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LONDON  
YOUNG WOMEN'S  
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
**REPORT**  
1927

~~26 GEORGE STREET~~  
~~HANOVER SQUARE, W.1~~

252-262, REGENT STREET,  
(FIFTH FLOOR) W.1.



267-59060421 YOU

**780,511 WOMEN & GIRLS  
are at WORK IN LONDON**

*(Official figures, 1921 Census)*

Will you help us to provide them  
with safe lodgings, friendship and  
recreation, and the opportunity of  
expanding mentally and spiritually?

**"BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER"**

*(Y.W.C.A. Motto)*

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LONDON  
YOUNG WOMEN'S  
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
being the area for London of the  
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN  
ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

*Patron of British National Y.W.C.A.*  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

*Officers for London :*

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*Vice-Presidents :*

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MRS. CARUS WILSON.  
MISS ETHEL WATNEY.

LADY SELBY BIGGE.  
MRS. PIERCY.  
MISS M. CAMPBELL.

*Finance Committee :*

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A. DODDS FAIRBAIRN, ESQ. THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-  
A. WILLIAMSON, ESQ. PRESIDENTS.

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*General Secretary :* MISS R. MOON, 26, George Street, Hanover Sq., W.1.

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*Chairman :* LADY SELBY BIGGE, O.B.E.

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*Chairman of the Women's Appeal Committee :* LADY SELBY BIGGE.

*Chairman of the Girls' Council :* MISS R. LARCOMBE.

*Bankers :*

MESSRS. BARCLAY'S BANK, LTD., 1, Pall Mall East, S.W.1.

## The London Young Women's Christian Association's Report for 1927

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IN reviewing our work at the beginning of a new year, we look to the past and the future. The future holds that sense of buoyant adventure so dear to the young. High hopes of fresh beginnings, of new inspiration, of the overcoming of difficulty, of planting and in due time reaping, rise before us. The CENTRAL BUILDING, towards which so many have given a helping hand, looms almost within actual sight. Already, committees are meeting to decide its constituent parts, its functions of club, hostel, office, canteen, etc., and the year 1928 may even see its foundations dug.

Meanwhile, the work in the great London circle of twelve-mile radius from Charing Cross, goes steadily on. Here, in the old building, 26 George Street, Hanover Square (see the woodcut on the cover), out of which, for the sake of better times to come, we are turning after 31 years as Divisional Headquarters, the threads of many different departments of work are held together. Here the Clubs gather for Competitions or Rallies; here committees sit to deal with intricate questions of education, moral care, the running of hostels and clubs, of holiday camps, and other schemes for the recreation of London's working girls. Here, too, those eternal questions of finance—How to make the little we have do the work that needs doing and, when that fails, How to raise enough?—are wrestled with in the spirit of prayer and hope. In this building is catered for, not only the high policy of the general work, but also the immediate needs of those young workers who are within its personal reach. Six hundred girls come in daily for their mid-day meal. Lectures are given on various subjects, and a flourishing club gives an opportunity to members of many callings, chiefly business

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H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF YORK  
*President, Blue Triangle Forward Movement, London.*

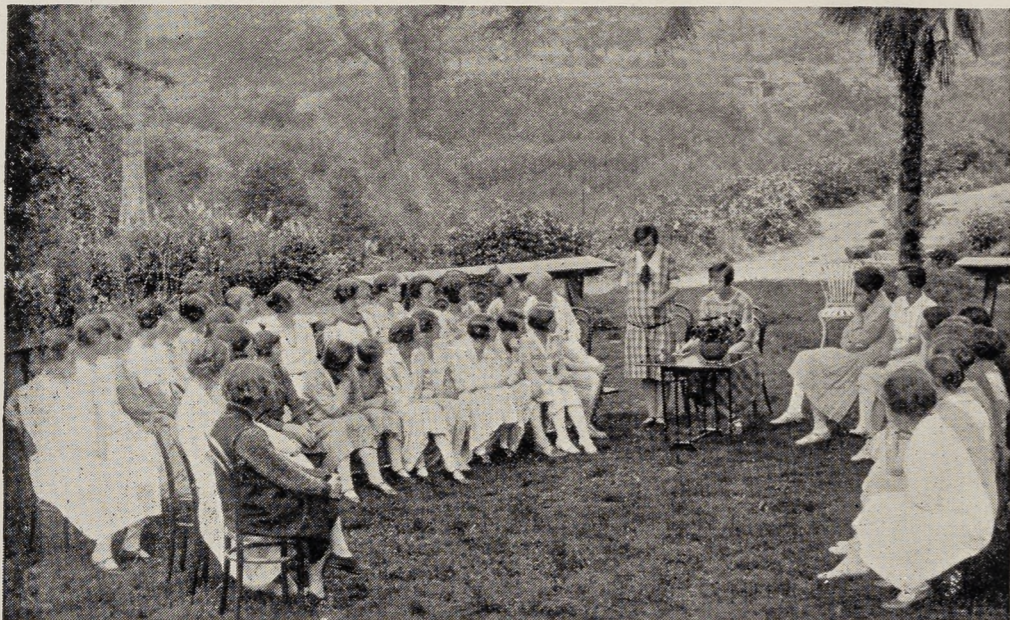
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*Girls of seven nationalities from the Association's INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL.*



*Representatives from London clubs attend a Conference Camp in their holidays.*

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and domestic, to meet for companionship and rest, for drill, singing or other classes, and for occasional lectures, social evenings and concerts. Here girls may join as Members of the Association, and at the Enquiry Office a friendly answer and the best possible advice is given to all requiring beds for the night, clubs or classes, help in reaching their destination, or, indeed, assistance in any difficulty whatsoever.

All service is given in the spirit of love; all are helped, irrespective of creed, age, political opinion or nationality.

This work calls for your help.

#### HOSTELS.

There are in London some 30 Y.W.C.A. hostels, which cater for many different types of girl. Some of these hostels care for the unfortunate, the very young, or those needing temporary shelter or a fresh start in life. Such have to appeal for outside help or, failing this, rely on assistance from Headquarters. Their appeal to the outside world is a strong one, as who does not wish to give freely to those needing a helping hand? Others, through generous gifts in the past, are entirely self-supporting, but assistance is given them through a visiting accountant, who audits the accounts and advises generally in all financial matters. Being thus set on a firm footing, they are able to give a comfortable home life to girls employed in banks and offices, civil servants, teachers, business girls, students, dispensers, visitors from other lands and, in the holiday season, visitors from all over the British Isles. The charges are such as a working girl can afford, varying in different districts and according to accommodation, and the aim is to give a home life to those who are of necessity far from their own relations. Some have a peaceful garden, a great joy in the summer; others a club-room where the energetic can get the drill or games that they need, or form classes for dressmaking, leather-work, the study of dramatics, singing or French. Some join together to support a hospital bed or to send help towards new beginnings of Christianity overseas; in some there is a weekly study circle, and in nearly every one a social evening, when the members can dance and play games.

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Through good management, these hostels pay their way, but in case of emergency, as when a lease falls in, or new premises must be bought, they apply to Headquarters for assistance—one of the many calls on the General Fund.

#### THE THEATRICAL RESIDENTIAL CLUB.

The problem of lodging for girls on the stage is always acute, as owing to their late hours they are not eligible for the ordinary hostel. The Theatrical Residential Club at 85 Guilford Street caters especially for these, housing 61 actresses, and often having to refuse others for want of space. Here a girl can live cheaply, either boarding for a fixed sum a week, or paying for meals as she has them, an arrangement which suits the actress who may be called out without warning for audition or rehearsal and who has to get a meal when she can. A special feature is the late supper which is ready for all on their return, tired, from the theatre. The Warden is always there to welcome them and the atmosphere is that of a cheerful home, rules being few and loyally kept.

Owing to the uncertainties of stage life, many are often out of work, needing great courage to face long periods of harassing anxiety. At these times, they have a personal friend in the Warden who, when they are ill, nurses them back to health, when they are out of work often allows credit, which they repay honourably at the earliest opportunity. They really value the club and all that it stands for.

Such work as this needs constant help, as it can never, from its very nature, be self-supporting.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, 24 UPPER BEDFORD PLACE, W.C.1.

For nearly seven years the International Centre has tried to meet the needs of foreign girls in London through its Hostel, Enquiry Bureau and Club. It was begun as an experiment in 1921, and each year has more than justified its existence. During 1926 about 900 girls from 40 different countries passed through the Hostel alone, and our premises were so inadequate that rooms had to be booked out for about 200, while addresses were given to many more who

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could not be helped in either of these ways. Representatives of every race, nationality, creed and class have come at different times, and one feels increasingly that the friendships and fellowships of this place are a very real factor, however small, in bringing about a better understanding and world peace.

The Club, which meets three times a week, has a membership of 150, comprising 23 nationalities.

Early this year a large and suitable house was found in Bloomsbury, and had to be bought at once, the move taking place in September. There were some funds in hand, and by a great effort £2,000 was raised in gifts. In addition, £5,500 had to be borrowed, in the hope that further gifts would be forthcoming, in order to pay off the debt as soon as possible.

#### THE HOME SERVICE CORPS, 87 FINCHLEY ROAD, N.W.3

There is still a shortage of domestic workers in the country, though the improvements in the conditions of employment is having a marked effect on the type of girl who is taking up household service to-day. The Y.W.C.A. has made an interesting experiment in this direction by the formation of a Home Service Corps. A Hostel has been opened which is able to accommodate about 28 girls who, after testing and training, become members of the Corps and go out to work by the hour in houses and flats in the neighbourhood. Employers are charged fees according to the experience of the workers, who receive board and lodging at the Hostel with a fixed weekly wage and club privileges. Any worker who desires to accept a resident situation with her employer is encouraged to do so, and after a few months of daily work a certain number of girls decide on this course.

In addition to trained workers the Hostel takes a few untrained girls, who receive free training, board, lodging, laundry, and a small sum for weekly pocket money.

There is a marked spirit of happiness and service in the Hostel and employers report on the cheerful efficiency of the girls. Needless to say, the demand for trained workers of this sort at present exceeds the supply.

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### CLUBS.

London's girls are very proud of their clubs, of which 41 are scattered in all directions. Many types of girl belong to them—industrial, domestic, business, staunch elderly supporters and very youthful Brownies—but all unite in the spirit of love, fellowship and service. The activities vary in different districts according to local possibilities. Some have tennis courts or gardens where they can rest or play; others get up debates or study circles, scenes from Shakespeare, or lectures on music. Many join in bright services or hold Bible talks by the fireside, and their interest in the world-wide fellowship of the Y.W.C.A. makes them keen to raise money for their own overseas work as well as for many other good causes. Singing takes a great part in club life, opportunities being given for weekly classes, when quite difficult two- and three-part songs are studied under professional teachers.

Classes are held during the year for drill, country dancing, handicrafts, swimming, elocution and skipping. Members of some of the older and larger clubs have started clubs in poorer districts, while in some places a group system is in force, each group being self-governing. New beginnings have been made at Acton, which is collecting for a new building; Brixton, which now has a flourishing canteen and club, with a group of Fellowship helpers behind it; Crouch End, which has new premises; the Crescent Club, Kentish Town, which is just about to move into a nice large, quiet house; Ealing, which has raised a lovely bright hall and, incidentally, hosts of friends during the year; Harrow, which has new premises, but needs a big hall; and Croydon, which, since taking new premises with a spacious and fruitful garden and hostel accommodation for nine in 1926, has built a hall for drill and concerts, made a hard court for tennis and net-ball, and has been presented with a quiet room. Stepney Club is itself a new venture, run by voluntary workers from other clubs, one day a week.

Nearly all these clubs are dependent, in one way or another, on help from Headquarters.

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### COMPETITIONS.

Competitions form a very important part of our work, as they are the culminating point of the weekly classes held during the year. Their object is definitely educational, and as the judges are all certificated and experienced teachers of the subjects, their constructive criticisms are awaited with breathless interest. Thus the standard in class-singing, country dancing and drill, is very high, which enables our clubs to compete in open competitions elsewhere.

In the Association, competition brings to the surface that keenness to excel, which might lead to envy were it not for the sporting spirit of admiration and appreciation which it is the aim of all the teachers to foster. As "showing off" or personal display is always penalised by the judges, the girls learn to restrain any natural inclination to self-advertisement, in the interest of their team, thus almost unconsciously practising self-control and unselfishness.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

An essential part of the Y.W.C.A. scheme of Physical Education is the work of the Director, who goes round from club to club, studying the girls personally and the conditions in which they work, being not only a direct link between Headquarters and clubs, but also, by the very informal nature of her visits, able to give help in unexpected ways. Through the Physical Director, the Y.W.C.A. is represented on the Executive Committee of the National Playing Fields Association, the Women's Amateur Athletic Association, the All England Women's Net Ball Association, the London Home Counties' Net Ball Federation, and the National Council of Women (Panel on Physical Subjects).

DRILL.—The basis of all Y.W.C.A. drill exercises is Swedish, but as the girls prefer to drill to music, in most cases only those movements are used to which music can be adapted. Judges are drawn from Dartford, Bedford, Cheltenham, and Queen Alexandra House. The standard is high, and it is felt that the mental discipline, calling for steadfastness of purpose, punctuality and neatness of

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appearance without show, is a very valuable practical grounding to character.

An Inter-Divisional Drill Competition was held for the first time in 1926, the Midland Division and South of England (winners) competing. London were winners in 1927.

COUNTRY DANCING.—Twenty teams entered for the Country Dancing Competition. Judge: MISS BOWER, of the E.F.D.S.

SPORTS.—Annual competitions are held for Net Ball, Athletic Sports under W.A.A.A. laws, Swimming, Lawn Tennis and Skipping. The standard of skipping is exceptionally high, and it is valuable for lightness, grace, and musical rhythm.

*Physical Director* : MISS MILMAN.

#### MUSIC.

Regular singing classes have been held under professional teachers in about 30 different centres, in most cases meeting once a week. This regular practice enables the choirs to compete not only in the annual Y.W.C.A. Musical Festival, but also in some of the big open London festivals, with considerable success. Members took part in the St. Cecilia Festival in Queen's Hall, organised by Mr. Harvey Grace, and in the great Festival of Youth at the Crystal Palace, organised by the League of Nations. About 350 formed the choir at the Y.W.C.A. Annual Meeting at the Queen's Hall.

London's MUSICAL COMPETITION FESTIVAL has been held in Morley Hall for fifteen years, between seven and eight hundred competitors taking part in 1927. For some years past the choral tests have been adjudicated by Mr. Harvey Grace, to whose kindly interest and helpful suggestions much of the success of the Festival is due. Tests are set in choral songs, both sacred and secular, solos, duets, trios, singing games, recitations and dialogues from Shakespeare.

This Festival is now affiliated to the British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals.

*Musical Director* : MISS M. W. BELL.

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#### HANDICRAFTS.

The HANDICRAFT DEPOT gathers beautiful hand-made articles from many corners of the earth. Preference is given to work of a high standard by Y.W.C.A. members, the Depot having a two-fold purpose—to raise the standard of handcraft in the Clubs, and to act as a medium between those who have good work to sell and those who want to buy. There is always a large variety of leather work, embroideries, pottery, lettering, and raffia work in stock, and many friends of the Association make a practice of buying their gifts from the Depot all the year round.

A HANDICRAFT COMPETITION is held every year.

*Handicraft Secretary* : MISS E. LYNE.

#### A WORLD-FELLOWSHIP OF GIRLS.

Membership of the Y.W.C.A. unites us in a world-fellowship of the girls of all nations, through our British National Association and that of the World. Members are glad to feel that, should they travel to Australia, the United States, India, or where they will, they will find friends of the BLUE TRIANGLE, not only amongst our own countrywomen, but of all races. New ventures overseas need support from home and, while we are proud to hear of the splendid work done by the British secretaries abroad, the responsibility for their support is ours. During 1927, £1,175 7s. 3d. has been raised by London for the OVERSEAS work. Some of this is given by friends who have personal knowledge of the work and its need; some is raised through stalls in the Annual Bazaar; and some by weekly collections or special efforts by the hostels and clubs, including a pageant, world exhibitions, international suppers or concerts. The amount thus collected by the clubs and branches in 1927 was £226 6s. 10d., a distinct advance on other years. Many branches have formed Study Circle Groups, to learn more about the other countries and the conditions in which their fellow-members live.

DANISH, SWEDISH and NORWEGIAN Associations have branches in London, caring for girls of those nations who come for a short time to learn English or who go as domestic

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helps in families. These take part in the big enrolment services or in special gatherings during the WORLD'S WEEK OF PRAYER, and so help to cement the friendship that our Association carries round the world. There is also a group of Indian students, a floating branch whose membership is continually changing.

#### Y.W.C.A. GUIDES.

GUIDING is a movement which appeals strongly to young girls. The uniform gives them a sense of belonging to something bigger than their own small group, the activities are attractive in form, and the ideal of duty to God and King, of help to our fellows and obedience to the Guide Law, is one that all feel worth striving after. Our Association and that of the Guides have many things in common, and through combining the two we can touch many with whom we should not otherwise come in contact. Through Guiding, we seek to teach girls a love of beauty and truth, to be loyal and useful citizens and of practical service in the home.

There is a great need for voluntary Guide Captains. Will any who have the training and the time offer for this work?

*National Secretary for Y.W.C.A. Guides:* Miss C. C. FAIRBAIRN.

#### MORAL CARE.

The Moral Care and Welfare Work of the Y.W.C.A. was the direct outcome of the work in London during the War, when the various Huts were so much appreciated by girls of all sorts and kinds. It was felt that some permanent department, prepared to help all girls in every kind of difficulty, was essential in such an organisation, and during the last seven years the department has increased enormously. It now deals with all Parliamentary Bills connected with the welfare of women and children, is represented on numbers of outside committees and conferences, and the considered opinion of the Association on such technical matters is much in request. The advisory work, which is naturally undertaken by the secretary, is an important feature of the work, and includes queries as to lost girls, girls in unsuitable surroundings, ex-service men who have trouble with their

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*A group of Brownies attached to a London club.*



*A scene from "The Merchant of Venice" acted by a Club Dramatic Class.*

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*PHYSICAL TRAINING is a strong feature of the Association's work.*



*HOME SERVICE CORPS members in training.*

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pensions, girls turned out of situations, and mistresses who cannot manage their maids. The Hostels are two in number: one a Before and After Care Hostel at Highbury for Unmarried Mothers, and an Emergency Hostel at Victoria, which takes girls in any sort of difficulty and which is open day and night.

As a very large number of our girls are quite destitute and often have to be fed and clothed for weeks at a time entirely free, it follows that the financial problem is nearly always acute, and we depend for our very existence on the generosity of others. Only by constant appeal, both personal and through the medium of the Press, by entertainments and drawing-room meetings, can the department be carried on at all, and we need every possible help we can get. To many of these girls it is the first real chance they have had, and once put on the right road they go forward without looking back.

*Secretary for Moral Care: MISS BRINSLEY RICHARDS.*

#### CANTEENS FOR GIRLS.

The provision of canteens, where girls at work in the vicinity can come for their mid-day meal, is one, and not one of the least, of Y.W.C.A. activities. Many of London's young workers come from long distances, necessitating a very early start after a hasty breakfast, so their need of a solid, freshly-cooked, wholesome meal, quickly served, during their hour's luncheon interval, is very real. Some, coming from home, bring sandwiches, but are glad of a warm room in which they can eat and rest, and of a cup of tea or coffee.

A very flourishing canteen is carried on at Bedford House, 108 Baker Street, on the cafeteria system. Another has recently been started at Brixton, supplying a want and at the same time bringing friends to the Association. There is one at 8 Sydenham Road, Croydon, used by professional and business women, Art students and High School girls, averaging 70 dinners daily.

The canteen at Headquarters is a large room in the basement, open from 12 to 2 for lunches, five days in the week. The seating accommodation is 142, and during the winter

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months an average of 300 come in every day. Besides the canteen proper, Morley Hall is open during the same hours for the use of workers who bring their own lunch; 300 girls use the hall daily and coffee, tea, fruit and cakes can be bought at the buffet. A small room is kept open for teas and light refreshments until 8 p.m.

These canteens are not a burden on the General Fund, as they all show a balance at the end of the year and so help to support the buildings which house them.

#### SHARING RESPONSIBILITY.

The question is often asked what part girls themselves take in the work and policy of the Association. They are to-day taking an increasing share in the work of their own local centres, frequently being responsible for juniors and intermediates, running club canteens and libraries, sharing in committee work and in the raising of funds, while those experienced in physical work or with technical training of any kind take classes in clubs needing this help.

They have also a direct share in helping to frame the policy of the Association, and in order that the girls' point of view may be understood and made effective, a GIRLS' ADVISORY COUNCIL was formed, with representatives from all the London local centres, whose duty it is to collect information from the girls themselves with regard to needs or fresh ideas in the running of clubs and hostels.

Girls who undertake work in their clubs are conscious often of their need of experience and training. Sometimes training can be given in the local centre; sometimes it is more convenient to give it at Headquarters, and so for the past two winters TRAINING COURSES have been held at 26 George Street, when lectures on Psychology, Hygiene, Literature, International Relationships, Art, Music, and Physical Training have been given and greatly valued by the trainees.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

How to raise the money necessary to carry on this many-sided work is an absorbing problem. On another page reference is made to the Appeal for the New Building which

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has met with so generous a response from a wide circle of people, many of them new friends to the Association. While plans are progressing for the new central club, however, the existing work makes heavy calls on our budget, and to maintain this a regular income of £12,000 is needed. Towards this, donations are received from the old City Companies, from many firms and offices throughout the City, from individual subscribers, and from legacies. Drawing-room meetings, concerts and special efforts of many kinds bring our income within sight of our expenditure, and the ANNUAL BAZAAR organised by the Blue Triangle Appeal Council, under Lady Selby Bigge's energetic chairmanship, adds £2,000 a year to our revenue.

We need many more annual subscribers: our hope is that some who read this Report will join their number.

#### THE BLUE TRIANGLE FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Few people in London can be unaware (thanks to the generous publicity given by the Press) of the scheme inaugurated in 1924 for the provision of a Y.W.C.A. central club for the girls and women of this great city. Miss Snelson, who had had experience of similar buildings in the Colonies, was called in as organiser, and from the first the scheme commanded the support and interest of the many who want to see London make better provision for the all-round welfare of its girl workers.

H.R.H. The Duchess of York has shown her practical interest in girls of her own generation by giving a Garden Party at St. James' Palace, by being present at meetings connected with the scheme and by asking to be kept constantly informed of its progress. The Prime Minister has spoken in aid of the scheme. "This is a movement," he said, "that I believe in, that I want to see prosper." Mrs. Baldwin, not content with regular attendance at the Council meetings, has broadcast an appeal, organised a Silver Treasure collection, and has turned old gramophone records into money for the Building. London business men, chairmen of important business undertakings, have formed the Finance Committee and themselves raised

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REPORT OF THE LONDON Y.W.C.A. FOR 1927

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large sums for the fund. Girls representing banks, insurance offices, the big City firms, colleges, the Civil Service, the nursing services, domestic workers and others, form the Girls' Council, which has raised over £11,000. Behind these girls is an important council of representative women—the Women's Appeal Council—who by means of an annual bazaar, a house-to-house visitation, and by a great variety of special efforts are securing the success of the scheme. As the result of the work of these three Committees (and by part proceeds of the sale of the present headquarters) the sum of £157,560 has been raised towards that of £250,000 needed, and a site—half way between the City and the West End—has been bought at the junction of Tottenham Court Road and Great Russell Street. Here, as soon as funds allow, will be erected a building containing club rooms, restaurant, gymnasium, lounge, library, chapel, hall for conferences, etc., and information bureau.

Many—rich and poor—will have contributed to this CENTRAL CLUB, but no name will be more honoured there than that of Lady Selby Bigge, the Chairman of the Council.



£92,440 is still needed for the new CENTRAL BUILDING. Contributions may be sent to—  
Lady Selby Bigge, ~~26 George St., Hanover Square, W.1.~~

£12,000 is needed this year (1928) for general work of the Y.W.C.A. in the London Area.

Cheques payable to London Y.W.C.A. may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, The Hon. William Sidney, ~~26 George St., Hanover Square, W.1.~~

252-262, REGENT STREET,  
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