

It was, on motion,  
RESOLVED that the sum of Forty-two thousand dollars (\$42,000),  
RF 54049 or as much thereof as may be necessary, be, and it  
hereby is, appropriated to provide up to C\$40,000 to  
the STRATFORD SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL OF CANADA FOUNDA-  
TION, Ontario, Canada, toward its general expenses,  
this sum to be payable in units of C\$10,000 on the basis  
of C\$1 for each C\$2 secured in cash or securities from  
Canadian sources for the same purpose during the period  
ending June 30, 1954.

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The following considerations were presented:

Humanities: The Arts

Previous Interest: None for this project. In January, 1954, a grant of \$200,000 was made by the Executive Committee to the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy of Connecticut toward the cost of building, equipping and initiating the operations of a theatre and academy, primarily for the production of Shakespeare's plays and the training of Shakespearean actors, payable in units of \$40,000 on the basis of \$2 for each \$3 from other sources.

General Description: The small town of Stratford, Ontario, with a population of only 18,000, was the scene last summer of a remarkable demonstration of the enduring vitality of Shakespearean drama and of the possibility of its use in stimulating a more active Canadian interest in the theatre arts. Out of an idea originated by local business men who had long cherished the hope that Stratford, like its English counterpart, might become a center for Shakespearean drama and study, the Shakespearean Festival of Canada Foundation was established in October, 1952, as a nonprofit corporation for the following purposes: to promote interest in and the study of the arts generally, and literature, drama and music in particular; to advance knowledge and appreciation of, and to stimulate interest in Shakespearean culture and tradition by theatrical performances and otherwise. Other purposes include providing for education and instruction in the arts of the theatre, for developing artistic talent and the theatre in Canada, and for conducting an annual Shakespearean Festival in Stratford.

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This was an ambitious program and it is surprising that despite the difficulties encountered by its inexperienced sponsors, no compromise has been made with the standards of excellence to which the group originally committed itself. Journeying to England, Mr. Tom Patterson, one of the original incorporators, sought out Tyrone Guthrie of the Old Vic Theatre and so interested him in the project that he agreed to direct the Festival. Next he enlisted the actor, Alec Guinness, and the gifted designer, Tanya Moiseiwitsch. The English actress, Irene Worth, was also engaged, but the balance of the company were to be Canadians. The festival began its first season on July 13, 1953, and ran for a period of six weeks with an attendance of 66,000 persons who paid from one to six dollars for their tickets.

Funds raised locally and across Canada provided for the original investment in a concrete foundation and stage sheltered by a tent. The design was distinctly that of Mr. Guthrie and aimed primarily at what he regarded as an ideal stage for Shakespearean production (similar to the stage adopted for the Edinburgh Festival) and surrounded by as many seats as could be brought within a distance of fifty feet from the edge of the stage. During the 1953 Festival presentations of Richard III and All's Well That Ends Well achieved a remarkable success. The opinions of the critics who attended (including representatives of the New York and London press) were uniformly favorable and laudatory; ticket sales averaged ninety-eight per cent of capacity.

Plans for the 1954 Festival include the production of two other Shakespearean plays. The Taming of the Shrew and Measure for Measure, together with a production of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. The principal star of this season will be James Mason, with other members of the company almost entirely Canadian. During the Festival Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Clarke, and others will participate in a three-week course dealing with all aspects of the theatre for a limited number of qualified students. Another feature will be an exhibition showing the development of the theatre from Greek and Roman times to the present.

Larger possibilities of the enterprise include the company's appearing in other Canadian cities, first in the west; the development of a full-time theatre school, modelled on the Old Vic School in London; and eventually the erection of a permanent theatre school at Stratford, Ontario.

The Festival Foundation has the patronage of Mr. Vincent Massey as Governor General of Canada, Mr. St. Laurent as Prime Minister, the presidents of the Ontario universities and, among other, Mr. Edward Johnson, formerly the Manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. Officers and Board of Governors of the Festival Foundation are primarily residents of the town of Stratford. Its President, Mr. H. A. Showalter, is likewise the president of a local company.

The Board of Governors, however, includes a number of members from other Canadian cities, Montreal, Toronto, London, etc. The actual direction of the work of the Foundation is in the hands of Mr. Tom Patterson as director for planning, Mr. Cecil Clarke, formerly of the Old Vic Theatre in London as artistic director, and Mr. Roy Luken, formerly Secretary-Treasurer of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, as administrative director.

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Finances: The operation of the Festival of 1953 resulted in a deficit of approximately \$4,100. Taking the position that advance sales of tickets (which by the middle of March had amounted to eighteen per cent of capacity) should be held in trust until the night of actual performance, the Board of Governors of the Festival Foundation are this year attempting to raise \$120,000 as working capital - a sum estimated to provide for all expenses of the 1954 Festival up to the opening night. Approximately \$42,000 of this sum has already been raised, most of it locally in Stratford, Ontario, with campaigns for other contributions begun only toward the end of February and not likely to be fully under way until late April and May. Because some major contributions received in 1953 were understood to be non-recurring and because the enterprise now has a claim on international attention, the officers of the Festival Foundation have requested assistance from The Rockefeller Foundation. The recommendation is for a grant of C\$40,000, payable in units of C\$10,000 against each C\$20,000 raised from Canadian sources during the period ending June 30, 1954, toward the general expenses of the Festival Foundation. Funds already raised for this purpose would be accepted as matching funds toward the first payment.

Based on seventy per cent of capacity, estimated income from ticket sales in 1954 will be approximately \$257,000. Estimated expenses total \$251,000, including preliminary expenses provided for by the working fund of \$120,000 now being raised. If this budget proves valid, the Festival, at seventy per cent of capacity, should yield a surplus of working funds in excess of \$100,000; and if ticket sales should rise to ninety per cent, this surplus would be increased by \$75,000.

Future Implications: None. It is understood that this grant would be regarded as the single contribution of The Rockefeller Foundation to the work of the Festival Foundation.

Comment: The importance of the Shakespearean theatre in the English-speaking countries has been constant virtually since Shakespeare's death, both for the works in themselves, and for their influence on the acting of any given period. Previously and today the English-speaking actor masters his craft in Shakespearean performance. It seems desirable that as a major English-speaking country, Canada should have provision for the performance of Shakespeare's work on

high standards of quality. The present proposal, then, which parallels the grant made to the Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy of Connecticut, is recommended as a contribution of major importance to the development of the theatre in Canada.

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The Stratford Festival of Canada Foundation has still to achieve full national standing. On its present record it has what is agreed to be a unique claim on such standing. The precise course of its development cannot yet be predicted but there can be no doubt that the venture has intrinsic merit and possibilities that amply justify the grant now proposed.

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