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CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE  
OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN LONDON,  
53, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

*Pam*

**ENQUIRY INTO  
LODGING ACCOMMODATION FOR  
GIRLS AND WOMEN IN LONDON.**

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## FOREWORD.

The Central Council have long realised the importance of the reaction of environmental conditions on girls and women working in London, and since the establishment of their Central Information Bureau they have learnt by the enquiries received, of the difficulty experienced by many workers in securing suitable lodging.

An enquiry has therefore been made as to lodging accommodation of various kinds which is available, of which the report now presented is the result.

The thanks of the Central Council are due to Miss Oliver, the former Head of the Women's work of the Dockland Settlement, who has given them valuable help in its preparation.

Though not exhaustive, it is thought that the report contains much information which will be of general interest to the public.

In addition, it is hoped that it may attract the attention of those who may be able to assist in making further provision of such types of accommodation as have been proved by experience to be most useful and successful.

With this end in view an analysis has been made in the concluding pages of the factors which appear to make for success, and suggestions are put forward for the consideration of those who may be willing to make fresh experiment.

The Central Council are convinced that further provision of cheap lodging accommodation of satisfactory character, on a self-supporting basis, would be of immense value to the girls and women in London, in whose interests their work is conceived.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Central Council.

O. E. WARBURG,  
*Chairman.*

## CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL WELFARE OF GIRLS AND WOMEN IN LONDON, 53, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

### ENQUIRY INTO LODGING ACCOMMODATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN IN LONDON.

The problem of where to live is one which confronts an ever increasing army of workers.

London at present provides work for a very large number of women—far more than can be done by the resident population, and there is a steady flow of workers into the town to supply the demand for social workers, teachers, civil servants and municipal officers, typists, clerks of every degree, shop assistants, waitresses and workers in all branches of the catering trade, and domestic servants.

All these classes with the exception of the last group need lodging accommodation of some sort. The aim of this enquiry is to give notes on how the need is being met at present and some suggestions as to the lines on which development seems most hopeful.

There is no need to emphasise the importance of a matter which affects the comfort and health of so large a number of workers. A woman who works all day at a profession or trade must depend on others for the work of the house, the buying and cooking of food and the material comforts of life. She can have neither time nor strength to undertake the whole of these duties herself, or to supervise them in any detail.

It follows that lodging accommodation with service is sought by the vast majority of women workers; from the common lodging house used by the lowest paid workers, through every degree of hostel and residential club, to flatlets and service flats with restaurants attached.

It is significant that where the provision is reasonably comfortable in relation to the price charged, there is almost always a waiting list of varying length, and where the price charged is low, it may extend to 200 or more. It should be, surely, possible for commercial enterprise to cope with this matter, and provide sufficient lodgings, within the financial resources of the women worker, where she can dwell in reasonable comfort and have some chance of developing her individual tastes and living as a responsible citizen and not merely one of a herd.

The notes which follow are offered as a basis for discussion by the Central Council and others interested in the housing of women workers. They are very far from being an exhaustive study of the complex question, but an attempt has been made to give a brief account of the main varieties of accommodation now available and to note where there seems definite need for further provision of a particular kind.

## COMMON LODGING HOUSES AND SHELTERS.

A very full and interesting report on Common Lodging Houses and kindred institutions was published by the London County Council in 1927, and detailed information on this matter may be found there.

The definition of a common lodging house there given, is a house in which persons are harboured or lodged for hire for a single night or for less than a week at a time, with the further qualification that the persons resorting to a common lodging house must be of the poorer class, who are strangers to one another, and who occupy some portion of the premises in common.

The accommodation provided in Common Lodging Houses is:—a bed in a dormitory which must be kept clear of other furniture and of clothes, and must not be used during the day; washing facilities; and the use of a day room or kitchen where lodgers have the opportunity of doing some simple cooking. A fire for this purpose is usually provided.

Since the London County Council Report was published, there has been some increase in the free emergency accommodation provided for women, and a considerable increase in the common lodging houses for women provided by charitable agencies. The Church Army have opened a large house in Westminster (which has recently been enlarged) and four houses known as the Cecil Houses have been opened in Finsbury, Islington, Paddington and Kensington. The Salvation Army have recently opened a house which provides more and much better accommodation than was formerly available in Stepney.

These houses are all built and equipped by charitable gifts, and the price charged to lodgers covers the running expenses. The accommodation is better than in the commercial lodging house, hot baths are available, and efforts are made to help lodgers to find employment.

In the Cecil Houses a cup of tea and a biscuit morning and evening is included in the price of the bed—but these houses are really "shelters" and not "lodging houses" since there is no kitchen accommodation where lodgers can cook food, and the sitting-room can only be used in the evening. Lodgers are obliged to leave the house during the day on Sundays as well as week days. Cecil Houses have a rule that women may only stay for a limited time, but the rule is elastic and is subject to the discretion of the Superintendent. At the end of the time they go on to another Cecil House or elsewhere, and may return again after a short period.

The class of women using Common Lodging Houses has not altered materially since the London County Council Report was published: these are still the refuge of the temporarily stranded and the permanently homeless, but they are perhaps increasingly used as permanent homes by those employed on rough unskilled labour, by street hawkers, and also by girls employed in the catering and other trades whose work finishes late at night and who get their food provided by their employers. The present shortage of houses prevents single women and widows engaged on such work staying as lodgers in the homes of relatives or friends.

Lodging Houses, even those provided by charitable agencies where the amenities are rather greater, cannot be considered satisfactory permanent homes for girls who have any form of regular work. The dormitories are necessarily without any privacy, and there is no place for keeping clothes or personal belongings, other than a very small locker, and even this, though general, is not universally provided.

The lack of other accommodation for this class of worker is noted elsewhere in this report.

The standard of decency and comfort in Common Lodging Houses is steadily improving as the older houses fall out of use and are replaced by better buildings with modern sanitation and plumbing.

The Common Lodging House still provides, on the whole effectively, for certain classes who are at present in need of such accommodation and will probably always need it, at least for occasional use. The provision appears to be adequate, since few Houses are quite full. In the London County Council report of the census of homeless people taken on February 13th, 1931, the following figures are given:—Women found in the streets, 18; vacant beds in the women's casual ward, 24; in shelters and lodging houses for women, 473.

The lodging houses of charitable societies are full on account of the extra help which is there given to lodgers, such as opportunities of getting work and gifts of clothes when needed.

## Shelters.

A shelter differs from a common lodging house in that it provides no day time accommodation, but simply shelter for the night. The provision of night shelters for destitute women is not strictly within the scope of this enquiry: but since they are used by the temporarily stranded as well as the destitute, they must be mentioned in any report touching on emergency accommodation for workers.

## EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION FOR THE TEMPORARILY STRANDED.

This is an important part of any enquiry into lodging accommodation, for many women and girls come up to London hopefully, thinking they can get work at once for the asking, and even if they are persons who will ultimately find employment, they may be in serious difficulties for a night or two. There are also those who come up by motor coach, and owing to some delay, find that it is too late to get on to their destination; those who miss the last train, through their own heedlessness, or through no fault of their own, may find themselves stranded. Some of those who need emergency accommodation may be able to pay something for their lodging, others may be without money.

Many of these difficulties arise when girls take unsuitable situations through unsatisfactory registry offices or misleading advertisements.

It is obviously undesirable, even if it were possible, to provide unlimited free board and lodging for any woman or girl who chooses to come to London without taking any steps to find work or accommodation before she arrives. But it is very desirable that in every district there should be some safe shelter which, in case of real need, will receive a girl at any hour, and not refuse her purely temporary shelter if she is unable to pay, though normally expecting payment.

Such provision must be made by charitable societies, since it cannot be self-supporting. Moreover it is a great advantage when those in charge of such lodgings are able to help a girl to find employment or advise her in any way she needs.

There is a good deal of accommodation of this sort in London, but the exact provision made varies considerably.

Classification is very difficult; the various houses differ in detail and many might reasonably appear in two classes. But there are four headings which indicate the main purposes of existing emergency accommodation. These are:—

(a) True emergency shelters which will receive any woman or girl at any hour, and when the beds are full, will spread mattresses on the floor, and when these are full, will at least provide a chair in warmth and under cover.

(b) Emergency Homes which are intended to help the temporarily stranded, but not the permanently destitute. These usually give special preference to girls and younger women, but have no rigid limit of admission. Lodging and food is given free if necessary; some small payment is asked from those able to give it.

(c) Homes or Refuges provided by the churches and religious societies. These are intended for girls needing more help and advice than shelter for one night, but they will always take in a girl for a night in an emergency. They cannot deal with older women. These also give free lodging and food if necessary. Some small payment is asked from those who are able to give it.

(d) Those common lodging houses and shelters provided by charitable societies or committees, which normally make a charge, but which have some provision for the temporarily destitute. This provision may be a special fund to pay for a destitute woman (as in the Cecil Houses), or a certain number of free beds to be used at the discretion of the Superintendent or by the headquarters of the society. These Houses can, however, only receive people until all the beds are full, which often happens early in the evening. Applicants would then be directed to some other shelter.

A good deal of emergency accommodation falling under one of these headings is distributed over the County of London, but there are many gaps, and in the City of London there is no such accommodation.

There are boroughs without any true emergency homes or hostels, though this is not always so serious as might appear, since some are in a measure supplied by the accessibility of provision in neighbouring districts. It may seem strange for instance that there is no real emergency home in Paddington, but the Church Army Hostel in Harrowby Street, though actually in St. Marylebone, is quite near enough to be used if any difficulty arises at the railway station. But when allowances have been made for all such circumstances, there are still too many districts which are a very long way from any Emergency Home. If it may be said that the total emergency accommodation for girls is not seriously inadequate, it is very far from being really satisfactory. The help available for older women is less, and less well distributed.

It is very desirable that the addresses of existing homes and hostels should be more widely known, and that the information issued to police, relieving officers and other officials on this matter should be kept up to date.

In the outer ring of London the situation is even less satisfactory.

In the suburbs there is no need for large homes dealing exclusively with emergency work, but it seems very necessary that in each district there should be some place to which a girl can go if an emergency arises late in the evening or at night. At present there are many suburban districts without any such provision.

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.

Temporary accommodation is constantly needed by those who come to London on special business, are seeking work, or are passing through London.

This need is met in its barest form and in the cheapest way by the common lodging houses, and the roughest type of worker and traveller is accommodated there.

The rather better lodging houses of the Church Army and other societies are much used for temporary lodging by those with small resources.

Domestic workers changing their places can use one or two special Hostels, and some Registry Offices provide a lodging of this sort for their own clients, sometimes also used by others.

Mabys Homes provide for all Mabys members needing temporary lodging and can sometimes take in other young servants.

The Y.W.C.A. has a special travellers Hostel, where bed and breakfast can be obtained from 3s. 6d. This, however, is not very large and moreover the price is a little high for the working girl who would not mind sharing a room, which is the accommodation provided.

The woman or girl who wants more privacy than a bed in a lodging house dormitory or a shared room at the special Y.W.C.A. hostel, but yet cannot afford even a cheap hotel, is not very easily provided for at present. Most Hostels will take in a temporary guest with suitable references, if they have room, and there are some hostels which, because they are in rather a poor neighbourhood or on the outskirts of London, are not very full; they can generally find room for a visitor. But naturally they cannot promise beforehand to keep a bed free if it should be needed for a permanent resident.

Accommodation of the cheaper sort has been increased recently. The Church Army have opened a house with cubicles let at 1s. 6d. a night, and food obtainable as needed. But this is very popular as a permanent or semi-permanent residence and is frequently quite full up for weeks together.

When the new Y.W.C.A. Headquarters are completed, a number of bedrooms will be reserved for the temporary visitor, and this will provide better and more highly priced accommodation; the price will be from 4s. 6d. a night for bedroom and food can be obtained in the Cafeteria.

Neither of these, however, meet the need for cheap accommodation together with some amenities: that is to say some place for keeping clothes and personal possessions in the bedroom, and the possibility of having access to the rooms during the day.

The valuable Church Army accommodation does not make exactly this provision, and the terms charged by the Y.W.C.A. will be beyond the reach of girls when seeking work or earning only moderate wages.

For the women able to pay rather more there is a fair amount of accommodation in boarding houses and residential clubs, some of which cater for large numbers of temporary visitors in addition to permanent residents.

### HOSTELS.

- (a) Provided by Churches and Societies.
- (b) Provided by Settlements for Social Work.
- (c) Provided by Special Committees and Charitable Trusts.
- (d) Provided by Private Companies.

The Hostel or Residential Club (the difference is often one of name only) is by far the most popular form of lodging in London, and these probably house the majority of professional and business girls who are not living at home.

The girl coming to work in London has to choose between a flatlet, a boarding house, a room in a private house as "paying guest," and a hostel. The first is too expensive for a beginner, the second has a dreary sound frequently borne out by its atmosphere, the third may curtail independence; there remains the Hostel.

A well run Hostel is an excellent place, particularly for the young girl. Food is provided, so there is no temptation to economise on meals, there is company, and where there are little single bedrooms or good cubicles, there is reasonable privacy. The Hostel is liked by parents who feel that their daughter has a safe home, and that too many late nights will not be encouraged. Hostels certainly fill a need, and have multiplied accordingly.

After a time, the somewhat congested life may become irksome and the necessary rules irritating. Girls who feel this, will, when wages increase, join a friend and go with her to make a little home in a flat. But many others settle down to permanent life in a Hostel and find it the best and most economical form of lodging.

It is noticeable that Hostels are liked by the business and professional girl, but have never appealed to the girl employed in factory or workroom in the industrial parts of London. Again and again the experiment has been tried of providing Hostels for these girls, but one after another the houses have been first empty, and then used by the business girl, or diverted to quite other uses.

The only experiments for industrial girls which have met with success are two Hostels provided by Settlements. Time and Talents Settlement provides what are really flatlets; girls rent little rooms and do their own work and catering. This is a popular arrangement. At the Princess Club Settlement the success of the Hostel seems due to the fact that the Settlement is well known and popular in the neighbourhood and girls who come to

the Hostel already know the surroundings and feel they are among friends. Also the Club provides the opportunity of meeting both girls and boys. These Hostels are described in detail in another section of this Report (pages 19 and 20). But the large Hostel for industrial girls, run on ordinary lines, has never yet succeeded in London.

In visiting the various Hostels it has been interesting to note the outlook of the superintendents and to realise that the success of the Hostel depends almost entirely on this. This is work in which the educated woman has a great advantage. She seems able to understand, and above all to trust girls, and so meets with fewer difficulties than the old-fashioned type of matron. The less educated superintendent, however kind and anxious to do the very best for the girls, seems to rely on strict rules, and to complain that they are not kept. She is apt to sigh with the Psalmist "there is none good, no not one." She does her best, with great devotion, to make her girls happy and good, but takes a gloomy view of her success. The educated woman on the other hand seems to have more power of putting herself in the girls' place, gains their co-operation in running the Hostel, and relies very little on set rules. One Hostel has altered the term "rules" to "household arrangements" and this does describe more accurately the arrangements in the most successful houses.

Hostels and residential clubs are provided by private individuals, by private companies, and by societies or churches. Of the private Hostels there are a large and increasing number, and there is so much competition that it is difficult for the small house offering inexpensive accommodation to succeed. Numbers are needed to make the cheap Hostel pay. The success of private clubs and Hostels depends first on the personality and capability of the proprietor, and then on her command of sufficient capital to adapt and equip the house properly. When these conditions are favourable very many of the private Hostels are both excellent and successful; it is not of course possible to comment upon them individually.

Some detailed notes on Hostels provided by Societies and private companies follow.

#### **Hostels provided by Societies concerned with the Welfare of Girls, and Church Societies.**

A number of Hostels in London are provided by, or affiliated to, Societies connected with religious bodies, or having a religious basis for their membership. These Hostels, naturally, are mainly used by members of the Society or Church providing the Hostel, but except in some Roman Catholic Hostels and the Jewish Hostels it is usual to receive girls of other creeds if there are vacancies.

No Hostel would refuse a girl simply on ground of religious belief, but the arrangements are made on the assumption that residents conform in certain ways—attendance at service or family prayers, behaviour on Sundays, and so on—girls with a different outlook do not fit in, and move elsewhere. Members of the Churches providing these Hostels are glad to use them and parents are also comforted to know that their daughters are mixing with those who have had the same up-bringing, and share the

same outlook in religious matters. This may be a very great help to a young inexperienced girl first finding her feet in the world.

These Hostels fill a need which will always exist, however much accommodation is provided by commercial enterprise.

The financial arrangements and management vary in each Hostel but they follow broadly on these lines. Each Hostel has its own Committee, responsible for finance and management. In the first instance funds are raised by an appeal, and the initial cost of building and equipment is met in this manner. Once started the Hostels usually pay their way, but should there be any deficit the Committee would be responsible. This rule has exceptions, the Jewish Association Hostel provides for very young girls just beginning work at a low wage, and is not intended to pay. It is provided as part of the social work of the Jewish Association. This also applies to the Hostel of the Baptist Women's League and others, and to the group of Homes for Working Girls.

The Committee of the Hostels appoints the Warden or Superintendent and draws up or approves the rules laid down for the management of the house and conduct of the residents.

Although the initial cost of establishment and equipment is met by voluntary gifts, the charges of these Hostels are not substantially lower than those in the large Hostels provided by companies. The reason for this is that the Hostels are usually comparatively small, and therefore more expensive to run. The small number accommodated has, however, certain advantages; a more homelike atmosphere is possible and Wardens can know their girls better and give them more individual care.

The newer Hostels as they are opened are adapted on modern lines, with single rooms or cubicles. In the older Hostels rooms with two or more beds are common.

The societies providing a number of Hostels leave arrangements entirely to the local committees, and the affiliation is not always very close. It follows that conditions vary to a surprising extent in Hostels bearing the same name, some having very rigid and old-fashioned rules, others being thoroughly broad in their outlook. This is to be regretted, since if there is no fixed standard either of rules or comfort in Hostels bearing the same name, a girl cannot be sure what conditions she will find, and this leads to some unnecessary disappointment and complaint. But the tendency is now to raise the general standard of such Hostels, and to endeavour, as changes take place in Committees, to get new Hostels more closely controlled by the headquarters of the society.

The following list shows the numbers of Hostels provided by Societies and Committees in the London area, and notes are given regarding accommodation, price, and general arrangements. The list is not exhaustive but indicates the different varieties of accommodation available. The addresses of the Headquarters of Societies and Committees are given, but not those of individual Hostels, since this Report is not intended to be a directory, but a commentary.

A Handbook of Hostels in London with full particulars of each Hostel is issued by the Central Council and kept up-to-date by new editions. This may be obtained from the office, price 1s.

<i>Society.</i>	<i>No. of Hostels.</i>	<i>Accommodation.</i>
Young Women's Christian Association ...	30	984
Girls' Friendly Society ...	8	222
Church Army ...	4	241
National Free Church Women's Council...	4	100
Christian Alliance of Women and Girls ...	3	59
Toc H League of Women Helpers ...	2	25
Baptist Women's League ...	1	27
Catholic Girls' Society ...	1	56
Catholic Women's League ...	1	20
Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women ...	1	15
St. Columba's House for Scotswomen ...	1	39
St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Mabelle Egerton Club ...	1	49
Salvation Army ...	1	31
West London Mission ...	1	37
<i>Settlements.</i>		
Time and Talents Settlement ...	1	28
Princess Club Settlement ...	1	18
<i>Special Committees and Charitable Trusts.</i>		
Homes for Working Girls ...	6	360
Ada Lewis Trust ...	2	260
Ames House Committee ...	1	70
St. Vincent Club and Hostel Committee	1	30
The Queen Mary Hostel Committee ...	1	44

### London Y.W.C.A. Hostels.

Headquarters: GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

Number of Hostels, 30.

Accommodation in all, 984.

Prices charged vary according to the Hostel, from 21s. to 35s. a week for lodging and partial board.

The Hostels in the London area are started either by local branches, who are in this case entirely responsible for finance and management, or by Headquarters, when the management and finance is under the charge of the Hostels Committee of the London Central Board.

The conditions of affiliation of branches to the Central body are not rigid. There are a few constitutional requirements which must be kept to by all local Centres, beyond this, branch and Hostel Committees have power to make their own rules independently.

There has been in the past considerable variety both in the rules and standard of comfort of Y.W.C.A. Hostels. This standard is becoming more uniform. The London Secretary is *ex-officio* a member of all Hostel Committees, and attends from time to time as work permits.

*Finance.*—Where the Hostel is carried on by a local Committee, they are entirely responsible for finance. As regards initial expenses, money may be raised by appeals or donations to cover part of the cost of house and furnishing, the remainder being borrowed from a Bank, or Building or Insurance Society, and repaid over a term of years.

The Y.W.C.A. possesses a small Central Fund of its own from which money can be lent to approved centres, free of interest, to be paid back over a term of years.

Hostels in the London area, with the possible exception of one or two very small ones, pay their way.

*Management.*—The warden is appointed either by the local Committee or by Headquarters Hostel Committee, according to the circumstances of the case. Appointments are now only offered to educated women with training in social work and domestic science diplomas.

*Girls accommodated.*—The Y.W.C.A. caters for business girls, clerks, typists, elementary school teachers and students, and in some hostels a few domestic servants.

Latchkeys are provided at the discretion of the warden, but if the residents will be coming in late the warden must be informed.

### Girls' Friendly Society.

Headquarters: LONDON, 29, FRANCIS STREET, S.W.

SOUTHWARK: 7, FLODDEN ROAD, S.E.

The Hostels in each diocese are sanctioned by the G.F.S. Diocesan Council.

In the London area, there are six Hostels in the diocese of London, and one in Southwark.

In London each Hostel has its own Committee, who are responsible for the finance and general working of the Hostel. A representative of the Diocesan Council sits on all these Committees, and is consulted regarding rules and also the appointment of superintendents.

The Diocesan Council itself never either starts or finances a Hostel, but when a local Committee is formed the Council approves and supports the scheme, and by means of its representative, ensures that the rules and general arrangements are such as it approves. The establishment of a Hostel is usually due to the enthusiasm of a branch, or individual members of a branch, who see that a Hostel is needed in their neighbourhood. A committee is formed and an appeal for funds issued. This is usually supported first by the branch concerned, but also by individuals throughout the diocese.

The funds collected by the appeal provide for buying the lease of the house and any necessary alterations and furnishing. Part of the money for the lease is usually borrowed from the bank.

The local Committee are entirely responsible for any money they borrow. But it is considered by the G.F.S. that any Hostel accommodating 26 girls or over, should pay its way, that is, pay running expenses and salaries and the interest on borrowed money. Large Hostels should make a substantial profit.



The Diocesan Lodge, in Francis Street, which accommodates 67, was built and is run by a company, paying not more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on its shares. A substantial reserve fund had been accumulated and this was recently used to buy two houses in Kensington for another Hostel. The Committee of this Hostel pay rent for their houses to the Company.

G.F.S. Hostels are provided primarily for members of the Society, but other girls are welcomed when there are vacancies. Members of the Society have the advantage of slightly lower charges. The aim is to give girls, particularly young girls, safe and healthy lodging and kindly care and supervision.

There are certain rules, particularly regarding coming in at night; latch keys are allowed in one London Hostel, for use until a certain hour only, after which special arrangements have to be made.

A night bell is provided for use in an emergency.

In the Diocesan Lodge which is used chiefly by educated women and those passing through London, the closing hour is late—12 o'clock.

Rules vary a little according to the locality and the class and age of girls using any particular Hostel. Rules are drawn up by the local Committee.

### Christian Alliance of Women and Girls.

Headquarters: 16, DARTMOUTH STREET, S.W.1.

In the London area the Alliance provides five Hostels, accommodating in all 85.

These are all in the suburbs, but convenient for girls working in town.

*Finance.*—Each Hostel is provided by a local committee who are responsible for the initial cost. The Central Committee take no responsibility for finance, and any deficit would be met by the local committee. But it is found that after the initial cost of establishment all the Hostels are self-supporting.

*Management* is by the local Committee. The Alliance has a Charter of Constitution setting out the definite religious basis of the work. Within this Charter local Committees make their own rules for the management of the Hostels. The appointment of a Warden must be ratified by the Central Committee and each Warden must accept the Charter.

*Girls accommodated.*—The Hostels are intended for professional and business girls and visitors to London. Members of the Alliance have the first claim on accommodation, but others are accepted when there are vacancies.

*Prices charged.*—These vary a little in each Hostel. Cubicles can be had from 22s. and single rooms from 30s. a week with partial board.

*Notes.*—The Hostels close at a definite hour. Special permission is given if necessary for residents to be out late, and the Warden would wait up. The Charter states definitely that such amusements as dancing and theatrical performances are not compatible with the aims of the Alliance and residents in the Hostel are expected to respect this rule during their residence, even if they are not members of the Alliance.

## National Free Church Council.

### Women's Council.

Headquarters: MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGDON STREET.

In the London area there are four Hostels affiliated to the Council, accommodating in all about 100.

Connection with the National Council is secured by each Local Council paying an affiliation fee and sending two representatives to the National Council.

*Finance.*—Each Hostel is provided by the Free Church Women's Council in the district, which is responsible for the finance. The National Council takes no responsibility for this.

*Management.*—The management is by a Committee appointed by the Local Council and responsible to them. Lady Wardens, resident at the Hostels are responsible to the Committee. All arrangements and rules are settled by the local Committee, there are no general rules suggested by the National Council.

*Conditions of admission.*—The Hostels are intended for professional and business girls and girl students. Domestic workers are not received, except at the Woolwich Hostel occasionally.

*Prices charged.*—The price charged varies with the locality. The Woolwich Hostel starts at 15s. a week. At Fulham and Hampstead the price for rooms is from 27s. 6d. upwards and there are some cubicles at 23s.

It is found that there is small demand for cubicles, and in Fulham and Hampstead the houses have been recently reconstituted to provide single rooms only.

The Hostels are constantly full.

### Church Army.

Headquarters: BRYANSTON STREET, W.1.

The Church Army, among its other activities, provides accommodation for employed women and girls at various charges.

There are three Hostels and one Residential Club.

Southwick Lodge, has accommodation for 23. Prices are from 15s. to 35s. a week for lodging and partial board. The cheaper price is for accommodation in a dormitory of six beds. There is no age limit, but the Hostel is used chiefly by young people, usually shop assistants and junior clerks.

McKirdy and Wortly Hostel has accommodation for 68. Prices are from 21s. to 35s. a week for lodging and part board. It is chiefly used by professional women and students. Latchkeys are provided.

Turner House has accommodation for 33. This is used by blind girls, working in, or pupils at, the blind workshops. A very few small bedrooms are available for which 25s. a week is charged, including partial board.

The Alexandra Residential Club has accommodation for 120 (100 cubicles and 20 small rooms). Prices are, for members, 5s. 9d. to 7s. 9d.

a week, non-members 7s. 9d. to 10s. a week. Special rooms, with gas fires, are available from 15s. to 20s. a week, in an annexe. Meals can be obtained at a cheap rate in the restaurant attached to the Club, and are paid for as ordered.

*Finance.*—The general funds of the Church Army provide the Hostels. The payments received cover running expenses, except where the houses are old and require constant repairs.

*Management.*—By the Church Army Headquarters. There are no separate Committees for individual Hostels.

### Baptist Women's League.

Headquarters: 4, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation* for 28. In cubicles, and a few single rooms.

*Prices Charged.*—22s. 6d. to 25s. a week or 17s. 6d. in special cases of girls beginning work on a small wage.

*Conditions of admission.*—Residents must be earning under £2 10s. a week, and be under 28 years of age.

*Management* by Baptist Women's League, who undertake all financial responsibility and appoint the staff.

*Notes.*—This Hostel is intended for young girls starting work in London. Residents are admitted if under 28 years of age, but in fact most of them are under 21. The house is an expensive one and could not pay on the number it accommodates. The deficit is born by the League, who consider the provision of good cheap lodgings for young girls a definite part of their social work. Preference is given to girls belonging to the Baptist Church, but others are also received. Morning and evening prayers are held; these are not compulsory, but girls who would appreciate them are preferred. Latchkeys are not allowed. Hostel closes at 10–10.30. On one night a week, generally Saturday, the Hostel remains open later.

The Hostel is extensively used. It is always full, and there is a waiting list.

### The Catholic Girls' Society

(under the auspices of the Ladies of Charity).

Headquarters: 79, GLOUCESTER STREET, S.W.1.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation* for 54 in cubicles, shared rooms and some single rooms.

*Prices Charged.*—18s. to 32s. 6d. for lodging and full board (or according to circumstances).

*Conditions of Admission.*—Catholic girls, working or seeking work in London, or visiting London.

*Management* by Committee of the Ladies of Charity one of whom resides at the Hostel.

*Notes.*—This hostel is provided for the benefit of young Catholic girls and the price charged to those earning small wages, or out of work, does not cover the cost. The Hostel is partly supported by donations and subscriptions.

The Hostel closes at 10, except on Saturday, which is the late night. Residents can always arrange to be out late on other nights, by permission. A few latchkeys are given out to older permanent residents. The Hostel is extensively used and is always full. Three beds are available for emergency work. The Ladies of Charity hope shortly to open a special emergency night hostel.

### Catholic Women's League.

Headquarters: 116, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.

One Residential Club.

*Accommodation* for 37. All in single rooms.

*Prices charged.*—£2 to £2 9s. a week, lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission.*—Residents are professional women, students, or lady workers. The provision is primarily intended for Roman Catholics, though members of other Churches are received if there are vacancies. References must be given.

*Management* by Secretary appointed by the Catholic Women's League.

### Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women.

Headquarters: 45, GREAT PRESCOTT STREET, ALDGATE, E.1.

One Hostel, Sara Pyke House.

*Accommodation*, 15.

*Price charged.*—£1 per week for lodging and full board (or less, in proportion to earnings and according to circumstances).

*Conditions of admission.*—Respectable, young, Jewish working girls.

*Management.*—Sara Pyke House Committee.

*Notes.*—The prices charged are not intended to meet the full cost of the Hostel. It is provided for the benefit of young girls starting work, many of whom have been educated at other Homes of the Jewish Association. The cost is met by voluntary subscriptions.

The Hostel is always full and elder girls are expected after a time, when their earnings increase and circumstances are favourable, to find other lodgings and make room for young girls beginning work.

### Mabelle Egerton Club.

Headquarters: 36, GROSVENOR ROAD, S.W.1.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 49.

*Prices charged.*—10 cubicles 25s. to 27s., single rooms 30s. to 35s., for lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission.*—Educated girls in employment; income not exceeding £4 weekly. References required.

*Management.*—By Committee, of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and others.

*Notes.*—The Club houses were started largely by friends and were named in memory of the late Lady Mabelle Egerton who had done so much for girls in the St. Martin-in-the-Fields Girls Lunch Club. In addition to the Warden, there is an assistant who lets in the girls at night. They enter their name in a book if they are to be in later than 11 p.m. There is a waiting list.

### St. Columba's House for Scotswomen.

4, BINA GARDENS, S.W.1.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 39.

*Price charged*.—24s. to 26s. a week for lodging and partial board, according to position of cubicle and seniority.

*Conditions of admission*.—Scotswomen between (as a general rule) 17 and 25, preference given to members of the Church of Scotland, and importance is attached to connection with and readiness to give some assistance in St. Columba's. References are required; one of them must be from the minister of her parish.

*Management* by a Committee of St. Columba's Church (who undertake all financial responsibility).

*Notes*.—The House and its equipment were a gift to the Church and it is not therefore carried on for profit, but to provide a safe and happy home for Scots girls employed in London.

The residents are usually girls in offices, business houses and students. There is usually a waiting list, but girls are sent temporarily to other Hostels until there is a vacancy. The Hostel closes at 10.30 p.m., except on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when it remains open till 12. Special permission can be given for late return on other nights.

### The Salvation Army.

Headquarters: MARE STREET, HACKNEY.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 31.

*Price charged*.—From 21s. 6d. (shared room) to 25s. 6d. (single room), lodging and full board (mid-day dinner).

*Conditions of admission*.—Hostel is intended for business girls and women.

*Management*.—By Women's Social Work Branch of Salvation Army.

*Notes*.—The Hostel closes at 10.30, except on two nights in the week, when it remains open later.

One of staff sits up to let residents in on these nights.

### Toc H League of Women Helpers.

Headquarters: CHANDOS HOUSE, PALMER STREET, S.W.1.

Two Hostels.

*Accommodation* in all, 26.

*Price charged*.—Cubicles or double rooms 31s., single room 36s. per week for lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission*.—The Hostels are intended for members of the League of Women Helpers, but others are admitted if there are vacancies. Visitors are received.

*Management* by the League.

*Notes*.—The Hostels are used by students, teachers and business girls, usually members of the League.

The Hostels are just self-supporting, with the aid of a Lunch Club at the "New June" Hostel which is open to all women and girls who wish to make use of it.

### West London Mission.

Headquarters: KINGSWAY HALL, KINGSWAY.

One Hostel, Emerson Bainbridge House.

*Accommodation*, 37.

*Price charged*.—18s. 6d. for lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission*.—Girls must be employed and under 30. References are required.

*Management* by West London Mission who are financially responsible.

*Notes*.—The House was built and endowed by Mr. Emerson Bainbridge and after his death, placed under the control and management of the West London Mission.

According to the wishes of the founder, the Hostel was specially intended for the benefit of young girls beginning work on small wages. The price charged is not intended to cover the cost.

This house is extensively used, and there is a long waiting list. Discrimination is used in admitting girls. Preference is given to those coming to London for the first time, and therefore in special need of the help the House can give them.

### HOSTELS PROVIDED BY SETTLEMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK.

#### Time and Talents Settlement.

BERMONDSEY STREET, S.E.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 28.

*Price charged*.—4s. 3d. to 5s. a week, rent for room.

*Management*.—By Committee of the Settlement, who appoint a resident Secretary to manage the Hostel.

This is an interesting Hostel which provides accommodation of a rather different kind to any other. Each girl has her own bed-sittingroom: keeps it herself, cooks and caters for herself. A resident housekeeper cleans landings, stairs, bathrooms and the common room, but in her own room each girl provides entirely for herself and does all cleaning and washing, with the exception of blankets which are washed for her. A good hot dinner cooked by the housekeeper at mid-day can be obtained for 7d., if notice is given the day before. This is an excellent arrangement for those working close at hand and many, though not all, girls make use of it.

Rooms are supplied furnished or unfurnished. Girls often take a furnished room and gradually buy their own furniture piece by piece. Rent for room without furniture is reduced by 3d. a week.

One of the Settlement Residents lives at the Hostel and acts as Secretary and arranges for letting. She also looks at the rooms to ensure that a certain standard of cleanliness is maintained. It is found that girls

who are at work all day need this amount of encouragement and supervision, especially when they first start housekeeping on their own account.

In the common room the residents can see their friends, including "boy friends"; this is an arrangement much appreciated by both girls and boys.

The rent paid by the girls provides for rent and upkeep of the houses and the Housekeeper. The services of the Secretary are met by outside subscription. The Hostel, which accommodates 28, is always full.

This experiment is discussed further in the last section of this Report.

#### **Princess Club Settlement.**

106, JAMAICA ROAD, BERMONDSEY.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 18.

*Price charged*.—4s. 8d. a week for cubicles: food paid for as required.

*Management*.—By Committee of the Settlement.

*Finance*.—Girls' payments cover running expenses. Further cost is met by the funds of the Settlement.

*Note*.—This Hostel is provided for girls working in factories and workshops in the immediate neighbourhood. The rent is low, and the arrangement of buying food as required appeals to the members. The girls often know, and are known by the workers of the Settlement before coming to the Hostel, and some are already members of one of the large and flourishing clubs run on the same premises. The Hostel owes its success largely to the existence of these clubs with their various activities and the opportunity they provide for meeting boys and girls of all ages.

#### **HOSTELS PROVIDED BY SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS.**

##### **Ada Lewis Women's Lodging Houses.**

TRUSTEES' OFFICE, BEDFORD ROW, W.C.

Two houses have been erected and equipped by the trustees of the above charity out of funds bequeathed by the will of the late Mrs. Ada H. Lewis Hill, which funds are subject to a scheme approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice.

The ordinary running expenses of the Houses are met out of receipts and income from capital funds.

A lady superintendent for each house is appointed by the trustees and she is responsible for the management under their supervision.

The first house was opened in 1913, and the scale of charges at that house is as follows: cubicles 7s. per week, and rooms 9s. and 11s. per week, and in addition each resident has to purchase a book of "food coupons" each week for the sum of 7s. to ensure that she spends at least that amount weekly on food in the house.

The second house was opened in April 1927, and at that house an inclusive charge of 18s. 6d. per week is made for a bedroom, breakfast and dinner, and full board at weekends. At this house each resident has the key of her room, a very popular arrangement.

At each house the use of the laundry and bathrooms is free, and residents have the use of the cleaning rooms, recreation rooms, and sewing rooms.

Application for rooms is made to the Superintendents.

#### **Homes for Working Girls in London.**

OFFICE: 55, DENISON HOUSE, 296, VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD, S.W.1.

The Homes were founded in 1878 by the late John Shrimpton.

There are six Homes in London accommodating in all 360 girls.

The Homes are intended for girls and young women who are employed in workrooms, shops, offices, etc., who need homes in London at such moderate charges as they can meet out of their low wages. The charges are, therefore, based upon a graduated scale according to wages received. The normal charges for board residence range between 18s. 6d. to 21s., but these charges are subject to arrangement and reduction for special cases.

The Homes are carried on with a definitely religious intention, but there is no religious test for applicants, and no compulsory attendance at prayers, but the residents are asked to come. Practically all do so, and appear to value the religious privileges.

The houses are closed at half-past ten. In individual cases arrangements may be made occasionally for residents to return later. An extension of the hour of closing is arranged on two nights a week.

The bedroom accommodation is divided into cubicles (both wooden partitions and curtains) and there are large sitting and dining-rooms, with piano and library. There is also a study room in several of the houses and a laundry in all for use of residents.

There is a charge of 2d. a week for the baths (included in the charges) which can be used constantly.

The staff at each Home consists of a superintendent, assistant and domestic staff.

The accommodation provided costs more than the girl can afford to pay and the expenditure is covered by subscriptions. There is no possibility of the Homes being self-supporting, as they are intended to help young girls with small wages.

Applications for admission to be made to the Superintendents of the Homes or the Secretary, at the office.

##### **Ames House.**

44, MORTIMER STREET, W.1.

Provided by a Committee interested in the housing of girl workers, who meet all expenditure not covered by girls' payments.

*Accommodation*, 70. Cubicles, and some single rooms.

*Prices charged*.—25s. a week for lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission*.—Business girls and students between 16 and 25 years of age. References required.

*Management*.—By Warden appointed by the Committee.

*Notes.*—The Hostel is not intended to make any profit but to provide a safe home for girls working in London.

The public rooms include a work-room with smoothing iron and sewing machines, and a quiet room for study.

Family prayers are held every day and though attendance is not compulsory most of the residents attend and appreciate them.

The Hostel closes at 10.30 p.m. (Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11.30). Latchkeys are not provided. A night bell rings in a staff bedroom for emergency use.

### St. Vincent Club and Hostel.

Provided by a committee who meet all expenditure not covered by girls' payments.

*Accommodation*, 30.

*Price charged.*—21s. to 31s. a week for lodging and partial board.

*Conditions of admission.*—Girls must be employed.

*Notes.*—The Hostel is intended for very young girls beginning work. It is very full, and applications have to be refused continually for this reason.

Lunches are served to non-residents.

### The Queen Mary Hostel Committee.

128, HOXTON STREET, N.1.

One Hostel.

*Accommodation*, 44.

*Price charged.*—21s. for cubicle or shared room, 23s. 6d. for single room, and full board (four meals a day).

*Conditions of admission.*—References required.

*Management by Committee* who appoint the Hon. Warden and Matron.

*Notes.*—The Hostel is intended for business girls, nurses, teachers and students or girls visiting London. The price charged only covers running expenses. It is not intended to make a profit.

There is central heating and unlimited hot water and hot baths.

The public rooms include a large lounge and recreation room. There is a laundry and drying room for the use of residents.

The Hostel remains open till midnight twice a week. On other nights it closes at 10.15.

The restaurant is open to non-residents for lunch.

### RESIDENTIAL CLUBS AND HOSTELS PROVIDED BY SPECIAL COMPANIES.

There are several groups of Residential Clubs and Hostels in London established by people interested in supplying the need for good lodgings for women workers as a piece of social service, but who consider that such Hostels should be run as business concerns and ultimately pay their way.

These experiments have been fully justified. The Hostels have been specially built to accommodate large numbers, with suitable labour saving appliances and they can be run economically. Cubicles or rooms, according

to the price paid, are provided, with good public rooms in addition to the dining-rooms or restaurant; there is usually a small laundry room where residents can do light washing for themselves.

The charges in one group start at 22s. 6d., others run from 30s. a week upwards.

Although these Clubs and Hostels pay their way and make a reasonable return on capital, their first object is not profit-making but the provision of good safe lodgings for women workers with small means. With this end in view, certain conditions are laid down defining who is eligible for admission, and certain rules made regarding such matters as the time of closing the Hostel, and these rules are definite and strictly enforced. It is not the invariable custom in this type of residence to provide latchkeys; some make special arrangements for girls wishing to be out late, which means that notice has to be given beforehand. All have the rule that residents must be employed. Some definitely prefer young girls and limit the age of admission. Others, while not refusing older residents, do have rules which are irksome to the older women and so tend to be used by others.

Clubs and Hostels of this kind fill a great need, and it seems probable that an increased number would be readily filled. One private company is considering the possibility of building more houses, but other companies, as far as is known, are not contemplating extension. Some Wardens even see an advantage in a long waiting list as giving them every opportunity to choose the right type of resident.

It may be admitted that the waiting lists contain many applicants who would not be suitable to the particular residence to which they have applied, but there are many others who would be received were there room.

The advantages of this type of residence over the small house provided by an individual proprietor are:—

The numbers dealt with enable better food and accommodation to be provided for any given sum.

The houses, being specially built or thoroughly adapted provide small rooms or cubicles (the more modern Hostel provides rooms only, however small) with proper light and ventilation to each. In old houses only superficially "adapted" there are many double rooms and often cubicles without windows.

The public rooms can be better and more numerous and can be allotted to definite purposes—reading room, games room, etc.

The points which should, in our opinion, be specially remembered in building new hostels are:—

That rooms, however small, are better than cubicles.

That variety of public rooms is a great advantage.

That one or more rooms which can be hired by residents for private parties are much appreciated.

That a courtyard, or roof garden for sitting out is a great asset.

The following list gives some of the best known Residential Clubs and Hostels provided by private companies having inexpensive accommodation; there are others with higher charges. They pay reasonable

dividends and are excellent well-managed concerns. They are always full and have long waiting lists.

Brabazon House Ltd., 1, Moreton Street, S.W.1. Hopkinson House. Brabazon House.	} Prices from 22s. 6d. a week, accommodation for 230.	
Cartwright Gardens Club, Cartwright Gardens, W.C.		Prices 26s. to 38s. a week, accommodation for 125.
Ingram House, Ltd., Stockwell Road, S.E.		Prices 30s. and 32s. a week, accommodation for 200.
Nutford House, Nutford Place, W.	Prices from 40s. to 55s. a week, accommodation for 120.	
St. Clements House, Bolsover Street, S.W.1.	Prices from 31s. to 42s. a week, accommodation for 106.	
St. George's House, 82, Vincent Square, S.W.	Prices 29s. to 39s. a week, accommodation for 55.	
Twentieth Century Club, Ltd., Stanley Gardens, W.	Prices from 35s. 6d. to 40s. a week, accommodation for 100.	

## FLATS AND FLATLETS.

Women who can afford to do so usually prefer to live in flats or flatlets rather than the more economical hostel. It is possible to live in a Hostel for so small a sum as 30s. or less a week, which includes food, except lunch and tea on week-days. The same provision in a flat, or even flatlet, would probably cost double this sum at least.

The difference between a flat and a flatlet is rather nebulous: strictly speaking flats should be entirely self contained, with kitchen or kitchenette and bathroom, while flatlets usually consist of one or at most two rooms and perhaps a kitchenette, a bathroom being shared by two or three flatlets. But the terms are used loosely.

The demand for this form of dwelling and the prohibitive cost of the ordinary flat built for the open market has led to the formation of several societies, registered as Public Utility Societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act or the Housing and Town Planning Act, for the purpose of buying property and converting it into flatlets, or building special blocks of flatlets and letting them to shareholders of the Society at a very moderate rent.

The best known of these Societies is Women's Pioneer Housing, Ltd., which was the first to be started about eleven years ago: there are now several others. The schemes are self-supporting and are usually financed on the following lines. Partly by shares which are held by members, partly by issue of Loan Stock, by subsidies under the Housing Acts and loans from public authorities on mortgage. Women wishing to become tenants of such societies, take shares up to a specified amount according to the size of the flat required. In some Societies an investment of £25 will secure a one-roomed flatlet, in others the lowest investment is £50. Larger investments are always needed for more accommodation. The investments bear interest, usually about 5 per cent.

The demand for the smaller and cheaper flatlets is great, and prospective tenants must be prepared to wait some months after registration before a flat is available. There are usually some larger flats vacant. The Women's Pioneer Housing ask a registration fee of 5s. when application for a flat is made, but investment need not be made until the flat is procured. In some other societies shares must be taken before an application for a flat can be received. The shares bear interest from the beginning. The advantages of such schemes are that the flat when secured gives better accommodation at a much lower rent than would be obtained elsewhere. Rents range from £25 to £35 per annum for one room—to £75 or £80 for three.

These schemes are intended to supply the needs of women workers, but also to be sound commercial undertakings, and carry a steady though not high rate of interest. When the rents are contrasted with those of commercial undertakings it is obvious that these Societies, when the finance is sound and the management efficient, can help materially to solve a very difficult problem. The payment of interest must depend on the management of the concern and on general financial conditions

in the country : the schemes are not perhaps the best form of investment for the woman whose whole savings may be only £50 to £100, but are useful for those with a little more margin.

Some of the buildings have restaurants or common dining rooms attached. This is an advantage, since it is always difficult for a single woman to get satisfactory meals for herself alone, especially when she comes in tired after a long day's work ; it is a further advantage if food can be sent up to the flatlet for a small extra payment. This is done at some service flats for women provided by private enterprise.

Supplying good and cheap food can be made to pay and to pay well, if there is a large number of customers. A restaurant may not be a paying proposition if the block of flats is not very large, even if a clause in the lease stipulates that a certain sum should be spent each week in the restaurant by each tenant. In certain localities this difficulty might be met by allowing non-residents to use the restaurants, but this would not be possible everywhere. There is a further difficulty ; some landlords when letting houses for conversion into flats, or building sites for the erection of new blocks, object to the establishment of a restaurant.

The housing problem is beset with difficulties on every side, and the thanks of all workers are due to the pioneers in this field who make experiments and thus give future attempts the benefit of their experience. The recent developments in the use of electricity, the modern ideas of plumbing and house furnishing and decoration, all help to lighten the task of the single-handed housewife, and the intelligent use of all such developments should make the flatlet of the future a thoroughly desirable residence.

In addition to the flats of the Public Utility Societies, numbers are supplied by private enterprise. Those that are built for the purpose, or are thoroughly well adapted from good clean houses are very good : the rent charged is of course, considerably higher than that of the Public Utility Societies, where tenants invest some capital.

Many so-called flatlets are in the market which are cheap but somewhat nasty : old houses in poor repair are made to look attractive with a lick of paint which will not last clean for a week. These have nothing to recommend them.

The latest development of the flatlet is the "Baby Flat." A fine old house in a beautiful position in the north of London has been converted in this manner. Single rooms are let either furnished or unfurnished (from 32s. or 25s. a week respectively). The tenants have a common kitchen with several stoves where they do their own cooking and a common dining room with separate tables. The house is attractive and it will be interesting to see if the idea proves popular, but the price is somewhat high considering that service is not provided.

## LACK OF ACCOMMODATION.

In the course of making this Enquiry, and also in reviewing the enquiries received at the Central Information Bureau, evidence has been found of a definite lack of accommodation of certain kinds.

1. *Temporary accommodation for girls seeking work, or between places.* As has been noted earlier in this report, it frequently happens that girls come to London to look for work or to interview prospective employers and need cheap temporary accommodation.

The accommodation most needed is :—

(a) Cubicles at 1s. 6d. or 2s. a night, with the possibility of getting breakfast for 6d.

(b) Rather better lodging at about 3s. 6d. a night for bed in a small separate room or good cubicle, with breakfast and the use of a sitting room during the day, to return to between interviews or to use for writing.

2. *Accommodation for girls and women working late at night.* Many girls whose work necessitates late or irregular hours live in lodgings or in their own homes, but those who do not, find great difficulty in securing accommodation.

Those who work at theatres, hotels, restaurants, and clubs need lodgings either in the centre of London, within walking distance of their work, or on a route where there is a good all-night transport service. They need Hostels to which they can get admission however late their work stops, and where they can remain in the morning until their work begins.

The employees at restaurants and hostels generally have the greater part of their food at work. This presents an additional problem as most hostels include board or partial board with lodging, and the girls and women who get their food in part payment of wages, obviously cannot afford, and do not wish to afford, anything like the sum charged in such hostels. Their special need is inexpensive rooms or cubicles with food *à la carte*. One small private hostel caters successfully for these, 10s. 6d. a week is charged for a cubicle, gas rings are available so that tea can be made and eggs boiled. Breakfast is given to those who want it for 4s. 6d. a week. No other meals are provided, but the hostel is near a residential club, the restaurant of which is open to non-residents, where the girls can always get substantial well-cooked meals, on the days or the half-days when they are not working. There are also Lyons and A.B.C. shops near.

If a privately-owned house, not specially built for the purpose can pay on these terms, it should be possible to get something even more satisfactory on a larger scale.

3. *Cheap accommodation for older women.* The older women (over forty) who is often working for a very small wage, finds considerable difficulty in getting lodging within her means.

Admittedly she is not an easy person to provide for, but she does need consideration. Probably the best provision is the flatlet, but where this is too expensive, a hostel with little separate rooms and a restaurant

for meals would be a great boon. The public rooms would be arranged rather differently to those in girls' Hostels, more small rooms would be desirable. The important thing would be to let older women feel the Hostel was provided for them, and that they were not there on sufferance, and expected to move out as soon as possible.

The still older woman who has retired from her work on a small pension or annuity is an even more difficult problem as her income is less than when she was working and she can afford very little indeed for her maintenance. It is difficult to find any Hostel cheap enough for her limited means. She dislikes the idea of a cubicle and cannot afford the terms for a single room with board. She now has the leisure to enjoy the comforts of life, but cannot afford them, and she also has leisure to complain of the lack of comfort. The older woman is often a sore trial to the warden of a Hostel which caters also for the younger professional and business woman. She is in the house for the greater part of the day, gives the most trouble and work to the staff and is the least able to pay a fair price for accommodation.

A Hostel run by private enterprise was opened for these older women, but it was closed in less than a year, for long before that time it had to be used for the woman who was still working. Those for whom it was originally intended were unable to afford the terms, which were from 35s. to 38s. a week for single rooms with partial board, *i.e.*, breakfast and dinner, and all meals at the weekends.

Charitable provision is made for such women by several Societies. But there are many women able to pay a weekly sum of 15s. to 20s. who do not need Almshouses or "Homes." Endowed Hostels, such as are provided for girls beginning work, seem needed for the woman past work, where her payments would cover running expenses. Such Hostels might provide a furnished room with facilities for cooking and the use of a bathroom. The cleaning could be done, if required, at a small additional charge and a restaurant should be attached. The older woman who is not working would have the time to do her own light housework, and at any rate some of her own cooking, though the possibility of obtaining one good meal a day in the restaurant would be an advantage. Comfortable public rooms could be provided where residents could entertain their friends and meet each other.

A Hostel with unfurnished rooms would often be greatly appreciated by women who have a few pieces of furniture of their own, and could settle more happily in a place where their own possessions gave them a feeling of home and permanency.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

In reviewing the lodging accommodation available in London attention has been drawn to certain things which seem worthy of consideration. These are now set out in the hope that those bodies and individuals who already do much to provide for the needs of women and girls in London, may be willing to consider them, and with their long experience, to decide if the suggestions are practicable and advisable.

*Emergency Shelters.*—When women and girls using these shelters are ready—physically and mentally—to do any form of work, a great deal is done to get them the work for which they are fitted; and young women who show any signs of being fit for training, are trained. But there remains the dreary army of women who trail about from shelter to shelter, using each till their welcome is worn out. In their present state they cannot possibly obtain work, some never could obtain it, but it seems as though a certain number of them, if fed and clothed for a few weeks and given some practise in scrubbing and rough housework, might be able to take work of a rough type in eating houses or lodging houses. A warden of one emergency hostel gave the rougher type of girls and women an intensive course of housewifery, lasting three or four weeks. At the end of the course she generally succeeded in getting a place in service for these rough diamonds, not of course in Park Lane, but in a small house or shop under the immediate eye of the mistress; some were sent to farms. If it is not possible to give the requisite polish even for rough service, an able-bodied woman can be trained to concentrate on simple scrubbing, which is the sole accomplishment needed by many employees in fried fish shops and cheap eating houses. Much is already done—can even greater effort be made by those so experienced in handling the "down and out" to give more permanent help to these draggled and melancholy folk?

*Lodging accommodation for girls from factories and workshops in the industrial quarters of London.*—The possibility of lodging these girls outside their own overcrowded homes, is a question which is periodically discussed in connection with the general problem of housing. It has been proved again and again that the ordinary Hostel is not liked or used by these girls, and it would be a pity if further effort were wasted in providing the type of accommodation which they do not want; but it might be well worth while to explore the possibilities of other forms of housing.

The interesting experiment made at Time and Talents Settlement has been described on page 19.

This seems a hopeful line of development. The working girl undoubtedly appreciates being her own mistress and making her own arrangements. It is, of course, necessary to ensure that certain standards are maintained, which can best be done by the presence of a sympathetic and able resident Warden.

At Time and Talents Hostel a hot mid-day meal can be obtained by ordering it beforehand; this plan could be developed so that an evening meal could be had if any girl were unable to get back at mid-day. Further help with heavy cleaning or washing might be made available at a



reasonable charge, or included in a slightly higher rent. It would, however, be very important to keep the rent low, and preserve the independence of the tenants.

A further point to be remembered is that a small Hostel, serving girls in the immediate neighbourhood, as does Time and Talents Hostel, would be more likely to succeed, as girls working in factories usually have local ties and friendships.

*Hostels partly endowed or supported by subscriptions.*—There are many of these Hostels which can and do provide accommodation at a very low price. They are invaluable for the girl starting work on a learner's wage, and it would seem desirable that they should be kept for girls in this position. This was the original aim of most Hostels of this kind, but the rule is not always very definite nor very clearly laid down, and older girls, who should be in a position to pay an economic price, are received and stay on. In some Hostels such as the Homes for Working Girls, information is asked about wages and the charges are adjusted accordingly. In others it is an "understood thing" that girls when they get older and earn better wages should leave and make way for the younger generation. Such Hostels fulfil their original purpose. There are good openings in work in London, there are many trades and professions which will ensure a girl's future, but where the beginning wage—the learner's wage—is only sufficient if a girl is living at home or getting lodging almost free. Girls from the country taking up such posts (and there are more than can be filled by London girls) can only do so with help, and here the endowed Hostel is doing good work, and should be kept as far as possible or the girls who really need it.

### SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ORGANISATION OF HOSTELS.

*Food.*—The foundation on which the success of a club or Hostel really depends is the provision of nutritious and appetising food. Lack of nutrition, with indigestion, lie at the root of much of the ill health of women and girl workers. They account for a great deal of the bad temper and bickerings in Hostels and elsewhere, they lead to slackness and bad work, and often involve loss of earning power for longer or shorter periods. No apology therefore is needed for emphasising the subject of food.

The importance of good food is now universally known and admitted, but in spite of much talk Hostel meals are not always a conspicuous success.

It is not an easy matter to cater for a number of girls day after day, to give the variety needed, to consider reasonable diversities of taste, and yet to keep within the weekly allowance for expenditure on food. The provision of economical and appetising meals, is not, we are frequently told, one of our national gifts. In these days much attention is however given to cookery and domestic science and the reproach should no longer be justified. It is possible for Hostels to obtain the services of intelligent and well trained cooks and caterers, and the success of many

clubs and Hostels in providing really good meals shows that the problem is by no means insoluble.

Few, if any, Hostels now expect girls to begin the day on a breakfast of bread and butter only (or worse, bread and margarine); if a really good breakfast is provided and a good hot meal in the evening, the hasty lunch at midday does not matter.

Some Hostels make up packets of lunch for the young girls on small wages to take to work with them, and this seems an excellent plan, especially if the girls work near one of the Picnic Lunch Rooms which now exist in some parts of London, and can eat their lunch there and buy a cup of tea or milk.

Some Hostels provide a good midday meal and a light supper. These Hostels are intended to provide for the girl working quite near at hand, who can get back at midday. In practice this is not altogether satisfactory; few girls have work so near that they can get back *easily* in an hour, and a solid meal hastily eaten is a sure road to indigestion. Also some girls who use the Hostel, work too far away to be able to get back at all, and for them the light supper in the evening is not adequate. When the immense distances of London are taken into consideration the midday meal at the Hostel is not a practical proposition.

Where a Hostel is of sufficient size, a restaurant where residents can buy their food is an excellent and popular arrangement. A rule can be made that a minimum sum per week must be spent in the restaurant; but this still leaves the residents able to arrange their meals in accordance with their engagements, and to save something when they are away or with friends.

*Rules.*—The only comment to be made on these is, the fewer the better. The practice at one residence of having no rules but certain "household arrangements" seems admirable.

*Closing at night.*—The hour for closing must naturally depend on the age and status of the residents, but whatever is settled it is essential that there should be a night bell for use in an emergency. This provision is not universal, and the need cannot be too strongly emphasised. If there is no possibility of getting in after closing hours, in cases of accidental detention, the very purpose for which Hostels exist, the provision of a safe home, is defeated.

#### *Future Development of Hostels.*

The number of girls and women needing lodging accommodation in London is certainly not declining, and the good inexpensive Hostel is very popular. The standard of comfort and convenience is steadily rising and this means that the large Residential Club or Hostel will be best able to provide the accommodation desired. It should be possible to provide such residences and to secure a fair return on capital; the points

already noted in this report as apparently deserving of consideration when new Hostels are being built, are the provision of :—

- (a) Small separate rooms or good cubicles.
- (b) A variety of public rooms, including a quiet room for reading and study.
- (c) At least one large room which may be secured by residents for private parties for a small charge.
- (d) A room for washing and ironing of small articles.
- (e) Some sort of garden or roof garden.
- (f) For large Hostels, a restaurant where food can be had as wanted.

This report deals only with those Clubs and Hostels which provide some accommodation at £2 2s. a week or less. The report is a commentary, not a directory, and no attempt has therefore been made to give an exhaustive list of Hostels. The aim has been to give some idea of the different types of lodging available in London to-day.

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