. From 1914, its Immigration Committee worked hard to win the support of governments, churches, and railway and steamship companies for its immigration programs. The CPR was persuaded to allow the YWCA to post warnings to young women in train stations, rather than undertaking a separate work of its own.¹⁰¹ A national badge and directory were issued in cooperation with the Women's Christian Temperance Union and Methodist Deaconesses' Society, and YWCA pamphlets were distributed in the rural districts by the Women's Institutes.¹⁰² The Immigration Committee participated with the National Council of Women in lobbying the federal government for stricter screening of the morals and employment backgrounds of women emigrating to Canada in search of employment in domestic service.¹⁰³ 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."¹⁰⁴ By 1917 pressure was being exerted by British and American Travellers' Aid workers and by the World's Committee of the YWCA for unification of the Canadian work to avoid confusion

and duplication of efforts, but YWCA attempts to organize a Canadian conference met with a less than enthusiastic response.¹⁰⁵ Relations between T.A.s representing the various churches and agencies were often somewhat lacking in harmony at the local level, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Salvation Army questioned the YWCA's assumption that it would naturally play a leadership role in any national body, and the Catholic women, for their part, were opposed to anything but a non-sectarian approach to Travellers' Aid. All these difficulties prevented even an informal conference on the subject of a national organization from taking place until 1922.¹⁰⁶

During the war years Mrs. Ham made several trips to England to improve arrangements and develop closer links with British T.A. workers, putting the YWCA in a position to play an active role in the supervision of the wives and children of Canadian soldiers during their voyage from Britain to their new home in Canada. In October 1918, Mrs. Ham 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."¹⁰⁷ Upon learning, one month later, of the government's plans to begin demobilization with the 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.¹⁰⁸ 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 two hundred women and children. The ship's secretaries were to refer all those passengers requiring assistance to local YWCAs, Soldiers' Wives Leagues, and other bodies at the ports, as well as keeping a watchful eye on their conduct during the voyage. Mrs. Ham personally made detailed recommendations to government officials on

every aspect of the undertaking from the vaccination of children and the assignment of berths to the character of the medical officers.¹⁰⁹ The task of receiving the immigrants, largely at the port of Saint John, was supervised by the National Travellers' Aid Secretary, recently hired by the Dominion Council, under whose direction huts were erected and a Women's Welcome Committee representing fifteen women's societies in Saint 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.¹¹⁰ The YWCA's involvement in this mammoth operation ended in 1919 with a rancorous jurisdictional dispute with the new Women's Division of the Immigration Department in Ottawa, under the leadership of Mrs. Massey and Mrs. Robson, the latter wanting to take over the YWCA's Buxton operation and hiring new ship's secretaries whose character had not been vouchsafed by the YWCA.¹¹¹ Future prospects for a National Travellers' Aid Association under the YWCA's leadership looked grim indeed.

Even attempts to systematize and coordinate the Travellers' Aid and immigration services of the various local YWCAs proved to be less successful than had been hoped, and after all, as the national staff were the first to admit, the key to the success of this particular work lay with the locals. "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."¹¹² Despite the educational efforts of the Dominion Council, the attention of local YWCAs remained focussed on the British immigrant, and efforts to follow up the "foreign" girl who had reached her destination remained, in the view of national secretaries, woefully inadequate. At the 1919 conference, following the completion of

the YWCA's involvement with the supervision of soldiers' dependents, a renewed effort was made to awaken local interest in the non-British immigrant.

As an Association our first move should be to ascertain who are the strangers in our midst, whence they come, and where they are making their abode. Do you and I know this in our own cities? Having ascertained facts, we are in a place to reach out and help bridge the chasm between Canadian and foreign-born girls, to let the foreign-born girls feel that we are friendly women ready to help them settle, find a home, get worthy employment, and real recreation, and an opportunity to make friends. These girls will need advice, protection, and help on the subject of wages and hours.¹¹³

Before 1920, 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. There was, moreover, a lack of consensus about the objectives of the work, the national secretaries having on occasion to remind the matrons of local hostels that "the Y.W.C.A. is not an employment bureau, but is working solely for the girls themselves."¹¹⁴ Noting that governments were increasingly assuming responsibility for the screening and admitting, healthcare, education, and housing of immigrants, Mrs. H.P. Plumptre of the Dominion Council's Immigration Committee called upon the locals to answer "The Call of the West" in their own way by providing "comradeship, understanding and protection, [and] by taking the newcomers in to work with us to build a bigger, better nation." As "handmaid of the Church," she reminded them, the YWCA had "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."¹¹⁵ In the 1920s, this work would come to assume a much more prominent place on the YWCA's agenda. Before that time the groundwork had been laid by the Dominion Council and its immigration workers who exposed many local YWCA workers and students to

social gospel teachings on the immigration question which, although stereotyped and patronizing, were fundamentally optimistic and sympathetic at a time when outright hostility and nativist hysteria were common. By emphasizing the importance of environmental influences on character and values in their efforts to "Christianize" and "Canadianize" the immigrants, YWCA women helped to strengthen both the social impulse in the Protestant churches and the links between the immigration question and the problem of the city.¹¹⁶ In so doing, they drew the attention of the churches and government officials to what they perceived to be the particular requirements of the immigrant woman, and the important role that she too would play in building the new Canada.

Student Work

For the first two decades of the twentieth century, supervising the organization and functioning of student YWCAs at the growing numbers of colleges, universities and normal schools was one of the most significant activities undertaken by the Dominion Council and was absolutely integral to its efforts to create a strong and cohesive national movement. Continuing to emphasize the importance of evangelizing the student population, the Student Department of the Dominion Council, created in 1901, explained the rationale behind its work and its significance for 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. But the conditions of college life, and the ambitions of the student in many cases are such that there is a strong tendency to neglect this. With such conditions, and the fact that nine-tenths of those who leave college unconverted are never won for Christ, how imperative the need is for a strong, active, spiritual force in each college, and this force is being found in the Young Women's Christian Association.¹¹⁷

As the Dominion Council became increasingly committed to spreading the teachings of the Social Gospel, the thrust of its efforts shifted from evangelizing students to inspiring them to a greater sense of social responsibility, and particularly to a sense of responsibility for their own sex. The Student Department viewed its work as a constant struggle against selfishness in the woman student, an ongoing effort to relate the activities of the college branch to larger national and international questions, and a campaign to influence vocational choices and persuade YWCA students to transfer their allegiance to the city associations following graduation. The Dominion YWCA aspired to raise up a new generation of women leaders who, in making their career choices, would place "the call to service" above personal ambition, who would bridge the gap between the national movement and the local associations, and who would form the connecting link between the Social Gospel and the Women's Movement.

From the perspective of the students, the student YWCA, an integral part of the college experience for many women students during these decades, performed a somewhat different function. As Nancy Sheehan has recently observed, Canadian histories of higher education have been mainly institutional in their approach and we know very little about the actual experience of students.¹¹⁸ Some understanding of the role of the student YWCA, one of the principal women's societies on campus before 1920, could help to remedy this deficiency in our knowledge. By 1915, the Dominion Council reported, branches had been organized "in every University enrolling women, in most of the Residential and Household Science Colleges, and in many of the Teacher-training institutions throughout Canada."¹¹⁹ Despite the supervisory role of

the Dominion Council, the direct involvement of this body in the students' activities was minimal, consisting of one or two yearly visits from a national secretary. The student YWCA was essentially a "work of students among students."¹²⁰ Surviving reports of student activities in the college yearbooks suggest that the YWCA had an important social function on campus and, particularly, that it functioned as an important bond linking the women students. On some campuses, as well, it cooperated with the YMCA to link the women students with the opposite sex. The YWCA undoubtedly stimulated many women students to take an interest in foreign missions and social questions, but its emphasis on critical and frank study of the Bible sometimes resulted in an unexpected tendency to criticize the conservative evangelicalism of missionaries and the city YWCAs. Perhaps most distressing of all, many of those students who were inspired by the Social Gospel to apply their talents to changing the world, elected to do so as professionals and in partnership with men, rejecting the woman-centered volunteerism of the city YWCAs. Most of the Dominion Council's hopes for student work, because of the very different hopes and preoccupations of its targets, were thus destined not to be realized.

The YWCA quickly demonstrated itself to be the most popular expression of Christian life among Canadian women students. Shortly after its formation in 1901, the Student Department, consisting of a committee of alumnae appointed by the Dominion Council, was able to announce that twenty-two associations had been organized from Brandon to Prince Edward Island. "In these colleges there are about 1,325 women students, of which more than sixty-seven per cent are members of the Y.W.C.A."¹²¹ The Dominion Council played a major role in organizing new branches, responding to requests for assistance from Western Canada where there was a proliferation of new colleges as settlement advanced in the second decade of the century. In 1913,

thirty-nine branches were reported in affiliation, with the YWCA claiming fifty per cent of all women in these institutions as members, with a much higher percentage in universities and residential colleges. The same report noted, however, that membership could mean "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."¹²² Commenting on the work of the Student Department in 1918, Una Saunders, National General Secretary, observed that the membership in any one year was only about 2,700 students with at least a third of the membership being replaced each year. Associations at short-term colleges such as normal schools and agricultural colleges were particularly difficult to maintain and often needed the support of a faculty member. Nonetheless, she argued, although much smaller than the other departments of national YWCA work, "its importance is out of all proportion to its numerical strength, for it is reaching the coming women leaders and is helping to call them into obedience to Christ and into His service."¹²³

Throughout these years student YWCAs took very seriously their responsibility to keep before the women students the higher purpose of their education and the momentousness of their choice of a life work during their college years. Exhorted the program card of the Victoria College, University of Toronto, YWCA in 1906:

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to
dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and
loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle; face it!
'Tis God's gift.¹²⁴

A typical program of YWCA meetings held at the University of New Brunswick in 1907-08 featured student-led discussions on topics including "The Call to Service,"

"Glorifying God in Our Recreations," "What Seekest Thou as a College Girl," "What is Worth While?," "The Sense of Responsibility," "Prayer as a Means of Accomplishment," "The Power of Personal Influence," and "The Pure Life."¹²⁵ Albert College YWCA included a helpful list of "College 'Do's and Dont's'" on the back of its program card in 1903-04. These included: "Do be loyal to your parents," "Do your Bible study," "Do be womanly," "Do be punctual at Y.W.C.A.," "Don't be irreverent," "Don't be selfish," and "Don't forget--Teachers First."¹²⁶ Such a responsible attitude undoubtedly endeared the YWCA to college administrators who were quick to recognize that in encouraging Christian spirit, it acted as "an important auxiliary to the Faculty in preserving good discipline and fostering the best interests of the school."¹²⁷ As one "lady principal" commented to the Dominion Council's 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."¹²⁸ Yet the earnest zeal of YWCA members alienated some of the student population. One disgruntled student, in a survey conducted by a college YWCA president, described the YWCA as "a body of fanatics, interfering with other people and making of itself a centre of emotional, sanctimonious religiousness. The people who are really good pray by themselves, 'do good by stealth,' and don't preach."¹²⁹ That there was some truth in this accusation was acknowledged in subsequent advice to student branches to avoid aggressive tactics in recruiting new members. "Christ stands at the door and knocks; He never goes inside and nags."¹³⁰

As in the 1890s, the recruitment of missionaries for the foreign field continued to be an important function of student YWCAs. In 1902, the Bishop of Toronto addressed a

large missionary gathering, explaining why the movement for foreign missions placed its hopes for success in the college student.

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.¹³¹

In her study of women students at McGill, Margaret Gillett notes with reference to the activities of the YWCA's missionary committee that "programmes such as these serve to point up the high degree of interest taken by women in missionary work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries."¹³² Literature provided by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions exhorted the female students that "there is no service at home or abroad in which a Christian college woman can make her life count for more in extending the Kingdom of God than in this work for the women of the Orient."¹³³ The students at Acadia University held a missionary meeting once a month, "though they are not always on the whole successful, as one girl just reads a paper and if the others have not studied the subject at all they do not get much out of it."¹³⁴ The undoubted highlights of student YWCA mission study were addresses by returned missionaries, "men and women who had lived among the scenes and people they described and whose earnestness and enthusiasm would not fail to move the most indifferent heart to a sense of individual responsibility." As reported by one delegate to the second national summer conference in 1910, such speakers provided "word pictures of India, South America, China and even Canada, of miseries that, to most of us college girls at least, were quite horrifying in their suggestive power."¹³⁵ The Queen's YWCA was addressed in 1905 by one of its own alumnae, a returned missionary who pointed out "how thankful we girls should be for the grand opportunities we enjoy at college and she could not but contrast our life with the awful wretchedness and degradation of the girls of India."¹³⁶

As a result of these continuing efforts, some students were undoubtedly inspired to pursue careers as missionaries, and the Canadian student YWCA movement devoted considerable energy to fundraising activities to support the work of missionaries in the field. The Dominion Council's Foreign Department was a major beneficiary of this enthusiasm as, proportionately to their numbers, the students contributed a far greater share of its budget than did the city associations. Students were especially enthusiastic about supporting secretaries engaged in student work overseas. Indicative of an underlying problem for the Dominion Council, however, was the fact that students could not be persuaded to direct all their support for missionary efforts into the YWCA's work with Asian women, being just as willing to support the work of church missions. Out of \$2,215.87 raised for foreign missions by the women students in 1912, only \$802.10 was directed to the YWCA.¹³⁷ The student YWCAs also cooperated with the YMCAs to support work of the YMCA's Canadian Colleges' Missions in Korea and India.¹³⁸ Despite the best efforts of the YWCA, students did not necessarily see their missionary efforts as part of a special "women's work for women." In fact, their missionary activities brought them into extensive contact with male students both on campus at lectures held jointly with the YMCA on missionary topics and at the gigantic conferences of the Student Volunteer Movement and the World Student Christian Federation. These contacts were undoubtedly an extremely important factor in the ultimate failure of the Dominion Council to unite the students with the city associations in a strong national women's movement.

Reflecting the pledge of the student YWCAs to help students "to develop an efficiency in Christian service" and "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,"¹³⁹ members were provided with much advice and information about choosing and

preparing for a life work. Principal Gordon of Queen's University addressed the YWCA students at regular intervals on the subject of "The Influence of a University Training on the Home Life," expressing his view that "after the college course there is too frequently a narrowness and restraint felt with the home life and surroundings" and advising students, as one of them reported, that "with all our training we need much yet to bring us to the level of our mothers and grandmothers."¹⁴⁰ Yet the theme of a college course as preparation for "educated motherhood," judging from the absence of discussion in the records, does not appear to have interested either the students or the Dominion Council's Student Department who took for granted that students were preparing for a career. If this was to be a "career" in volunteer work, service on the executive of a student YWCA could be a valuable experience, according to Mrs. H.P. Plumptre of the Montreal YWCA, who wrote an open letter to students advising them to take up some "official work" during college life. A training in "business habits," "system," and "method," were "just as essential for the society woman or for the philanthropist as for the professional woman or student." Nothing could be more essential than acquiring practical experience in committee work, for "the business of the world must be organized by the few, acting for the many: or in other words, all societies must be 'run' by committees; and the sooner you are trained for this part of the world's work the better."¹⁴¹

For the most part, however, it was assumed that students would be seeking paid work, and the thrust of discussion was to encourage a choice that provided the greatest opportunity for "service." "The truest college woman," students were advised in 1902, "does not crave a career in which she shall merely enjoy herself, or earn wealth, or gain a reputation. She hopes to be of the greatest real usefulness to the community, and so to the world."¹⁴² This particular writer, an American YWCA secretary, recommended

the YWCA secretaryship as "a career which shall be most helpful to others and at the same time shall develop every power, revealed or latent, in the woman herself." In the early part of the century it appeared that the most likely possibilities for those with a desire to serve lay in teaching and foreign missions, but by the second decade, the situation was changing rapidly. By 1912, Principal Gordon was advising the Queen's YWCA students that changed ideas of "womanliness" now allowed it as womanly to earn a livelihood, to be well educated, to take an interest in the welfare of women, and to extend the female influence even to the state.¹⁴³ In a lengthy discussion of "Occupations Open to College Women" in 1916, Winifred Harvey of the Dominion Council's Student Department, commented that "until a few years ago the scarcity of teachers all over the Dominion led the majority of university graduates to turn to that line of employment. Even those with little aptitude and less liking for teaching were induced to take up educational work." Under the present changed circumstances, she advised women to "choose fearlessly." "So often women find they are misfits because they chose what they felt was safe work rather than what was suited to their talents." To the new generation of YWCA students she recommended secretarial work, library work, social service, business, household science, commercial art, journalism, and the professions of dentistry, medicine and law.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, in describing its work for the college woman in a special publication by the National Council of Women, the Student Department claimed to provide students with lists of "possible opportunities in Welfare Work, Charity Organizations, Church Work, Nursing, Functional and Technical Re-education, and other branches of Social Service."¹⁴⁵

Another of the principal activities of student YWCAs was Bible study. In addition to influencing students' vocational choices, YWCAs also intended "to win the non-Christian women students to become followers of Jesus Christ," "to guard them

against the temptations common in college" (these were viewed as primarily intellectual rather than moral), and "to deepen the spiritual life."¹⁴⁶ In encouraging students to join small student-led discussion groups pursuing a definite course of Bible study, the student YWCAs participated in the launching of a phenomenon that was to have a profound influence on several generations of Canadian college students, extending into the 1930s and beyond. As explained in a 1908 YMCA pamphlet, prior to 1890 Bible study had consisted mainly of lectures by professors who had rarely been successful in influencing students to undertake independent study outside the class hour.¹⁴⁷ The Bible study movement among students was launched by American evangelist Dwight L. Moody in 1885 at the gigantic Northfield, Massachusetts, conferences attended by delegates from the Canadian student YWCAs and YMCAs. As reported by a historian of Victoria College, "The marvellous quickening of interest in the study of the Bible...among the college students of the whole Christian world, in the twenty years from 1890-1910, was due in large measure to the spirit of honest, fearless investigation manifested everywhere in the historical and critical methods of Bible study."¹⁴⁸ Particularly influential for the Canadian students was the publication of Henry Burton Sharman's Studies in the Life of Christ in 1896. Sharman became a regular feature at student YWCA conferences in the 1910s and 1920s, leading study groups in which students were encouraged to undertake their own personal quest for "the historical Jesus" by approaching the synoptic gospels with an open and critical mind and putting aside their preconceptions derived from traditional church teachings.¹⁴⁹ In 1918, the Student Department reported: "Great emphasis is laid on Bible study...Next year's effort, it is hoped, will find sixty per cent of the students throughout Canada engaged in study 'centering around the person and power of Jesus Christ.'"¹⁵⁰ The liberal theological leanings of the Bible study movement were strongly encouraged by

the Dominion Council's Student Department, but they were to have unforeseen consequences, contributing to the eventual withdrawal of the students from the YWCA.

In addition to the more explicitly religious activities of promoting Bible and mission study and the consideration of the higher purposes of women's education, student YWCAs also contributed significantly to the social life of women students. A 1902 pamphlet described the "legitimate social work" of the student YWCA as "the welcoming of new students, the identification of religious with social life in college, the establishment of a Christian sisterhood, more dear and permanent than any other tie."¹⁵¹ In a report on "Life Among the Women at University College, University of Toronto" in 1909, it was noted that despite three dances and four receptions per year organized jointly by men and women, "the most popular social life of the girls is that which is solely for girls." All the women students reportedly participated in the social life of the various societies. Although the Women's Lit was the largest, "the Y.W.C.A. claims many girls of a serious turn of mind and finds plenty to interest them."¹⁵² Certainly the YWCA was not necessarily identified with only the most religious students on campus. In a welcome to the 1903 "freshettes," the editors of the ladies' column in the Queen's University Journal advised the new student to "neglect not any side of the triangle which represents the unity of your being." It was recommended, therefore, to join the Levana Society, go to church, go skating each season "but don't slope lectures for the rink--unless you have a headache," and "attend the Y.W. every Friday afternoon, for all the best girls go to Y.W."¹⁵³ Joint social functions with the YMCA were also popular with students. The women students at Acadia reported, somewhat ruefully, that their joint reception with the YMCA "always takes the form of a topic reception, for being a Baptist institution, nothing gayer is permitted."¹⁵⁴ The more fortunate students of the YWCA at McGill cooperated with the YMCA in holding at

least two Saturday night skating parties each season "where they skate till ten to the tune of a hurdy-gurdy, when all retire again to Strathcona Hall for a good cup of hot coffee, etc." These parties, it was reported, were "one of the most pleasant memories of the McGill student."¹⁵⁵

In 1909, a new phase in the history of the student YWCAs began with the launching of the annual summer conference of city and student delegates held by the Dominion Council in the Muskoka District of Ontario. Prior to this date, Canadian student YWCAs had sent delegates to the international YWCA conferences at Silver Bay, New York, and Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, from which they had derived much "inspiration" and enthusiasm for the broader objectives of the student YWCA.¹⁵⁶ By organizing Canadian conferences which brought the students together with the city associations, the Dominion Council hoped to harness this enthusiasm for the benefit of the Canadian movement. Each branch undertook fundraising to send at least one delegate with the result that the conferences were attended by approximately 200 students each year.

These gatherings are made up of girls from almost all the leading Colleges of the Dominion, and for ten days they study and play together, learning from each other which methods are most helpful and which most unsatisfactory. Experienced secretaries give help on practical Association subjects by addresses and in discussion. Mission and Bible Study courses are taken up by efficient leaders, and evening addresses are delivered by prominent clergymen and professors. It is essentially a time of new friendships and new inspirations.¹⁵⁷

The most significant feature of these conferences was the concerted attempt by the Student Department to expose students to the ideas of leading Canadian social gospel thinkers, such as J.S. Woodsworth. While the conferences were not intended to downplay the importance of evangelizing non-Christian lands, it was hoped that students would be roused to a similar enthusiasm for resolving the problems of Canadian cities. As The Young Women of Canada reported in 1912, "The fearless and

uncompromising study of social conditions as they exist in our Dominion, with its attendant 'call to arms' to each Christian Canadian, marks a new era in Mission Study."¹⁵⁸

By 1918, the Dominion Council's Student Department had broadened its conception of student work, intending it "to bring every student in touch with the religious and social problems of Canada and of foreign countries, and to assist her to work out her responsibility for the solution of these problems." Three national secretaries and four conferences held each year at Deep Brook, Nova Scotia; Lake Couchiching, Ontario; Lumsden Beach, Saskatchewan; and Whytecliffe Beach, B.C., where "opportunities for service are presented by authorities on the various branches of work," were devoted to the accomplishment of this objective.¹⁵⁹ Sometimes the desired results were achieved. The Queen's YWCA reported in 1910 that "as a result of the enthusiasm brought back from Muskoka, three classes are being organized on "Japan and its Degeneration," "The Stranger Within Our Gates," and "South America."¹⁶⁰ The delegates reported that "we saw our Queen's Y.W. in an entirely different light, as a part of a great whole, a world-wide association. We grew several inches during those ten days."¹⁶¹ A McGill student who attended the 1919 Central Student Conference on the theme, "A Living Faith for an Age of Rebuilding," reported that "to every girl there came a new meaning to Bible study" and that "from great fields of service there were brought living, stirring messages that made one's heart leap to hear, and one's desire eager to enter into work that would render less dreadful the sufferings of the ignorant and the oppressed."¹⁶²

Nonetheless, the Student Department was consistently disappointed with the results of its efforts as the new "Social Study" groups enrolled fewer students than the Bible and Mission Study classes; the numbers reported for 1912 were 293, 543, and 1002

respectively.¹⁶³ In 1915 the Department reported what it perceived as the continuing failure of students to embrace the Social Gospel: "The number of students engaged in social study is small, and as yet the interest in social problems though wide-spread is rather superficial, and expresses itself in a readiness to do philanthropic and palliative work rather than make a study of courses and constructive work."¹⁶⁴ Nor were efforts to interest the students in the cause of women more successful. An important function of the conferences, with their sunrise boat launches, picnics, and athletic competitions, was to foster the rituals of female friendship; the Queen's delegates to Muskoka in 1910 reported that "it was certainly surprising how many discovered a talent for singing and giving yells at that conference."¹⁶⁵ The National Council of Women made a gesture of sisterly solidarity by providing the students with ice cream.¹⁶⁶ The Elgin House Student Committee, composed of national secretaries and Dominion Council representatives, found it necessary to recommend, following the 1915 conference, "that an effort be made to point out to students the significance of the Woman's Movement in its broader aspects, as an essential part of the establishment of the Kingdom of God."¹⁶⁷

The advent of the First World War did result in a marked change in the attitude of students and an unprecedented willingness to consider the importance of national and international questions. This new spirit, however, did not necessarily lead students in the direction that the YWCA had hoped. Instead, it encouraged them to demand both greater democracy and a more flexible definition of Christianity from the Dominion Council. As one student critic wrote in 1916:

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 Christians, whether warm or lukewarm, but there are many not in our Christian Association.¹⁶⁸

Under the influence of the Bible study movement, many Christian students who had newly discovered the ethical and social teachings of Jesus, were coming to reject their affiliations with the denominational churches which they regarded as narrow, conservative, and materialistic; Donald Kirkey has argued that this critical spirit was particularly prevalent among the women students.¹⁶⁹ Both the student YWCAs and YMCAs increasingly found the evangelical membership test a serious liability. "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."¹⁷⁰ In 1916, the students sought and received both representation on the Dominion Council's Student Committee and permission 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. The Dominion Council proved more flexible than the YMCA, which refused the students permission to abandon the evangelical test, but it continued to insist 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.

As students were caught up in the wartime spirit of reform, many of those who at this point embraced the Social Gospel, as the Dominion Council had hoped, ironically turned against the YWCA, associating the city movement with the conservatism of the evangelical churches and the business sector. Both male and female students found their "honest expression of opinion" hampered by their connection with an organization

that was forced to rely on the "good will and support of a conservative element--the community."¹⁷¹ A growing nationalism prompted the student YWCAs and YMCAs to withdraw from the North American Student Council in 1914 to form, with the Canadian Colleges Missions and the Canadian branch of the Student Volunteer Movement, the Council of Canadian Student Movements. For the remainder of the war there was growing discussion of the desirability of a united student Christian movement. Objections were more and more frequently raised to the existence of separate Christian organizations for male and female students on the grounds that this was inefficient and failed to recognize "the principle of co-education."¹⁷² Increasingly, the students argued that the same name could no longer be used to describe two such distinct movements as the city and the student YWCAs.

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.¹⁷³

At the Student Volunteer convention at Des Moines, Iowa, on December 30, 1919, a caucus of four hundred Canadian delegates met to discuss the organization of a 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."¹⁷⁴

Thus the end of the war brought the end of the Dominion Council's hopes for a united movement of volunteers and professional women committed to extending the Kingdom of God through the creation of a separate female public sphere. By incorporating the

fledgling student Christian associations into the YWCA in the 1890s, the Dominion Council had hoped to provide the organization with a reliable source of committed recruits for city and foreign secretaryships. Although this effort was largely unsuccessful, it does appear that for many students the YWCA did provide an importance source of "Christian fellowship" and female companionship. It is difficult to know how many of those aspiring professional women heeded the YWCA's "call to service" in their later lives and careers, and to what extent the attitudes they brought to their work were influenced by that contact with the YWCA in their formative college years. It is possible, however, that the ideology of womanly self-sacrifice characteristic of the new female professions such as home economics and social work in the 1920s and 1930s may have been at least in some measure a legacy of the Student Department of the Dominion Council of YWCAs.

Girls' Work

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the YWCA was significantly affected by the appearance in Canada of new ideas about "adolescence", a new biologically-defined age-grouping straddling the older categories of childhood and youth, which inevitably had important implications for what was by then the leading organization specializing in work with girls. An "invention" of the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the modern concept of adolescence began to gain wide acceptance in the second decade of this century, the "era of the adolescent", during which were developed "both the institutions and psychology that were to govern the social treatment of youth for much of the twentieth century."¹⁷⁵ In the forefront of the movement to define and promote the new age grouping were self-styled lay "religious

educators" who generated a substantial literature describing the peculiar susceptibility of adolescents to religious influences and the strategic importance of this group for the churches' larger goal of winning the nation for Christ. Given the YWCA's self-proclaimed role as "handmaiden" to the churches, the adolescent problem was considered significant enough to warrant a coordinated national policy.

The YWCA's response to the new concept of adolescence was defined and mediated principally by the specially-created Girls' Work Department of the Dominion Council which, between 1909 and 1921 played a major role in disseminating these new ideas throughout Canada. Cherishing visions of reaching ever larger numbers of girls, YWCA secretaries specializing in the new Girls' Work experimented with a variety of strategies including girls' clubs, summer camps, and Girl Guide companies, and the new Canadian Girls in Training program, launched during the First World War. By 1920, their optimism knew no bounds:

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.¹⁷⁶

The Dominion Council's Girls' Workers saw the new adolescent group as the principal means by which the YWCA could achieve its goals of reaching all the young women of Canada and of remaking Canadian society in the image of Christ's teachings. In promoting and professionalizing Girls' Work, they contributed to the development of a distinctly Canadian solution to the problem of the adolescent girl.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in North America and Europe, witnessed a profound transformation of adult attitudes toward young people. Prior to this time, a stage in life known as "youth" was commonly recognized and described, but

the modern concept of adolescence was virtually unknown. Adolescence replaced youth as a life stage of an unprecedented number of young people of all social classes as a result of economic, demographic and social changes taking place in emerging industrial societies. Historians have stressed the relative importance of a variety of factors, including fundamental changes affecting the internal structure of the home, an increasing pattern of age segregation resulting from the removal of young people from the labour force and the introduction of compulsory schooling, and a fall in the age of puberty combined with the late marriage of the middle-class male. All these factors resulted in an increasingly lengthy period of dependence for young people of both sexes. Adolescence also, however, implied a new emphasis on, and a new perception of, the experience of puberty. Young people who had once been perceived primarily in terms of the social standing of their parents were more and more defined by the physiological changes affecting their bodies. Unlike youth, a state which had existed primarily for young people of the middle classes, adolescence was described as a universal condition transcending social class.¹⁷⁷

The new theories of adolescence were developed in Europe and the United States by psychologists and educators, and were soon taken up by church leaders, social reformers and other adults with an interest in young people. Consequently, ideas about adolescence reflected middle-class adult ambivalence toward both modern young people and the rapidly evolving urban industrial world they inhabited. Adolescents were, on the one hand, viewed as particularly vulnerable to the temptations of modern life, and juvenile delinquency, formerly associated only with the children of the working classes, was now seen as inseparably linked to the biological experience of puberty.¹⁷⁸ By 1914, "a stage of life, adolescence, had replaced station in life, class, as the perceived cause of misbehaviour."¹⁷⁹ Yet on the other hand, malleable adolescents were

perceived as equally susceptible to influence for good, and their potentially redemptive qualities of idealism, optimism and youth attracted the attention of reformers who feared that traditional religious and rural values were being threatened by materialism, socialism, corruption and moral decay.¹⁸⁰ According to the new adolescent psychologists, particularly the American G. Stanley Hall, whose monumental Adolescence, published in 1905, provided the most comprehensive statement of the new ideas, the trauma of puberty produced a time of turmoil or crisis in the life of the young person.¹⁸¹ Consequently adolescents were believed to need close and intense adult supervision to shepherd them through this dangerous period; "the model adolescent therefore became the organized youth, dependent but secure from temptation."¹⁸²

A plethora of programs were designed, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, by the adult promoters of what was rapidly becoming an international youth movement to recruit adolescents into an environment where their various spiritual, physical, and intellectual crises could be carefully monitored. A substantial literature, mostly produced outside this country but widely read by Canadian reformers and religious educators, meticulously catalogued the biological changes through which adolescents passed and the various phases of their social, religious and intellectual development.¹⁸³ Adolescent psychologists and religious educators, armed with this understanding, defined the principal "needs" of the adolescent age group as respect for adult authority and a new sense of duty to counteract the selfishness and irresponsibility to which they were prone; self-discipline to control their new sexual urges; religious guidance to ensure that their inevitable spiritual crisis resulted in a conversion experience; adult-sponsored recreation to direct the powerful influence of the peer group, to provide distraction, and to make them physically fit for their adult

responsibilities; and, most importantly, opportunities for intimate contacts with sympathetic adults trained in the principles of the new adolescent psychology.

For a number of reasons this influx of new ideas about adolescents and adolescence demanded a response from the YWCA. First, the new psychologists and religious educators were unanimous in their conviction that the needs of adolescent girls were distinct from those of boys. Hall's Adolescence devoted an entire chapter to "Adolescent Girls and Their Education" that provided "hints and general outlines of a higher education for girls based on their nature and needs and not on convention or the demands of feminists."¹⁸⁴ Not all authorities regarded these distinct needs, as Hall did, as biologically based. Minnie E. Kennedy in an essay recommended by the YWCA defined the needs of the adolescent girl with reference to her principal characteristics--Hero-worship, the Social Instinct, the Religious Instinct, Altruism, the Maternal Instinct, Constructive Imagination, Secretiveness, Love of the Beautiful, and a Desire to Please--which she considered to be "due to the different 'traditions,' conventions and training that have been brought to bear upon her." Kennedy, like other writers, drew the obvious conclusion that "because a girl's life must broaden into a woman's life--because the woman's hopes, fears and experiences will surely in the future be those of the girl--the best person to be brought in close touch with her during this period of hero-worship, is a woman."¹⁸⁵ As the leading organization of women working with young women, the YWCA with its extensive experience and staff of trained workers, was inevitably drawn to this new movement and perceived itself as uniquely qualified to provide the all important female role models.

Also contributing to the YWCA's interest in the newly-defined adolescent group was the fact that the literature on the subject suggested that adolescents were central to the YWCA's broader objectives of bringing together the young women of all classes and

winning them for Christ. Hall provided extensive documentation to the effect that adolescence was a time of religious turmoil and that adolescents were peculiarly susceptible to conversion. This, of course, was even more true for girls than it was for boys. "Religion will always hold as prominent a place in woman's life as politics does in man's, and adolescence is still more its seedtime with girls than with boys."¹⁸⁶ Yet the churches and religious educators were preoccupied with what was generally referred to as "the young boy problem," given the greater tendency of boys to leave the church during the teenage years and the growing conviction, encouraged by Hall and others, that those who did not experience conversion during these crucial years were lost forever.¹⁸⁷ It was, of course, axiomatic to YWCA work that it was equally, if not more, important to the welfare of the churches and society as a whole that the future mothers be won for Christ.

...girl life is of such infinite value to Canada to-day that no foresighted thinker dare ignore it. In the latent powers of 'teen-age girls lie those faculties and characteristics which will make the foundations, good or bad, of the homes on which the Dominion is built.¹⁸⁸

Finally, and perhaps most promising of all from the perspective of the YWCA, the new ideas about adolescence contributed to a new biological definition of young womanhood and stressed the universality of the adolescent experience. For YWCA women who since the 1890s had been expressing a growing desire to expand their mandate to all the young women of Canada and to bring them together in a way that would encourage cooperation between women and help to overcome the class barriers that divided them, Girls' Work, as they christened their new programs for adolescents, appeared to promise results surpassing anything the YWCA had yet achieved.

In turning to the problem of the adolescent girl, the YWCA drew on its extensive experience in Junior Work, pioneered by the Montreal YWCA in the 1870s and by the turn

of the century "gradually but surely becoming a recognized feature of the work."¹⁸⁹ In her address on the subject to the 1903 conference, Hattie Tenney, General Secretary of the Montreal YWCA, recounted the formation of the Helping Hand Sewing School, the Day Nursery, Happy Morning Circles, classes in sewing, cooking and gymnastics, and Bible study groups. Emphasizing the preventive character of the programs, she also observed that "the Junior work yields not only future, but present definite results. A spirit of unselfishness and thoughtfulness for others is inculcated. A practical knowledge of helpful subjects is obtained. A spirit of love and personal interest in the Association is fostered."¹⁹⁰ Junior Work, of course, was directed to working-class children under thirteen and was rooted in a nineteenth-century perception of childhood rather than the newer concept of adolescence. Intended primarily to train girls for working-class motherhood and employment in domestic service, it had no conception of the "universal needs" of girls. Nonetheless, from their experience with Junior girls, YWCA workers learned a number of valuable lessons. For example, "character formation" could be greatly facilitated through the use of pictures, stories, songs and organized games. The appeal of activity, especially cooking and "physical culture" was duly noted, as was the successful formation of self-governing clubs adapted from the model of women's clubs and suitably christened Daisy or Sunshine. Most important was the discovery that the key to success in Junior Work was the personality of the worker "because her adaptability to the child nature is an important factor in the success of our Junior Work."¹⁹¹ Junior Work, in fact, encouraged the first discussions of standards for children's work and laid the groundwork for the emergence of the professional Girls' Worker.

Much of the impetus for Girls' Work came from the Dominion Council's Student Department and from its staff of young college-educated secretaries. From the very

beginning, they raised the question of training and standards for Girls' Work and, as the programs evolved, so too did the concept of the professional Girls' Worker--a college graduate with a particular affinity for working with girls, a thorough training in adolescent psychology, and a knowledge of the most modern programs and methods being used in the field. By 1921, a one-year post-graduate course of training for Girls' Workers, offered in conjunction with 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 Canadian Girls in Training. From amongst the ranks of young YWCA secretaries were recruited and trained Canada's first professional Girls' Workers.

Feeling the impact of the new ideas about adolescence, the Dominion Council held its first discussion of Girls' Work in 1909, pronouncing it "practically the largest undeveloped field in Young Women's Christian Association work in Canada."¹⁹² Unlike Junior Work, which had been left to the discretion of the locals, Girls' Work was rapidly incorporated as a vital and integral department of YWCA work at the national level. The target singled out for attention by this department was the estimated population of 35,000 Canadian high school girls. Mary S. Edgar, a national secretary who rapidly became one of the leading advocates of Girls' Work, explained the significance of this group to the 1913 YWCA convention.

This great army of High School girls presents an enormous field of opportunity. Other classes of girls perhaps offer more spectacular opportunities, for instance the young wage-earning girl or the immigrant. But do not the great majority of our leaders pass through the High Schools of the country? It is only about 10% of them who actually go on to College, but they do go out from school with a wider intelligence, greater efficiency and therefore with larger possibilities than the little fourteen year old who steps out of the public school into shop or factory.¹⁹³

Appealing to the delegates for support for this new work, she argued that in her view, given the YWCA's experience in working with students and its city associations "offering a rallying place and capable of securing leaders for the work," there was "no other agency in Canada that can go in and more adequately occupy the field for the purpose of winning these girls for Christ."

At a special meeting of representatives of the City and Student Committees of the Dominion Council held to discuss High School Work in 1914, the principal characteristics of the high school and teenage populations were discussed at length. The high school girl, it was noted, was generally living at home or with relatives. She was therefore under the direct influence of the home and usually of the church, "the majority being enrolled in Sunday School classes, probably a higher percentage than that of any other teen-age group."¹⁹⁴ In common with the whole teenage group she was considered to be fun-loving, having a desire to serve, seeking to understand life, and having a love of organization. What distinguished the high school group from others was that they were consciously preparing for life and had a higher potential for leadership. More eloquently, at the 1913 convention, Mary Edgar described the high school girl as "at that plastic period in her life when she is particularly responsive to all kinds of influences. It is her 'Golden Age' when dreams are the realest things and she has golden dreams of her own possibilities."

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.¹⁹⁵

Along with other YWCA Girls' Workers, she argued that the organization had a responsibility that it could not shirk to enter the field of high school work. "Can we

assume that somehow these needs will be met, or shall we as an agency under a solemn obligation towards all kinds of girls realize that God can use the Young Women's Christian Association to make a vital contribution to the lives of school girls."

Between 1909 and 1921, the Dominion Council experimented with a variety of strategies and programs in order to most effectively reach its projected target--the entire population of Canadian high school girls. Its first experiments resulted in the introduction of the first summer camp held for schoolgirls in Canada. In 1909, Canadian YWCA leaders were introduced by Grace Saunders of the British YWCA to the work of the University Women's Camp for School Girls, initiated in England in 1901.¹⁹⁶ In the following summer, the Dominion Council held its first summer camp at Lake Couchiching, near Orillia, Ontario. Staffed by six "officers" drawn from the ranks of the college YWCAs, the camp provided a wholesome two-week vacation for twenty-five girls from private boarding schools in Toronto. According to a pamphlet promoting the camp, the aim was "to show schoolgirls that a life lived for Christ is happier and more useful than any other, and to bring them into touch with those who may be able to help them in some of the practical difficulties which all school-girls have to face sooner or later."¹⁹⁷ In keeping with the teachings of Stanley Hall, YWCA camp literature was permeated by the assumption that the idyllic pastoral environment at the camps facilitated religious conversion.

...underneath the enjoyment of the care-free life lies the deeper and stronger motives, which are to bring girls to a knowledge of the God of the Open Air, at the age when heart-to-heart talks and strong gentle influence mean much; to give them a nearer conception of the Christ-life by talking and living, by daily Bible study, by twilight talks at sunset on the margin of the lake, when subjects of interest to girls--Ideals, Friendship, Service, Character, or women's work in the world, are brought before them, and by the quiet times at morning and evening when there is an opportunity for personal communion with the Father. And so the girls go forth from these

happy days with a broader outlook and a better understanding of how to live their lives.¹⁹⁸

At the camps, too, the ideal relationship between girl and leader was clearly defined for the first time. The young unmarried college graduate was acknowledged as the most suitable candidate for Girls' Work, being young enough to identify with the interests of school girls, to win their respect by participating fully in their activities, and to inspire the confidences shared by a young girl with a trusted older sister.

The camps were judged a phenomenal success by the Dominion Council whose first School Girls' Secretary, Mary Edgar, 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."¹⁹⁹ As a logical follow-up to the camps, several high school clubs were established in Toronto in 1911 and 1912 on an experimental basis to see if the camp experience could be more directly related to the girls' school and home life and translated into concrete instances of helpful service to others. Despite the apparent success of these clubs, which featured the advantage of a flexible program that could be adapted to different types of girls, the Dominion Council was not optimistic that their example would be widely followed in schools across the country. The experience of the American YWCA, studied carefully by Canadian leaders, had shown that even when the permission of the school authorities was obtained, vociferous objections from Jews, socialists and Roman Catholics to the presence of the YWCA in the schools often put an end to club work. The Dominion Council feared that opposition from Catholics would prove particularly strong in Canada, making work in Quebec possible only in the Protestant schools and in Manitoba "quite out of the question."²⁰⁰ In 1913, therefore, experiments were conducted in several cities with an alternative favoured by the American YWCA--the organization of high school clubs to meet at the local City YWCA under the supervision of a Girls' Work

Secretary. The fact remained, however, that an estimated two-thirds of Canada's high school girls lived in smaller communities lacking a YWCA building.

A similar lack of success resulted from YWCA experiments with the Girl Guides, a new movement for adolescent girls featuring a program more flexible than anything the YWCA had yet devised. Arriving from England the first Canadian company of Agnes Baden-Powell Girl Guides was registered at St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1909, an example soon followed in other cities across the country.²⁰¹ YWCA leaders supported the ideals and principles of Guiding as "those which are most needed by the girls of to-day, girls who are out in the firing-line, fighting side by side with their brothers, facing the same temptations and winning the same honours."²⁰² Despite some public concern that Guiding would make girls bold or encourage them to ape their brothers, the YWCA became the first of the major women's organizations to sponsor Guide companies and was represented on the Dominion Council of Girl Guides organized in 1912. Despite these promising beginnings, however, growing dissatisfaction with some aspects of the Guide program caused a gradual withdrawal of YWCA support from the movement. At its 1913 convention, the YWCA voiced its criticism of the British content of Guide program materials, strongly advising "the necessity of publishing a hand-book and literature adapted to Canadian ideals and conditions."²⁰³ No program aimed at Canadian girls could satisfy the YWCA unless it took into account the need to assimilate Canada's large and diverse immigrant population. Given the YWCA's commitment to linking girls with the Protestant churches, the non-sectarian stance of the Guides also proved unsatisfactory. Finally, YWCA Girls' Workers stressed the development of "leadership potential" among girls and young women, and felt that the Girl Guide Company, less democratic than the YWCA club, did not promote sufficient initiative on the part of the girls.

With the outbreak of the First World War the problem of the adolescent girl took on a new urgency. With the identification of Canada's war with Germany by the Protestant churches, particularly the Methodists, as "the beginning of our regeneration," Protestant reformers linked the struggle overseas and on the home front to the Social Gospel crusade to remake Canadian society in the image of the teachings of Christ.²⁰⁴ Many women's organizations, including the YWCA, saw in the war an opportunity for women to serve, creating new possibilities for women and demonstrating the worth of their contribution to the community and the nation to a greater extent than ever before. Girls' workers spoke increasingly of the need for and the possibility of a transformation of the "selfish" and "thoughtless" adolescent as a result of participation in the war effort which would encourage her to think about the "higher things" in life. "Canada needs as never before strong, sane, womanly women, and to produce such women as these from the eager but undirected and uninspired multitude of girls is the unrivalled opportunity of every leader."²⁰⁵ The perceived need for a program to meet the "needs" of adolescent girls became increasingly linked to the desire of YWCA Girls' Workers to channel the wartime idealism and patriotism of girls into "service" and to prepare them for an unprecedented assumption of responsibility by women in post-war Canada.

The girl now in her teens will come into womanhood in a new Canada--indeed in a new world...But, as she steps into womanhood, she will meet conditions most complex and problems almost overwhelming. Those who marry must keep up the best traditions of our Canadian homelife; those who enter business or professional life...must be especially efficient, as they will meet in this period of readjustment many new difficulties, and many will be called on to fill those positions of leadership which would have been filled by the men who have fallen in the great war; all must be ready to meet new social and, no doubt, new political responsibilities.²⁰⁶

Una Saunders, addressing a girls' conference during the war, explained that "girls are being looked to for conservation of the life of Canada" by making homes and rearing

children. But in the environment of wartime Canada and in the new society that would emerge from it, women's responsibilities extended beyond these traditional tasks. Girls had a responsibility to replace the men gone to the front and to defend the ideals for which the men were fighting in France. For this, they needed "training to make them efficient." In the new society that Girls' Workers were helping to create, every woman would be married either to a man or to a cause. "And if there are not enough men to go round," she observed pointedly, "there are plenty of causes."²⁰⁷

During these years of YWCA experimentation in Girls' Work, national church leaders, too, had been attracted by the new ideas about adolescence, and wished to see the establishment of a mid-week program for the adolescent members of Sunday School classes to extend the churches' influence over these young people. But, according to historian Patricia Dirks, "denominational religious education officials had, by 1914, fallen so short of achieving their objectives that Canada's major Protestant churches found it expedient to enter into co-operative arrangements for boys', and subsequently for girls' work with the non-denominational YM and YWCAs and Sunday School Associations."²⁰⁸ Appealing to the Dominion Council of YWCAs, with its staff of trained workers and experience in Girls' Work, the churches were inspired by their recent successful launching of Canadian Standard Efficiency Training (CSET), a program for adolescent boys developed in cooperation with the Young Men's Christian Association.²⁰⁹ Leaping at this opportunity to demonstrate its usefulness to the churches, whose members at the local level frequently suspected both the YMCA and YWCA of trying to "steal" their young people from denominational church societies, the Dominion Council joined with the Protestant Sunday School Boards and Associations to establish the National Advisory Committee for Cooperation in Girls' Work in 1915.²¹⁰ Soundly rejecting suggestions that the boys' program should simply be adapted for the

girls, the committee spent two years studying the needs of adolescent girls, during which time the expertise provided by several YWCA Girls' Workers on the Committee was crucial, as was the YWCA's experience in smoothing the "ruffled feathers" which frequently resulted in the course of attempts at interdenominational cooperation. In 1917, the committee members unveiled the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) program.

It is a Canadian Programme, prepared by Canadian men and women for Canadian Girls. It is a programme 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.²¹¹

The CGIT program was, in no small measure, the climax of the YWCA's years of experimentation in Girls' Work, incorporating the emphasis on the "four-fold" development of the girl, a knowledge of "girl psychology," the use of self-governing clubs, the recognition of the appeal of the camp experience, and the commitment to a special relationship between leader and girl. To an unprecedented degree, however, girls were called upon to prepare themselves for a life of "service."

At the 1913 YWCA convention, Mary Edgar asked those in attendance who among them was going to answer "the universal questions of school girls," which she believed were: "1. How can I be sure of what is right or what is wrong? 2. Where can I get the power to do what is right? 3. How can I serve?"²¹² The National Advisory Committee for Cooperation in Girls' Work, in its deliberations, attempted to see that girls were guided to the right answers to those questions. At CGIT meetings, modelled after the YWCA girls' club and led by a Sunday School teacher or YWCA Girls' Worker, activities were organized under the four standards--spiritual, intellectual, physical, and service--and discussions focussed on 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."²¹³ The CGIT code 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. The charting system used by the CSET program, which encouraged boys to accumulate points "for everything from swimming to daily bowel movements"²¹⁴, was rejected by the founders of CGIT. The emphasis was placed instead on personal interviews with the leader, group discussions, and Bible study using the new liberal and more intellectual "higher criticism" which YWCA Girls' Workers had encountered in their experience with the Student YWCAs.²¹⁵ Girls were encouraged to come to their own understanding of the teachings of Jesus as embodying an ideal of service that would be applicable in their own futures, whether they chose to "serve" as mothers, volunteers in women's organizations, missionaries, teachers, health professionals and social workers, or members of the clerical or industrial labour force. As one CGIT handbook explained in 1916, "Life is not lived in isolation, but in social groups (home, school, church, community), and the Christian law for these relationships is that of service, actuated by love." Selfishness, defined as "purely personal ambition" was to be overcome "by a study of the rights and interests of others, and by viewing life from Christ's standpoint of brotherhood."²¹⁶

Between 1918 and 1921, CGIT was officially launched and promoted by a series of cooperative camps and weekend girls' conferences, each attended by hundreds of girls and interested women, not only in the larger cities but also in smaller communities such as Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and Dauphin, Manitoba. Again, the YWCA played a significant role, organizing the conferences, assuming the financial burden of organization and promotion, providing a staff of five travelling Girls' Works

Secretaries, and assuming the responsibility for training Sunday School teachers in the principles of CGIT. Despite the support of the national church bodies, considerable opposition remained to be overcome from local church groups who regarded CGIT as a competitor, who refused to believe that this "adolescent" group existed in their community and who were suspicious of this new "psychology." But by 1921, an estimated 12,000 Canadian girls had been recruited by this uniquely Canadian response to the problem of the adolescent girl--unique in its non-denominational approach that involved close and direct cooperation with the churches.²¹⁷ In 1919, the Dominion Council proudly reported that "the Cooperative Movement as worked out for the first time in Canada is attracting attention in the United States, England and other countries."²¹⁸

Yet the YWCA's connections with CGIT were abruptly severed in 1921 when the Dominion Council found itself unable any longer to bear the burden of financial support, and turned the responsibility for CGIT over to the new Religious Education Council of Canada, under whose supervision the movement continued to expand in the ensuing decades.²¹⁹ Also contributing to this separation, however, was the fact that CGIT was rapidly becoming a church program for Sunday School girls, abandoning its mandate to reach girls who were beyond the influence of the churches. YWCA Girls' Workers, in keeping with a trend that has been described as the "democratization" of adolescence, were already turning their attention to the thousands of adolescents employed in factories and department stores, deprived by economic circumstances of the "fun, fellowship and self-development which a high school affords."²²⁰ The YWCA did not find in CGIT the answer to the problem of reaching "every girl" nor did Girls' Work ever again figure so prominently on its agenda. Yet during this crucial decade, the Dominion Council of YWCAs played a significant role in introducing the new "girl psychology" to

Canadians and in helping to shape public perceptions of the "problem" of the adolescent girl. In the process, many girls were provided with their first opportunity to experience camping, organized sports, club meetings, and unprecedented gatherings of girls and women that generated an atmosphere of excitement, warmth and friendship. As one leader commented years later, CGIT, at a time that pre-dated community centres and extra-curricular school activities, "filled a vacuum in the life of girls."²²¹

The First World War and Reconstruction

Our understanding of female responses to and participation in the Great War is as yet very fragmented.²²² There is much that we still do not know, and in particular the relationship between the women's movement and women's participation in the war effort is still unclear. An examination of the response of the Dominion Council of the YWCA suggests, in the context of what we know about the National Council of Women and socialist and pacifist responses, that women were capable of a wide range of responses to the outbreak of war, and that those who supported the conflict could do so for very different reasons. The active participation in the Canadian war effort by the Dominion Council of YWCAs demonstrates that for some Canadian women the causes of victory over Germany, the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth, and the advancement of women's interests were inextricably linked.

The fact that the First World War provided a considerable impetus to the cause of reform in Canada has by now been well documented by historians interested in woman suffrage, temperance, and most recently, venereal disease control.²²³ In a pioneering and influential article, Michael Bliss was the first to argue that the war also intensified rather than checked the long-standing effort of the Protestant churches,

particularly the Methodist, to re-make Canadian society in the image of Christ's Kingdom. The war, according to Bliss, became "a divine cause" for the Methodist church which, by the end of the first year of conflict, "had 'transfigured' the war into a crusade for Christianity rather than a simple defence of liberty."²²⁴ There was in fact no real contradiction between the church's pre-war attacks on national sinfulness and its wartime position that the conflict represented a defence of Christian civilization. As Bliss points out, "Methodists insisted that in a war of ideals the right ideals must prevail at home. A righteous war would have to end with Canada nearer the Kingdom of righteousness. Many Methodists thought the war would not end until Canada did come closer to that Kingdom."²²⁵ Bliss demonstrates convincingly that "it was both possible and consistent for the same individuals to combine militant nationalism with a determination to reconstruct Canadian society," and that during the war years the church's "historic concern for social redemption blossomed into a comprehensive programme of social reconstruction."²²⁶ The implications of this thesis for Canadian Protestant churchwomen have yet to be explored.

The response of the Dominion Council of YWCAs to Canada's participation in World War I suggests that for some churchwomen, at least, their wartime commitment to reconstructing society in the image of Christ's teachings was believed to have profound implications for women. The Dominion Council of the YWCA envisioned a post-war society in which women in general, and the YWCA in particular, would have a greatly enhanced role to play at both the civic and national levels. Much of the Dominion Council's war effort was directed not only to promoting victory against Germany and the forces of darkness but also to ensuring that women participated in that struggle to an unprecedented extent and that the coming generation of Canadian womanhood was suitably prepared to meet the challenge of the post-war period. That challenge, in the

view of YWCA women, would be posed by women's new political responsibilities following the winning of the suffrage, new occupational choices and an obligation to assume the duties of the men killed in battle, and a call to maintain moral and religious standards in the wake of both the relaxed sexual behaviour engendered by the circumstances of war and a widespread disenchantment with the traditional religious teachings which had failed to prevent the slaughter. Subscribing to the view that the men in the trenches were being led to a deeper understanding of Christianity and a greater concern with the "higher things" in life, the YWCA considered itself under an obligation to ensure that its war work helped to prepare Canadian women to be worthy of such men.

One man has said that it requires greater moral courage to come home to women of narrow vision after what they have seen than it requires to "go over the top". Let all the stumbling blocks to vision be removed and a message brought to girls of the things which really count in this life, so that the men who return may not be disappointed in the womanhood of Canada.²²⁷

Taking advantage of the wartime demand for women's labour and an international hysteria over the prevalence of venereal disease to gain unprecedented public support and recognition for the YWCA, the Dominion Council tried to forge from the chaos of war a new Canadian society committed to the Christian ideals of service and co-operation and to an equal standard of morality for men and women. This effort required not only that the YWCA participate in the organized women's war effort, but also that it develop new national policies on the questions of recreation, health education, and the woman in industry.

For the first year of the war the Dominion Council's involvement in the war effort was limited. The members of the local associations were urged to undertake as individuals some form of women's war work, with the result that Field Comfort Clubs

were formed, bandages were rolled at YWCA meetings, fundraising was undertaken for the Red Cross, and soldiers' families were assisted.²²⁸ 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."²²⁹ Business women were urged to "report the situations of hard-up unemployed girls to the responsible people," students were urged to eliminate unnecessary expenses such as banana splits, and all women were urged to encourage their men to enlist.²³⁰ The war, the Dominion Council confidently asserted in early 1915, 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."²³¹ To encourage such developments, the Dominion Council initiated its first real contribution to the war effort in December 1915 by inaugurating 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. Aiming to recruit every Canadian woman, the League claimed 12,000-15,000 members in sixty-four Canadian centres in September 1916, and until it was disbanded in March 1919, it continued its efforts to mobilize Canadian women behind the war effort by encouraging everything from thrift and modest dress to work in munitions and support for the Union Government.²³² In its sponsorship of the League of Honour and a public meeting on "Women and the War" addressed by Ontario Premier Hearst and Opposition Leader N.W. Rowell who lauded the influence of good mothers and praised the YWCA for its work of uplifting them²³³, the Dominion Council indicated that, initially at least, it expected that women's principal contribution to the war effort would consist of exerting their influence in the home. By 1918, that assumption had undergone a radical revision.

By 1916 a shortage of male labour and a desire on the part of military and government officials and civilian recruiting agencies to "free" men for service at the Front, suggested that Canada might successfully follow the British example by making use of female labour in agriculture and the war industries.²³⁴ The participation of the YWCA was considered advisable 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. The YWCA, of course, had a great deal of experience in providing for the special needs of women 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. This presence also promised to prevent any scandal involving the war workers that could have seriously threatened further attempts by governments and employers to recruit women workers. The YWCA's participation promised to improve worker morale and efficiency, and to relieve the government, farmers and factory owners of a considerable part of the responsibility and cost of providing for the women. For the local associations, involvement with "the women behind the men behind the guns" represented a heaven-sent opportunity to make a significant contribution to the war effort, to raise their public profile, and to provide a convincing demonstration of their potential usefulness to governments and employers. For the Dominion Council, increasingly committed to rallying the city and student associations to the Social Gospel and linking them to the woman in industry, it represented infinitely more.

Early in 1917 the Dominion Council was asked by the Ontario government to supervise the housing, provisioning and chaperonage of the female agricultural workers or "farmerettes"--including "students from both College and High School, teachers, office workers, leisured girls, factory workers and domestics"²³⁵--who were being recruited by the Department of Trades and Labour to harvest the fruit crops of the Niagara Peninsula. In the Okanagan and Fraser Valleys of British Columbia, a similar work was undertaken by the Dominion Council in cooperation with the YWCAs of Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster at the request of the fruit growers and the provincial Department of Labour.²³⁶ Hiring several National Service secretaries to oversee this new department of work, the members of the Dominion Council 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 and outdoor life 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 situation for workers who faced ill health and idleness.²³⁷

One of the Dominion Council's most prominent members, Constance Hamilton, hoped that some young women would be drawn to possible careers in agriculture as a result of their experience in National Service work, and devoted considerable energy to an unsuccessful campaign to secure government land grants for the "farmerettes" at the end of the war.²³⁸ Despite their enthusiasm for agricultural work, YWCA National Service secretaries did not hesitate to speak out publicly against the inadequate accommodation and low wages with which the women workers were frequently rewarded for their patriotic service.²³⁹ They hoped for long-lasting and exciting results from

the fact that the college students among the "farmerettes" were being allowed to experience these conditions at first hand, and in so doing "tasted something of the daily experience of the millions of wage-earning women." The Dominion Council's Student Department hoped that stints of agricultural labour would render its "social study" groups more effective and that some students might even be prompted to consider careers as YWCA industrial secretaries. "Those old economic problems that will come again in the winter's study will now be alive with pictorial interest; social service will be no mere dream of a future life-hobby for it will be really and vitally here now, as the new sense of kinship, with all who labour, makes itself manifest." This new knowledge, it was hoped, would be "a real national asset."²⁴⁰

Even more significant results were expected from the involvement of the YWCA with women working in industrial war production, which promised to bring the local associations into greater contact than ever before with the problems of the "industrial girl." Observing the entry of Canadian women into munitions production late in 1915, and inspired by the example of the British YWCA's successful operation of programs for women in the war industries, Lady Falconer, on behalf of the Dominion Council, contacted J.W. Flavelle, Chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, to indicate that the Canadian YWCA was "very anxious" to undertake a similar work.²⁴¹ In October 1916, the Imperial Munitions Board formally requested the YWCA to undertake the supervision of women workers engaged in munitions production, leading to the creation of a national Military Purposes Committee by the Dominion Council.

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 lunchroom 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.²⁴²

In cooperation with the Toronto YWCA, the Military Purposes Committee operated three canteens in Toronto munitions factories during 1917 and 1918. A hostel for munitions workers in St. Catharine's, Ontario, was staffed and operated by the Dominion Council at its own expense, and an employer-financed hostel and canteen at the Wm. Davies Co. canning factory in Harriston was also supervised by the YWCA.²⁴³ As in the case of agricultural work, YWCA Industrial Secretaries found it necessary to speak out, to the effect that while the war had brought "a new understanding of sacrifice among women," this spirit was "not universal." As one secretary commented, "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...Women doing men's work are not in all cases receiving men's pay...Where conditions are bad and action is needed, women are totally lacking in co-operation and organization among themselves."²⁴⁴

Despite the recommendations of the World's YWCA Conference held in Berlin in 1910, as well as encouragement from the Dominion Council, to the effect that YWCAs should study the social and industrial problems of the day as they affected working women and the means of amelioration offered by legislation, private endeavour, and working women's organizations,²⁴⁵ contacts between local YWCAs and women workers in Canadian industry were still very limited. The Dominion Council seized upon the war as a means to bring about a dramatic shift in the quantity and quality of contacts between factory workers and the YWCA, and as an opportunity to address at last the need for a coordinated national policy on the whole question of the woman in industry. Every opportunity was taken to encourage the local associations to learn as much as possible from their involvement with women war workers and to recognize that their obligations to the industrial girl extended far beyond the provision of hot lunches and supervised accommodation. National industrial secretaries explained that the mobilization of

women in the war industries could mean "a new understanding of economic and factory conditions, and a closer union between women of different types."²⁴⁶ It could help YWCAs to overcome their deficiencies in practical knowledge. "As women, many of us have not known the economic problems which the girls in our industrial life are struggling with. Our contact through the industrial department with the industrial girl forces upon us her problem, and we are unable to deal with her wisely unless we know it."²⁴⁷ To resolve the problems facing women in industry, education was considered "absolutely essential. Women of all classes must have a better grasp of the issues at stake, together with a wider and higher vision of possibilities of reform."²⁴⁸ To that end, the Dominion Council launched an educational campaign in its publication for the local associations to inform them about the industrial question, needed reforms, and successful strategies for winning over the women in industry.

Writing on "The Challenge of To-day to Women Leaders," Constance Hamilton quoted the well-known American Social Gospel thinker, Professor Graham Taylor, who advised YWCAs to "get closer to the working conditions under which women and girls labour" despite the fact that some of their friends would surely say, "Here, here, it is not for you to do." To this objection he countered, "We must surely have a great deal more liberty for the application of Christianity to industrial relations and conditions if the Gospel is to win out and hold its own in an industrial age."²⁴⁹ In "The Challenge of the Times," an article written for the Canadian YWCA by Elizabeth Dutcher of the New York Women's Trade Union League, Dutcher addressed directly the objection, "I don't see what this has to do with spiritual things. Surely the Christian life has nothing to do with one's material surroundings." A life without reasonable hours of labour and a living wage, she explained, made a Christian life impossible. In the words of Beatrice Webb, "Poverty in the desert may make people saints; in the crowded city slum it makes

people beasts." Working women were told that laws were useless unless they met the needs of the workers and were enforced. "And they cannot express the needs of any group unless individuals are banded together in a club or trade union or a professional league...And even when the laws are once enacted, they cannot be enforced unless you and the rest of the workers will report every violation, and stand ready to support each other in making these complaints, so that you may be protected from discharge." YWCA leaders were counselled to assist working women with organization, to consider the implications of the word "Association," and to recognize the futility of individual solutions to social problems. "If Christ's Kingdom is to come, it cannot come without the active help of you and me and every one. Even in questions of individual temptation, individual sin is so interwoven with social sin that it is impossible to overcome one without attacking the other...True, it is a long road, and a hard one; fighting social sin is terribly difficult, especially for women, who are just awakening to their new opportunities, and who are so individual by nature and training."²⁵⁰

The Dominion Council's active promotion of industrial work during the war years was also based on the hope that the atmosphere of wartime patriotism would make the industrial girl more receptive to the ideals of service, cooperation and personal purity promoted by the YWCA. Florence Simms of the American National Board of YWCAs congratulated the Canadian associations on their impending acquisition of a National Industrial Secretary and explained that the wartime circumstances made the occasion particularly opportune for reaching out to the industrial worker.

...seeing her labour in the light of patriotic service, the industrial girl knows herself to be an important factor in national life. This latter fact eases our approach, gives the girl a confidence in herself which makes her believe in herself, and at once bridges a chasm which many times has existed between her and the Association. Of all the things which must be done in dealing with this group of girls, the most important is to lead them to respect themselves and their work.²⁵¹

Margaret Wrong hoped that the women war workers could be led to see that in order to face wisely the important questions of wages, working conditions, and organization, it was essential that they possess "health of body and of mind...for a warped judgment is certain to follow on unhealthy habit of living and thinking." Because of the circumstances of war, working women had an obligation greater than ever before to consider the questions of wholesome exercise, sensible dress and eating habits. "So many women ruin their health of body or of mind with bad habits, bad food, bad movies and worse talk. Yet cleanliness of body and of mind are national duties to-day."²⁵² Advocates of YWCA industrial work unanimously agreed that the industrial club was the most suitable vehicle for channeling the patriotism and enthusiasm of the worker into support for the ideals of service and purity, and for promoting "greater unity and comradeship among women."²⁵³ Constance Hamilton warned, however, that such clubs had to be truly self-governing--"Self-governing,' because self-government and democracy are in the very air we breathe to-day; and since the modern girl is determined to have her share, Association members must look the fact squarely in the face....There must be no vestige of the 'Lady Bountiful,' no suspicion of anything of a patronizing nature...Our chief task as leaders must then be to make leaders of the led."²⁵⁴

In the immediate post-war period, articles on the subject of minimum wage legislation written by Margaret Nairn, the Dominion Council's new Industrial Secretary, appeared in The Association Outlook,²⁵⁵ along with a new feature called "The Industrial Question Box." "Do you ever wonder just what is the meaning of some of the terms used in our papers these days?" For those who did, brief definitions of industrial unions, real wages and nominal wages, collective bargaining, and other useful terms were provided.²⁵⁶ Writing on "The Christian in Industry," Nairn stressed that

YWCA women had to do more than simply inform themselves on the industrial question. As individuals and as organized citizens, they had an obligation to enforce Christian standards in industry. "We shall know 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, and this whether they are made in our country or not." She also stressed the importance of research and gathering statistics. "We must have potent arguments, and criticism-proof, constructive plans for our friend the businessman, couched in his own language, not in terms that he may label 'visionary and unbusinesslike.'"²⁵⁷ Where women's wages were not adequate to meet their living expenses, she argued, "someone is paying the cost--should it not be part of the legitimate manufacturing cost?"

Let us see that our Canadian girls have wages that will let them pay for good meals, not force them to makeshifts 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 streets; let them have sufficient for clothes, laundry, and incidentals, and a margin for holiday, recreation, saving, sickness, and self-improvement. Make a list of the 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.²⁵⁸

In the climate of post-war labour unrest, YWCA industrial secretaries emphasized the important role that their organization could play in resolving the conflict between capital and labour.²⁵⁹ In 1917, Florence Simms had warned the Canadian associations that "It is all too true that thinking women of the industrial group have questioned Christianity deeply because they have not seen it concerned with their practical, economic problems."²⁶⁰ The YWCA should mediate between employer and employees to make each aware of the point of view of the other, and should instruct working women about protective legislation "to save them from being led off by the arguments of

unscrupulous agitators." An industrial secretary could make the YWCA "so human and servicable to the industrial workers that they shall see through it a new vision of the God of love."²⁶¹ Mary Cady of the American National Board, stressed that in the circumstances of the post-war period, YWCA educational programs offered "the opportunity for helping our girls in securing wider social vision and in seeing themselves as a part of the economic fabric of society."

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?²⁶²

The impressive results achieved by the U.S. National Board, well provided with trained secretaries and recreational facilities, had not been duplicated in Canada where "with few exceptions the work with industrial girls has been done by secretaries who were already overladen with work for girls in general, and who consequently have not been able to lay the emphasis that they would have liked on club and recreation work for industrial girls."²⁶³ That the Canadian YWCA might provide for the post-war industrial worker in the areas of recreation, education, self-expression, service and citizenship, the Dominion Council appealed to the local associations and to the Canadian public for secretaries and money for their salaries; buildings equipped with club rooms, gymnasias, swimming pools, and recreation centres; camps; the cooperation of employers; and above all money to finance a national department to help organize work at the local level and to conduct practical experiments in industrial work. Thus equipped, the Canadian associations could join the American YWCA which had "definitely taken its stand side by side with the Women's Trade Union League and other bodies in demanding

minimum wage laws, a shorter working day and several other reforms urgently needed for the great mass of women workers."²⁶⁴

Viewed as an important part of the proposed post-war national policy on industrial work was a new and comprehensive strategy for dealing with the question of recreation which, because of the changed circumstances brought about by the war, necessarily implied facing the thorny question of mixed recreational programs. The Dominion Council's new national Department of Recreation was launched in cooperation with the YMCA and derived from the concern of both organizations over the unsupervised interaction taking place between soldiers stationed 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.²⁶⁵ 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.²⁶⁶ The most important function of the Houses was to deal with the problem of "stray girls." "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."²⁶⁷ While the YWCA stressed that its Hostess Houses provided the men with "the opportunity of meeting the right kind of women,"²⁶⁸ its concern was for the "harm" that would result to the women rather than to the men; there is no evidence to suggest that YWCA women shared the view of military authorities who tended to blame "immorality" and venereal disease on "loose women."

Another experiment was conducted in France at the "Canadian Hut" for the British women of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, 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: "...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."²⁶⁹

The crisis of the war years forced a re-evaluation of the YWCA's traditional policy toward recreation with its emphasis on same-sex friendships. That a dramatic shift was taking place was evident in statements such as Constance Hamilton's which would have been unthinkable before the war. "'God knew His own business when He put boys and girls in one family,'...No companionship is better for any healthy young human being than that of another wholesome young creature of the opposite sex."²⁷⁰ During the war, more and more YWCA workers argued that the organization's traditional policy on recreation was outmoded and that the city 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."²⁷¹ The YWCA's traditional offerings, explained the Dominion Council's new National Recreation Secretary, simply did not meet the needs of the modern girl.

The girl of to-day craves excitement in the evening, in a way that the girl of old times did not do. There is a reason for this--her conditions and environment are quite different. In old times she got some of the joy of life out of her work, an opportunity to use her creative power, and to do things on her own initiative...To-day, the larger part of the work of the world is so highly specialized that it has become meaningless, routinary and monotonous. The girl craves something in the evening that will give colour to her life, something that will supply the excitement, the romance, the element of chance that her life lacks--and she is going to get it.

The challenge facing the YWCA was whether it would provide the modern young woman with "Recreation, Re-creation, or Wreck-creation,"²⁷² and, like it or not, there could be no place in "this new era of reality...for her who hides her head from the world of grim fact, and thereby denies the existence of forces which must be acknowledged and understood if they are to be blended into God's purposes."²⁷³

Progressive YWCA leaders 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 that would compete with commercial attractions.²⁷⁴ The latter, explained Una Saunders, "direct their best efforts to make recreation attractive, and while some few are high principled, the greater number pay no real attention to the moral aspect of the question and too many actually pander to the lower instincts and stimulate the very passions we would fain see kept under strict control." In her view, the provision of recreation by the locals was entirely inadequate and would probably require the cooperation of the churches whose buildings were unused at night.

It will not alone be the recreation of girls that calls for this united effort. One of the pathetic sights is to see men and girls obliged to use the streets or "movies" for opportunities for perfectly legitimate friendship. The few girls boarding in the Association Home can, of course, bring their men friends there to sit and talk, but what is really needed is something of a centre or club, perhaps under the united guardianship of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. and backed by the churches they represent. There men and women could enjoy real fun together, could at times play and dance, could sit down to a light meal together and feel the joy of something approaching a home atmosphere.²⁷⁵

In contrast to the commercial agencies the YWCA, "through plays, pageants and games, songs and story telling...[had] the means of presenting high ideals, developing community spirit, leadership and a sense of fair play, and stimulating quick decision,

and resourcefulness, as well as giving to the young the chance to take part in 'make believe,' which will supply the romance and excitement they need."²⁷⁶

Having obtained from its experience with the Hostess Houses, the last of which closed in January 1919, an awareness of "the great importance and opportunity for a place of friendliness and recreation for men and women, the Dominion Council opened an experimental centre in Toronto under the direction of the National Recreation Secretary.²⁷⁷ The Blue Triangle Recreation Centre 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 in games, plays, singing, and folk dancing; and a program 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."²⁷⁸ To supporters of the centre, there seemed no obvious reason that the YWCA should not compete directly with the commercial operations. "There are in Toronto eighty-nine moving picture theatres, and thirty-five dance halls, and these numbers are increasing daily. Why should not the Young Women's Christian Association run one...?"²⁷⁹ According to this viewpoint, it was not movies, dancing, smoking, or card-playing in themselves that brought about the ruin of young women, but the surroundings in which these entertainments were offered. Yet it was on the lack of consensus on this issue that the Dominion Council's planned national policy on recreation foundered. Disagreement was not confined to the Canadian YWCA, as the Association Outlook reported 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."²⁸⁰ A

coordinated national strategy to deal with recreation in the post-war period could not be developed so long as the local churches, particularly the Baptists, remained resolutely opposed to the very activities that the modern young woman found most attractive. At the 1919 convention in Hamilton, where delegates discussed the possibility of lifting the YWCA's traditional ban on dancing, Lady Falconer, as National President, reportedly spoke in favour of such a move, saying that "since she countenanced dancing within her own home and chaperoned dances within the university, that she could not possibly put a veto on it within the Y.W.C.A."²⁸¹ Prudently, the Dominion Council adopted the policy of local option, leaving the individual associations to decide what type of recreation should be offered in order to avoid any action that might offend the local churches.²⁸²

Adding to the urgency of addressing the recreation question was the hysteria over venereal disease that erupted during the war as an embarrassingly high number of Canadian troops were found to be infected at the time of enlistment, causing a severe strain on military resources and indicating the existence of a serious problem within the civilian population.²⁸³ At the end of the war a major assault on venereal disease was launched by government and medical authorities in cooperation with civilian agencies, prominent among which was the Dominion Council of YWCAs. Because of recent advances in treatment, there was considerable optimism that venereal disease would soon go the way of smallpox, a hope that was within only a few years demonstrated to be quite unwarranted. This crusade, as Jay Cassel points out in his recent comprehensive treatment of it, has been inaccurately portrayed as a straightforward attempt by middle-class moralists to use the "excuse" of venereal disease to enforce conformity to a repressive moral code. While his own contribution adds considerably to our understanding of this complex issue, it fails to explain adequately the motives

behind the YWCA's prominent participation in the anti-venereal disease crusade. While YWCA women cooperated with military, government, and medical authorities, they did not necessarily share all of their concerns. Rather than reflecting a sudden upsurge of concern for the state of Canadian manhood, or a need for a new "cause" following the achievement of the suffrage as Cassel implies with respect to Constance Hamilton,²⁸⁴ the YWCA's response to venereal disease was a continuation of its long-standing commitment to the protection of young women and to the equal moral standard. Like the temperance crusaders who were able to turn the war to their advantage, the Dominion Council of YWCAs saw in the venereal disease crisis an opportunity to mobilize public support for measures that would benefit women by ending the double standard of morality and that would help to build a new postwar society based on the teachings of Jesus.

As with the issue of mixed recreation, the Dominion Council hoped to rally the local associations behind it, welding the YWCA into a national force that would make a substantial contribution to educating public opinion about the hazards of venereal disease and creating a climate favourable to the adoption of appropriate preventive measures. In keeping with its position on white slavery, in which women figured as the victims of male lust, the YWCA consistently portrayed women as the primary and often completely innocent victims of venereal disease. This view was bolstered by recent medical findings suggesting that gonorrhea had particularly devastating consequences for women, leading to sterility or gynecological surgery, and that syphilis was a primary cause of miscarriage and congenital disease and deformity.²⁸⁵ A 1917 editorial in The Globe intoned that "Canada is paying the penalty of guilty silence and cowardly neglect in regard to infectious diseases more destructive in their results than tuberculosis...we must cast off the prurience that has left the race enervated,

debilitated, and polluted."²⁸⁶ Treatment of venereal disease was a long drawn-out process that was painful, humiliating and frequently unsuccessful, and YWCA women, while they undoubtedly shared prevalent middle-class fears about the deterioration of "the race," were genuinely concerned that young women should not be exposed to the ordeal of venereal disease and its treatment. Young women, argued Constance Hamilton in her "Challenge of To-day to Women Leaders," had a right to know how to protect themselves, and older women had an obligation to provide them with what they needed to know "regardless of old convention and prejudice."

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 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.²⁸⁷

To the YWCA's critics who suggested that young girls and women should have no knowledge of such things and that respectable women should not speak about them from public platforms, Hamilton replied, "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."

One of the two principal functions of the Dominion Council's new Department of Health Education, established in 1919 as a direct result of the venereal disease crisis, was to link both Canada and the YWCA with international efforts to combat "the secret plague." The Association Outlook reported on the International Social Hygiene Conference organized by the American YWCA and held in October 1918 in New York, attended by delegates from the United States, Britain, France and Canada who were gathered to discuss "co-operative methods to be used in bringing about higher

standards in regard to questions concerning social morality."²⁸⁸ The four Canadian delegates were Una Saunders, Constance Hamilton, and E. Frances Jones, all of the Dominion Council of YWCAs, and Dr. Gordon Bates, Canada's leading advocate of measures to combat venereal disease. The conference delegates "unanimously agreed that the attack on vice conditions should be simultaneous along educational, medical and social lines," and produced the following recommendations.

1. That the single standard of morals should prevail for men and women.
2. That continence is compatible with health and intellectual vigour for both sexes.
3. That men and women should serve together whenever possible in organizations whose functions concern the development and enforcement of moral standards.
4. That prostitutes be not treated as a class apart from other women, and that prostitution be not recognized as a trade.
5. That all measures, either preventative or repressive concerned with Social Morality, apply impartially to men and women.
6. That a simultaneous vigorous attack on venereal disease should be made, and that the issues of public health morals be thoroughly correlated.
7. That sound sex education be incorporated into one entire educational system in homes, school, college, and the Church and press.
8. That social and economic adjustments granting to the individual decent living conditions and adequate recreation are essential to progress in Social Morality.

An international committee of twelve was formed to take action on these recommendations with Bates, Hamilton and Saunders being asked to serve.

Apparently at a loss to account for the complex mixture of social, moralist, and feminist concerns and assumptions embedded in these resolutions, Cassel, in his discussion "Launching the VD Crusade", labels them "remarkable" and offers no other comment or analysis.²⁸⁹ In fact, these points do not seem remarkable at all if placed in the context of the YWCA's long-standing commitment to the principle of the equal or single standard of morality for men and women. Canadian historians have tended to treat the demand for the single standard as a straightforward and uncomplicated attempt to subject men to the same repressive standards as women by people who were

motivated by their own hostility to sex.²⁹⁰ Given that recent non-Canadian research has suggested that feminist demands were sometimes intertwined in a very complex way with "straightforward" moralism,²⁹¹ it is perhaps the case that the motives of the women involved in the anti-venereal disease campaign should be examined more closely. For example, one of the delegates to the International Conference, Madame Avril de Ste. Croix who was apparently "acknowledged to be the great leader in France in work for girls,"²⁹² visited Toronto in November 1918. In her public address she stressed that the moral aspect of venereal disease prevention must never be overlooked, but this moralist demand was based on feminist reasoning. "Sociologists, hygienists and moralists must unitedly strive to solve the problem, for if it is attacked merely from a scientific or materialistic point of view, the ultimate result would probably be the introduction into Canada of state regulation of vice, the very evil that paralyzes progress in France and in many European countries." Mme de Ste. Croix and other French women strenuously objected to the compulsory medical inspection of women only that was a feature of state regulation. She also linked the moral evil to social conditions and stressed that Canadian public opinion had to be roused to demand reforms in the areas of education, housing, and wages. The Association Outlook heartily endorsed these views and noted as well that at the same meeting Mabel Jamieson of the Montreal YWCA presented the recently-released report of the Committee of Sixteen on organized vice in that city. "It is encouraging that throughout Canada a new day seems to have dawned, and at last men and women are willing to throw aside the veil and face the evil conditions, and unitedly resolve that these things must no longer be, whatever the crusade may cost."²⁹³ Given the prominent female presence in the anti-venereal disease campaign, it would appear that the "remarkable" views of the YWCA and other women's organizations warrant further consideration by historians.

Linked to its dual commitments to venereal disease control and abolition of the white slave traffic was a new program known as Girls' Protective Work initiated by the Dominion Council early in 1918 in the hope that similar efforts would be launched by YWCAs across the country. 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"²⁹⁴ were based on the example of England and New York 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."²⁹⁵ 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.²⁹⁶ By July of 1918, the Women's Protective Association of Canada had sixty women patrolling the streets of Toronto in cooperation with civil and military police.²⁹⁷ In Halifax, the YWCA was virtually alone in attempting to combat the extensive "girl-on-the-street problem" in that city, receiving "no co-operation from the Police Department worthy the name," only one woman having been hired "at a beggarly pittance." The indifference of the Board of Control to this issue was labelled by its women promoters as "almost a public crime."²⁹⁸

As Lucy Bland has noted in the English context, however, this protection of women by other women easily slipped into surveillance and feminist motives were frequently subverted. "While women police and patrols thought of themselves as protecting women

sexually and morally, they were viewed by the authorities as an ideal means of protecting men: men's physical protection from VD through the 'protection'/control of women."²⁹⁹ Some of the British protective officers noted that everyone concerned seemed unanimously agreed that women were responsible for venereal disease. Interestingly, Canadian military authorities in Britain were among the most vociferous exponents of this view, complaining that naive young Canadian boys fresh from the farm were being preyed upon by scheming and diseased British women.³⁰⁰ Like the British women, Dominion Council YWCA women found such reasoning objectionable and in their commitment to the equal moral standard expressed their view that men were responsible for their own sexual behaviour. But like the British protective officers, Canadian YWCA women were willing, in the interests of gaining some influence and official recognition, to accept a role that offered limited authority over women only, and indirectly perpetuated the view that venereal disease was a perpetration of "loose women."

Possibly the most influential contribution of the Dominion Council's Department of Health Education to the anti-venereal disease campaign in Canada was its appointment of two lecturers assigned to travel across the country to address groups of girls and women on the subject of venereal disease. Una Saunders explained the need for the new department: "The community is growing aware, as never before, of the problem created by the relationship of young men and women to each other and is considering how best to give positive teaching to both boys and girls on the sanctity of life. Spasmodic attempts have been made in many places, but for the lack of really qualified lecturers, many leaders have hesitated to introduce such teaching. The Association has planned a Department through which some of this need may be met."³⁰¹ Dr. Margaret Patterson was a returned medical missionary who was "well known throughout the Dominion for all

her work on behalf of women and their higher interests"; the Dominion Council expressed its confidence that she would "never treat the subject of sex hygiene from the merely material standpoint."³⁰² Her assistant Elizabeth Harcourt was a trained nurse with experience in lecturing in the United States to parents of schoolchildren. Both were prepared to accept any invitation from a city or student YWCA, with their travel expenses being paid by the Dominion Council.

What type of people do we aim to reach? First and foremost every club or group of girls in any city that can be brought together to hear an inspiring message on the beauty of their womanhood. Then, next, the parents of these same girls or of school girls, for often they are keenly aware of their own inability to help their growing girls along these lines. For some cities we much hope that employers of labour will allow short talks to be given to their women employees during work hours, for it might mean a great help to the welfare of these women. For colleges and schools, too, we are sure there will be many opportunities for this branch of Social Education.³⁰³

Like other crusaders against venereal disease, Harcourt and Patterson 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. Only the frank discussion of sexual matters, they argued, would enable a young woman both 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."³⁰⁴ Needless to say, speakers from the Dominion Council's Department of Health Education tended to attract the notice of the press. An address by Dr. Anne Young to the YWCA's 1919 convention in Hamilton was reported in a local newspaper under the headline, "Sexual Problems Must Be Fearlessly Faced; Frank Discussion Indulged in at Y.W.C.A. Convention; Tossing Aside of Old Traditions of Mock Modesty Urged."

We have never yet faced squarely the matter of sex...Now it is being forced on us, and we have got to consider it...I believe that the coming generation of girls should be instructed in the phenomena of their sexual functions;

and I do believe that when girls are taught these vital matters, they will take a greater pride in protecting themselves and being healthy...We have always been told that men had a stronger sexual impulse than have women. We do not know this...There has been every tendency to drive men on, and to repress women...

Dr. Young declared that havoc had been wrought in many women's lives with the thwarting of their natural impulses by the enforced celibacy entailed by war wastage; that is, many Canadian women would be unable to marry. "So to these patients I say: Take up some physical work; do not think too much of the opposite sex; throw your whole soul into some business, or absorb yourself in a hobby, and observe the conditions of hygiene in all departments of your life."³⁰⁵

In his analysis of literature used in the anti-venereal disease campaign, Jay Cassel notes that pamphlets and lectures addressed to women contained little factual information about diagnosis and treatment, in comparison with those addressed to men. Instead they provided more general information about female physiology and stressed the importance of "hygiene."³⁰⁶ Certainly it is difficult to distinguish physical from moral instruction in "A Talk to 'Teen Age Girls" by Elizabeth Harcourt which appeared in the Association Outlook in 1919. Harcourt 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.³⁰⁷

In a post-war lecture to adolescents on "A Girl's Value to Her Country," Dr. Patterson combined moralism and patriotism in an analysis that was rooted in a more conservative evangelicalism than that which characterized the views of some other members of the

Dominion Council. After a discussion of the importance of clean teeth and regular bowels, Patterson explained how girls could contribute to immorality by failing to treat the human body as "The Temple of the Holy Ghost."

That few girls realize the sacredness of the body is shown by the fact that so many are defacing this Temple with paint and powder and rendering it hideous by the grotesque clothing they wear. If girls realized how they injured themselves and others, by the modern fashionable dress they would hesitate to adopt it...The disgusting habit of exposing the body, as the present fashions do, not only lowers the vitality of the wearer, but the moral standards of all around them.³⁰⁸

Patterson warned adolescents of the dangers of immoral relationships, motor rides with comparative strangers, 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. "Try to live in such a way as will develop strength, and preserve health, because in this way you will have the greatest success in life, and be of real value to your country."³⁰⁹

It would not be difficult to dismiss this "instruction" as mere moralizing and a thinly-veiled attempt to use the fear of venereal disease to manipulate and control the sexual behaviour of young women. Yet as Cassel has clearly demonstrated, the limitations of medical knowledge meant that the diseases, especially gonorrhea, could not be easily diagnosed, and treatment was not only grueling, painful, and humiliating, but also frequently ineffective. Thus "while the official position reflected social preconceptions, it also reflected therapeutic realities."

Organizers could not place too much faith in treatment as a means to control or eliminate venereal infection, so they had to combine it with advice aimed at reducing conduct which exacerbated the medical problem. Such interweaving of medical and social factors makes the history of venereal disease complex and reduces the validity of simple one-line explanations for the course of action.³¹⁰

Given the limitations of treatment, then, it is possible that the "moralism" of some female anti-venereal disease crusaders, rather than merely reflecting class concerns and a hostility to sex, was at least partially based in a not unrealistic perception that "restraint" or "self-control" for both sexes offered the only real protection for the young women who would suffer the most serious consequences from infection. And it is important to keep in mind that the YWCA's concern to protect young women from venereal disease, patronizing and maternalistic though it may have been, was quite genuine, despite the conclusion of Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis that Canadian women reformers supported venereal disease measures because they believed that they were in their own interest and that only prostitutes or loose women contracted the disease.³¹¹ Many YWCA women believed that "good girls" acting on giddy high spirits and a harmless desire for a "good time" were just as likely to fall victim to VD. To add to the complexity of this issue, YWCA women undoubtedly saw in the venereal disease campaign an opportunity to gain unprecedented public support, similar to the success of temperance crusaders, for their long-standing commitment to the equal moral standard, the achievement of which they viewed as fundamental not only to the abolition of prostitution and the white slave traffic but to the establishment of a Christian social order based on the teachings of Jesus.

In his discussion of the Methodist church and its attempt to transform the struggle for victory over Germany into a struggle to remake Canadian society, Michael Bliss notes that in 1918 Methodists had learned useful lessons from government experiments with wartime controls and "were ready to participate in the creation of a peacetime community as unified and egalitarian as the wartime society." "It is surprising," he adds, "how many other Canadians shared their determination."³¹² Among those

Canadians were the members of the Dominion Council of YWCAs who, in a 1918 editorial in the Association Outlook, met the question "After Peace, What?" with the hopeful response, "a well-planned era of moral and social uplift for the women and the homes of Canada." Such an era could not be expected to materialize, however, without considerable effort on the part of the YWCA.

It is sheer nonsense for us to talk of reconstruction as if some beatific vision would descend from the sky and we should all become new creatures. We must ourselves lay hold of the many visions that have already been displayed before us, and summon all our best energies to carry out our share of them and to help others to become builders of the "New City" and the New Canada.³¹³

Una Saunders advised YWCA women to begin preparation for reconstruction by supporting "valiantly" efforts to combat intemperance and social vice "so that when the time comes...we can work more directly and not only by influencing the men who have the legislative power, we may be trained and prepared to do so on right lines." An important function of the YWCA in the days ahead would be to ensure that "the foundation shall be better, the architecture more sure...[that] every effort of reconstruction, every part of the revival, every step of hopeful progress must be founded on the firm foundation of a true faith, on the ethic of life as taught and shown by the human life of the Incarnate Son of God."³¹⁴

In 1918 Una Saunders voiced the view shared by other YWCA women that "with the coming of peace it seems probable that our work will be increased rather than curtailed."³¹⁵ As a prime example of the way that the YWCA, along with other organizations of Canadian women, could be expected to participate more actively in directing the nation's affairs with the coming of peace, the Dominion Council proudly pointed to its participation in the Women's War Conference held in Ottawa on February 28, 1918, when seventy delegates from national and provincial women's organizations

met with the War Committee of the Cabinet by invitation of the latter.³¹⁶ This conference, which was "really in some ways like a Women's Parliament" marked "A New Era for Canadian Women," according to Una Saunders' report in The Association Outlook.³¹⁷ After some initial "mental confusion and debate," she noted, the women were able to work out a "scheme for gaining each other's viewpoints." All parts of the country were represented, with one notable exception; "labour was not as fully represented as some other sections of the community. This would be largely accounted for because there are as yet few women's labour unions." Along with the other delegates, the YWCA endorsed resolutions supporting the minimum wage and equal pay for equal work in the war industries, the increased employment of women in trades and agriculture for the war effort, daylight saving, war gardens, compulsory national registration, recognition of volunteer service in farm kitchens as a war measure, and training in housework for laid-off munitions workers. Although, as Saunders pointed out, there was no immediate formation of "a women's committee to advise with the Government (as has been the case in Washington through the Council of National Defence)", the YWCA felt that the conference set an important precedent and would undoubtedly serve as a model for a closer relationship between governments and women's organizations in the future.

In the Dominion Council's plans for reconstruction, however, the YWCA was to have a unique role to play in welding Canadian women into a strong moral force which would ensure that the right kind of Canada emerged from the chaos of the war.

...if there is to be reconstruction after the war, if we are to have juster social laws and judgments, if the things of the spirit are to have pre-eminence, then we women must be intelligent, sympathetic and Christ-like in all that pertains to life. That means that we have to handpick and train in character the girls and young women of Canada, for no way has yet been found of changing a community without first reaching the individual.³¹⁸

No organization, it was hardly necessary to point out, had a better grasp of the most efficient and effective means of building "character" in young women. This was not, however, a straightforward individualist argument placing the responsibility for social change onto the shoulders of Canadian women. If individual women were expected to assume responsibility for the moral standards of the new postwar society, then the YWCA argued that the church and the community had an obligation to undertake to "procure for the young womanhood of Canada such means of character building and such helpful social environment as will strengthen their moral force." "Character building" as the YWCA had already clearly demonstrated, required buildings, swimming pools, recreational centres, clubs, camps, trained secretaries, and money. The emphasis on women's moral influence was also a strategy intended to remind the Canadian public, obsessed during the war with the welfare of the troops and after it with the needs and potential disruptive impact of the returning men, of the importance of young women. As Una Saunders explained, the answer to the question so much concerning the churches of what help the returned men would give to the work of the Kingdom of God, what kind of homes they would build up or rebuild, would "largely depend on the spiritual and moral influence of their womenkind, those awaiting their return here, as well as those coming to these shores as wives of returning men."³¹⁹ If nothing else, YWCA women intended to ensure that the welfare of young women was not overlooked in the process of "normalization" following the war.

Despite the upheaval caused by the war and the dramatic, if temporary, changes in the pattern of women's participation in the labour force, the YWCA's perception of the "girl problem" to be faced in the post-war period remained unchanged in some fundamental ways. The Dominion Council reproduced approvingly the views of Mrs.

Oswin Bull, from the Women's International Quarterly, on "The Spiritual Needs of the Modern Girl" who eloquently described the challenge facing the YWCA.

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 in sanctified womanhood.³²⁰

Yet the war had resulted in some modification of this position. The Dominion Council's plans for Reconstruction included a new emphasis on the right of the single woman to a satisfying career as a substitute for husband and children. For the many women who because of the war would be denied the opportunity of marriage and a home of their own there was "urgent necessity" that they should have "the possibility of a full and satisfying life so that they may not eat out their hearts in loneliness and aimlessness."³²¹ For the sake of these women the YWCA advocated new opportunities for women in the expanding social services so that they might "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."³²² Lady Falconer, like Mrs. Oswin Bull, agreed that before the war, "too much of the literature on the Woman Movement seemed to minimize the importance of the home-maker and to leave the impression that something in the position itself was narrowing and repressive of the higher faculties." It was important that in the new post-war Canada, young women should look on marriage and homemaking "as a career, not only open to women, but calling for all the finest endowments of her[sic] nature, and requiring every possible preparation." Yet she expressed her conviction that for a woman who had supported herself with her own

earnings, it was "not easy to become an economic dependent." Marriage for this young woman, she hoped, would be a "real marriage" based on a companionship of the spirit, recognition that the wife and mother put in "just as difficult and trying a day's work as any industrial or business woman," and economic arrangements that allowed a woman a definite share of her husband's income "by right, not by grace."³²³

There is a sense that permeates the writings of members of the Dominion Council in the immediate postwar period that the times were changing radically and that the YWCA had to change too if it did not want to be relegated unceremoniously to the past. Equally apparent, however, is the conviction that the local associations had not recognized the urgent necessity for change and for expansion of some of the new and more controversial areas of work that had been opened up by the war.

...we are not yet beginning to be ready for the influx of new life that we may have after peace; we are not making plans half large enough for the housing of girls in our cities. And it seems sometimes as if we were half asleep to the moral dangers that lie round girls' lives, like bomb-holes camouflaged to look attractive and safe. Which City Boards are yet adequately planning for well-supervised recreations, which have got thorough arrangements made for talks on social hygiene, and for protective work so that the ignorant or the thoughtless may be made aware of danger and given that inner and spiritual help which alone can render them immune to moral disease germs?³²⁴

Local associations were challenged to face the fact, however unpleasant, that "the business girl is not with us as she should be," and to assess the ways in which attitudes on the part of the YWCA's leadership were contributing to this situation. "Many say we are patronizing. You refute it; so do I, but it is there." Much of the advice about the need for a change in attitudes came from the secretaries who were in closest contact with the membership and was directed to the volunteer who, being less familiar with the conditions faced by working women, was more inclined to be judgmental. "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."³²⁵ The timeless truths of Christianity, too, required new modes of presentation, so that they would not be obscured by doctrine, dogma or the method of teaching, if they were to be made appealing to the Modern Girl. "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."³²⁶ The new message to the local associations contained a none too subtle criticism of the failure of many YWCA workers to abandon an approach that would no longer be tolerated by the more independent young woman of the New Canada. "Work with her not for her, as we have been doing for so many years."³²⁷

In arguing that the spirit of wartime Christian idealism extended far beyond the Methodist church, Michael Bliss points to evidence of its influence in the Farmers' platform of 1918, the Liberal party platform of 1919, the collection of essays The New Era in Canada (Toronto, 1917), W.L.M. King's Industry and Humanity (Toronto, 1918), Stephen Leacock's The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice (Toronto, 1920), and C.W. Gordon's To Him That Hath (Toronto, 1921).³²⁸ Many Canadian churchwomen too were affected by this spirit. Advising the YWCA to prepare for reconstruction in 1917, Una Saunders explained her "practical idealism" in these terms: "I am not a Socialist. But it is at least clear to me that in the future reconstruction of our national life, we must make it our aim to build up for the benefit of the greater number, in real brotherhood, rather than for the gain of a few."³²⁹ By 1919 these views permeated the rhetoric of the Dominion Council of YWCAs. Perhaps more than any other gathering of Canadian women, the national convention of Canadian YWCAs held in that year, the first since

1913, reflected the extent to which the Christian idealism of the war period influenced Canadian churchwomen, linking the social gospel with the organized women's movement. Lady Falconer, in addressing the convention, emphasized the need for "great constructive changes in our social and political life."

...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. Local associations should know local conditions, and if necessary lead opinion towards that which is best for women workers, and against that which must be debarred. The Association should be a leader not only of public opinion towards creating the Kingdom of Righteousness for all industrial workers, but should help to lead and mould the thought of our young women towards work, so that the poor, inefficient worker shall cease to be a drag on the economic force of the community. If the Association with the Churches is to make good in these days of change, we must recognize the social applications of the teachings of Christ, and apply them to our community life.³³⁰

Marie Wing, General Secretary of the Cleveland YWCA and authority on industrial work, also addressed the 1919 convention, informing the delegates that the British YWCA had taken a definite stand in favour of collective bargaining. From her travels, she had gained the impression "that the vital relation between religion and industry had been realized more keenly by the people of England than by those in Canada and the United States." The British YWCA's leadership "believed that club leaders should support trades unionism as the only way to get ahead and help each other and themselves...If we have some difficulty in persuading some of the more conservative members that this is the right thing to do, we must base the action on the principles of Christ and the sacredness of human life, His justice, and spirit of co-operation."³³¹

The YWCA's stated purpose in 1919 was "to lead young women into personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, as Saviour and Lord, and to associate them in an organized effort to promote their spiritual, intellectual, social and physical well-being, and thus, to make

the Association, in co-operation with the Church, a social factor in the extension of the Kingdom of God."³³² One of the four themes of the convention held in that year was "Our Purpose," summarized by one leader as "to remove the cramping things of life, and to bring to full development the life of women." The "cramping things" that the YWCA had to attack included bad housing, commercial recreations, and the narrowness of small-town religious teachings, and discussions at the convention focussed on how to make the purpose live through recreation, friendliness, religious work, Christian unity, boarding homes, health education and cafeterias, and especially through co-operation with the churches, the YMCA and outside organizations, and between the board, staff and girl membership. Discussions of a second theme, "Christ's Spirit in Industry," emphasized the formation of industrial clubs and the special responsibility and obligation of the YWCA to become involved in the industrial problem "because it is the one organization in the industrial field, which is founded on a distinctly Christian basis, and there is a strong bond between the great movement of religion and the great labour movement." The YWCA could contribute to resolving the industrial problem in that it could "help girls to live up to their best in spite of cramping conditions, and, at the same time, endeavour to remove the bad conditions, and help to make the world safe for women to work in."³³³ Convention discussions on the theme of "World Fellowship" stressed the need to assist the churches in responding to "The Call of the West" and to undertake Travellers' Aid and educational classes for the immigrants, showing them "the great vision of a Christian Democracy, which is the outcome of a unity of all nations."³³⁴ The world program, of course, included a commitment to breaking down the distinctions between YWCA work in Canada and other countries and to giving to "the girlhood of the world a knowledge of Jesus Christ." A new emphasis on "Leadership," the fourth theme of the convention, committed the YWCA to encouraging a sense of responsibility and building character in young women by preparing students to make

their influence felt in church and state, by supporting the Canadian Girls in Training program, and, most challenging of all, by allowing young women to exercise their leadership abilities within the YWCA.

The ambitious vision of the YWCA's role in the new post-war Canadian society, as articulated at the 1919 national convention, was destined not to be realized. The most immediate reason for what must have been a bitter disappointment to many members of the national organization was the unanticipated financial collapse of the Dominion Council following the abysmal failure of the 1919 Red Triangle Campaign. As one national worker described the developments of the war years in 1919: "God's call came to us to make several new ventures; He entrusted to us far more money than we had ever dispensed before; He brought us splendid new workers; and withal He strengthened our faith, widened our love so that we might accomplish more for His Kingdom."³³⁵ It had been confidently expected by the national organization that it would continue indefinitely to receive both God's grace and the financial support of the Canadian public. The Dominion Council's ambitious vision for Reconstruction had depended on anticipated receipts of \$175,000 from the 1919 campaign, only a small portion of which was realized, partly because of war weariness on the part of the public and partly because of considerable bad publicity incurred by the YMCA, accused of reaping an excessive profit from its wartime services.³³⁶ As the YWCA's Emergency Finance Committee explained to the locals in justifying the substantial deficit, "The Council--and it was not alone in this--did not foresee the immediate and cataclysmic descent from enthusiastic liberality of war time to the extreme caution of peace."³³⁷ Canadians, the Dominion Council concluded, had very quickly forgotten the "wonderful lesson of generosity" that 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...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 behind us in a fight against all forms of unrighteousness?³³⁸

This appeal, however, was to no avail. The new departments of Industrial Work, Recreation, and Health Education were disbanded almost as soon as they had been created, the Girls' Work Department was handed over to the Religious Education Council of Canada, and financial responsibility for the Student Department was turned over to the students, contributing to their exit from the YWCA. Most of the large staff of national secretaries had to be laid off, and it was not until after 1922, when the local associations agreed to assume the burden of half the responsibility for financial support of the national organization, that the Dominion Council could once again begin to think of defining and achieving national objectives.

In addition to the problem of finances, it was also the case that the local associations did not respond as enthusiastically as the Dominion Council had expected to the challenge of the "social question." On many occasions, Dominion Council members and national secretaries expressed their hope that the local associations would become leaders of public opinion in their communities on issues relating to the "girl in industry." Yet as middle-class women dependent on the support of the business community, and frequently connected by ties of birth and marriage to that community, city YWCA Boards were unable and probably unwilling to undertake this role. Certainly the records of the Winnipeg YWCA provide no evidence that the Board members understood or even discussed the issues raised by the General Strike in 1919.³³⁹ The records of the organization's response to the strike are reminiscent of the tone of its reports on the period of the Spanish influenza pandemic some months previous; in both cases, the Winnipeg YWCA survived.

During the strike, we were greatly inconvenienced in all our buildings. It was so difficult to obtain supplies and so expensive, as we had to engage a car to carry our provisions...Only five girls belonged to the striking Unions, and before the strike was over two of these had secured work in other establishments. We were able to house several girls who, through absence of street cars, were unable to go home at night...The strike affected so many branches of our work. Imagine, say, forty girls at our Beach Bungalow, and no way of having our laundry done; no way of securing fresh food. So many too, of the girls were inconvenienced. They had planned their vacations, then the strike, and owing to the dull time in their offices and the consequent rush of work following the strike, numbers of them had to alter their plans, with the result that we had many more for week-ends than usual, with some dull periods in between. The help problem was almost too much for us, but despite all difficulties our guests numbered 300 and the girls were very good-natured about any inconveniences, which they knew we could not possibly avoid.³⁴⁰

In keeping with the YWCA's stated policy of refusing to turn away any young woman in dire need, it was reported in the Winnipeg Tribune that "the Y.W.C.A. board at its meeting Wednesday decided to take care of any girls, strikers or not, who are temporarily in want on account of the strike."³⁴¹ While this supportive role was undoubtedly appreciated by the women who took advantage of it, it was far more limited than the Dominion Council's vision of the YWCA as a key factor in the resolution of the problem of capital and labour in the new post-war industrial society. As discussed earlier, it was also the case that the city associations were reluctant to undertake controversial new programs in the fields of recreation and health education, as well as industry, for fear of arousing the animosity of the local churches.

It is ironic that throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century the Dominion Council urged the city YWCAs not to define the YWCA's spiritual objectives too narrowly but to attempt to meet the needs of young women in all aspects of their lives, for it was also the Dominion Council that regularly accused those same locals of losing sight of the religious dimension of YWCA work. Una Saunders, National General Secretary, typically wrote in 1918: "In throwing ourselves into the infinitely varied life and the human interests of all types of women, we hope that our spiritual message may

not be lost, but may gain new opportunities to sound out its clear message of hope and love through the Incarnate Saviour."³⁴² Her optimism, however, proved unfounded. Certainly the statistical reports provided by the local associations were cause for concern, indicating a certain indifference on the part of young women to attendance at Bible study classes and religious services. The Hamilton branch provided a typical set of figures in 1917, based on a grand aggregate attendance of 11,411: "the aggregate attendance at the various departments was: Physical, 5,739; swimming, 4,726; outing club and tennis, 330; dressmaking, 95; I Will Trust Club, 376; Bible study, 125."³⁴³ Such reports caused the Dominion Council to urge at regular intervals that local associations hire special workers to oversee the religious work and to develop new strategies such as recruiting "key girls" who would attract others, and encouraging a social atmosphere that would bring to the Bible study class girls "who would not be thought religious for anything."³⁴⁴ One speaker at the 1919 convention argued that "the religious work of the Y.W.C.A. had been too namby-pamby to appeal to the red-blooded woman" and that it required a much greater expenditure of energy.³⁴⁵ Yet the local associations, preoccupied with the demands of fundraising and administration, had little energy or inclination to undertake overtly religious activities. Only a year after the landmark 1919 convention, an interesting addendum appeared in the minutes of the Board meetings of the Victoria YWCA. After a seemingly endless series of meetings devoted entirely to the merits of various strategies of fundraising for a new building, it was recorded: "A suggestion that we endeavour to reach more of the girls was discussed and various means brought forward. It was left to the Religious Comm. to carry out any plan they might devise."³⁴⁶ Little heed had been paid to the warning delivered at the 1919 convention that "in working out the purpose of the Association we need to remember that it is not a structure of brick or stone, but a living organism that we build."³⁴⁷

While the Dominion Council articulated its vision of a new Canada constructed according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Vancouver YWCA described its more modest vision for Reconstruction as "a cafeteria downtown, a recreation centre, a restroom established. Every store or factory employing girls visited--in short, the needs of the young women of the city met."³⁴⁸ In theory, at least, there was no contradiction between these two visions, as the Vancouver YWCA explained in the same 1919 report.

...the very first ideal of the Association is that every person in a position of responsibility shall embody the Spirit of Christ, so that through every department, the Spirit of the Risen Lord will throb. This unifies the whole work and makes the lunch-room, the Home, the gymnasium, the social party and the warm welcome of the Association body as essentially religious as the Bible class or the vesper service.³⁴⁹

In making this assertion, YWCA leaders revealed their acceptance of a tenet of belief common to many turn-of-the-century Canadian reformers, namely that there was no fundamental distinction between the sacred and the secular. This melding of the sacred and the profane was, as Ramsay Cook has argued in his recent important study of social criticism in late-Victorian English Canada, "the hallmark of the theological liberalism that underpinned the social gospel."³⁵⁰ In The Regenerators, Cook traces the process of the secularization of social reform thought, or the process by which it moved "from a religious to a social science perspective."³⁵¹ His findings are certainly borne out by the experience of the YWCA, and particularly by the Dominion Council, which promoted a conception of Christianity as a social religion and which tried to make Christianity more appealing to young women by demonstrating its relevance to all aspects of their lives. The accomplishment of this objective, however, required the YWCA to adopt the values of business and to commit itself to the professionalization of social work. To their chagrin, YWCA leaders learned, in the company of many others, that "the path blazed by

nineteenth-century religious liberals led not to the Kingdom of God on earth but to the secular city."³⁵²

NOTES - CHAPTER 5

1. National Archives of Canada, MG 28 I 198, YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1920, "Our Purpose," p. 3.
2. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, January 1913, "The Young Women's Christian Association--A Movement to Meet a Spiritual, Civic and National Need," Una M. Saunders, p. 10.
3. Una M. Saunders, The Work of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, (Toronto, 1918).
4. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1902-03, p. 13.
5. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women's Gazette, November 1901, p. 9.
6. National Archives of Canada, MG 28 I 240, Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada," Dominion Council pamphlet, ca. 1902.
7. Ottawa YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1902-03, A. Caroline Macdonald, p. 13.
8. For a portrait of six prominent Toronto reformers, including Mrs. L.A. Hamilton, see Wayne Roberts, "Six New Women: A Guide to the Mental Map of Women Reformers in Toronto," Atlantis 3(1) 1977, pp. 145-164.
9. There is no information in the records to indicate the denominational affiliations of either Dominion Council or local Board members. Such information is more readily obtainable about their husbands than about the women themselves, and it cannot be assumed at this period that husband and wife necessarily attended the same church.
10. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1917, p. 7.
11. Ibid., January 1918, p. 10.
12. Ibid., Dominion Tie, December 1903, p. 278.
13. Una M. Saunders, The Work of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada (Toronto, 1918), p. 2.
14. Ibid.
15. Woman's Century, "The Y.W.C.A. and the Church," Mrs. R.A. Falconer, p. 5.
16. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, "The Spiritual and Social Significance of the Young Women's Christian Association," Anna V. Rice, pp. 46-47.

17. On the social gospel in Canada, see Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928," Canadian Historical Review 49(4) 1968, pp. 381-399; The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); The Social Gospel in Canada (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975); Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
18. Richard Allen, "Social Gospel," The Canadian Encyclopedia (1985), v. III, p. 1717.
19. The Foreign Department of the Dominion Council sent secretaries to India, China and Japan, and was heavily involved in the establishment of a national Japanese YWCA. This aspect of YWCA work is beyond the scope of this thesis and will be discussed in a future paper.
20. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Dominion Tie, December 1904, p. 146.
21. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, February-March 1911, p. 29.
22. Victoria Daily Times, "Lectured on Women's Work," 14 August 1907, p. 9.
23. On Susie Little's involvement in founding the Edmonton YWCA during her western tour, see Edmonton Journal, 9 July 1907, p. 2; 10 July 1907, pp. 1, 4; 30 August 1907, p. 7.
24. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 21.
25. Halifax Herald, "The Y.W.C.A. Annual A Record Meeting," 1 May 1919, p. 8.
26. Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 B 37, Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 2, Board of Directors Minutes, 9 July 1909, Clipping, "Miss Reynolds And Her Y.W.C.A. Work."
27. The Story of the Y.W.C.A. in Canada (Toronto: National Council Y.W.C.A., 1933), p. 11.
28. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, October 1910, p. 273.
29. Ibid., May 1910, "The Value of the Summer Conference to the Volunteer Worker," Lily M. Strong, p. 234.
30. Ibid., Association Outlook, March 1919, "Annual Reports," p. 45.
31. Ibid., November 1919, "Our National Training School," p. 187.
32. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, March 1914, "The Training Course," p. 91.
33. Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 3, Y.W.C.A. Notes, March 1921, p. 5.
34. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 21.

35. Ibid., March 1916, "A National Need: A Plea for the Dominion Council," p. 46-47. See also January 1914, "Finance," pp. 32-33, 61-63.

36. Ibid., March 1916, "A National Need: A Plea for the Dominion Council," p. 47.

37. Ibid., November 1915, p. 174.

38. Ibid., Association Outlook, January 1920, "Report of the Executive Committee of the Dominion Council of the Young Women's Christian Associations of Canada--1913-1919," p. 19.

39. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, March 1916, "A National Need: A Plea for the Dominion Council," p. 47.

40. On the Red Triangle Campaigns, see Murray G. Ross, The Y.M.C.A. in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), pp. 289-291.

41. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, March 1918, p. 65.

42. Ibid., June 1917, p. 119; January 1920, p. 46.

43. Ibid., January 1920, "Report of the Executive Committee of the Dominion Council of Young Women's Christian Associations of Canada--1913-1919," p. 19.

44. Ibid.

45. Marilyn Barber, "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel: The Protestant Church Response to Foreign Immigrants in Western Canada, 1897-1914," in Allen, ed., The Social Gospel in Canada, pp. 186-226.

46. Ibid., p. 187.

47. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes 1914-20, "Young Women's Christian Association Immigration Work," Dominion Council pamphlet, 1914. The literature on these women immigrants is as yet very small. On British immigrants, see Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic Workers for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930," Ontario History 72(3) 1980, pp. 148-172; "The Gentlewomen of Queen Mary's Coronation Hostel," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), pp. 141-158; and "Sunny Ontario for British Girls, 1900-30," in Jean Burnet, ed., Looking Into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), pp. 55-73. See also Varpu Lindstrom-Best, "'I Won't Be a Slave!':--Finnish Domestic Workers in Canada, 1911-30," in Burnet, ed., Looking Into My Sister's Eyes, pp. 33-53; and Franc Sturino, "The Role of Women in Italian Immigration to the New World," in Burnet, ed., Looking Into My Sister's Eyes, pp. 21-32. For a general discussion of domestic service, see Genevieve Leslie, "Domestic Service in Canada, 1880-1920," in Janice Acton, et al, eds., Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930 (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), pp. 71-125.

48. Barber, "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel," p. 187.

49. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 52.
50. Ibid., December 1912, p. 339.
51. Barber, "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel," p. 189.
52. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.
53. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, February 1914, p. 76.
54. Ibid., December 1912, p. 341.
55. Barbara Roberts, "'A Work of Empire': Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration," in Linda Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 185-201.
56. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1912, p. 342.
57. Barber, "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel," p. 208.
58. On Woodsworth and the influence of his ideas, see Kenneth McNaught, A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959); Allen Mills, "Cooperation and Community in the Thought of J.S. Woodsworth," Labour/Le Travail 14 (Fall 1984), pp. 103-120; J.S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians (1909), with an introduction by Marilyn Barber, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972); J.S. Woodsworth, My Neighbor: A Study of City Conditions, A Plea for Social Service (1911), with an introduction by Richard Allen, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).
59. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1909, p. 150.
60. The following works on immigration were endorsed by the Dominion Council: Immigrant and the Community; From Alien to Citizen (Steiner); Immigrant Forces (Shriver); My Neighbor (Woodsworth); Our Slavic Fellow Citizen (Balch); On the Trail of the Immigrant (Steiner); Strangers Within Our Gates (Woodsworth); The Immigrant Tide (Steiner); The Promised Land (Antin). YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 4, "Classified List of Publications Recommended for City and Student Associations," 1915.
61. Ibid., v. 44, Clippings 1915-1925, "The Dominion Council Y.W.C.A.," Mrs. E.A. Burrington-Ham, National Ports Secretary.
62. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, April 1914, pp. 115-116.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.
65. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 55.
66. Ibid., April 1914, pp. 115-116.

67. Ibid., v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 6 April 1911 and 5 October 1911.
68. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, 18 November 1912.
69. University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections, Vancouver YWCA Records, Box 10, Annual Report, 1905, p. 8.
70. Ibid., p. 13.
71. Ibid., 1907, p. 11. See also Vancouver, Daily Province, 21 February 1908, p. 7.
72. Vancouver YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1907, p. 6.
73. Ibid., p. 8. See also Vancouver, Daily Province, 19 February 1909, p. 8.
74. Vancouver YWCA Records, Annual Report, 1905, p. 14.
75. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 24, "History of the National Travellers' Aid Association, 1911-1948 (U.S.).
76. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, February 1914, p. 74.
77. Suzann Buckley, "British Female Emigration and Imperial Development: Experiments in Canada, 1885-1931," Hecate 3(2) 1977, p. 32.
78. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers (1912), Cd. 6516 [hereinafter Cd. 6516], para. 3362. Testimony of Miss A.M. Wingate before the Dominions Royal Commission.
79. Ibid., para. 3240 and 3266. Testimony of Dr. E.C. Sparrow, M.A., M.B., B.C.
80. Lucy Brooking, "Conditions in Toronto," in Ernest E. Bell, ed., Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls (Chicago: Illinois Vigilance Association, 1910; reprint ed., War on the White Slave Trade, Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1980) p. 374.
81. Cd. 6516, para. 3240.
82. Ibid., para. 3355. Testimony of Dr. E.C. Sparrow.
83. Ibid., para. 3370. Testimony of Miss A.M. Wingate.
84. Rev. J.G. Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade," in Bell, ed., War on the White Slave Trade, p. 337.
85. Edwin W. Sims, "The White Slave Trade of Today," in Bell, ed., War on the White Slave Trade, p. 57.
86. Shearer, "The Canadian Crusade", p. 337.
87. Ibid., pp. 350-351.
88. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, October 1912, p. 315.

89. Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 13, Clipping, "Kindly Eye on Newcomers: Mrs. Burrington-Ham, Immigration Secretary of Y.W.C.A., on Tour of West," 1916?; Victoria Daily Times, 23 March 1916, p. 13.
90. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1914, p. 245.
91. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 4, "Facts of Interest in Association Work," 1915.
92. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 25.
93. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, 26 April 1916.
94. Victoria Daily Times, 23 March 1916, p. 13.
95. Winnipeg YWCA Records, Box 13, Clipping, "Kindly Eye on Newcomers."
96. Victoria Daily Times, 23 March 1916, p. 13.
97. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 4 April 1912 and 3 October 1912.
98. Ibid., 2 April 1914.
99. Ibid., 1 June 1916.
100. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, February 1914, p. 76.
101. Ibid., January 1914, pp. 55-56.
102. Ibid., p. 54.
103. Ibid., April 1915, p. 89.
104. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, 2 March 1917.
105. Ibid., v. 9, National Executive Committee Minutes, 2 April 1913.
106. Ibid., v. 14, Immigration and Travellers Aid Committee Minutes, 26 January 1922.
107. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, 25 October 1918.
108. Ibid., 20 November 1918.
109. Ibid., 3 February 1919.
110. Ibid., 16 December 1918 and 3 February 1919.
111. Ibid., 25 March 1919, 7 July 1919, and 26 September 1919.
112. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1912, p. 342.

113. Ibid., Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.
114. Ibid., v. 13, Immigration Committee Minutes, 22 October 1913.
115. Ibid., v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 12.
116. Barber, "Nationalism, Nativism and the Social Gospel," pp. 216-217.
117. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada," Dominion Council pamphlet, 1902.
118. Nancy Sheehan, "Collegiate Women in Canada," History of Education Quarterly 24(1) 1984, pp. 143-151. The literature on Canadian women students is as yet very small and confined to students at one institution. See Margaret Gillett, We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981); John G. Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914," Acadiensis 12(2) 1983, pp. 3-33; Lee Stewart, "Women on Campus in British Columbia: Strategies for Survival, Years of War and Peace, 1906-1920," in Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), pp. 185-193; Lynne Marks and Chad Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895-1905: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?" Ontario History 78(4) 1986, pp. 331-349. In a few cases useful material on women students has been integrated into accounts of student life. See Paul Axelrod, "Moulding the Middle Class: Student Life at Dalhousie University in the 1930s," Acadiensis 15(1) 1985, pp. 84-122; Donald Kirkey, "'Building the City of God': The Founding of the Student Christian Movement of Canada," (M.A. thesis, McMaster University, 1983); and John G. Reid, Mount Allison University: A History to 1963 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). In the absence of a Canadian survey, an excellent American reference is Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).
119. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 4, "Facts of Interest in Association Work," 1915.
120. Una M. Saunders, The Work of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada (Toronto, 1918), p. 12.
121. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada," Dominion Council pamphlet, 1902.
122. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, The Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 27.
123. Una M. Saunders, The Work of the Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, (Toronto, 1918), p. 13.
124. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook A, p. 10, "Y.W.C.A. Topics: Victoria College, October to December 1906," "Be Strong!," Maltbie Davenport Babcock.
125. Ibid., p. 3, University of New Brunswick Y.W.C.A., "Topics for 1907-08."

126. Ibid., p. 10, Albert College YWCA, 1903-04.
127. Ibid., v. 46, Dominion Tie, October 1902, p. 74.
128. Ibid., December 1903.
129. Ibid., Young Women of Canada, October 1915, p. 158.
130. Ibid., December 1915, p. 197.
131. 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 (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1902), p. 17.
132. Gillett, We Walked Very Warily, p. 231.
133. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook A, p. 14, "The College Woman's Opportunity," Mrs. Lawrence Thurston, (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1906), p. 13. See also Scrapbook A, p. 13, "Women Students and the Foreign Mission Field," Ruth Rouse (London: Student Volunteer Missionary Union, 1907).
134. Queen's University Journal, 18 January 1909, "A College Girl's Life at Acadia University," p. 218.
135. Ibid., 9 November 1910, "Echoes from Muskoka," T.F.B.'11, p. 68.
136. Ibid., 18 October 1905.
137. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 1, "Y.W.C.A. Student Work in Canada," 1913.
138. Kirkey, "Building the City of God," p. 20.
139. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Young Women's Christian Association Work in Canada," Dominion Council pamphlet, 1902, p. 2.
140. Queen's University Journal, 20 February 1903, p. 32, and 15 November 1905, p. 84.
141. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Dominion Tie, November 1904, p. 141.
142. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Of Use to Others and of Value to Herself", Elizabeth Wilson, American Committee pamphlet, 1902.
143. Queen's University Journal, 19 January 1912, p. 3.
144. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1916, pp. 184-187.

145. Women's Century, September 1918, "The Young Women's Christian Association," p. 43.

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147. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook A, p. 5, Clayton S. Cooper, "Brief Historical Sketch of the Voluntary Bible Study Movement Among North American Institutions," (New York: Young Men's Christian Association Press, 1908). See also Queen's University Journal, 3 November 1905, "The Bible Study Movement," pp. 40-43.

148. Nathanael Burwash, The History of Victoria College (Toronto: Victoria College Press, 1927), p. 476, as quoted in Kirkey, "Building the City of God," p. 16.

149. For discussions of Sharman and his influence, see This One Thing: A Tribute to Henry Burton Sharman (Toronto: Student Christian Movement of Canada, 1959); Kirkey, "Building the City of God," pp. 51-53, 88-89, 102-103, 153-154; Allen, The Social Passion, pp. 221-222; and Margaret Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-1939," Canadian Historical Review 66(2) 1985, pp. 165-168.

150. Women's Century, September 1918, "The Young Women's Christian Association," p. 43.

151. Montreal YWCA Records, v. 25, Miscellaneous, "Fundamental Principles of the Young Women's Christian Association," American Committee pamphlet, 1902.

152. Queen's University Journal, 1 March 1909, p. 341.

153. Queen's University Journal, 16 October 1903, p. 25.

154. Ibid., 18 January 1909, p. 218.

155. Ibid., 15 February 1909, "A College Girl's Life at the Royal Victoria College," p. 302.

156. For a report of the 1908 Silver Bay conference, see Queen's University Journal, 16 November 1908, pp. 93-97.

157. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 1, "Y.W.C.A. Student Work in Canada," 1913. For reports of the first two conferences, see Queen's University Journal, 27 October 1909, pp. 37-41, and 9 November 1910, pp. 67-70.

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159. Women's Century, September 1918, "The Young Women's Christian Association," p. 43.

160. Queen's University Journal, 20 October 1910, p. 32.

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162. Canadian Student, October 1919, "Ten Days at Couchiching Conference," Helen R.H. Nichol, p. 24.

163. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 44, Scrapbook B, p. 1, "Y.W.C.A. Student Work in Canada," 1913.

164. Ibid., v. 40, "Report of the Canadian Student Young Women's Christian Association, 1914-1915."

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166. Ibid., 27 October 1909, p. 40. Solomon has noted the significance of eating treats as a ritual of female friendship among students in The Company of Educated Women, p. 97.

167. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, October 1915, p. 150.

168. Ibid., February 1916, p. 36.

169. Kirkey, "Building the City of God," p. 50.

170. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Young Women of Canada, December 1915, p. 196.

171. Canadian Student, March 1920, p. 31.

172. Ibid., February 1920, pp. 25-26.

173. YWCA of Canada Records, Young Women of Canada, February 1916, p. 36.

174. Canadian Student, January 1921, p. 15. For a full account of the formation of the SCM, see Kirkey, "Building the City of God," pp. 72-131.

175. John Demos and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," in Michael Gordon, ed., The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), p. 209; Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977), p. 215.

176. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, January 1920, p. 16.

177. Demos and Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective"; Kett, Rites of Passage; David Bakan, "Adolescence in America: From Idea to Social Fact," in Jerome Kagan and Robert Cole, eds., Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), pp. 73-89; John R. Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Joseph F. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth-Century America," in Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg, eds., The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 95-110; Selwyn K. Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent by American Educational Reformers, 1900-1920: An Economic Perspective," in Lawrence

Stone, ed., Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of Education (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 239-251; R.P. Neuman, "Masturbation, Madness and the Modern Concepts of Childhood and Adolescence," Journal of Social History, Spring 1975, pp. 1-27; David MacLeod, "Act Your Age: Boyhood, Adolescence, and the Rise of the Boy Scouts of America," Journal of Social History 16(2) 1982, pp. 3-20. Very little work has been done on perceptions of female adolescence. An important beginning is Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), esp. pp. 101-122.

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179. John Gillis, "The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1890-1914," Past and Present 67 (May 1975), p. 97.

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185. Minnie E. Kennedy, "The Adolescent Girl," in John L. Alexander, ed., The Sunday School and the Teens (New York: Association Press, 1913), pp. 1-16. See also in the same volume, Margaret Slattery, "The Adolescent Girl and the Sunday School"; and Harriet McT. Daniels, "Home Conditions and the Adolescent Girl."

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187. Patricia Dirks, "Beyond Family and School: An Analysis of the Changing Place of Protestant Churches in the Lives of Canada's Young, 1900-1918," Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Vancouver, June 1983; David Howell and Peter Lindsay, "Social Gospel and the Young Boy Problem, 1895-1925," Canadian Journal of History of Sport 17(1) 1986, pp. 75-87.

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198. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, September 1914, pp. 174-5.
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203. Ibid., v. 1, Convention--1913--Winnipeg(2), "Recommendations Presented to the Eighth Annual Convention of the Young Women's Christian Association of Canada, 17 November 1913."
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205. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 46, Association Outlook, November 1917, p. 179.
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207. Ibid., v. 44, Scrapbooks, 1912-1916, Clipping, "Mrs. McKinney M.P.P. Speaks at Girls' Conference on the Choosing of a Life Vocation."

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209. See Dirks, "Beyond Family and School"; Ross, The Y.M.C.A. in Canada, pp. 201-207; and David MacLeod, "A Live Vaccine: The YMCA and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada, 1870-1920," Histoire sociale/Social History XI, No. 21 (May 1978), pp. 5-25.

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212. Ibid., v. 46, Young Women of Canada, January 1914, p. 61.

213. Ibid., v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work--Provincial Girls' Work 1918-1921, "Supplementary Suggestions for Canadian Girls in Training." For fuller accounts of the CGIT program, see Prang, "The Girl God Would Have Me Be"; and Diana Pedersen, "'On the Trail of the Great Quest': The YWCA and the Launching of Canadian Girls in Training, 1909-1921," Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Ottawa, June 1982.

214. MacLeod, "A Live Vaccine," p. 21.

215. Prang, "The Girl God Would Have Me Be," p. 165. For a discussion of the impact of higher criticism on the student YWCAs and YMCAs, see Donald Kirkey, "'Building the City of God': The Founding of the Student Christian Movement of Canada," (M.A. thesis, McMaster University, 1983).

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217. YWCA of Canada Records, v. 40, Youth--Girls' Work 1918-1921.

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219. For an account of the growth and development of the CGIT program after the withdrawal of the YWCA, see Prang, "The Girl God Would Have Me Be." On the RECC, see Dirks, "Canada's Sunday Schools."

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

An examination of the history of the YWCA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helps to illuminate considerably our understanding of the complex relationship between evangelical religion and social reform in the development of this country. The evangelical crusade to establish a Christian social order in conformity with the teachings of Jesus Christ was a powerful impetus to reform, whose relationship to concerns as divergent as temperance, Sunday streetcars, child welfare, and organized vice, has attracted considerable attention from Canadian historians. Yet the existing models developed by historians are inadequate to accommodate the range of views that were encompassed within the heterogeneous group that has been loosely categorized as "middle-class social reformers." Too often the concerns of women reformers have been subsumed within the often more highly publicized statements of the male reformers with whom they frequently cooperated, and evangelical women in particular have been misrepresented as pathetic, sexually repressed, or even comic figures whose concerns do not constitute a subject for serious examination. At the same time, the religious dimension of the Canadian women's movement has been neglected by Canadian women's historians who, acting on an unchallenged assumption that evangelical women were not fundamentally committed to social change or to the cause of women, have overlooked the ways in which religious, as well as maternal, rhetoric was often used to enhance women's influence and to expand the scope of their activities beyond the home and the private sphere. The case of the YWCA demonstrates clearly that evangelical women had a distinct agenda for social reform, that in

promoting an ideal of an active organized evangelical womanhood they were attempting to make women central to the process of reform, and that their vision of a Canada transformed according to the teachings of Jesus Christ had, they believed, profound implications for all women.

The YWCA played an important role in the turn-of-the-century Canadian reform movement both by drawing public attention to "the girl problem" and by defining this issue as central to the resolution of the larger problems of the city and the nation. The YWCA was an institutional response by urban middle-class evangelical women to the growing numbers of young women experiencing an unprecedented degree of independence and mobility as they moved to the cities in search of employment or educational opportunities. Evangelical women believed that these young working women, not under the supervision of family, community, or church, were in imminent moral peril and that, lacking a substitute for maternal solicitude and the supportive environment of the Christian family home, they were in danger of joining the burgeoning ranks of "fallen women." The "girl problem", evangelical women believed, could best be resolved by winning young women for Christ and by constructing for them a set of institutional supports that would help them to preserve their respectability and their traditional ties to home and family in the face of rapidly changing social conditions. In defining the "girl problem," YWCA women viewed the difficulties of young working women through a middle-class and evangelical prism with the result that the solutions they proposed were often maternalistic, moralistic and patronizing. Nonetheless, their attempt to define the "girl problem" as an issue that warranted public concern and active measures to address it constituted an assertion of young women's importance to the community, of their distinct needs, and of women's right to address women's problems. Supporting their position by referring to evangelical teachings on the

centrality of the family, home, and motherhood to a Christian social order, YWCA women asserted that the "great issues" of the day--the problem of the city and the problem of the nation--could not be resolved so long as women played no part in their solution and so long as the churches, governments, and the public continued to ignore the needs and the welfare of one-half of the future generations of citizens. In making continual reference to the importance of young women as the mothers of tomorrow who would determine the religious and moral standards of the future generations of Canadians, YWCA women responded to those who justified the expenditure of public funds for young men on the grounds that they were the future leaders of the community and of the country, with young women, by implication, having no such important role to play.

The YWCA's response to the problem of the city reflected middle-class evangelical women's perception of the city as the home of godlessness, crime, indigence, crime, and vice. In rallying to the defence of the innocent young country girl, ignorant of city ways and prey to thieves and white slavers, YWCA women expressed their fears of the growing urban influence in Canadian society. Yet by insisting that the "girl problem" would not go away and had to be addressed, YWCA women acknowledged that the city was also a place of opportunity for women, and their attempts to provide "protection" had the effect, as some of their critics suggested, of making it easier for some young women to leave home and attempt to make their way in the world. Nineteenth-century YWCAs, drawing on their heritage of evangelical women's benevolent work, experimented with a variety of strategies for addressing the "girl problem," gradually abandoning traditional rescue work for "fallen women" in favour of "preventive" measures on behalf of "respectable" working women. Central to their strategy of preventive work was a new kind of public institution--a female-controlled boarding house catering to respectable working women--that drew on YWCA women's commitment

to evangelical domesticity and the importance of the mother-daughter bond. Their struggle to win public acceptance of this new institution is suggestive of the difficulties encountered by evangelical women whose efforts were initially unwelcome to certain elements of the churches and the business community, which questioned women's right and competence to form autonomous organizations intended to address issues of significance to the larger community. The experience of YWCA women suggests that historians, in portraying women's organizations as the agents of their class, have sometimes overlooked the existence of significant tensions between middle-class men and middle-class women, with the former sometimes resisting the latter's efforts to act autonomously.

In the early twentieth century, the YWCA's attempts to address the "girl problem" in Canadian cities underwent considerable modification. Responding in part to the demands of their clientele and in part to their own belief as evangelicals that women should be prepared to answer Christ's call and to serve the community by development of their physical, social, and intellectual, as well as spiritual, selves, YWCA women considerably expanded their programs and services. Boarding houses and educational classes were supplemented by cafeterias, gymnasias, swimming pools, summer camps, and Travellers' Aid. This expanded mandate was physically manifested in an elaborate and expensive physical complex that heightened the YWCA's public visibility in the Canadian city and that constituted in most communities the first attempt by women to create a female-controlled urban public space. The YWCA building also reflected the organization's changing perception of itself as the sole agency that could claim to unite all the women of the community in "a great democratic sisterhood" linked by their commitment to one another's welfare and by their desire to serve the community. Ironically, this vision of female community within a female-controlled environment drew

the YWCA into an ever closer and ever more dependent relationship with the men who provided the necessary financial support. Throughout the early twentieth century city YWCAs struggled to balance the often conflicting needs and requirements of their clientele, their financial supporters, the churches, and the public at large. The resulting successful and not so successful compromises help to deepen our understanding of the process of social reform in early twentieth century Canadian cities by revealing clearly that what social reformers accomplished was not necessarily what they had set out to do, and by demonstrating the nature of the constraints by which women reformers in particular were governed. The YWCA's involvement in a variety of campaigns, particularly on issues relating to social purity, also suggests the need for greater sensitivity to these reform movements as loosely-organized coalitions requiring analysis on several levels, with the distinct concerns of both female and male reformers being taken into account.

The evolution of the YWCA in nineteenth-century Canada sheds light on a neglected aspect of the history of social reform in this country by demonstrating that Canadian reform movements, including the organized women's movement, were not indigenous phenomena but frequently developed in an international context which encouraged the dissemination of reform ideas through books, correspondence, travelling speakers, and international conferences. The nineteenth-century Canadian YWCA evolved in the context of what was essentially a North American movement, and the commitment to the American YWCA model, with its emphasis on buildings, fundraising, and professionalization, had profound implications for the development of the Canadian YWCA in the twentieth century. The push for the formation of a Dominion YWCA in the 1890s reflected the response of the scattered Canadian city and student YWCAs to a growing evangelical nationalism in late-nineteenth-century Canada and shows how

women promoted nationalist ideas, perceiving in them an opportunity for women to assist the churches in the resolution of issues of national significance, and for the YWCA in particular to demonstrate its usefulness as self-proclaimed "hand-maiden" of the churches. The early history of the Dominion YWCA is suggestive of the highly complex relationship between evangelical religion, nationalism, and feminism in late-nineteenth-century Canada. The YWCA tried to establish clear links between the "girl problem" and the larger problem of the nation by stressing that young women would one day be responsible for determining moral and religious standards and would thereby determine the character of this young nation in a crucial period of its development. Without the girl, the YWCA argued, the churches' quest to remake Canadian society according to the teachings of Christ was doomed to failure. In its initial phase, the YWCA defined itself primarily as a lay evangelical organization dedicated to advancing the cause of evangelical Protestantism by mobilizing women on behalf of the churches. Yet, the YWCA's commitment to interdenominational cooperation had the effect of considerably increasing the influence and autonomy of church women, and placed under their control far greater resources than were available to denominational church women's societies. By the end of the century, the Dominion organization had developed a heightened consciousness of the YWCA as a women's organization working on behalf of other women, but expressed its ambivalence toward the secular women's movement by refusing to affiliate with the National Council of Women. In working to strengthen the Canadian Protestant churches and to advance the cause of evangelical religion by winning women for Christ and by promoting the ideal of evangelical domesticity that emphasized the redemptive capacities of family life and motherhood, YWCA women believed that they were simultaneously advancing the interests of women and the nation.

With consolidation, a larger professional staff and greater financial resources in the twentieth century, the Dominion Council of YWCAs continued to assert the right of organized evangelical women to address issues of national significance, and attempted to shape a coherent YWCA national policy on issues such as immigration, the adolescent, and the industrial question. The twentieth-century development of the Dominion Council adds considerably to our understanding of the much-neglected relationship between the women's movement and the social gospel in that the Dominion Council of YWCAs, perhaps more than any other single organization or agency, was committed to bridging the gap between the two. As the churches' commitment to addressing social and economic questions deepened in the twentieth century, the Dominion Council saw an opportunity to demonstrate women's usefulness in the struggle for Christ's Kingdom by offering the YWCA's expertise and experience in interdenominational cooperation and the "conditions of girl life." In the outbreak of the First World War, the Dominion Council perceived an unprecedented opportunity to link the cause of Christ with the cause of women, and attempted to inspire both the local YWCAs and the Canadian public with a vision of a post-war society in which Christian women, as mothers, workers, and citizens, would play a vastly expanded role in working out the problems of the nation. The realization of this vision for Reconstruction, however, demanded new strategies for addressing issues such as recreation and venereal disease, a greater willingness on the part of the local associations to take up the issues of women's wages and working conditions, and a revitalization and rekindling of the YWCA's fundamental religious objectives. The constant tension between the social gospel rhetoric of the Dominion Council and the preoccupation of the local associations with the demands of fundraising and administration, which derived directly, after all, from the YWCA's commitment to a broad definition of the spiritual, is indicative of the dilemma in which the larger Canadian reform movement found itself

by 1920. It is surely significant that the Dominion Council foundered badly, finding itself without funds and without direction, with the collapse of the broader reform movement in the period of post-war disillusionment, while the city associations embarked on a decade of expansion and unprecedented acceptance in Canadian cities as a respected "community service."

In assessing the activities of evangelical women reformers in turn-of-the-century Canada, many Canadian historians have been harsh in their judgment and have emphasized the fundamental conservatism of organizations such as the YWCA. This assessment has been based in part on an accurate perception of the inability of YWCA women to overcome their class bias and demonstrate a solidarity with working women that transcended class barriers. It has also been based on a somewhat less valid understanding of the commitment of evangelical women to achieving "the white life for two" by promoting the single standard of sexual morality as a single-minded advocacy of sexual repression for all that derived from their intolerance and fanatical religious beliefs. In emphasizing the YWCA's class bias and in displaying a certain insensitivity to the complexity of social purity reform, Canadian historians have overlooked certain radical, or potentially radical, implications of the YWCA's objectives and activities. Too ready to tar women and men reformers with the same brush, historians have failed to acknowledge the fact that women were frequently more receptive to progressive ideas and to some of the more liberal and radical implications of Christian social reform. More importantly, in their commitment to "sisterhood," YWCA women expressed an understanding, however limited, of women's common oppression, and achieved a measure of genuine identification, however imperfect, with working women. Perhaps the real "radicalism" of the YWCA lay in its demands that communities pay more attention and devote more resources to their young women, in its recognition and critique of male

sexual privilege, in its assertion of the right of women to address both the problems of women and the larger problems of the city and the nation, and above all, in its recognition of women's special relationship to the urban environment. The legacy of the YWCA to Canadian women was the creation of a female public space and a gender-based critique of the urban environment whose implications are only now beginning to be fully understood and appreciated by the wider women's movement.

APPENDIX I

Constitution of the Dominion Y.W.C.A. as adopted at the first annual Convention held in
Ottawa Jan.23rd [1895].

Preamble

In order to give greater uniformity, permanency and efficiency to the general work of the Young Women's Christian Associations of the Dominion of Canada and to bring them into closer relationship through an organized union, the following constitution is adopted and shall become binding upon the Dominion Association, as soon as the executive shall have received official notification from the majority of the Associations informing them of its ratification.

Article I -- Name

This organization shall be known as the Young Women's Christian Association of the Dominion of Canada.

Article II -- Object

Its object shall be to unite in one central body all organizations existing and those to be formed in the future for the purpose of Y.W.C.A. work, viz:--The promotion of the spiritual intellectual physical and social condition of young women; believing that the

more intimate knowledge of one another's work, will result in larger mutual sympathy, greater unity of purpose and plan and therefore in more effective action.

Article III -- Basis

The Dominion Y.W.C.A. 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 women by such means as are in accordance with the word of God. (The basis of the evangelical alliance may be appended where locally desired.)

Article IV -- Officers

The Officers shall be a President, four Vice-Presidents, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer. These officers together with the Presidents of affiliated Associations shall constitute the Executive Committee who shall control and provide for the general interests of the work, of whom five shall make a quorum.

Article V -- Meetings

A bi-ennial Convention shall be held in such place and at such time as shall be decided at a previous Convention.

Article VI -- Representation

The number of delegates shall be in proportion to two to every Association of one hundred members or less and for every additional one hundred members or fraction

thereof one additional delegate who together with the Executive Committee only shall have the right to vote. Other members of affiliated Associations may attend the meetings and take part in the discussions but may not vote. All new business to be brought before the Coonvention must first be submitted to the Executive as a notice of motion one previous to Convention.

Article VII -- Fees

Each auxiliary Association shall pay annually to the funds of the Dominion Association an amount equal to three cents for each paid member.

Article VIII -- Amendments

These articles may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular Convention of the Association provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at a previous convention. Any amendment so carried shall be substituted for and taken by the Executive Committee at its next meeting with the exception of this clause of this article and that portion of Article III, defining the basis of membership which shall not be altered or repealed except by the unanimous vote of two successive Conventions.

Basis of the Evangelical Alliance

1. The divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.
2. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.
3. The unity of the Godhead, and the Trinity of Persons therein.
4. The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall.

5. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement for sinners, and His mediatorial intercession and reign.
6. The justification of the sinner by faith alone.
7. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.
8. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.
9. The Divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

APPENDIX II

Note on Sources

To a considerable degree the questions raised and addressed in the course of this study have been determined by the limitations of the surviving records of Canadian YWCAs at the national and local levels. Those records are, unfortunately, much less than the historian could wish. Consequently many important issues and questions, particularly those having to do with the YWCA's clientele of working women and its relationship with other women's organizations, have not been raised. In every case I have investigated, far more records produced by the local YMCA have survived in comparison with its female counterpart. The National Council of YMCAs in particular has left an enormous body of material, particularly rich in correspondence, personnel files, and unpublished reports, that constitutes an historian's dream. The YMCA, having greater financial resources, was always able to produce a larger quantity of more expensive documents such as photographs and published reports. It is less clear why it should have been more inclined to preserve its correspondence. It may be the case, as some historians have speculated, that women's organizations are less inclined to see their activities as having historical significance and therefore worthy of documentation. In any event, I have developed a very strong empathy with those YWCA secretaries at the turn of the century who complained that in comparison with their counterparts at the YMCA their work was constantly hampered by a lack of resources.

The records generated by the Dominion Council of YWCAs between 1895 and 1920 consist primarily of the minutes of meetings of the national executive and, in the latter

part of this period, of other committees such as City, Finance, Immigration, Girls' Work, and Foreign Work. Other miscellaneous documents include conference materials; photographs; pamphlets promoting the Dominion Council's school girls' camps; copies of constitutions for city and student YWCAs; two scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings as well as booklets and pamphlets produced by the city and student YWCAs, the YMCA and the Student Volunteer Movement. The most valuable source for the period 1900-1920 is the magazine published by the Dominion Council, successively titled The Young Woman's Gazette, The Dominion Tie, The Young Women of Canada, and The Association Outlook. This magazine was produced for and addressed to the YWCA's staff and active membership rather than for the "girl membership." Articles were written by national secretaries, members of the Dominion Council, members of other organizations such as the YMCA or the Women's Trade Union League, clergymen, and various authorities in the fields of social service and work with young women. Short reports from the local associations are included in many of the issues, and some special issues on student work contain articles written by students themselves as well as by the responsible national secretaries. With the exception of the minute books, almost all of this material was published and intended for public consumption.

Only one printed annual report (that for 1896) produced by the Dominion Council has survived. Given the importance of this type of document for fundraising purposes, it is almost certain that such a report was produced each year. The loss of this set of documents is a serious one that hampers the tasks of chronicling the growth of the Dominion Council and of identifying and analyzing its changing objectives. Perhaps the greatest loss to this collection has been the correspondence. Only one file of correspondence generated before 1920 has survived, that file containing letters from Caroline Macdonald, the Dominion Council's Foreign Secretary in Japan. The absence of

correspondence means that the records shed little light on the Dominion Council's relationships with various departments of the federal government and with other bodies such as the National Council of YMCAs, the National Council of Women, and the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada. Even more seriously, without the correspondence it is very difficult to identify certain ideological positions with certain individuals within the Dominion Council and thus only a limited understanding of internal conflicts and dissension can be gained from the records. Another serious loss is the unpublished reports produced by the staff of national secretaries for the benefit of the national executive. Only one file of such reports, produced by National Service Secretaries during the First World War, has survived. These documents, like the case reports of Travellers' Aid workers which are also missing, tended to be much more frank in discussing the organization's weaknesses, internal conflicts, and criticisms made by the clientele or outside agencies.

Limited as these records are, even less has survived at the local level. In some cities such as Kingston, where active YWCAs existed well before 1920, no records at all from this period are currently held by the organization. In other centres such as Hamilton and Halifax only one or two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings remain. I was informed by a reliable source that following the centenary of the Halifax YWCA in 1975, one hundred years of records were thrown into the furnace. In other cases they were simply lost or accidentally thrown out. The majority of locals have preserved only the minutes of the Board of Directors and the printed annual reports produced for the benefit of subscribers and potential financial supporters. These appear to have been kept because they are perceived to provide sufficient information for a basic institutional account of the history of the organization. Beginning in about 1919, a number of Canadian YWCAs undertook surveys of conditions facing women workers in

their cities, but none of these documents has surfaced thus far. Again all correspondence has been destroyed. In a few cases, some other type of document has survived. The Peterborough YWCA, for example, holds some very interesting unpublished reports by the Industrial Secretary, and the Winnipeg YWCA has preserved a wonderful collection of promotional materials and programmes for various social and educational events.

YWCA Board minutes are uniformly preoccupied with the details of fundraising, and administering and staffing the institution. They are not helpful for understanding the Board's position on larger or more controversial questions. A typical entry might read: "There was heated discussion on the question of dancing. The Board decided not to take a position at this time." To the questions why was dancing an issue, who supported or opposed it and on what grounds, the records are singularly unhelpful. In these circumstances the printed annual reports are invaluable documents, although even they have their limitations. Intended for public consumption they are less than frank about the organization's difficulties, although a careful reading can turn up oblique references to problems and criticisms. They also have a tendency to emphasize the work of some departments at the expense of others, the latter presumably more controversial or less popular with financial supporters. There is, for example, a great deal of information about domestic science classes and Immigration and Travellers' Aid services, but almost nothing about business education or programs for industrial workers. While historians will undoubtedly have many questions about the latter in particular, it is difficult to make too much of "reports" that read: "Several noon visits were paid to local factories this fall with the result that three clubs for industrial girls have been organized and are now holding weekly meetings."

This last observation raises one of the most difficult problems encountered by the historian in working with the records of the YWCA. In the case of the Dominion Council and the city YWCAs the only documents produced by the young women who formed the *raison d'être* of the organization are a small collection of photographs. Their concerns are never voiced directly in the records and must be deduced from oblique references to complaints or from enrolment figures in the YWCA's various programs, where these are available. Often the most basic questions about the clientele such as "What proportion of the 'girl membership' could be described as evangelical Protestants?", "Who qualified as a 'girl of leisure'?", "What were the ages and ethnic backgrounds of workers in YWCA clubs or other programs?", or "What proportion of the boarding house residents were of rural origins?" cannot be answered from the surviving records. While the institution of the city YWCA would appear to offer an ideal opportunity to study the nature of cross-class contacts between women, the written records provide little of the kind of information that the historian would find most useful for such a study, such as, for example, records of the actual discussions that took place at YWCA club meetings. It is highly probable, however, that this difficulty could be largely overcome in future studies of local YWCAs that focus on one city and draw upon oral history to overcome the deficiencies of the written record. The student YWCA records, it should be noted, are also sketchy, consisting largely of reports and articles appearing in campus yearbooks and newspapers, as well as in the Dominion Council magazine. While some of the latter items were written by the Dominion Council's staff of student secretaries, much of this material was actually written by students.

Given the limitations of the surviving records generated by the YWCA, and the impossibility of undertaking a cross-Canada oral history project for this study, newspapers have been an absolutely invaluable supplementary source. In some cases I

was able to draw upon scrapbooks of clippings actually compiled by the YWCA, as well as an extremely useful set of scrapbooks compiled by the staff of the Special Collections Division of the Hamilton Public Library. Most of the clippings used in this study, however, were located through research in the newspapers themselves. The "key" that unlocks the newspapers to the historian may be found in the minute books and printed annual reports of the local associations where references are frequently made, with varying degrees of precision, to the dates of events that were likely to be covered in the daily press. These included annual meetings, conventions, conferences, public meetings featuring visiting speakers, social functions, anniversary celebrations, fundraising activities, building campaigns and opening ceremonies. They contain valuable information not found in minute books and printed annual reports such as lists of conference delegates or participants in and contributors to financial campaigns, summaries of speeches and sometimes the complete text of important addresses at conferences or public meetings. Newspaper research on two international YWCA conferences held in Montreal in 1877 and 1897 turned up a wealth of material that has not survived anywhere else. Editorials have been particularly important for understanding the YWCA's public presentation of its work and the perception of the organization held by its supporters; they sometimes contain revealing references to public controversies involving the YWCA. It is newspaper research that made it possible in this study to consider the YWCA's relationship with local businessmen, a dimension of the organization's history that does not figure at all in the organizational records. Newspaper sources also provided a wealth of material helpful for understanding the conditions faced by working women, at least as they were perceived by the YWCA and its supporters. Building campaigns in particular tended to generate a series of articles on white slavery and the lack of housing or recreational facilities

suitable for working women. This type of research is time-consuming, but it will prove invaluable in reconstructing local YWCA histories where the records have been lost.

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