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Nat'l Theatre Conf.



October 28, 1935

Mr. David H. Stevens
c/o The Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York, N. Y.

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Dear Mr. Stevens:

I am writing to urge as strongly as I can the giving of financial assistance to the National Theatre Conference. Six years ago, as you may know, I covered some eighteen thousand miles, gathering information on the community theatres and university theatres of our country and Canada for a book called "Footlights Across America." The result of my experience was a very definite conviction that the future of spoken drama in America outside New York City lay in the local theatres, whether amateur, as in most cases, or semi-professional, as in the cases of the outstanding examples of the Cleveland Playhouse and Pasadena Community Playhouse. I felt that co-operation between such groups was essential to their greater development, and I urged on the American Association for Adult Education the subsidizing for a time at least of an organization linking these theatres -- the National Theatre Conference.

I do not know the reason for the discontinuance of the Association's assistance, unless it was that it felt it had done enough in making possible this beginning and had too many demands to be able to go further with the project. In any case, I feel that for this work to stop at this time because of the need of a very few thousand dollars would be criminal.

I am sure the significance of this movement must be clear to anyone who has seen how the great bulk of work outlined by Mrs. Hallie Flanagan for the Federal Theatres Project in the Works Progress Administration has fallen inevitably into the regions covered by the national theatre activities which the National Theatre Conference is attempting to co-ordinate.

Yours very truly,

Kenneth Macgowan
Kenneth Macgowan

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