

## THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL

The idea of holding a festival of Shakespeare's plays in the Canadian namesake of the poet's birthplace was conceived by Tom Patterson, a Stratford-born journalist. The original plan called for a simple open-air presentation, but eventually it was decided on the advice of Tyrone Guthrie, who had been called in to advise on the project, to construct a tent theatre. Sir Tyrone visited Canada in July 1952, and spent two weeks investigating the suitability of Stratford as a site for such a project and the state of theatre in Canada.

At the end of his visit he agreed to be associated with the venture if a star and experienced theatre personnel were employed; if a closed-in theatre, or tent, was constructed; and if a revolutionary "open" stage was built instead of the conventional proscenium type. A committee approved his proposed budget of \$150,000 and negotiations were completed with Alec Guinness and Irene Worth to head the company, Tyrone Guthrie as director and Tanya Moiseiwitsch as designer. An application was made for a charter to the provincial government and, in October 1952, a non-profit organization to be known as the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Foundation of Canada was set up.

**THE OPENING**  
As one critic noted, July 13, 1953, was "the most exciting night in the history of Canadian theatre". From the first entrance of Sir Alec Guinness in the title role of *Richard III*, to the ovation after the opening performance, the atmosphere was electrifying. By the conclusion of the second production, *All's Well That Ends Well*, the following night, again featuring Sir Alec, Irene Worth and a company otherwise made up largely of Canadian actors, it was evident that in the small industrial city of Stratford the Stratford Shakespearean Festival had overnight become a centre of major theatrical importance.

### AID FOR PAKISTAN DAM

Canada has pledged financial support for construction of the world's largest earth-fill dam, at Tarbela in West Pakistan. Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, recently announced the readiness of the Canadian Government to make a \$5-million loan free of interest available to the Tarbela Development Fund to pay for Canadian goods and services.

The World Bank is administering the Tarbela development and backing its cost of \$827.5 million. The foreign-exchange cost of construction is about \$492 million, of which \$342 million will come from the special international fund established for the Indus Basin Development Scheme (of which Tarbela is a significant part). The remainder had to be raised by special pledges. Excluding Canada's pledge, \$144,383,000 has been promised by Britain, France,

The Stratford Festival, created in a city with a population of 19,500 in a prosperous Western Ontario farming community, where no professional theatre had existed for almost half a century, faced the doubts of countless sceptics who underestimated the determination of a small group of Stratford residents dedicated to seeing the project through.

All that summer, tourists poured into Stratford, filling the tent theatre to 98 per cent of its capacity. The original five-week season had to be extended to six. The attendance record and box-office totals quickly dispelled any lingering doubt that the Shakespearean plays on the banks of Ontario's Avon become an annual event.

### GROWING SUCCESS

In the years since 1953, at first under the artistic direction of Tyrone Guthrie and, since 1955, under that of Michael Langham, the Festival has presented 31 of Shakespeare's 37 plays. Seven have been repeated. It also has staged Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Molière's *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, Wycherly's *The Country Wife*, Checkhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, Strindberg's *The Dance of Death*, Gogol's *The Government Inspector* and three original works by Canadian authors - *The Canvas Barricade* by Donald Lamont Jack, Michael Bawtree's *The Last of the Tsars* and James Reaney's *Colours in the Dark*. Music and exhibitions have been added to the theatre activities.

Some 68,000 people attended the first season of Shakespearean drama in 1953. Today, the number of admissions to drama and music combined is in the neighbourhood of 350,000. During the same period, box-office grosses have climbed from \$206,000 to approximately \$1,250,000; the season has been extended from six to 18 weeks; and actors are now engaged for a period of nine months, including rehearsal time.

Italy, and the United States. Local costs equivalent to \$335.5 million will be met by Pakistan.

The project, which involves the construction of an earth and rock-fill embankment-dam 485 feet high and 9,000 feet long, is on the Indus River about six miles downstream from Tarbela village and 40 miles northwest of Rawalpindi. Construction will be completed in April 1976, and the powerhouse will eventually produce 2,100 megawatts. Its reservoir will stretch 50 miles, with a maximum depth of 450 feet.

An important side benefit of the project will be its aid to irrigation, enabling a considerable increase in the area's agricultural production.

### HISTORY OF SCHEME

The Indus Basin Development Scheme, which is supported by eight nations and the World Bank, is taking shape in the Punjab, where the Indus collects