

Little Theatre Plans Approved Last Night By Club Representatives

The second step toward the ultimate establishment of a Little Theatre in Montreal was made last evening in Victoria Hall when representatives from all the amateur dramatic organizations in and about the city unanimously approved by resolution a draft of plans drawn up by a provisional committee, empowered by a general public meeting held last November. The resolution declared that not only did the local clubs undividedly support the draft but that they felt that the present provisional committee should proceed to develop more fully the draft, after which it will be submitted to another general meeting in the near future.

J. M. Macdonnell, chairman pro tem, read the contents of a circular embracing the general aim of the committee at the outset, pointing out that the circular had been mailed some time before to all local societies for their consideration. The circular stated that it was the belief of the members of the committee that in this city there is a definite need for an institution as a Little Theatre for the cultivation of the drama and the arts generally; that the Little Theatre should aim to present drama of the highest standard at the smallest possible cost to its patrons; that in no way must it be regarded as something which will combat existing amateur dramatic clubs, but, on the contrary, that it will assist them to the attainment of the ideal of good drama in the community.

A Little Theatre, the committee was convinced, must be run upon sound, businesslike lines, not as a commercial undertaking, but as an idealistic undertaking to the accomplishment of which are brought the best standards, the best judgment, and the best talents available. The committee proposed that an advisory or administrative board composed of representative citizens be appointed to undertake the business administration of the Little Theatre. The personnel of this board is to be submitted later.

DIRECTOR SUGGESTED.

It is suggested that a director be appointed by this board, and in him will be vested most of the executive responsibility of the dramatic side of the organization. The board, in association with the director, should appoint assistant directors to take care of the various branches of production work, but they shall at all times be subject to final decisions of the director.

It was also submitted that a number of counsellors be named, who may be called upon individually or collectively, or in groups, as the occasion may require, to collaborate with the director, or to be consulted upon productions. In answer to a query, a member of the committee emphasized the word may in this suggestion. A number of names were put forward as a tentative list of counsellors, with the observation that the list is not at all final, that it might be augmented or otherwise subsequent to future discussions. But it was pointed out that the larger, more embracing, and more elastic such a group would be, the better it would serve its purpose.

Discussion of these suggestions was entered upon and Miss Martha Allan, Sir Andrew MacPhail and S. Morgan-Powell, together with the chairman pro tem, expatiated upon points in the draft which were not clear to some of the persons present. In reply to a question from Wesley Eley, Westmount Dramatic Club, Mr. Morgan-Powell explained that the Little Theatre would encourage in every way possible, and would place its equipment at the disposal of any amateur organization worthy of the standards of the Little Theatre. He took the opportunity to stress the fact that the Little Theatre sought the co-operation of all local societies and that, in turn, it would seek to be of every assistance to deserving clubs.

Reginald Cornish, St. James' Players, expressed concern over the interpretation of the word "representative" mentioned in regard to the proposed board of administration. Both the chairman and Mr. Morgan-Powell declared that this board would not necessarily interfere with the director, who, when chosen, would be thoroughly competent from every viewpoint; rather would these persons constitute a group to which the director might come at any time for advice of any nature, should he desire to do so.

IDEAL OUTLINED.

An appeal for all those concerned to ever keep to the forefront the great ideal of the Little Theatre was voiced by Rupert Caplan, director of the Ottawa Little Theatre. It was his fear

that a dream of great things physically at the start might tend to dim the real aim of a Little Theatre, which was to better the community culturally and to instill a love of the arts in general in that community. He urged that, whether the start be on a large scale or in a small way, this ideal be not forgotten.

The question of the appointment of a director was raised by Mrs. Stehle, who felt that a board of business men might not be sufficiently conversant with such a problem to carry it out with the best success. Mr. Macdonnell replied that in all undertakings it was usually a group of laymen who took the initiative in appointing the individual who would be at the helm of that undertaking.

Questions on incidental matters were raised and discussed by the meeting. Sir Andrew Macphail then suggested that each club in and about Montreal lose no time in selecting one representative as a permanent counsellor on whom the provisional committee may call at any time, and so make the contact between committee and the various dramatic clubs more concrete. Howard Murray gave his impressions of what a Little Theatre should be and he expressed great hope in the present movement.

During the evening it was urged by Mr. Morgan-Powell, Miss Allan and others that it was only with the sincere, active, sympathetic co-operation of the public that the provisional committee felt it worth while to proceed to further develop plans. An indication of the active support promised was provided at the conclusion of the discussion when over 40 representatives of local dramatic organizations unanimously expressed their approval of and confidence in the work done by the provisional committee to date.