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THE LONDON LITTLE THEATRE, 1934-1956

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1962

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INTRODUCTION

Drama for a civilized community is not just an amenity but a necessity. In Canada, with the professional theatre concentrated largely in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, it has been the amateur theatre that has prevented the villages, towns, and cities across its breadth from being theatrically destitute.

The paucity of established professional companies and touring road shows has minimized, in Canada, the temptation to dismiss the amateur theatre as merely a stamping ground for the exhibitionism or ego inflation of its participants. There is, of course, an element of these in any amateur group, but in a country almost bereft of professional theatre, the services of the amateur theatre workers, while unpaid, have not been unhonored in their communities. An accurate analysis of the professional and amateur theatre in Canada was made by Tyrone Guthrie when he wrote that "due to the difficulty of distributing 'live' [professional] theatre in a country so sparsely populated . . . live drama has only survived because of the determination, courage, persistence and skill of amateur practitioners."¹

The plays produced by these amateur theatre workers bring the people in their communities together for a common emotional experience and, occasionally, an intellectual experience as well. Their productions require the services and skills of many. Directors, actors, scenic and costume designers, lighting technicians, musicians, ticket-sellers, promoters, and organizers are all given the opportunity to participate in the creation of an artistic success. These are but a few of the cultural, creative, and avocational opportunities which a little theatre organization can provide within its community.

The investigation of an amateur theatre organization which has been successfully providing these opportunities within its own community would seem to be justified.

The London Little Theatre, situated in the city of London in the province of Ontario, is one of Canada's most unique and successful amateur theatres. In its production season of 1934-35 the London Little Theatre, with a membership of 784, produced five plays with one performance each in the Grand Theatre, which it rented; in 1949-50, only 15 years later, this same community theatre had a membership of 10,636, produced six major plays on its major bill with nine consecutive performances each in the Grand Theatre, which it now no longer rented but owned outright.

Why this phenomenal success? Was the London Little Theatre worthy of such unprecedented support? Is there
anything that present or future little theatre groups might learn from the London Little Theatre's organization, policy or activities which might help them to be equally successful? Finally, did this amateur\textsuperscript{2} community theatre\textsuperscript{3} in any way participate in or contribute to the development of the theatre, either amateur or professional, on a regional and national level?

The purpose of this investigation is to discover the degree to which these questions can be answered in the affirmative. To accomplish this objective the principal sources for the investigation were the London Little

\textsuperscript{2}The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines an amateur as "one who is fond of; one who cultivates a thing or a pastime." The word amateur is not used in this paper as a term of reproach. In the theatre, amateur only becomes a slur if it implies incompetence. There are bad amateurs as well as good, just as there are good professionals as well as bad. The real distinction between professionals and amateurs is that the professionals are in the theatre as a career; it is their business, whereas the amateurs are in it for the pleasures they derive from it.

\textsuperscript{3}There are many people who declare that there is only one distinction between a professional or resident stock company and a community theatre, the distinction being that in the former the actors are paid. Such a restricted distinction is not used in this paper.

A community theatre can justifiably be labelled as such when the play producing group has grown out of the local interest and experimentation, when it enjoys the community's support because of its ability to satisfy the community's highest production standards, when it functions as a meeting place for the citizens who are interested in theatre, when it provides many local people with interesting jobs to do, when it employs open-tryouts for parts, and when its admission price is low enough to not be prohibitive for any large segment of the community's citizens.

The degree to which the London Little Theatre can, with justification, be labelled a "community theatre" will be determined in the succeeding investigation.
Theatre's scrapbooks, business records, membership and production files, its system of operation, interviews with executive members, periodical and newspaper articles, and my own participation and observation as a subscribing and working member of the London Little Theatre during the years 1948 to 1956. The scope of the investigation is confined to the years which encompass the development of the London Little Theatre from its infancy to its maturity, specifically from 1934 to 1956. The hiring, by the organization, of a full-time, salaried professional director, during the 1956-57 season, and the changes in administration, production, and personnel policies which accompanied this appointment, serves as the logical point at which to terminate the investigation.

The community within which the London Little Theatre has functioned must be briefly considered, for its composition partially accounts for the emergence and continued success of this organization.

London is situated in the heavily populated southern part of Western Ontario, approximately halfway between Detroit and Toronto and Detroit and Buffalo. The city is a major wholesale and distributing centre and focal point for business and pleasure for a radius of at least fifty miles. However, in 1934 it was not thought of as an industrial city nor is it to-day. Financially, London has always been regarded as a wealthy city by other Canadians, an opinion
which has been partially based upon its per capita income as listed in the Canada Year Books. In the realm of cultural pursuits, it has its own symphony and art gallery. London is also a college town in that the following educational institutions are located here: Ursuline College, the College of Christ the King, Huron College, London Teachers' College, and the University of Western Ontario. The population of London, which was predominantly middle class and had a high percentage of retired people, was 74,484 in 1934. In 1956 London's population was 101,086. Many of its citizens came from the British Isles and in the last few years a large number from Continental Europe. Both groups knew what it was to see "top-notch" professional and amateur performances.

An observer of the citizens' habits would be prone to label London as a city of joiners. As joiners of the various cultural and educational organizations their motives are occasionally suspect. The most prominent one in this category is that of joining for the sake of social prestige, because it is the thing to do. The London Little Theatre has not been without this type of member. That it has such may be regarded as a compliment. The London Little Theatre would not have them as members, desirable or undesirable as this type of member may be, had not the choice and production of its plays and the scope of its activities been of such a high standard of quality and performance that it was
worthy of being elevated to the level of a prestige organization. The renewals of this type of member from season to season are, however, usually limited in number. The London Little Theatre's maintenance of a large membership certainly is not due exclusively to this type of patron. Rather, it is the middle-class and middle-income-bracket citizens who comprise the bulk of the London Little Theatre's membership and in so doing prove to be its lifeblood.

The initial memberships of many of London's citizens in the London Little Theatre may not have been exclusively prompted by an awareness of the standards of production of the organization. Instead, for some it was the result of having been stirred by a performance of the Barrymores in London's legitimate theatres; for others it was because of the work of the Meredith Players or their participation in the University of Western Ontario's Players' Guild. Many, because of London's proximity to Detroit, Buffalo, Toronto, and New York, had seen some live theatre in one of these cities. There were others who, as tired businessmen, were simply in pursuit of entertainment.

The citizens of London as subscribing members of the London Little Theatre, irrespective of their motivations, made the organization the largest amateur theatre in North America, if not in the world. The London Little Theatre, because of its membership, the quantity and quality of its activities, and its ownership of an attractive theatre was,
by 1949, the envy of similar organizations across Canada. This was the organization, even two years prior to its acquisition of 10,636 members, to which the New York director, J. Douglas MacLean, referred when he stated, "I have seen many community theatres in the United States, but never one such as in London."\(^4\) Within five years from its 10,636 membership, the achievements of this same community theatre prompted Dorothy and Joseph Samachson, based upon their survey of little theatres across the United States, to declare: "In London, Ontario, which is north of the border, there is a community theatre from whose example our own theatre could very well profit."\(^5\)


CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF AMATEUR THEATRE IN LONDON, 1838-1934

The London Little Theatre did not emerge out of a vacuum. The roots of this organization go back to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Amateur drama first made its appearance in the city of London in the late 1830's. This occurred with the stationing in London of Her Majesty's Thirty-Second Regiment of Foot as the result of the troubled conditions that followed the outbreak of the rebellion of 1837-1838.

It is quite possible that despite the rugged pioneer existence and the strong Methodist element of the community, some theatrical activities, amateur or professional, had taken place prior to the arrival of the British troops. However, with only scattered issues of London newspapers available for this period, no definite record has been found.

Queen Victoria's contingent of spirited Red Coats must surely have found life in London far removed from its namesake in England. Mrs. Anna Jameson described London in 1837 as a city in which "the population consists principally of Artisans--as blacksmiths, carpenters, builders; all flourishing. There is . . . a good deal of drunkenness and
profligacy; for though the people have work and wealth, they have neither education nor amusements."¹ This situation Her Majesty's soldiers endeavoured to rectify by creating their own entertainment.

In 1838 the Thirty-Second Regiment of Foot presented the first recorded performance of a play in London. The play, which was presented in a warehouse, was Macbeth. The enthusiastic response to their performance prompted the British officers to search the town for a structure that would be suitable for their productions. This objective they accomplished, ironically, through the financial inability of a group of ardent Methodists to complete the construction of their church. Thus it was that "a group of young English officers organized an amateur theatre. They called themselves 'the Gentlemen Amateurs,' and their theatre 'The Theatre Royal.' The building itself was a converted Methodist chapel."²

It was an officer named Raynor, attached to the British regiment, who saw the abandoned structure and coveted it. Colonel Thomas Talbot, whose dislike for the "damned cold water societies" extended to their authors and principal supporters, the Methodists, was at that time the


²Orlo Miller, "It So Happened," radio address of May 9, 1949, Radio Station CFPL, London, Ontario (unpubl.).
autocratic purveyor of government lands in the London District. He proved to be most amenable to the officer's wishes. The ownership of the erstwhile chapel was transferred by the simple act of erasing the pencilled name of the Wesleyan Methodist group and substituting that of the officer on the master land map in Talbot's office.

The first performance by The Gentlemen Amateurs in their newly acquired Methodist chapel, renamed the Theatre Royal, possibly to compensate for its barrenness, was a double bill, consisting of Rent Day and You Can't Marry Your Grandmother. 3

The London citizenry, who formerly had welcomed the British soldiers for economic and social reasons, now enthusiastically supported their amateur theatricals. As Mrs. Gilbert Porte recalled:

The residence of the military in our midst, the contract for the barracks, and the start given to building generally made life easier; . . . . As Dr. O'Flarity of the 83rd Regiment lived quite near . . . . we saw a good deal of what was going on, and were once allowed to attend an amateur performance at a theatre on Wellington street the Theatre Royal. Standing trees supported the board roof and stumps, sawed off pretty evenly, supported the rough board seats. Dr. O'Flarity acted the part of a ghost; so I suppose the play was Hamlet, but that I don't remember. 4


Since the 83rd Regiment, with which Dr. O'Flarity was associated, was stationed in London from 1838 to 1841, it is possible to place the time of this pioneer performance between these two dates. The existence of a file of the London newspaper, The Herald, provides a record from 1843 of the activities of the Gentlemen Amateurs. In February 1843, the critic of The London Herald, wrote:

The officers of this garrison, with a condescension and liberality which does them great credit, again entertained the lovers of the drama in this town...with another exhibition of their powers to ease the troubled mind...The pieces selected, A Nabob for an Hour and Fish Out of Water, the characters of both were cast with a discrimination as to the idiosyncrasy of the performers which was attended by the most happy result.

All the characters were portrayed by men. The wife of a British soldier, Mrs. Powell, who appeared in the first production, seems to have taken part occasionally. Further evidence of civilian participation is indicated by the remarks of the Herald's critic concerning the music of the evening: "Between the first and after-piece...several popular glees were remarkably well sung. The noble band of Royals delighted the audience with several orchestral pieces...The theatre was filled to repletion..."  

Because of the efforts of the Gentlemen Amateurs, civilians with an artistic bent gradually became more

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5The Herald (London, Ontario), February 18, 1843, p. 2.  
6Ibid.
interested in taking part in the venture. In the latter part of 1844, the London Theatrical Company was formed. Michael McGarry, on behalf of this group, in the month of October applied to the town officials for a license to stage a production at the Theatre Royal. Since the social life of the townsfolk and the soldiers was undoubtedly blended, it is probable that the London Theatrical Company was composed of both military and civilian members.

By 1846 another group appeared that called itself the Shakespeare Club. The rules and regulations of this club are on file at the London Public Library. This was the first amateur group whose officers were all civilians and Londoners. No records are available to indicate how long the club lasted. Captain Joseph Cowley, editor of the London Times, who was one of the first dramatic critics of the period, said of one of the club's first performances:

The theatre was crowded to overflowing to partake of a rich Bill of Fare in the representation of Douglas, State Secrets, and The Review, . . . . The tragedy was acted in a very creditable and in some parts excellent style . . . . but . . . . some of the rest of the performance was far below their usual acquirements. Perfection we don't expect. We are far from wishing to check their ardour . . . . but . . . . we would advise them not to undertake too much at one time, rather apply themselves to become perfect in all they do attempt.  

8London Times, Friday, January 23, 1846, p. 2.
Queen Victoria's troops left London in 1853. During their sixteen years of occupation they established amateur theatricals in London. The local civilian imitators continued to maintain them.

About 1855, largely because of the success of the Gentlemen Amateurs and other amateur dramatic groups, the first professional theatre, Brunton's Varieties, later the Royal Exchange Theatre, was established. Within a year there were two professional theatres in London, the second being known by the grandiose and historic title, The Covent Garden Theatre. This professional activity enabled members of the amateur groups to exercise their talents professionally. A notable example is that of Graves Simcoe Lee, matinee idol of American audiences in the 1860's and 1870's, who first received his professional training on the boards of London's Covent Garden and Royal Exchange theatres.

The financial panic of 1857-1859 brought an end to theatrical activity, both professional and amateur. At a time when banks were failing and long-established businesses declaring bankruptcy, everyone was too impoverished and depressed to encourage the make-believe drama of the stage. The tide turned for Canada with the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861. Food poured over the international border to the south, and American dollars rolled swiftly northward in return.
The theatre in London, however, was slow to recover from the cruel blow of 1857. When it was revived the credit went once more to the city's amateurs, and again the prime movers in the renaissance were the officers of the imperial British garrison.

The Trent Incident prompted Queen Victoria to send 10,000 soldiers to Canada, 2,000 of whom were posted at London. The return of the regimental forces, coupled with an increasing economic prosperity, resulted in an era of extravagance and plenty, when balls, fetes, and receptions were the order of the day. In the midst of this social activity the theatre once more emerged.

In 1862 the London Dramatic Association was formed. This distinguished group of amateurs staged their plays in a converted barn behind the police station. Among its members were Sir John Carling, who was later a member of Parliament, and General, then Colonel, Sir E. B. Hamley, author of Operations of War, Lady Iris' Widowhood, and other novels written while he was in London.

This group lasted for approximately five years. At its peak in 1864, it sponsored a three-day Shakespearean Festival. An account of this undertaking is recorded in the London Free Press:

The Shakespeare centenary was ushered in on Friday night by the representation at the City Hall of Shakespeare's much admired play, The Merchant of Venice. The Hall was crowded by a highly respectable audience who testified by frequent applause their appreciation of the highly
dramatic manner in which the piece was put upon
the stage, and the really splendid acting which
marked its performance.9

The professional theatre once again soon followed the
revival of the drama initiated by the amateur players. By
the mid-1860's the London Music Hall was attracting London's
theatregoers by means of such immortals as Maurice Barrymore
and the Drews. Toward the close of 1869, George Holman and
his wife, "the immortal Sally," took over the old London
Music Hall, which they renamed the Holman Opera House. The
Holmans were professionals from Boston. Their stock company
shows were the best the city had seen up to that time, and
their theatre prospered accordingly. Their enterprise ended
in 1885.

Many amateur players received valuable training with
the Holman company. Some of the Holman-trained players
eventually achieved fame in the professional theatre. Among
them was Johnny Chatterton, who eventually became inter­
nationally famous as a light opera star under the name
Signor Perugini.

Within a period of forty years London had become such
a theatre-conscious community that in 1884 a big-time
theatrical chain playhouse, the London Opera House, opened
in London. This theatre for the next twenty years was able
to play host profitably to the best professional road shows

9"London Amateur Theatricals," London Free Press,
Monday, April 25, 1864, p. 3.
on the continent. The amateur efforts of the military and civilian performers had not been in vain. Moreover, the manager of the London Opera House found that his problem of providing professional theatre was largely eliminated since London, situated as it is halfway between Detroit and Buffalo, proved to be a convenient stop-over for the professional touring companies.

The Grand Opera House was constructed in 1901. At the time it was built it had a seating capacity of 1850, the most modern stage equipment and the largest stage of any theatre in Canada. Among the theatre's luminaries who played here were Sarah Bernhardt, John Martin-Harvey, George Arliss, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, John and Ethel Barrymore, Robert Mantell, Lillian Russell, and Mrs. Fiske.

The road shows did more than develop and maintain a theatre-going public in London. Many a Londoner, having experienced the thrill of just a walk-on part with one of these professional companies, wanted to shift from the role of a spectator to that of an active participant. He was able to do so by means of several amateur dramatic groups that appeared from 1900 to 1930.

The highly successful London Dramatic Club and the Huron College Players began staging productions in the early 1900's. The former group of players won the best actress awards in the Earl Grey dramatic competitions in 1910 and 1911. The Huron College Players appeared largely
in Shakespearean repertoire. An amateur performance of *Liberty Hall* in the spring of 1921, sponsored by the Women's Press Club, prompted the participants to form the London Drama League.

The creation of these and similar groups was due not only to the stimulating presence of the professional touring companies but also to the interest in amateur theatre initially fostered by Queen Victoria's troops. These divers forces were at least partially responsible for the existence, by 1934, of three actively producing amateur groups in London.

These three amateur groups, the London Drama League, the Meredith Players, and the Half-Way House Theatre, while operating with some artistic but little financial success, decided to amalgamate under one business head. The result of the amalgamation was the establishment, in May 1934, of the London Little Theatre (the initials L.L.T. will stand for the London Little Theatre throughout the balance of this study).

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10 The Community Drama Guild, which was formed in September 1934, joined the London Little Theatre organization in the fall of 1935.
CHAPTER II

THE GRAND THEATRE

The reduction in touring companies and the advent of the movies brought an end to the live professional theatre that the Grand Opera House had provided the citizens of London for almost twenty-five years. The theatre became a dispenser of "canned entertainment" with its purchase by Famous Players, Inc. in the late twenties. The Grand Opera House lost its elegant name, which was reduced to simply the Grand Theatre, and it lost its upper balcony which reduced its seating capacity to 1210. In June 1945 the Grand Theatre, London's last legitimate playhouse, was destined to become a bowling alley. The theatre became, instead, the property of the L.L.T.

The acquisition of the Grand was a landmark in the history of the L.L.T. An examination of the organization's minutes from the fall of 1934 to the spring of 1945 reveals that in meeting after meeting the active workers expressed their desire and determination to own their own home. Throughout these eleven years the organization had been renting the Grand for their major productions at an annual rental fee of approximately $2,100. Another $300 was spent
annually on the rental of club rooms. The organization's financial preparedness and its businesslike acumen, which will be investigated in the subsequent chapter, enabled it to accomplish its objective—to cease being a tenant and become the owner of a building. The members of the L.L.T., however, wanted more than just a building. They wanted one that would satisfactorily accommodate their many activities. The physical structure of the Grand enabled them to achieve that aim.

The Grand's stage has a proscenium opening of forty-two feet with a height of forty feet. From its footlights to its back wall the stage measures forty feet. The height from the stage floor to the rigging loft is seventy feet. The L.L.T. had acquired a stage area that few little theatre groups in Canada could duplicate. The Grand also provided the working members with numerous club and rehearsal rooms located over its lobby.

The new owners of the Grand Theatre soon discovered that they could extend the scope of their activities and improve the quality of their productions. They also experienced a notable increase in memberships which was partially because of their ownership of the Grand. As the Grand Theatre's manager, appointed by the L.L.T. as a
salaried employee, stated in the fall of 1953:

Owning its own theatre has been a tremendous help to the organization. . . . Our membership went up in a hurry after we bought the Grand. There is just something about going to a regular theatre to see a play—a feeling you don't get anywhere else.

The ownership of its own theatre proved to be a stimulant for other struggling and homeless amateur theatre groups across Canada. Articles dealing with the L.L.T.'s purchase of the Grand Theatre must have been an inspiration

1Appointed in July 1945 by the Board of Directors of the L.L.T., he and his house staff of from ten to twelve persons were salaried and responsible to the L.L.T. It should be noted that the Board selected for its Theatre Manager one of the organization's own working members and a native son. After eleven years of continuous service, due to his managerial talents and the experience afforded him through the L.L.T., he was appointed as Director-Manager of a professional theatre company, the Erie Playhouse, in Erie, Pennsylvania. He is but one of many, as will be discovered later, who through their association with the L.L.T. have gone on to the professional theatre.

The Theatre Manager and his house staff were not the organization's first salaried employees. The L.L.T. ceased to be a totally volunteer organization as early as in the fall of 1938. At that time, four years after its birth, the club had so expanded in memberships, community services and activities, that it appointed, on a part-time basis, one of its own members to act as Business Manager and Campaign Secretary at the very nominal yearly salary of two hundred dollars. In July of 1946 the former Business Manager became the full-time, salaried Executive Secretary. A Workshop Director, in charge of set design and construction, was added to the L.L.T.'s payroll in the fall of 1950. This is the extent of the paid personnel within the organization. That there are not more is a tribute to their efficiency and to the quality and quantity of service provided by the volunteer workers.

to them. "The largest group of its kind in Canada, it [the L.L.T.] is now consistently drawing crowds for six-night stands six times a season. The London Little Theatre is now [with its purchase of the Grand Theatre] a one-of-its-kind venture." What the L.L.T. had accomplished within eleven years, five of them war years, became an incentive and a challenge to these groups. Some sought advice and guidance through correspondence, others sent representatives to the L.L.T. to investigate how they might accomplish such a miracle.

Ownership of a building is, however, by no means a guarantee for a successful theatrical operation. Too often a beginning group thinks a home of its own would be the answer to all its problems. Admittedly, "one of the major hurdles which must be surmounted, before the Canadian theatre will be in a healthy state, is the need for many more theatres with proper facilities for the production of plays. . . ." The need for such structures was still prevalent three years later as indicated by John Allen, British playwright and producer, who stated that "Canadian drama is literally gasping for breath in enormous high school gyms

3"A Little Theatre with a Big Idea," New World Illustrated, VI (February 1946), 42.

and auditoriums." But premature ownership, before the group has sufficiently crystallized as an organization to know just what type of plant is required, may result in the acquisition of an unsuitable one, either physically, financially, or both. Even after eleven years of operation, during which time a Ways and Means Committee was formed to investigate possible homes for their enterprise, the members did not escape such a situation.

The Grand possesses two major physical limitations which even the resourcefulness of its owners has not been able to circumvent. First, the rehearsal, property, and wardrobe rooms are separated from the stage and workshop areas by the auditorium. Members who are working in these rooms and who wish to do some work on- or off-stage must either go through the lobby and auditorium or, should there be a performance on stage, they then must go outside the theatre and down an alley to gain admission to the backstage of the theatre. Second, its huge stage and auditorium have proved to be much too large for the organization's Studio Club, with its audiences of approximately 300, and the experimental, intimate type of theatre it endeavours to

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6 The premature and precipitate action of an ambitious amateur group could easily result in ownership of but another unsuitable structure.

7 Studio Club, p. 82.
present. This limitation, however, has not been permitted to curtail the Studio Club's development nor its success.

It was not the ownership of the Grand, in itself, which accounts for the success of the L.L.T. It was the L.L.T.'s state of preparedness in organization, administration, and experienced personnel. Had it not been for this solid foundation the Grand Theatre, within five years from the date of purchase, could have become a financial liability. How this situation came about and was, at least temporarily, eliminated, will now be investigated.

As a community service organization the L.L.T., with the purchase of the Grand, was now able to bring to London professional road shows and performers in the allied arts. At least such was the hope of the organization and many in the community when the L.L.T. purchased the Grand Theatre. This hope is reflected in an editorial written at the time of purchase:

The Grand Theatre under the new set-up should be a real community centre with provision for music as well as drama. Once again top-notch professional productions should be available in this city . . . . It opens new cultural possibilities for London and those who have made it possible deserve the thanks of the community. London bids fair to be the Athens of Canada.  

The editor may have been somewhat optimistic, but within three years London was described by Helen Bower, of

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the Detroit Free Press, as "The Broadway of the North." The Broadway of the North."  
Six years later, the members of the Theatre Managers Conference in New York declared the Grand to be "one of the busiest road houses on the continent." How "busy" was the Grand and how could this apparently enviable activity become a financial threat to the solvency of its owners?

In 1946-47 the Grand was used 104 nights; two seasons later, 217 nights; by 1949-50, 300 nights; the next season, 287 nights; in 1953-54, 300 nights with the house dark only 5 nights from January 13 to April 13; in 1954-55, 270 nights; and in 1955-56 the Grand was used 251 nights. Stanley Richards' statement that few community theatres are lighted twelve months a year, as the Grand is, seems to be justified.

A breakdown of the activities that made it possible for the Grand "to be always lit" is interesting, both in itself and also because it reflects the financial problem with which the L.L.T. has had to contend as the owner of its own theatre. Of the 104 nights that the Grand was in operation in 1946-47, 74 of these were L.L.T. performances and

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10 1953-54 Annual Report by the Theatre Manager of the Grant Theatre (unpubl.).


12 Ibid.
rehearsals (Major, Studio, and Children's Theatre productions). This number increased to 153 performances and rehearsals by 1948-49, jumped to 180 to 1949-50, and from then to the end of the 1955-56 season averaged 128. In contrast to this non-revenue producing activity, in 1946-47 the Grand was occupied for 30 nights by road shows; in the 1948-49 season thirteen road shows occupied it for a total of 40 nights, while local organizations rented it for 10 nights, and an L.L.T. sponsored concert series accounts for the remaining 4 nights. The following season only ten road shows played London for 32 nights but local rentals increased to 27 evenings. This same season, 1949-50, a New York equity summer stock company played for 11 weeks for a total of 57 evenings. From 1950 to 1956 inclusive, the number of road shows diminished, with but six in the 1950-51 and 1954-55 seasons, none in 1953-54 nor in 1955-56. Throughout this same period the number of local rentals increased to an average of 69 nights per season.

These figures are significant in that they reflect a dangerous situation with which any active organization, owning its own house, might be confronted. They also reveal how it was, at least partly, eliminated.

With the L.L.T.'s increase in the number of productions and performances, together with an expansion of its activities as a result of the additional facilities provided by its new home, it is apparent that the L.L.T. from 1945 to
1956 was using the Grand more and more. As early as the 1950-51 season the L.L.T. had so expanded its operations that but two weeks of every month, from October to May, were available for outside bookings. This non-revenue producing activity of the L.L.T., while admirable, seriously limited the revenue-earning capacity of the Grand. The touring companies, which were decreasing in number, were frequently unable to fit their itineraries into the available nights at the Grand. This meant periods of darkness which could only result in a prohibitive drain upon the organization's major revenue source, its membership fund.

Money is needed to operate a theatre, approximately $150 per day as estimated by the Business Manager of the Grand. To meet this overhead, as well as to provide at least 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the Club's income, became for the Grand, as early as 1950, increasingly difficult. The Grand's earning power was being substantially reduced through the increased activities of its owner, the L.L.T. The financial solvency of the organization was, ironically, being jeopardized through the extension of the L.L.T.'s activities as a community service club. The more its members laboured to meet the needs of the community, the less opportunity was there for the Grand to produce its share of revenue; the smaller the Grand's revenue, the greater was the financial strain upon the L.L.T.'s membership fund.
The ownership of a theatre by an extremely active and ambitious little theatre organization could result in a club being penalized for its industry and its home could become a liability instead of an asset.

Awareness and a preparedness to do something constructive about such a seemingly incongruous and unwarranted situation are essential if the demise of such an organization is to be forestalled. Various courses of action might be implemented, dependent upon the resources and objectives of the club. Exclusive dependence could be placed upon the membership fund. This, obviously, would necessitate a marked increase in memberships or higher subscription rates, or both. To implement the former, the organization would have to extend the number of performances for each production. This means more time and effort would be required of its volunteer active workers. In 1950 the L.L.T. was presenting each of its six major productions for nine nights, which must surely be about the maximum that can be expected of volunteer workers. Indeed, it was the organization's opinion that to expect more volunteer work would be impossible. To compensate for the loss of the theatre's revenue, the subscription rate would have to be so substantially increased that membership might be reduced so as to negate the motive behind the raise in prices; to proceed to justify the raise by increasing the number of productions would again only mean more hours of labour by the volunteer workers. Neither
the increase of members, of productions, nor of subscription rates seem to be satisfactory solutions for such an organization.

The L.L.T., in the spring of 1951, considered the possibility of taking its productions to other centres in the area. The organization felt this would be a means of helping to stimulate dramatic interest in these centres as well as supplementing its income. Because of the complications over bookings, transportation, and the availability of casts, but especially because of the increased burden that would be placed upon the active members, this course of action was abandoned.

There is a solution, a drastic one admittedly, to this enigmatic situation. The organization could, by deliberately restricting and reducing its productions and activities, make "the house" more available to professional companies. The implementation of such a solution is dependent upon both the availability of such companies and the very objectives of the organization. Are they to encourage and establish amateur drama on a local, even national level, or are they directed towards either the creation and establishment of a permanent professional repertory company or the presentation to its patrons of the best the theatre has to offer by way of professional companies? Should they be

13Minutes of the 1950-51 annual spring meeting (unpubl.).
either of the latter, this would be the logical solution to adopt. The L.L.T., however, has been regarded by the community, indeed, the nation, as a leader in the promotion and development of amateur drama. Its very aims and objectives, embodied in its by-laws when it became incorporated in 1936, are directed toward these goals. When the citizens of London contributed to the purchase of the Grand, they did so primarily as a home for an amateur community project. Miss B. Taylor, drama critic for the London Free Press, reflected this communal concept when she wrote that with such an amateur organization as the L.L.T. there was "no reason to fear that Canadian professionalism would curtail amateur expression." To terminate, suddenly, its amateur status and become a professional group or underwrite a permanent professional company with funds contributed to it as a community theatre organization, would require the support of the citizens of London and district, support which would not be forthcoming without considerable education and persuasion. This opinion is confirmed by a report (unpublished) submitted to the L.L.T.'s voting members by the Board of Directors in the fall of 1950.

It is the belief of the Executive, . . . that the citizens of London contributed to the purchase of the Grand Theatre primarily as a home for an amateur community project. . . . the citizens of London would be very sympathetic toward a further

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appeal for help [contemplated because the conflict between L.L.T. and road show attractions was reducing the Grand's income] but not toward a professional, profit making company with salaried personnel.

The Executive Officers are of the opinion that the employment of any considerable number of paid, full-time people . . . would automatically cancel out most of the enthusiasm and interest of the volunteer workers.

Community theatre has not only creative and artistic values, but also educational, communal, and social ones. In the fall of 1950 the Board of Directors was, apparently, reluctant to lose these values.

The solutions adopted by the L.L.T. to resolve, at least in part, its financial embarrassment due to the ownership of its "house" are revealed in the breakdown of the activities within the Grand from 1945 to 1956. Less reliance was placed upon the rental of the Grand to touring companies and individual artists and more effort was made to promote the theatre's rental to cultural and civic organizations. Local rentals amounted to ten evenings in the 1948-49 season, from 1950 to 1956 inclusive they averaged sixty-nine evenings. To bring in income at a time when the theatre was normally idle and fewer touring companies are available, the L.L.T., in the summer of 1949, expanded its efforts by sponsoring a New York summer stock company. For seven years, up to 1955 inclusive, summer stock produced an operating profit of $24,493, an average of $3,499 a season.
The Grand Theatre's Cultural Contribution

The ownership of the Grand by the L.L.T. has, admittedly, not been without its problems, both financial and administrative. However, these have been more than compensated for by what this ownership has meant to the city of London and district. Lacking a civic centre, an auditorium, or any structure capable of housing such touring shows as Oklahoma or Brigadoon, the people of this community would not have had the opportunity to see such professional productions but for the L.L.T.'s ownership of the Grand. The very fact that the Grand Theatre is in existence, not a bowling alley as it was about to become in 1945, makes it possible for the citizens of London to see the best of professional performers. This should earn for the L.L.T. a debt of gratitude from them. That the citizens have not always displayed their appreciation for the existence of the Grand, is unfortunate. Their failure to do so may be due to one or both of two factors.

First, the existence of the Grand has come to be taken for granted by many of London's citizens. They fail to realize that were it not for the L.L.T., and their continued support of that organization, they would not be able to see such performers as John Gielgud or Michael Redgrave. The citizens also fail to realize that when they buy a membership in the L.L.T., they are not only helping to support their local amateurs but are also, indirectly, helping to
ensure the existence of the Grand. London is regarded as one of the major theatrical centres in Canada. The citizenry need to be reminded that it is so regarded not only because of the L.L.T. but also because of the existence of a legitimate theatre in their midst. The L.L.T. developed an audience while the Grand has functioned as an attractive and efficient house for both amateur and professional productions. The union of the L.L.T. and the Grand has resulted in creating a theatre-conscious public, but a public which needs to be reminded, and frequently, of its indebtedness to the L.L.T.

The above statement suggests the second factor that may be partially responsible for the apparent indifference to the L.L.T.'s maintenance of the Grand. The organization needs to remind the people oftener and more extensively what a burden the ownership of the Grand is and that it is this ownership which enables the people of London to see professional performances. These professional performances enrich the cultural life of the community. They also, indirectly, serve as a production yardstick for the club's active workers. The editor of the local newspaper, only two years after the purchase of the Grand, wrote of this need for enrichment when he said:

London's Little Theatre movement has done a good deal to keep alive in the older generation and to build up in the younger one an intelligent interest in the living stage. But if this is to be of the greatest value it is important that there be
regular visits by the luminaries of the great contemporary professional stage for the development of standards and the inspiration their performances provide.\textsuperscript{15}

Support of the L.L.T. means support of the Grand, which means the continuation of a home for the professional touring companies and concert artists. The L.L.T. should frequently remind the citizens of London of these facts. Such a reminder would help to eliminate both the public's lack of gratitude to the L.L.T. as owner of the Grand, and also serve as a very effective means of increasing its membership. Would such a membership-appeal be an honest one? To what extent did the L.L.T.'s ownership of the Grand contribute to the cultural life of the community?

From the date of purchase of the Grand, the L.L.T., when not using the theatre for its own productions, became a patron of the theatrical arts. The L.L.T. has brought to the Grand professional companies of Broadway successes, pre-Broadway try-outs, concert artists, ballet companies, opera, college productions, and choral and instrumental groups.\textsuperscript{16} "The L.L.T.'s accumulation of profits from the commercial professional stage," the Business Manager of the Grand claimed, "makes it the only amateur organization in


\textsuperscript{16}Notices of up-coming professional performances are mailed to the members prior to public announcements, at the same time giving the organization's members the opportunity to procure seats before they are made available to the general public.
Canada, and possibly in the world, to accomplish such a feat." This claim may be questionable but it does seem to indicate the organization's resourcefulness. When a financial loss has been experienced, the indebtedness has been met by funds from the L.L.T.

As an organization committed to service in the community the L.L.T. has, at various times, brought productions to the Grand which it expected would be, if not financial losses, at least box-office gambles. These expectations were based upon either the type of play or the time of year for which it was booked or both. When such fears became a reality, the L.L.T. made good the deficit. Babes in the Woods, a professional Christmas pantomine, backed by the L.L.T. at a cost of $12,649, serves as an example of the club's determination to fulfill its cultural obligations to the community even at the risk of an anticipated loss. The specialized nature of the production and its Christmas week booking were regarded as serious obstacles at the box-office. Yet, as a community service, it was regarded as a worthy undertaking. The financial report for 1951-52 shows a loss of $3,300 for this production. It is significant that the minutes of the annual meeting record that "the Board of Directors are not too depressed, for they felt it was an investment in the future and that the L.L.T., which aims to
introduce good theatre to its community, was in line with its own tenets." The active members in attendance even recommended that it become the policy of the club to sponsor a comparable type of production each Christmas season. A similar gamble, but with happier results, occurred when *Oklahoma* played the Grand. The professional touring company was available only during Easter week. Despite this and the fact that this company required a guarantee of $30,000 gross, the L.L.T., with a house which seated only 1210, took a chance. The musical played to 9,300 people in eight performances. The sum of $9,900 had to be returned to individuals whose mail orders for seats could not be filled, and the L.L.T. ended up with a substantial profit.

From 1945 to 1956 inclusive, the Grand averaged six professional road shows a season. This commendable figure, despite the absence of touring companies during the 1953-54 and the 1955-56 seasons, is indicative of the organization's determination to keep the Grand always lit and to fulfill its objective of bringing to London the best in theatrical entertainment. Of these professional companies, mention should be made of at least a few, if only because of their significance in the history of the L.L.T. Their presence in London was a tribute to the work of the L.L.T., to the

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18 Minutes of the Annual Meeting for the 1951-52 season (unpubl.).
staging facilities of the Grand, and to the city of London as a theatrical centre.

John Gielgud and his company opened their North American tour in London in January 1947. The Business Manager of the Grand, with reference to this company, six years later stated: "The meteoric rise of the Grand Theatre began in 1947 with The Importance of Being Earnest and Gielgud's decision to risk the rage of the Broadway agents, cut short his Broadway run by two weeks and return to the Grand with Love for Love. That made New York people enquire about London."19

Equally successful North American premières were later given at the Grand by the Dublin Gate Theatre Repertory Company and by Theatre Incorporated with its production of Macbeth, starring Flora Robson and Michael Redgrave. The latter paid tribute to the L.L.T. when he stated in a press interview: "A live theatre does not just serve those who actually take part. . . . More than anything else it helps to educate and interest the men and women of a community in stage presentations."20

New York try-outs have included the production Ivy Green, Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep, The Four-Poster, and

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Goodbye My Fancy. As a result of his experience while performing in the latter, Conrad Nagel declared that "London, for its size, is one of the most theatre-conscious cities in the world."\textsuperscript{21} Although this accolade may be somewhat exaggerated, it is to be regretted that the degree to which the L.L.T. is responsible for it can never be determined accurately.

Equity summer stock companies were brought to London from the summer of 1949 to the summer of 1956 as a means of keeping the Grand lit at a time when it would normally be in darkness. It has been noted previously that this L.L.T. project produced an average yearly profit of $3,499 by the end of the 1955 season. The 1956 summer season of stock opened on June 25 with the Trans Canada Theatre Company. This was a company of all Canadian actors under the English director Joan White, sponsored and financially supported by the L.L.T. Ten shows were presented during the ten-week run with seats at one dollar and at seventy-five cents, matinees at fifty cents, or a summer membership for eight dollars.

The project was not a success financially. Various factors, such as the quality and choice of productions and the unseasonably hot weather for a theatre with no air conditioning, contributed to the loss sustained by the L.L.T. Undeterred, the club again sponsored the Canadian Company the
following summer, this time showing a profit. Here is the only example in Canada where an amateur theatre group has backed a newly formed company of professionals.

The L.L.T. has never been so exclusively concerned with the achievement of its own objectives, as a community theatre, that it has been indifferent to the promotion of the professional theatre. Acting as the host and as the financial backer of professional companies, the L.L.T., although as owner of the Grand not entirely altruistically motivated, has endeavored to establish and maintain that attitude of respect and admiration that should exist between the amateur and professional theatre. That there should be a close link between the amateur and professional theatre was forthrightly stated by Llewellyn Rees, who, as the Drama Director of England's Art Council in 1948, said: "Unless the amateurs support the professional theatre, I don't think the amateur societies are very much good. . . . They can be of great use to the theatre if they will regard themselves as part of the theatre." The L.L.T.'s sponsorship of the production Babes in the Woods and the Trans Canada Theatre Company indicates the organization was aware that the amateur and professional theatre should complement each other. Ownership of the Grand gave the L.L.T. the opportunity to demonstrate, tangibly, this awareness. That the citizens

of London have benefited from the demonstration is indicated by the statement that "the L.L.T. by providing top theatrical entertainment by . . . professional talent has played a big role in the remarkable cultural development of this city [London]."²³

The continued existence of the Grand, through the determined efforts of the L.L.T., has also meant that many local organizations, who would have had to use inadequate school auditoriums or club rooms, have been able to use it at a nominal rental fee. A minimum rental of $100 (for a theatre which costs $150 per day to operate) is the fee paid by local nonprofit-making organizations such as school, church or civil groups. The fee for profit-making organizations varies from $130 to $250 per day. Every effort is made by the L.L.T. to promote local rentals, especially since the road shows have decreased. Such rentals, while helping to keep the operation of the Grand in the black, can be and have been a means of maintaining good public relations as a community service organization.

The L.L.T., if only on the basis of its record as the landlord of the Grand, would be more than justified in appealing to the citizens of London for their continued support.

CHAPTER III

THE LONDON LITTLE THEATRE'S
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

The customary business and production committees were created when the L.L.T. was established in 1934. Within ten years the club, as a result of its expansion and experience, had evolved a most ambitious and highly practicable plan of operation.¹

"There is no form of enterprise," Edward Mallory has stated, "that requires such a firm foundation as the [amateur] theatre—not only for business continuance but also for artistic success, whether it is organized for profit or not."² The L.L.T.'s awareness of the need for an efficient and practical system of operation is reflected in its Organization Chart. Of the thirty-two committees created to supervise and carry out the L.L.T.'s activities, eleven are of an administrative nature. The remainder consists of ten committees concerned with the operation of the

¹Organization Chart, p. 180. As this chart is almost self-explanatory, only a brief analysis will be made of it. What will be investigated are the committees listed on the chart whose activities are particularly unique or significant.

Children's Theatre and the various areas of production, and eleven committees that deal with related or supplementary activities. The former, called the Group "A" Committees, are under the supervision of and directly responsible to the first Vice-President; the latter, the Group "B" Committees, are responsible to the second Vice-President. These Vice-Presidents are members of the Executive Committee which is subject to the Board of Directors.

No amateur theatre group, nor, indeed, any business or industrial organization, is exempt from either breakdowns in communication within its structure or conflicts among its personnel over policy and administration. The L.L.T., with its multiplicity of committees which require annually the services of approximately two hundred volunteer workers, is by no means an exception. Each producing season the organization has experienced disagreements among its personnel and unproductiveness or discrepancies in policy on the part of some of its working members or committees. An organization which is almost exclusively dependent upon volunteer workers is especially prone to such administrative hazards. The L.L.T.'s scheme of organization not only has anticipated these hazards but it is so devised that they have never reached such proportions as to be a threat to the L.L.T.'s existence.

Every working committee listed on the Organization Chart has a chairman who is responsible for the administration
of his committee. Whenever any personnel problem arises or whenever the work of his committee is inadequate, because of insufficient or incapable members, he has only to report to the Personnel Committee or to the Vice-President in charge of his committee. The Personnel Committee, which maintains a card file listing all the organization's working members, is responsible for supplying the properly qualified worker whenever it is called upon to do so by the various committee chairmen. Nor does this committee merely passively wait for such appeals. Instead, it constantly checks with each committee chairman to discover if his committee is properly functioning and if not what he requires to secure the maximum of productivity within his committee. The two Vice-Presidents are expected to keep in close touch with the committees of which they are in charge. It is their task to resolve any administration, production, or personality problems which arise within their committees. If unable to do so, they then, within the organization's hierarchical structure, submit them to the Executive Committee. If this committee is incapable of coping with the problem, it promptly submits it to the final authority, the Board of Directors.

Every major administrative and production decision is ultimately finalized by the Board of Directors and every working member or committee is responsible to the Board.
Board of Directors

The L.L.T. from the time of its inception has had the foresight and good fortune to have on its Board of Directors some of the city's most prominent executives and businessmen. "The very presence of these men on our Board," a member of the L.L.T. stated, "helped to establish us as a serious business without the usual arty stigma of many little theatres."

"Every business decision [in the theatre]," as noted by David Heilweil, "has its artistic implication and every artistic decision its business considerations." The failure to realize this, as recorded in the Royal Commission Report, has led to the insolvency of many little theatre organizations in Canada. To help prevent such a destiny it has been the L.L.T.'s policy that approximately 50 per cent of the members of the Board of Directors are primarily interested in the business operations of the organization, and the remainder in the various aspects of production.

The Board of Directors consists of all the past presidents of the corporation and twelve members nominated

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3 Interview with Miss Margaret Glass, Executive Secretary of the L.L.T. from July 1946 to July 1957.

4 David Heilweil, "Business or Art?" Theatre Arts, December 1949, p. 50.

by the Nominating Committee and elected by the voting members at the annual spring meeting. Each year four Directors are elected to hold office for three years. This procedure ensures permanence and continuity—which is essential to any such organization—within the Board. It is also designed to help it to achieve a spirit of adventure and experiment by means of the yearly introduction of new members.

The members of the Board meet immediately following the annual meeting of the L.L.T. to select the chairmen of all but three of the various committees. Their selections are based upon the recommendations submitted to them by the Personnel Committee. From among themselves they elect a Chairman who is eligible for re-election and who presides at all Board Meetings; a President who presides at the Board meetings in the absence of the Chairman, who is an ex-officio member of all the organization's committees, and whose tenure of office cannot exceed two years; two Vice-Presidents who are responsible for the supervision of the work of certain of the standing committees as set up by the Board; and a Chairman for the Finance Committee. The Board of Directors at this time also appoints a Business Manager for the Grand and an Executive Secretary. From September to May inclusive all officers and Committee Chairmen meet

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6 Voting members, p. 105.
monthly with the Board of Directors to report on their work and to submit any problems or requests. It is at these Board meetings, therefore, that every phase of the organization's operations is considered and resolved.

The Executive Committee, which is responsible to the Board, carries on with the Board’s work between the regular meetings, making decisions and implementing them whenever it seems unnecessary or inadvisable to call a special meeting of the entire Board. This committee consists of the President, who acts as Chairman, the Secretary, Treasurer, the Board Chairman, and the first and second Vice-Presidents.

In the 1939-40 season, to help minimize the onus of responsibility placed upon the Board, an Advisory Committee was established. The five or more members of this committee are elected by the Board and they select a chairman from among themselves. The membership of this committee consists primarily of former members of the Board of Directors and senior active workers in the organization. Vacancies are filled only upon the voluntary retirement of any member. The Advisory Committee fulfills the duties its title implies, working in conjunction with the Board. An L.L.T. bulletin states that "the Advisory Committee . . . is available when needed to give valuable advice on any matters of major importance such as changes in policy."7 The members

7Bulletin B, 1954 Membership Campaign (unpubl.).
of this committee are free to attend the regular Board meet-

ings but are not eligible to vote at these meetings.

This operational procedure has worked satisfactorily

for the L.L.T. However, it has its limitations. Much

responsibility, if not too much, is placed upon the Board.
The large number of activities to be reported upon and con-
sidered sometimes makes the meetings somewhat cumbersome.
Also, they can become unduly prolonged, dealing with prob-
lems of administration or production which should have been
resolved within the committee concerned, and merely the
decision of this particular committee submitted to the Board
for approval. Frequently the meetings are largely devoted

to a phase of the club's work in which some members are

neither especially interested nor informed.

The resolution of problems within the committees

themselves could often be achieved if, according to a former
executive secretary, there were more authority delegated to
them and if there were a more coordinated operation within
them. It is to be expected that all those attending the
Board meetings will not be particularly interested in every
item of business being considered, although they should be.
To such volunteer members the time consumed occasionally

seems to be an unwarranted burden.

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8 Interview with Mrs. Frieda Stephens, a former Secretary to the Board of Directors, July 16, 1960.

9 Interview with Miss Margaret Glass, May 9, 1962.
There have been members of the Board who proposed that the Board be broken into two divisions, one division dealing with the business and the administration of the club, the other with all the aspects of production. If implemented, such a division would, doubtlessly, attract valuable Board members whose interests may lie in only one of these directions. The Board as a whole would likely be able to meet less frequently. In spite of these dubious advantages, the establishment of such a scheme would be ill-advised. The present plan of operation has helped to minimize the well-known operational system where the one hand never knows what the other hand is doing. The suggestion that the Board be divided would only aid in creating such a lack of complete communication. As mentioned previously, the business and artistic operations of an amateur theatre should never be regarded as two distinct entities. The L.L.T.'s constant integration of these two entities, a Past President of the organization, when interviewed, stated, was one of the major reasons for its successful operation.10

10Interview with Fred N. Phelps, Past President of the L.L.T., of the Western Ontario Drama League, a member of the Executive and Honorary Governor of the Dominion Drama Festival, May 14, 1962.
In 1934-35 the L.L.T. managed to show a surplus of $150. By 1945, after eleven years of renting the Grand Theatre, this same organization was able to do what many similar organizations go on wishfully dreaming about from season to season—own its own house. The L.L.T. bought the Grand Theatre for $35,000 in 1945. Three years later the mortgage had been paid off and the organization was free of indebtedness. By 1951 it had spent over $60,000 in improvements and alterations to its property. Despite these major investments, the Chairman of the Finance Committee was able to report, in his annual statement for that year: "Each year since its [L.L.T.] inception there has been an excess of income over expenditures which has been used to pay off the mortgage, finance alterations and additions, and to buy equipment." The surplus which he reported at the end of the 1950-51 season amounted to $15,843.63.

The achievement of this enviable financial record is attributable to the scrupulous supervision of the money made and spent by the L.L.T. that is exercised by the Finance Committee. This committee consists of a Chairman acting also as a treasurer, who is a member of and appointed by the Board of Directors. He is assisted by two members.

The purchase price of $35,000 was met by means of $15,381 raised through public subscriptions plus a cash payment of $4,619 and a $15,000 mortgage undertaken by the L.L.T.
elected at the annual meeting and a Budget Chairman selected by the Board. The President, ex-officio, is also a member of the Finance Committee.

There are several financial policies that have been instituted by the Finance Committee from 1934 to 1956 that are worthy of being recorded. They are indicative of the L.L.T.'s desire to administer its funds wisely and well.

The L.L.T. became incorporated in 1936. Although this action, which is strongly endorsed by Edward Mallory as one to be taken by any amateur group, was neither solely prompted by the Finance Committee nor directly related to its financial policies, it was, nevertheless, a factor in the execution of this committee's duties. The acquisition of the charter by the members of the L.L.T. undoubtedly increased their sense of responsibility and their awareness of their obligations as a "legal entity." Regarded as an act of good faith, it also enhanced the status of the organization in the community. In 1938 the amount of money which any one person could spend, without executive approval, was limited. All material expenditures could only be made by a Purchase Order approved by the Business Manager. Expenditures from twenty-five dollars to one hundred dollars required the approval of the Finance Committee, while all amounts over one hundred dollars had to be authorized by

\[12\] Mallory, op. cit., p. 521.
the Board of Directors. Since 1945, with the acquisition of the Grand Theatre, approximately 79 per cent of the organization's annual income has been derived from memberships, 13 per cent from the theatre and its store rentals, and 7 per cent from road shows and the summer stock program. To ensure a sound administration of the L.L.T.'s income, two more major changes in financial policy were established. In 1952 the fiscal year, formerly from May 1 to April 30, was changed to October 1 to September 30. The second change occurred in 1954 when the budget, previously drawn up for the entire year's operations, was determined on a quarterly basis.

In terms of practicability and adaptability the advantages of these two changes in the financial operations of the organization are obvious. By waiting until October to set up the budget for the coming year the Finance Committee was, by that time, well informed as to the amount of money which had been raised in the fall membership campaign. The policy of budgeting on a quarterly basis enabled the committee to maintain a better control over and restrict, whenever necessary, the monthly expenses of the L.L.T.

The decision as to how and where the L.L.T.'s income is to be spent is the sole responsibility of the Finance Committee. In 1935-36 with an income of $3,808.94, the budget was set at $3,290.00; in 1940 with an income of $6,476.77, the budget was $5,100.00; by 1949-50, with an
income of $64,478.34, the organization operated on a budget of $45,000.00; and, in the 1955-56 season with an income of $57,534.45, its budget was $46,500.00. Unlike many amateur groups where the individual directors determine how much money they will require to produce their shows, the L.L.T.'s Finance Committee, based upon the production demands of the plays and upon similar shows of previous seasons, determines the amount which is to be spent on each production. The individual directors, while wanting the best in sets and costumes for their own productions, derive great satisfaction, indeed, vie with each other, in their ability to keep under the budget allotments. The Finance Committee, while hoping that they will be able to do so, primarily concentrates upon the over-all budget of the productions. If one production exceeds its allotment the committee then imposes some financial restrictions upon the succeeding productions.

The Executive Secretary could justifiably say, in a promotional brochure published for the organization's membership canvassers, "every effort is made to spend money wisely and in general administer what might be termed 'trustee funds' in a manner which will keep 'living theatre' in London." Stanley Richards attributed the L.L.T.'s ability to ignore the red ink when it made out its financial

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13 Interview with Miss Margaret Glass, May 8, 1962.
14 Canvassers Bulletin D, 1954 (unpubl.).
statements to "theatrical witchcraft."\textsuperscript{15} It was not witchcraft which accounts for the organization's enviable financial state but the awareness of its members, acquired through bitter experience,\textsuperscript{16} that to ignore business management in the theatre leads to unsuccessful theatre.

There are many thespians, or budding ones, who feel they should not be bothered with crass commercial details. Admittedly, the arithmetic of the theatre can be a bore, yet the making and spending of money in the theatre can also be, and fundamentally is, a very creative effort. The theatre is both a business and an art. The members of the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors, many of whom, as has been previously noted, have been London's leading businessmen, have demonstrated this awareness. As the Chairman of the Finance Committee reported:

\begin{quote}
The London Little Theatre has steadily progressed over the years by careful planning and sound management. Every business enterprise, under competent management, is guided by reasons not by emotions. Preparedness in business in the amateur theatre is an essential policy to success.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15}Richards, "Black Ink--and no Black Magic," \textit{Theatre Arts}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{16}The precarious financial position in which the London Drama League, the Meredith Players, and the Half-Way House Theatre found themselves from season to season was the primary reason for their amalgamation in 1934.

\textsuperscript{17}1952-53 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Finance Committee (unpubl.).
It was this businesslike administrative policy which prompted Robertson Davies, upon comparing the L.L.T.'s system of operation with other amateur groups in Canada, to report to the Royal Commission investigating the arts in Canada:

The London Little Theatre . . . is a brilliant exception. The average amateur theatre works in a hired hall, pays its way from year to year, and in the course of time acquires a wardrobe and some scenery. If at the end of a season it has paid its bills and still has enough in hand to finance some of the preparatory work for the season to come it has done well. And in addition to these groups of average success, there are struggling groups which very often can't make ends meet.18

Nominating Committee

The Third committee which selects its chairman independent of the Board is the Nominating Committee. This committee, like the Personnel, Scholarship, and Summer School Committees, is not supervised by one of the Vice-Presidents but is, instead, directly responsible to the Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee consists of two members appointed from the Board, two appointed by the Personnel Committee from among the voting members who are not Directors, and the immediate Past President who is the Chairman, ex-officio. This Committee is formally established by the Board of Directors at the L.L.T.'s annual spring meeting.

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The task of preparing a slate of nominees for all the positions to be filled at the general meeting is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee. In the selection of its nominees, this committee first ascertains if the nominees are eligible and qualified by contacting the Personnel Committee. Then the Nominating Committee determines if the nominees are willing to accept. The Chairman of this committee presents the slate of officers at the annual meeting, at which time the meeting may accept it without change, accept it in part, add to it, or discard it completely.

Personnel Committee

The frequency of references to the Personnel Committee is indicative of its importance in the successful operation of the L.L.T. Some consideration of it is, therefore, mandatory. An analysis of the work of this committee will indicate how much it has contributed to the successful operation of the L.L.T.

The L.L.T.'s Personnel Committee consists of the President, the first and second Vice-Presidents and others appointed by them, and the committee's chairman who is appointed by the Board at its first meeting following the annual spring meeting.

The primary purpose of this committee is to keep closely in touch with the organization's membership, both
active and non-active with a view to enlisting the services of as many members as possible in the work of the L.L.T. To accomplish this purpose, which Norris Houghton states should be a major objective of every little theatre group, this committee is responsible for the maintenance of the Working Membership forms of all the members who are doing, or volunteer to do work of any nature essential to the welfare of the L.L.T. New subscribing members at the opening of each season are canvassed by this committee to discover who among them would like to become working members. Working Membership forms are also distributed by this committee to the directors who have new members in their casts or stage crews. These new members after filling out the forms return them to the directors who in turn submit them to the Personnel Committee. The services of non-subscribing members to the L.L.T., whether they do or do not fill out a Working Membership form, are always welcome within the organization's activities. As a means of becoming better acquainted with the new members and the interested non-members, as well as acquainting them with the L.L.T.'s activities and working members, the Personnel Committee sponsors one or two Club Nights during the season.

Upon the request of a chairman of any committee Personnel must be prepared to suggest such volunteer workers

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as may be required to accomplish the work of his committee. Personnel also contacts, at intervals during the season, all the committee chairmen to learn if they have sufficient members to carry on their work. If they do not, this committee endeavours to obtain the names of persons willing to assist. The Board of Directors notifies the Personnel Committee of all new committees to be set up. Personnel then must be able to submit to the Board a list of suggested Chairmen and, if necessary, members for such committees.

The maintenance of the voting membership list is also a direct responsibility of this committee which decides if any additions or deletions should be made from this list. As these decisions are of vital importance to the organization, the Personnel Committee submits a list of the names under consideration to all the committee chairmen for their recommendation of the personnel with whom they had worked during the season. This committee then compiles its list of voting members which it presents to the Board for its ratification at the annual meeting. At least fourteen days prior to the date of this meeting the voting members must have been notified by mail. To do so is impossible unless the Personnel Committee has previously reviewed and brought up-to-date the voting members list. Fortunately for this committee, despite its close connection with membership, it is not required to participate in the subscription membership
campaigns of the L.L.T., this being the responsibility of the Membership Committee.

The successful conduct of the L.L.T.'s activities is, to a large extent, dependent upon the careful and informed selections made from among the working membership lists by the Personnel Committee. By employing a fair and democratic policy of selection, motivated by a real desire to put to work as many people in as many activities as possible, the Personnel Committee can do much to eliminate the stigma of a "closed shop" so often attached to amateur groups. It is essential, therefore, that the committee has an intimate knowledge of the nature of the work being done within the organization and the interests and abilities of the working members. The L.L.T.'s Personnel Committee, consisting as it does of members who have been and still are active, admirably helps to satisfy these requirements.

Scholarship Committee

In 1948 a Scholarship Committee was established by the L.L.T. The creation of this committee reflects the organization's desire to foster a spirit of goodwill and service within the community. Any working member that had done work of outstanding merit, in any of the areas of production during at least two years of active service, was to

201948-49 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Personnel Committee (unpubl.).
be eligible for financial assistance up to $1000. The purpose of the award was to help talented members to advance into the professional theatre by enabling them to study at any accredited theatre school in the United States or abroad. The winner of the award, who is selected by the Scholarship Committee, was to be under no obligation to the organization.

The scholarship fund was established by the L.L.T. with monies to be allocated from the Studio Club's surplus revenues and from a benefit performance to be presented each season by the L.L.T. or by a visiting amateur theatre group sponsored by the L.L.T. Such benefit performances were given in the spring of 1949 by the Hamilton Little Theatre, and again in 1950 with the L.L.T.'s production, *A Pig in a Poke*, written and directed by one of its own members. On August 26, 1948, the first scholarship was awarded to Olga Landiak. Winner of the best actress award at the Dominion Drama Festival for her portrayal of Joan in *Saint Joan*, she was provided with transportation, living expenses, and tuition that enabled her to study for a year at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 1953, Gwyne Kelly was awarded a $500 scholarship. She enrolled at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York. This is the extent of such a commendable project.

The cause of its demise is difficult to determine. If the members are unable to produce a play separate from
the season's bill, the most successful one from it could be used for a scholarship benefit performance. The award need not be given every year, but there should be a fund available whenever there is a deserving member within the club's ranks. In the minutes of the annual meetings from 1951 to 1956 are recorded statements of regret that nothing is being done by the Scholarship Committee. Lacking funds and without any directive from the Board, however, this committee has been powerless to act. The Executive Secretary, in her 1956 annual report stated:

The Scholarship . . . competition started in the last ten years . . . went up, then finally died out in the last few years. The natural reason is financial but we are supposed to make these funds separately. We haven't. It would be a good idea to review this situation in the future.21

The resumption of this project would, in all probability, strengthen the organization's public relations and serve as an incentive for its working members.

*Summer School Committee*

From its inception the L.I.T., as revealed in its minutes and demonstrated by its performance, has been dedicated to the promotion of the legitimate theatre not only in London or Western Ontario but also on a national level as well. A typical example of such dedication was the

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21 1955-56 Annual Report by the Executive Secretary (unpubl.).
establishment in 1946 of a Summer School of the Theatre.

The purpose of the drama school is two-fold. To provide training in all phases of the theatre to the youth of Western Ontario through whom will be sponsored drama groups in the secondary schools, in the towns and municipalities, is its immediate and primary aim. The second purpose, a far-reaching idealistic one, is providing a service to the nation through a national theatre.22

Operated by the L.L.T.'s Summer School Committee, in conjunction with the University of Western Ontario, the school provided theatrical training for six consecutive summers to students from all parts of Canada.

The first summer, thirty-four students were enrolled for the five-week course for which they received one and a half university credits. Thirty-five members of the L.L.T. took advantage of the opportunity to enroll as auditors. Courses in Play Production, Directing, Scenery Design and Construction, Voice and Diction, Make-Up, and Ballet were provided. A public production of The Changeling concluded the L.L.T.'s first venture into this educational field. The succeeding summer, in order that more individuals besides teachers and students might be able to combine their holidays with theatrical instruction, a highly concentrated two-week course, given in morning, afternoon, and evening classes, was initiated. The seventeen who enrolled in this course presented three one-act plays to the public. The

22 Minutes of the Board of Directors of L.L.T., March 30, 1946 (unpubl.).
play *Stage Door* was presented by the twenty-seven students enrolled in the five-week course for a modest box-office price of thirty-five cents. Except for an increase to two and a half credits and the addition of a second two-week course in the summer of 1948, the academic procedure was retained through the summer of 1951.

The Summer School Committee not only operated the Summer School of the Theatre but also the L.L.T.'s talented personnel provided the instruction. These working members were, throughout the same years as the school was in operation, producing seventeen to twenty shows each season, serving as lecturers, adjudicators, make-up crews, and directors within their extension program and conducting an educational program within their own membership. "It is something to marvel at," the local press declared, "that they [the L.L.T.'s Summer School personnel] had the ambition, as well as the stamina and time, to devote to such a laudable project."23 Their industry is typical of the enterprise and activity which has made the L.L.T. a leader in the development of Canadian theatre and the strong cultural force it is in this area.

A Director of the Summer School was appointed by the University of Western Ontario for each summer session. He supervised the entire program, gave assistance to the L.L.T. instructors, conducted classes, and produced the final

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productions. Among these directors were: Norris Houghton of Theatre Incorporated, Roy Irving of the Dublin Gate Theatre, Day Tuttle of Smith College, J. Douglas McLean of New York and, for two consecutive summers, one of the L.L.T.'s own members, Mrs. Blanche Hogg.

In February 1952 the Summer School was temporarily discontinued. Neither the concerted effort nor the managerial discernment of the L.L.T.'s members was able to circumvent the red-ink in the auditor's ledgers. All but two of the six summer sessions had resulted in a financial loss to the L.L.T. To have continued, with the hope that their efforts ultimately would be rewarded through government subsidy or the emergence of a National School of the Theatre, would have been financial suicide. By 1951 the auditor's red-ink was already depicting a loss of over $1,200.

The termination of the School was not a reflection upon the calibre of its product. There were just not enough people demanding such a course in this area to warrant holding a school each summer. To interpret this lack of demand as indicative of a lack of desire or interest would be erroneous. Instead, it was largely due to the fact that since the University of Western Ontario grants no degrees in Speech or Theatre, the summer students, the majority of whom are teachers, found it more practicable and economical to concentrate upon courses in their major fields. The School
started with a registration of thirty full-time students in 1946; by 1948 there were twenty-seven, and in 1951 the number enrolled had fallen to nineteen. Another factor contributing to its discontinuance was that it became increasingly difficult to acquire professional personnel at a price that the organization could afford.

It could be said, and with a degree of justification, that the School's inauguration was somewhat premature. A more exhaustive investigation of similar operations elsewhere, together with the existence of a more substantial reserve fund might have ensured the School's stability and permanence. Yet the necessary ground was broken and the L.L.T., having profited from the experience, was ready for the future.24

The arithmetic of the theatre brought an end to the Summer School series after 1951. However, what it contributed and is still contributing to those who enrolled and to their schools and communities can never be recorded on an auditor's ledger sheet.

24 In 1958 it was decided to resume the Summer School of the Theatre, but to hold it only on alternate years. In July 1958 the School re-opened with forty credit and twenty-two non-credit students. It was a success artistically and financially.
CHAPTER IV

THE COMMITTEES RELATED TO PRODUCTION—GROUP "B"

Extension Committee

Among the committees in Group "B," which are under the supervision of the second Vice-President, one of the most active, and one that has made the greatest contribution to the cultural life of not only London but Western Ontario, is the Extension Committee.

The Extension Committee, from the time of its inception in 1936, has yearly been providing adjudicators, lecturers, directors, make-up artists, technical advisers, and physical equipment to any organization requesting theatrical instruction or assistance. When first created, the demands made upon it were nominal. To an organization ready and willing to serve the community this was so frustrating that the Extension Committee's Chairman reported to the Board: "We have willing workers and services to offer but this is unknown to most organizations. Better publicity of our services is needed to develop this phase of work." ¹ Organizations likely to be interested in these services

¹1936-37 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Extension Committee (unpubl.).
were promptly circularized. Members personally interviewed civic leaders. A bulletin enumerating the services available to clubs or organizations was distributed to the subscribing members during the run of the first production of the 1937-38 season. The response to this promotional campaign is revealed in the third annual report of the Chairman:

There has been much increase in our extension work as groups got to know of the services available. Eight directors were used, four adjudicators, and eight members gave talks and lectures on various phases of the theatre. Make-up assistance was given to six groups. Members gave advice on play-choice, stage construction, and the organization of dramatic groups.2

For three successive years, while busily promoting its extension services, this committee sponsored a drama festival for local and regional school, church, and civic groups. Each year from fourteen to eighteen groups competed for the trophy and cash awards provided by the L.L.T. The encouragement and assistance which the L.L.T. gave to these young and inexperienced groups served as a stimulant to their continued interest and development. With reference to what proved to be the last festival, in 1940, the Chairman announced:

The committee definitely feels that interest among smaller groups has grown, that the type and quality of work done had improved; that the L.L.T. benefited in finding new performers; that the general public has shown an increasing interest in and respect for the work done by these groups; and

21938-39 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Extension Committee (unpubl.)
that the work merits continuance and careful development.\(^3\)

The outbreak of the war necessitated the discontinuance of this project. However, it did not curtail the extension work of the L.L.T.

Instead of disbanding, as many little theatre organizations did in Canada during the war years,\(^4\) the L.L.T. decided to continue, even if it meant the curtailment of some of its activities. Despite the likely loss of working and subscribing members, the rise in production costs, and the prospect of having to produce and budget on a production to production basis, in the true tradition of the theatre the members were determined that the "show must go on." Moreover, they had over $2,000 in the bank which they regarded as a community trust. They resolved to continue until it was spent. This decision proved to be another factor in the phenomenal success of the L.L.T. By the end of the war it had more, rather than fewer, active and subscribing members. The L.L.T. was both financially and administratively in the enviable state of preparedness to acquire its own theatre, and it was even more securely entrenched as a stable and valuable institution within the community.

\(^3\)1939-40 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Extension Committee (unpubl.).

\(^4\)In an issue of the London Free Press, April 27, 1944, p. 6., the editor stated that with the exception of the little theatre groups in Ottawa and Montreal in Eastern Canada and those in the province of British Columbia, which were receiving government subsidy, most of Canada's little theatre groups had ceased to operate.
Throughout the war years, from the fall of 1939 to the cessation of hostilities in August 1945, the Extension Committee, while maintaining its usual peace-time activities, played a leading part in London's war effort. The wartime record of service of this committee, achieved through the efforts of the working members, vindicates the President's assertion that "we will offer any help we can give to the Red Cross and similar organizations ... if benefit performances ... are desired, we will hold ourselves in readiness to undertake them."5

The initial action of the Extension Committee was the offer of the L.L.T.'s services and co-operation to the Entertainment Division of the Canadian Auxiliary War Service Committee (C.A.W.S.C.), whose president was also president of the L.L.T. In February 1939, a successful variety show was produced and financed by the L.L.T. for the troops in the London area. The free use of its club rooms for rehearsal purposes was granted to the troops, with members of the L.L.T. serving as directors of their skits, short plays, and revues. Two hundred tickets were allotted to the troops for each of the L.L.T. productions. In 1941 Take It or Leave It, a two-hour revue, written and produced by members of the L.L.T., under the sponsorship of the C.A.W.S.C., was presented in London and neighbouring cities. By 1945 this

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troop show, the material for which was changed at least twice each season, had played to 300,000 soldiers in 257 performances. The sum of $40,000, for war charities, was raised by the L.L.T. by means of benefit performances—an enviable record which deserved the respect and admiration of the troops and of the citizens of London and Western Ontario. The editor of the local newspaper seemed to feel that such was merited when he reminded his readers that unlike most little theatres which had closed during the war, the L.L.T. was still successfully operating and making a "great war effort."6

Every amateur theatre is a part of and belongs to the way of life of its community. To become dissociated from it would inevitably result in the organization's impoverishment and decay. The L.L.T., through its responsiveness to the trying and anxious situation which confronted the community, demonstrated that it was a very dynamic and active force within it. The organization continued to make an equally praiseworthy contribution to the community with the resumption of peace in the fall of 1946.

Each succeeding season the Extension Committee, as indicated by its annual reports, increased the scope of its services. During the 1946-47 season twelve adjudicators were supplied to local and outside groups; working members

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directed and produced plays for the Y.W.C.A., Beck Collegiate, First St. Andrews Club, and the Junior and Senior Co-Ed Clubs; eleven talks on the theatre were given to groups in London and Western Ontario; three plays from the season's bill were presented in Simcoe, Woodstock, and Sarnia; a matinee performance of *Pride and Prejudice* was given for the students in the secondary schools of London; meetings and demonstrations were held for seven consecutive weeks in Woodstock and three in Simcoe; assistance was given in planning and equipping the D.V.A. Health Centre's stage and auditorium. Despite this ambitious program, the members found time to write and produce *Democracy in Action* to help bolster the receipts of the Community Chest. By 1952-53 the services of sixty members were required to fulfill the forty-eight requests for help submitted to the committee. During the 1954-55 season a Directors Course was given in the city of Brantford; a summer course conducted in Paris; twelve lectures were given to Home and School clubs, churches, universities and other groups in London and district; ten members produced church plays and three produced for other groups; nine members acted as adjudicators; help was given to the Hobby Fair and to the Garden Club. Toward the end of this season the Extension Committee, desirous of fulfilling its community obligations, undertook to have the L.L.T. contribute to the celebration of London's centennial. The working members promptly responded. Their response resulted in
a pageant, *This Was London*, written and produced by L.L.T. members, which for four evenings in July was performed to the delight of London's civic officials and citizens. The extension work was increasing noticeably.

It seems as though we are linked to every dramatic effort in our city and district. We have supplied writers, speakers, directors, adjudicators, actors, make-up and costuming for countless productions on stage, speaker's platform, radio and television. In fact it would sometimes seem that our own L.L.T. work is in danger of being hampered by the scope of our Extension efforts, all of which create enormous goodwill and confidence in one of London's most distinguished institutions.7

The statement is both justified and ironical when compared with the plea for work made by a previous chairman in 1937. There was not, however, any curtailment of this activity in 1955-56. Instead, while maintaining as ambitious a program as in previous seasons, the members even conducted a sixteen-week course in Play Production in the city of Ingersoll.

"The relation of the theatre and the community" Sheldon Cheney claims," should not be merely that of artist and patron; it should involve a wide influence in shaping the social and recreational life of the city." The L.L.T. from the time of its inception has been doing just that. Fred Kerner, Canadian Press staff writer, aptly expressed

71954-55 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Extension Committee (unpubl.).

the significance of the L.L.T.'s contribution to the community by its working members through the Extension Committee when he wrote:

Encouraged by the success achieved by the London Little Theatre, Western Ontario has shown the greatest increase in dramatic interest.

The highly developed London Little Theatre has led the way in aiding the drama movement in the western part of the province. . . . the L.L.T. has given every aid possible in the creation and development of new groups in surrounding municipalities.9

Education Committee

Two committees closely related to and functioning in conjunction with the Extension Committee are the Education and Public Relations Committees.

The Education Committee, which also assists the committee in charge of the Summer School, has been responsible for the sponsorship of courses in the many phases of play production. Open to members and non-members of the organization, courses in acting, directing, make-up, stage settings, voice and diction, costuming, and properties have been conducted yearly at the Grand by the L.L.T.'s experienced personnel. The Education Committee discovered that a nominal fee of from three to five dollars, while helping to meet any expenses incurred, helped to ensure faithful attendance. The discovery was also made that these courses could successfully operate only if the eager chairmen of the

various production committees would refrain from enlisting the help of those registered in them until the conclusion of the course. Rather than conduct these courses at various times throughout the season, as has so often been the Education Committee's policy, it would be more logical and practical to hold many of them in the month of September before the season's activities have commenced. The experienced personnel to conduct these courses would, at that time, not be too involved in the club's production activities; therefore, the committee's difficulty in finding instructors would be minimized. The work of the various committees would not yet be so burdensome that the chairmen would need to requisition the assistance of those enrolled in these courses. Instead, by the time such a need arose, the courses would be over, and there would be available a large number of qualified potential L.L.T. workers.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee's primary purpose is to assist in building goodwill toward the L.L.T. This committee has used two devices to help it accomplish its objective that are worthy of consideration.

The subscribing members attending the January production of Blithe Spirit, in 1946, found themselves in the possession of an attractive and informative program, Call Boy. This program has continued to be available to these
members, free of charge, at every major production. It is not merely a mimeographed or stencilled sheet recording the vital statistics of a particular production—that type of program which so many theatregoers scan and then proceed to leave in their seats upon the conclusion of the performance. **Call Boy** is an eight- to-ten-page printed booklet presenting not only the information pertinent to the current production and cast but also articles on the various activities of the L.L.T., the front and backstage operations of the Grand, profiles of its active members, and information with reference to the up-coming productions. Such material has made **Call Boy** a valuable medium of communication between the Board of Directors and the working members on the one hand and between the working and non-working subscription members on the other. Even the variety and originality of **Call Boy's** cover designs, often related to the particular production and created by London artists or L.L.T. members, enhance its value as a collector's item. Instead of being treated with indifference the Editor of **Call Boy** has stated that "very few patrons leave it behind at the end of a performance."\(^{10}\)

Through the years **Call Boy** has seldom been self-supporting, despite the effort to make it so through the ads of local business firms. The result has been that the 1949-1950 Annual Report by the Editor of **Call Boy** (unpubl.).
net cost has averaged each season approximately 2 per cent to 3 per cent of the subscriber's membership fee. Each year the editors have had their quota of problems in their efforts to get the club's departments to submit, and on time, their material, which would enable Call Boy to present a complete picture of the L.L.T., both on- and off-stage. These publishing costs and copy problems are more than compensated for by the value of the publication.

Although understandable, it is regrettable that the problem of securing material for each issue should exist. The working members should realize that Call Boy is one of the L.L.T.'s most effective means of informing the public both of its activities and its import to London and district. The publication of such a program is commendable; exploiting it to the fullest, in order that it can accomplish its original objectives, would be even more so. A real awareness of Call Boy's potentialities as an organ of information and as a promoter of goodwill ought to motivate the working members in their journalistic efforts.

The addition, within the past two years, of two columns, reviewing the New York and London stages, by theatre critics in those two cities would seem to indicate an absence of such awareness. This is certainly not exploiting Call Boy's potentialities. The inclusion of such material is almost an irrelevancy in a publication designed to advertise the organization. The justification for this material
seems to be based upon the premise that since its readers are patrons of the L.L.T. productions they would automatically be interested in what is happening on the New York and London stages. This is not always the case and those who are interested have an easy access to such information in any number of periodicals, magazines, and daily newspapers. This is the type of material, unnecessary and expensive, that the L.L.T. could advisedly have avoided, unless it was attempting to publish what at the very best could only be a frustratingly inadequate theatre magazine. The addition of these columns in Call Boy has, of course, necessitated a reduction in the amount of material dealing with the organization. And it is this material in which the members are primarily interested.

As its second device the Public Relations Committee has occasionally used the media of radio and television as a showcase for the L.L.T.'s talents and productions. The committee's efforts to do so have been spasmodic. There has been some continuity in programming but no firmly established production policy from one season to the next. Production and air-time costs, the time and effort which these media require of the overworked volunteer workers, and a division of attitude among the members, as to whether radio and television are the proper production media for them, have been largely responsible for what has been
described as, "an 'on again, off again' production policy."

The Apostates, written and produced by L.L.T. members in the summer of 1946, was the L.L.T.'s first venture into radio production. This presentation was the beginning of a series of fifteen-minute broadcasts produced periodically through the summer months.

The most concentrated and ambitious use of this medium occurred in 1947. A series of nineteen half-hour plays, twelve of them original scripts or radio adaptations written by L.L.T. members, were produced each Sunday evening from January 19 to May 25. This weekly radio program, known as "Off-Stage," opened with the play, Gentlemen Amateurs. Written by an L.L.T. member, it recreated the London of 1838 when Queen Victoria's troops introduced live drama to the town with the formation of their amateur group, the Gentle­men Amateurs. The presentation of Gentlemen Amateurs and the eighteen subsequent plays utilized the services of four directors, ten assistant directors, and almost forty players. The technical aspects of the presentations were under the supervision of a member of the local radio's production staff who also happened to be one of the L.L.T.'s talented performers. The meticulously rehearsed productions, together with their regularity of performance, soon created a Sunday evening listening habit on the part of those within the range...

11953-54 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Public Relations Committee (unpubl.).
of radio station CFPL. Although a listener's survey was not conducted, it is significant that when the L.L.T. found it impossible to continue in the fall of 1947, the radio station, using L.L.T. personnel, did.

The availability of personnel, the hours of work required of them, and the costs of production were the chief reasons for the L.L.T.'s discontinuance of the radio series in the fall of 1947. The project had cost over four hundred dollars. An "angel," in the person of the London Free Press, paid half the bill. This co-sponsorship typifies the support and encouragement which the L.L.T. has consistently received from the city's newspaper.

Radio Station CFPL, which is owned by the London Free Press, undertook to sponsor the L.L.T.'s half-hour radio plays in the winter of 1948. The L.L.T. was not only relieved of the financial burden but also CFPL's staff assumed the responsibilities of organization and production. The hours of work of the L.L.T. members were, therefore, considerably reduced. This scheme of production lasted for three successive seasons.

The conclusion of the second series, sponsored by CFPL, ended the organization's efforts in the field of radio. Nothing notable was done again until 1954, when with the sponsorship of the local television station, the L.L.T. produced a most memorable Easter production. It provoked favourable comments from the viewing public, but did not
become an annual event. Another prolonged period of inactivity followed until September 28, 1956. At that time some of the members of the L.L.T. again subjected themselves to the scrutiny of the television viewers. On this occasion, to promote the sale of membership tickets, seven members discussed, for a half-hour, the approaching season's bill of productions and activities. A sixty-minute television program, two weeks later, dealt with problems of play production and the work of the L.L.T.

Although notable in quality while lacking in quantity, this is the extent of the L.L.T.'s radio and television activities as sponsored by the Public Relations Committee. "I would strongly suggest," proposed a Chairman of this committee, "a continuously-employed and more carefully planned use of this medium throughout the year. . . ."\textsuperscript{12}

This suggestion could be accomplished, possibly, if two or three working members of L.L.T. were to take the initiative in formulating a specific policy of programming that would ensure a continuity of productions, whether they be one or one-hundred and one, from season to season. The sponsorship by one or two local business firms or a yearly benefit performance of one of the L.L.T.'s most popular major productions might be a means of financing such an operation. As a means of increasing the public interest in the organization

\textsuperscript{12}1955-56 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Public Relations Committee (unpubl.).
while at the same time providing the members with an exciting and stimulating creative experience, a greater exploitation of these media of communication would seem to be desirable. However, it is the kind of public interest which these media might generate if not consistently used with skill and the highly specialized art form in which these creative experiences are provided that have caused some members to be less enthusiastic about them than others. Both groups are in accord that they should not become actively involved with radio or television production if such involvement would jeopardize, in any way, their home plant. Beyond this point of agreement whether they should or should not participate in these media is highly controversial.

National Playwriting Committee

The L.L.T., while it has undertaken a diversity of commendable projects, and in most cases with success artistically if not financially, seems to be somewhat prone to permit these projects to expire quickly. It is as though the active members of the organization eagerly seized upon what appeared to be an exciting and worthwhile theatrical adventure, experienced it, and then proceeded to abandon it. Such seems to be the fate of the local drama festival, the radio series, and the scholarship fund. A similar fate befell another commendable project which brought the L.L.T.
considerable prestige and recognition, not only in Western Ontario but throughout the Dominion of Canada.

In the summer of 1950, under the sponsorship of the Public Relations Committee, a National Playwriting Competition was established. The prize-winning script was to receive an award of $1000 and a première performance by the L.L.T. By the end of December seventy-two full length scripts had been received from every province in Canada except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. The five members of the National Playwriting Committee read them. They sent a detailed criticism to the writers whose scripts were of a high order of merit. At the conclusion of this screening process, the scripts of highest merit were forwarded to three New York judges; John Gassner, Norris Houghton, and Robert Whitehead. The winning script, Shadow of the Tree, by Joseph Schull, was given a première performance in November 1951. There were five writers that received honorable mention.

As reported by the Royal Commission, it is unfortunate that "in Canada the writing of plays, in spite of the few vigorous creative artists who have found encouragement in the C.B.C., has lagged far behind the other literary arts."13 This project could have become a means of helping to rectify this regrettable situation. Unfortunately, despite its

success and the enthusiastic national response it provoked, this competition was the first and last one held.

It cannot be denied, and the minutes of the organization provide ample testimony, that the high mortality rate of these projects is attributable to the costs of operation and the man-hours required by them. The National Playwriting Competition cost the organization over three thousand dollars. Nor is it to be denied that the sponsorship of these projects has contributed to the L.L.T.'s success and national recognition. Yet it must be admitted that in the conduct of these activities the organization's failure to follow through is not only regrettable but also a reflection upon the continuity and consistency of the L.L.T.'s objectives. When the tenure of such projects becomes suspect in the minds of the citizens of London, then the winning of their financial and moral support of them becomes more difficult to achieve. "The loyalty and good faith of the members of a community theatre must be sustained," Lynn Harrington has asserted, "if it hopes to prosper."14 These can be maintained by the L.L.T. by either reducing the number of these projects or initiating them only when it has the necessary working members and funds available.

Studio Club Committee

On the evening of January 10, 1940, an event in the L.L.T.'s history occurred that was described as "... an important and happy day in the life of the London Little Theatre." This was the performance of A Matter of Husbands and Gallant Lady by the Studio Club.

The Executive and the active members for some time had been anxious to supplement their major productions with the performance of new plays, classical, and Canadian plays that were not considered suitable for the season's bill. This dramatic literature, the members felt, would not only be made available to the public but would provide a greater opportunity for production activities. To accomplish these objectives the Studio Club Committee was established in the fall of 1939. Here is another instance, it should be noted, of the organization extending rather than restricting its activities, despite the outbreak of war.

The Studio Club Committee circularized the L.L.T.'s subscribing members, informing them of the nature and intent of the Studio Club, and requested the names of those who would be interested as auditors or participants. The enthusiastic response prompted this committee to equip one of its rented rehearsal rooms, appropriately called the Green Room, with a small stage and the minimum of staging

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15 1939-40 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Studio Club (unpubl.).
equipment. The working personnel was recruited from among the organization's subscribing and working members as well as non-members of the organization. The L.L.T. provided the required staging materials. This concentrated and cooperative effort was responsible for the Studio Club's first production.

Since that memorable night the Studio Club has produced, each successive season, with the exception of 1945-46, an average of seven short and full-length plays, conducted workshop courses, and held open play-readings that the major producers, in search of actors, attended.

The Studio Club, since its inception, has continuously been supplied most of its costumes, properties, lighting equipment, and set pieces by the L.L.T. This has enabled the Studio Club to operate on a relatively low budget. There were eight plays produced in 1940-41 at an average cost of $10; in 1950-51, seven plays were produced at an average cost of $97; and in 1955-56, eight plays were produced at an average cost of $125. The box-office returns, first through single admission, then with the introduction in 1948 of memberships only, at $1.00 (increased to $1.50 in 1949), and finally, memberships and also the sale

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10 When the Grand was purchased by the L.L.T., in 1945, various firms held one year leases to some of its rooms. Studio Club was unable to operate until these rooms became available in the fall of 1946.
of single admissions in 1952, seldom were sufficient to enable the Studio Club to operate in the black. This desirable financial state it achieved only by the 1953-54 season. The attendance has averaged approximately 150 at each performance. In 1949-50 there were 318 members; by 1955-56 there were 665 members. It is apparent that but for the dedication and liberality of the working members of the L.L.T., the Studio Club could not have survived. Moreover, the subscribing members to the L.L.T.'s major productions, through their support of the L.L.T., were indirectly supporting the Studio Club.

The single word "experiment," because of the variety in its choice of plays and its styles of stage presentation, best characterizes this activity. "One of the most important activities a workshop theatre provides, in addition to that of training and entertaining," according to Sharon Anthony Bower, "is the experimental opportunities it provides." The artistic ingenuity and resourcefulness of its working members were constantly being challenged because of the Studio Club's financial precariousness. The result was presentations that were novel, suggestive, and simple in settings and costumes. Creative opportunities were provided budding actors and directors anxious to prove and improve

17 Studio Club Membership Record Chart, p. 196.

themselves. Similar opportunities were available to new members interested in costuming, make-up, properties, set designs, and stage lighting. Each season, as recorded in the Studio Club Committee's annual reports, talented actors, directors, and capable backstage workers were discovered and developed. Inevitably, experimentation dominated the Club's production program. This element, "experimentation," made the productions provocative and stimulating.

The word "experiment" suggests a laboratory. To describe the Studio Club as a laboratory would not be inaccurate. It served as a teaching and training activity. It became a crucible in which new ideas, actors and directors were tested. Through it, new members were assimilated into the organization and acquainted with all the aspects of theatrical production. These members, as products of this experimentation, then became qualified to participate in the L.L.T.'s major productions. In this way the Studio Club functioned as a laboratory and also as a supply store for the personnel required to produce the L.L.T.'s major productions. These functions the Editor of Call Boy enumerated when he wrote:

The Studio Club provides a steady stream of new talent, makes it possible for the working members to experiment with new techniques and methods, and is where the novel and the unusual may be attempted by those who want to explore new creative avenues.19

19Editor, "The Studio Club," Call Boy, VI (February, 1953), 3.
A significant phase of Studio's testing process is revealed in an analysis of its production record. The plays of ten Canadian playwrights were produced by Studio. Of these playwrights, seven were active L.L.T. members whose plays, largely one-acts, received, in some instances, their première productions by Studio. The opportunity for a practicing playwright to see his plays produced is as important, if not more so, as the winning of awards. Such an opportunity is by no means as available as it should be in the Canadian amateur theatre. In its preparedness to experiment with and to produce plays written by amateur Canadian playwrights, Studio Club performed a fine service both to these writers and to the Canadian theatre as a whole. This service must be at least partially responsible for the fact that of the ten Canadian playwrights five, whose plays had been previously unpublished, now have their plays listed in the play directories of such companies as Samuel French.

The Studio Club functions as a laboratory, as a supply store, as a promoter of Canadian playwriting, and as a producer of some of the theatre's finest plays.

These worth-while functions were, ironically, largely responsible for Studio's limitations. They inevitably became such as a direct result of Studio's objectives. Commendable in themselves and worthy of emulation by an amateur group, two of these objectives were: (1) to endeavour to assimilate and train new members, as actors, directors,
and stage crews, and (2) to produce new and classical plays or plays considered to be unsuitable for the organization's regular bill. The fusion of these two objectives within the single activity did not always produce satisfactory results either for the participants or the viewers. Such plays as *Hedda Gabler*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest* are certainly not plays which inexperienced actors and directors should be expected to produce for a paying audience. To have used such plays solely as workshop productions with no admission charge would have been more advisable. Although the Studio Committee neither hoped nor intended that the Club's productions would match the high quality of performance of the major productions, nevertheless, there is a level of efficiency that a paying audience, no matter how liberal its critical standards, quite properly expects. The size of Studio's memberships may, in part, have been attributed to its choice of plays, yet undeniably, the absence of this level of efficiency was a major factor.

The achievement of an adequate level of efficiency can only be accomplished if the inexperienced actors are provided the guidance and inspiration of experienced directors. This basic requisite is even more essential in the production of such plays as those chosen by the Studio Committee for public production. Moreover, any actor feels he has been rewarded if in the creation of his characterization he has learned and profited from the knowledge of his
director. The production policy of the Studio Committee did not always enable the Studio actor to experience such rewards. Members of this committee, or senior directors, occasionally did attend the rehearsals of the productions, giving advice to the novice director. This method of supervision at times proved to be beneficial, at other times it only served to contribute to the general confusion or to break down the cast's morale. It would have been more satisfactory, perhaps, for the performers and the audience, if an experienced director had been in charge, with the novice serving as the assistant director.

A physical liability with which the Club has had to contend was created with the purchase of the Grand Theatre. The Studio Club had been able to achieve, in its Green Room, an intimate style of production which was appropriate for both the type of play produced and the small audiences in attendance. The transfer of its productions to the Grand meant the loss of this theatrical element. The Grand did, however, provide theatrical atmosphere and styles of staging that had been impossible to achieve in the Green Room. By capitalizing upon these assets, the loss of intimacy was partially compensated for by the Club's producing members.

More regrettable than this loss of intimacy has been the existence of an attitude of condescension, by many L.L.T. members, toward the Studio Club. The production demands made each season by Studio upon the staging,
costuming, and make-up departments of the organization have been extensive. These demands have been satisfied only if they did not infringe upon the L.L.T.'s major productions. This policy, a justifiable one, has at times restricted Studio's artistic potentialities. More especially, it has created an attitude toward Studio, on the part of some of the organization's members, that has been detrimental to this activity. These members, "tend to regard Studio somewhat as a poor relation,"worthy of their support but from which not too much was to be expected. By their failure to set the highest critical standards of production and challenging Studio to meet them, these members could have hurt the morale of its working members and the quality of its productions. That they have not done so is attested to by the Executive Secretary's report: "The Studio Club after a few years of slight recession has upgraded in the last few years until the largest membership and the most advanced bill was last season."

The divers functions which Studio was expected to perform may have limited its satisfactory fulfillment of them. Nevertheless, its strengths have exceeded its weaknesses. The result has been that the Studio Club has proved to be an invaluable addition to the community service program of the L.L.T.

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22 Report of the Executive Secretary at the 1955-56 Annual Meeting (unpubl.).
CHAPTER V

THE PRODUCTION COMMITTEES--GROUP "A"

Motion Picture Committee

The Committees in Group "A" are, on the whole, more directly related to theatrical production than those of Group "B." One such committee is the Motion Picture Committee.

There are few amateur theatre groups that have the courage or personnel, much less the time, to attempt such a highly specialized medium of theatrical production as motion pictures. The L.L.T. not only did so but with results that culminated in recognition by Canada's National Film Board.

The Motion Picture Committee came into existence in 1947. The L.L.T. accepted, during this season, the challenge of the London Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society to produce, with its financial backing, a colour sound film depicting the Society's activities. The result was the film Horizons of Hope, written and directed by L.L.T. members. The London Cancer Society, as sponsor, was more than

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1 The Organization Chart, p. 180.

2 The Membership Committee, although listed in Group "B," will be discussed with the Bill Setting Committee of Group "A."

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satisfied with its investment of approximately $3,000; the L.L.T., as producer, was the richer for the experience; and London and the surrounding communities became better acquainted with both the sponsor and producer. The project could have been a disastrous one for both. The talent and resourcefulness of the L.L.T.'s working members prevented such a fate. The community is aware of these attributes as is indicated by the London Cancer Society's readiness to sponsor the L.L.T. in such a project.

In the fall of 1949 the Motion Picture Committee again ventured into the movie business. At that time the L.L.T. produced Prelude to Performance, a one-hour, sixteen millimetre, silent colour film. As a documentary its purpose was to portray cinematically the various production stages that are necessary from the time a play is chosen until it is ready for public presentation. As You Like It, under the direction of one of the L.L.T.'s talented directors, was selected. Various senior directors submitted outlines of their production procedures to this director, who co-ordinated them into a director's script. This script, published as a textbook, provided a running commentary on the direction procedures in the film. After weeks of rehearsal and the editing of 20,000 feet of film, the picture was released in July 1950.

The National Film Board, aware of the significance and merit of Prelude to Performance, became the film's
distributing agent and the custodian of the original colour negative. Within two years the film had been shown 168 times across Canada by the Board. To ensure its availability to amateur dramatic groups, the Board produced and placed copies of it in various libraries throughout Canada.

The city of London, in recognition of the L.L.T.'s achievement, on November 20, 1950, presented the organization with a bronze plaque. Its inscription is a tribute to the L.L.T. and a reflection of the esteem with which the citizens of London regard it.

The Council of the City of London is cognizant of the deep personal interest of all the citizens of the community in the work, progress and achievements of the London Little Theatre. Since early garrison days this form of entertainment has been an integral part of, and a primary and impelling force in, the cultural life of the City.

Impressive as the past deeds of the organization have been, with its own theatre and a membership exceeding ten thousand persons, the inspiration of previous records appears only to have created a burning desire to attain still greater heights of accomplishment, with the result that now the first motion picture, entitled "Prelude to Performance," has been produced.

Greeted with wide acclaim, this noteworthy production has but served to demonstrate the keen interest, creative imagination, technical skill and artistry of the executive, the direction staff, and the production personnel of the London Little Theatre. The knowledge that the film will be shown in many parts of this continent and abroad, is most gratifying and a further testimony to its sterling worth.

The Municipal Council, therefore extends to the London Little Theatre, on behalf of the people of London sincere congratulations on the creation of so praiseworthy a production as "Prelude to
Performance," which, although in a new medium—that of the motion picture—is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Society.

The production of Prelude to Performance is but another example of the L.L.T.'s notable accomplishments. The film is also another instance of the contribution which this active organization has endeavoured to make to the Canadian amateur theatre. Each successive season this adventurous organization, through its readiness to experiment with a new and challenging area of theatrical production, has enhanced its own reputation while contributing to the drama on a national level. Indeed, it is this persistent pursuit of new kinds of dramatic experiences that has been responsible for the L.L.T.'s spirit of youthfulness, vitality, and of self-criticism that is so essential within a successful amateur group. Success can breed smugness, complacency, and insularity. Joseph Schull seems to have found little evidence of these destructive qualities within the L.L.T. when he wrote:

... you're [the L.L.T.] not parochial and you're not smug, as you well might be; you criticize yourselves with fervor and you seem to be looking outside your own organization for means of improving it. All in all, I should say, a very healthful and a very powerful force in the development of Canadian drama.\(^3\)

\(^3\)Letter addressed to Mrs. M. P. A. Hare, dated November 16, 1951, by Mr. Joseph Schull, the winner of the L.L.T.'s National Playwriting Competition. Permission to use the letter granted.
The extensiveness and nature of the L.L.T.'s activities have served, undeniably, as an inspiration to other amateur groups in Canada. They have, simultaneously, served to justify the community's continued support.

**Children's Theatre Committee**

The Motion Picture Committee was established in the 1946-47 season. The next season, in the month of February, a Children's Theatre Committee was formed. On the afternoon of December 18, eleven months later, the first production of the Children's Theatre was presented in the Grand. The Children's Theatre has continued to present, each successive season, at least two full-length productions, one during the Christmas season, the other in the spring. Morning or afternoon rather than evening performances proved to be preferable. Although the latter did result in a larger adult audience, the number of children in attendance was usually reduced. From one to seven performances have been given each production.

Following its first production, the Children's Theatre Committee, using the services of L.L.T. personnel, conducted a theatre course open to any boy or girl at a modest fee of one dollar. The large numbers enrolling, 150 for the ten-week 1951-52 course conducted each Saturday afternoon, necessitated the creation of two such courses.

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4Children's Theatre Production Record Chart, p. 190.
These two courses, held respectively in the fall and spring, have had an average registration of fifty. The incidence of repeaters in these courses is so high that Beginners, Young, and Older Advanced categories have had to be created. The children enrolled are cast in the productions. Many of them, because "every effort is made to train the children in the various phases of stagecraft," are also used on the various production committees.

The policy of the Children's Theatre is to use, almost exclusively, children as the performers. "It is essential," stated a former member of the Children's Theatre Committee, "to provide for the children the maximum of creative opportunity. We have found, however, that the presence of two or three adults in the various productions has stimulated the younger players and vice versa." There have been many of these younger players who have performed in the L.L.T.'s Major and Studio Club productions. The production of plays for children performed primarily by children makes the L.L.T.'s Children's Theatre somewhat unique among the relatively few little theatre groups who are sponsoring children's theatres in Canada.

The successful operation of the Children's Theatre's courses, together with the rehearsing, costuming, and

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5Bulletin C, 1953 Membership Campaign (unpubl.).

6Interview with Mrs. H. C. Nancekivell, intermittent Chairman of the Children's Theatre Committee and play director of the Children's Theatre for over a ten-year period, May 20, 1962.
setting requirements of its productions, has made prohibitive demands upon the time and efforts of the volunteer workers and the resources of the L.L.T. The maintenance of this enterprise, is, therefore, a tribute to the L.L.T.'s venturesomeness.

Few amateur theatre groups in Canada possess either the financial or material resources to cope with the demands made by a Children's Theatre. The majority of these groups find that it is all they can do to satisfy, successfully, the demands of their own immediate operation. To imperil their resources and increase their man-hours in the sponsorship of a Children's Theatre, desirable though it may be, would be sheer folly. Only when such an organization has achieved in successive seasons, financial solvency, a firmly entrenched community support through the presentation of top-notch productions, and a working and experienced personnel of sizeable proportions would such an undertaking be advisable. The L.L.T. had achieved these basic requisites by 1948.

Production Committees

The L.L.T.'s Wardrobe, Properties, Scenic Workshop, and Make-Up Committees, by 1948, were well established. Each had developed a continuity of policy and working personnel and each had acquired considerable equipment.
During the 1947-48 season the Wardrobe Committee, consisting of the Chairman and fifteen active workers, had supplied, as revealed in the committee's reports, 101 costumes for the fourteen L.L.T. productions. Of these, in accordance with its policy of making the costumes whenever possible, only 15 were rented, 22 were made, 11 made over, and the remaining 53 came from its wardrobe collection that, according to a 1946-47 inventory, consisted of 505 items.

Throughout the run of each production dressers were supplied by this committee. The cost of operation, including materials and dry-cleaning amounted to slightly over ninety dollars. The rentals of costumes to various church, school, and drama groups amounted to $102. To promote public interest in and a better understanding of the various aspects of stage costuming, these busy workers found the time to hold a wardrobe demonstration during the season.

This account of Wardrobe's 1946-47 program, with one major exception, is fairly representative of its yearly activities. The Committee's activities have increased with each successive season. This increase was due to the constant expansion of the L.L.T.'s own production program and the creation of the Children's Theatre. Instead of 101 costumes that had been required for the fourteen productions in 1946-47, 525 costumes were required for the eighteen productions in 1953-54, and 432 for the sixteen productions in 1955-56. The active workers increased from eighteen to
twenty-five in the 1955-56 season. During the 1950-51 season the policy of lending rather than renting costumes was inaugurated. The rental fee, no matter how modest, was a real deterrent to many producing groups who needed such assistance. The members of the L.L.T. felt that as a non-profit community service organization such assistance should be available to these groups free of charge. Their only financial obligations would be the dry-cleaning and postal charges. The very next season, as a result of this new policy, thirty-two groups had borrowed 383 costumes or articles; by the end of the 1955-56 season, 984 costumes or articles had been loaned. This policy had obviously been enjoyed, and presumably appreciated, by any number of school, church, and dramatic groups in London and district. The task of selecting, packaging and mailing, and the sorting, inspecting and checking off of the returned items must have been a tremendous one for this committee. It is a miracle that the huge number of requests for costumes did not founder the committee. To help forestall this calamity, the lending of costumes, as of 1955, has been restricted to September to mid-May, when the necessary personnel is more available.

The Properties Committee, like Wardrobe, was in a similar state of preparedness to fulfill the additional tasks that the Children's Theatre would impose upon it. By 1948 the Committee had its own property room that provided ample space for the storage and repair of all hand and
furniture properties acquired by the organization since 1934. The existence and maintenance of an inventory of these made them readily accessible. The members, which by then numbered twenty-four, were divided into property crews of one or more experienced members and at least two new members to work each show. The personnel of this committee as revealed by its annual reports, has been a major factor in its efficiency. Each new season it has consisted of not only new members but at least 10 or more experienced former members. Of the 24 crew members in 1948-49, 10 were veterans; 25 of the 40 workers in 1951-52 were veterans; 18 former members brought the crews total to 38 in 1955-56. These figures would also seem to indicate that unlike many other amateur organizations the problem of acquiring workers for this unheralded activity has been a nominal one for the L.L.T.

Courses in the use, handling, and importance of props were conducted by this committee, working in co-operation with the Education Committee. These courses are partially responsible for the interest and respect which this important area of production has achieved. The lending policy of this committee may be another factor. The employment of such a policy by any little theatre group is an obvious means of winning public goodwill. Less apparent, although just as important, is its ability to serve as a subtle device by which to indoctrinate the borrowers in an
appreciation of the importance of properties in the achievement of a successful production.

Comparable reports of the organization, activity, and expansion of the Scenic Design and Make-Up Committees could be enumerated. Between these two committees there exists one notable distinction, a distinction which had constantly plagued the former and contributed to an easier operation of the latter.

The Make-Up Committee has always been able to enlist the services of any number of experienced and inexperienced crew members. The Scenic Design Committee, from the time of its inception in the fall of 1934, had never had a sufficient number of volunteer workers to enable it to avoid the customary last minute panic of construction and painting in order to finish the sets for opening nights. The Scenic Committee hoped that the acquisition of a large workshop and a scenery dock, constructed beside the stage in 1948, would eliminate this situation. However, the location of the workshop just off-stage made it prohibitive for the few volunteer workers to build sets while a performance was taking place. This meant that in the evenings, when most of them would be free, they were often unable to work. The committee established set-construction courses hoping that with more workers the limitations of the workshop might be overcome. This did not occur. Each year part-time help had to be procured and paid to get the sets, which by the 1949-50
season numbered twenty-one for the organization's sixteen productions, finished on time.

The need for such assistance was finally eliminated in the spring of 1950. At that time the L.L.T. hired a full-time Workshop Director. The organization has gladly continued to do so and for various reasons. The presence of a Workshop Director has helped to minimize the chaos so often prevalent in a workshop; has helped to make possible the construction of attractive and functional settings on time; has made possible the successful conduct of set-design and construction courses; and, as gleaned from the committee's annual reports, has resulted in an increase in the number of volunteer workers. In 1951-52 twenty-eight persons and in 1955-56 thirty-eight persons served on the stage crews in contrast to the eighteen who built the sets in 1949-50. With this supply of workers the Scenic Design Committee was now able to function as efficiently as any of the L.L.T.'s committees.

It has often been stated that an audience does not come to the theatre to look at sets, but rather to experience what happens in front of them. Nevertheless, adequate and appropriate stage settings are important in the successful presentation of any play. They should not be jeopardized by financial or personnel problems. The L.L.T. did not permit them to be, which is to the organization's credit.
There is one element which the four preceding committees have in common. That is the presence of three or four capable and industrious workers on each committee who can be relied upon to get their committee's necessary, sometimes irksome, tasks done. These willing workers, who more aptly might be called 'work horses,' are always ready to go beyond the call of duty, if need be, in the fulfillment of their particular committee's responsibilities. In this respect these four committees are not unlike the production committees of many amateur groups in Canada. However, to be dependent solely upon such workers not only places a heavy burden upon them but necessarily limits and restricts the production activities of the organization. The inability of many amateur theatre groups, in Canada, to acquire a sufficient number of backstage workers, which has been frequently reported by members of the competing groups at the Dominion Drama Festivals, has been a deterrent to their successful operations. The L.L.T. has not suffered from this affliction. This is not merely the result of fortuitous circumstances but rather of intensive recruiting and promotional campaigns that produce such a large number of backstage workers that the production committees are neither restricted in their efforts nor are their 'work-horses' unduly burdened. The existence of this army of workers, rather than exclusive dependence upon the services of a few, distinguishes these committees from those of many
less fortunate Canadian amateur groups. This distinction has helped to make the L.L.T. one of the most productive little theatre organizations in Canada.

Subscription Membership Committee

Types of Membership

The L.L.T. has five different types of membership. One of these is largely responsible for the club's enviable success in recruiting workers while at the same time helping it to justify its claim as a community theatre. The organization established this particular type of membership three years after its inception.

The L.L.T. is not a closed corporation. Anyone who wishes, as has been previously noted, whether he does or does not fill in a Working Membership card upon which he indicates in what capacity or capacities he would like to serve, can work within the L.L.T. There is no membership fee required to become a working member of the organization. The only working membership requisite, which as Louise Burleigh has stated should be the policy of every community theatre, is the magic word, "willing."7 Open play-readings and try-outs for both the Studio Club and the major productions are regularly conducted. Indeed, "no theatre has a

right to call itself a Community or Civic Theatre that
doesn't employ open try-outs for parts.\textsuperscript{8}

There is no distinction made in the lists of the
working memberships between those who as working members
are either subscribing or non-subscribing members. This
deliberate policy, and it is a desirable one, makes it
difficult to determine exactly how many of the L.L.T.'s
working members were in any single season actually sub-
scribing members. The following figures merely serve as a
comparison between the number of subscribing and working
(subscribing and non-subscribing) members in various L.L.T.
seasons. There were 1,650 subscribing members and 80 work-
ing members in the 1940-41 season.\textsuperscript{9} By 1950-51, there were
10,143 members by subscription and 285 working members. In
the 1955-56 season 7,959 names were listed in the Subscription
Membership file and 240 names were listed in the
Working Membership file.

A breakdown of the number of persons who directly
participated in the production of the L.L.T.'s plays during
some of its seasons should be made. The breakdown will
reveal a marked discrepancy between the number of working
members recorded in the Working Membership file and the
actual number of workers required to produce the Major,

\textsuperscript{8}John Gassner, \textit{Producing the Play} (New York: Dryden

\textsuperscript{9}There is no accurate record available prior to the
1940-41 season.
Children's Theatre, and Studio productions. The discrepancy exists because many individuals who casually filed a Working Membership form did not work, while others who never filed a form, did work. There being no records of how many working members did not work in any one season the subsequent figures are significant only to the degree that they do reveal the extent of participation provided by and required by the L.L.T. in the maintenance of its production program. While serving to substantiate the claim that the L.L.T. is a community service organization, they also reflect the unreliability of the volunteer worker.

In 1940-41 there were 80 working members yet the services of approximately 150 different people were used in the organization's thirteen productions. In the 1950-51 season with 285 working members, 321 persons were directly associated with its fourteen productions. The number of working members in 1955-56 was 240 while 285 workers were responsible for the club's sixteen productions.

The other types of membership are voting, honorary voting, studio club, and subscription memberships.

The voting members are those who, after showing competence in at least two departments of the organization's activities for a period of at least two years, are appointed by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee. After a three-year period a voting member must again be recommended to the Board for
reappointment. There were 71 voting members in 1940; by 1951 there were 115; and by 1956, 140 voting members. An honorary voting member is an individual who has at some time been of special service to the organization. There were 25 such members by 1953, 27 by 1955-56. Studio Club members are those who, upon payment of a yearly fee, are entitled to attend all the productions and events sponsored by the Studio Club. Lastly, there are the subscription members whose subscriptions, which provide approximately 79 per cent of the club's income, permit them to attend the major productions.

Subscription Memberships

The L.L.T. began its first season in 1934-35 with a subscription membership of approximately 800. At that time single admissions were available to any of the five major productions. In the spring of 1938 the Board of Directors and the voting members decided to discontinue the sale of these tickets and to make their major productions available to only subscribing members.

The L.L.T. discovered that with the implementation of its subscription policy the money derived from the fall sale of subscription memberships, which would be its main source of revenue, was now in the bank prior to its first production. With this money, and the names of the subscribers on file who had provided it, the organization now had a sense
of security that it had not experienced during its previous four seasons of existence. Moreover, advertising costs, although not eliminated, were considerably reduced. What was equally important to the active workers in the L.L.T. was the gradual emergency of a proprietary, almost paternal, interest in the organization on the part of the subscribing members. The subscription system was functioning as a link between the community and the producing members of the L.L.T. Within two years following its being adopted by the organization, Alan Skinner, President of the organization at the time, stated that "the London Little Theatre's strict adherence to this [subscription membership] policy has proved its value. . . ."10 This subscription system has continued to bind the community to the theatre.

The cost of a subscription membership has been another factor in the successful integration of the L.L.T. within the community. From 1934-35 to 1944-45 the subscription membership for five productions was $3; from 1945-46 to the end of the 1948-49 seasons a subscriber saw six different productions for $4; in the seasons from 1949-50 to 1950-51, six shows for $5 was the subscription membership price, and from 1951-52 to 1955-56 inclusive six shows for $6. The ownership of a subscription membership, at these nominal prices, has not been prohibitive for many of London's

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citizens. "A popular-price theatre," Norris Houghton feels, "is essential to the future well-being of dramatic art in this country."11 The L.L.T., in the fulfillment of this requisite, can also be properly designated as a community theatre.

The Subscription Membership Committee, whose personnel consists of a Chairman, appointed by the Board, the chairmen of the Personnel and the Public Relations Committees, and the Executive Secretary, who acts as secretary and campaign manager, together with other workings members, is responsible for the organization and conduct of the annual subscription membership campaigns. Approximately four to six weeks prior to the first production of the season, the Subscription Membership Committee, already in a state of preparedness, launches its intensive membership campaign. This campaign is organized on a team basis, each team having a captain and eight to ten canvassers. The permanent file of former subscription members forms the basis of the canvassers' lists. The awarding of prizes to the teams and the granting of cash or membership bonuses to the canvassers helps to keep the spirit of competition among the teams at a high level. Daily returns are made by the team captains. These returns, together with campaign material, are presented to the canvassers in weekly campaign bulletins. Except for two notable

changes, this has been the committee's campaign procedure throughout the years.

At various times, the working members considered the possibility of inaugurating the subscription membership campaign upon the conclusion of their last production of the season. They finally decided that such a policy would be ill-advised. Their own state of exhaustion from the recently concluded season's activities, and the likelihood that the potential subscribers would be too involved with the distractions which spring and early summer provide to give much thought to the possibility of attending the organization's productions, prompted this decision. However, in the spring of 1955, renewals by present subscribers were made available at the box office during the run of and after the last production of the season. The results were so satisfactory, by June 373 members had renewed their subscriptions, that this policy has been maintained. The efforts of the fall canvassers have been reduced and, more important, funds have been made available well in advance of the opening of the next season.

A second subscription innovation was instituted by the Board of Directors in the fall of 1953. At that time, part-season memberships were made available to individuals who had recently moved to London. This type of membership has been made available each succeeding season.
How successful, numerically, have these subscription membership campaigns been? In its first season of operations, 1934-35, the L.L.T. had a subscription membership of 784. In each of the next fifteen consecutive seasons there was an increase in membership but for the season of 1939-40, which, with the outbreak of war, suffered a loss of 300 members. By 1946 there were 6,769 subscription members and there was a waiting list of 1,500 seeking memberships.

There are few amateur theatre organizations that find it necessary to establish a waiting list. The L.L.T. had to do so during the 1946-47 subscription membership campaign. The volunteer workers at the commencement of the 1946-47 season were already giving six performances of each major production. More performances would be required, because of the seating capacity of the Grand, unless a restrictive membership policy was established. The working members felt that six performances was a sufficient drain upon their energy and time. The result was that the L.L.T. had to limit the number of subscription tickets which could be sold. This was a most enviable and unique situation for an amateur theatre group, especially when it owned a theatre with a seating capacity of 1,210. Any individual who was unable to obtain a subscription membership ticket, and who wished to

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12 Subscription Membership Record Chart, p. 197.
have the opportunity to become a subscribing member the following season, entered his name on a waiting list. The Subscription Membership Committee at the beginning of the succeeding season first canvassed the past season's subscribing members. The cancellations of any of these members were then made available to those on the waiting list. Despite the L.L.T.'s efforts to implement a restrictive membership policy, the demands for memberships were so extensive that the members had to give eight performances of each production in the very next season, 1947-48.

The subscription membership reached its peak in 1949-50 with a total of 10,636 members and a waiting list of 1,495. With this subscription membership nine performances of each production were required. Following this peak season, in each of the six subsequent seasons there was a decrease in memberships with a most serious decrease occurring in two of them.

In the season that followed the peak membership season of 1949-50, there was a decrease of 493 members. Yet the organization still had an enviable waiting list of 1,529, as of May 31, 1951. The waiting list had among its numbers 803 who had been former members but who were unable to renew during the membership campaign, yet wished to go on the waiting list to ensure membership in 1951-52. The remaining 706 were new names. Although the 1951-52 season had decrease of only 226 members, 1884 former members, or
approximately 20 per cent of the previous season's members, cancelled their subscriptions. The number of names on the waiting list was down by 40 per cent. When the time came to begin the 1952-53 fall membership campaign, the canvassers discovered that the waiting list no longer existed. The second alarming drop in membership was the loss of 1,644 members in 1954-55.

The time was past, by the end of the 1951-52 season, when advertisements would appear, as they had, in the local newspaper in which couples would state their willingness to surrender their precious L.L.T. memberships in exchange for information leading to an apartment. No longer was it necessary for the L.L.T. to publish an apology that it regretted being unable to accept any more subscription memberships for the coming season. Now the members of the Subscription Membership Committee had to get out and contact the potential prospects, whereas these prospects had previously often contacted them.

Subscription Membership Analysis

The phenomenal subscription membership growth of the L.L.T., as revealed by the Subscription Membership Record Chart, particularly from 1943 to 1950, can be largely attributed to the following: (1) the quality of its productions, (2) the scope and worth of its activities both culturally and financially to the city of London, (3) the artistic and businesslike acumen of its members, (4) the
continuance of its operations during World War II, and (5) its ownership of the Grand Theatre.

Throughout these years there were many who, as lovers of the theatre, became subscribing members in order to be a part of and experience whatever the L.L.T. had to offer. There were also many who joined the L.L.T. whose motives, as patrons of the theatre, were dubious. Among the latter were those who had previously been indifferent to, or at best only mildly interested in, the organization. They finally succumbed, either because of the enthusiasm of their subscribing friends and neighbours or because of the impact of the organization upon the community. The psychological factor of an organization blessed with such an avalanche of members that it had to exercise some restriction in the availability of memberships prompted the curious and prestige-conscious to seek membership. Reluctant husbands were coerced by wives eager to be a part of the social whirl which membership in the L.L.T. provides. There were also those who found that the organization's reputation, nationally as well as locally, was such that they could ill afford not to join. The series of professional Road Shows and Summer Stock performances while satisfying the dedicated theatregoers only whetted the appetites of the casual ones. For the latter, the L.L.T. became the means of appeasing this latent desire.
These indifferent theatregoers, primarily in pursuit of entertainment in the guise of escapism, were a part, but fortunately for the continued success of the L.L.T. a relatively small part, of the 10,636 subscribers in the 1949-50 season. It was this subscription membership which made the L.L.T. the largest little theatre organization in North America, if not in the world. This accomplishment was regarded as an enviable one by other little theatre groups. It won for the L.L.T. national prestige and commendation. This large membership was, however, accompanied by the attendant liabilities that such a membership will automatically impose upon any little theatre organization.

The most readily apparent liabilities, and the ones which the L.L.T. experienced, were the need to increase the number of performances, thereby increasing the amount of time and effort required of its volunteers, and the loss of revenue to the Grand because of the decrease in the number of evenings it could be rented. A more destructive and debilitating element, however, can result from such a sizeable membership.

When an organization achieves, as did the L.L.T., a membership of 10,000, there is the danger of it having to entertain an audience that is large rather than discriminating. This means that the plays chosen may become mentally, morally, and aesthetically inferior for the more theatre-minded members of its audience. The inevitable result is
that instead of being regarded with respect, such an organi-
ization is regarded with good-natured indulgence as an
engaging but silly toy. This is not to imply that a com-
munity theatre should be so high-brow in its choice of plays
that it is several steps ahead of the community's tastes.
Any little theatre must use as a guide in the selection of
its repertory the dictates of its audience who must, directly
or indirectly, support the plays and pay the bills. Never-
theless, it is the duty of a community theatre, according
to Sheldon Cheney, to at least keep a step ahead of its
audience without going to a ruthless extreme in its play
selection. Admittedly, such a middle course is difficult
for any little theatre to maintain, particularly, for one
with a membership the size of the L.L.T.'s.

The danger which threatened the L.L.T. with its con-
stantly increasing memberships, culminating in the 1949-50
membership of 10,636, was not that it would become unduly
highbrow, but rather that, in catering to the tastes of so
many, it would choose plays that were light and frivolous in
content. When this occurs, and such has been the fate of
many Canadian groups with even smaller memberships than the
L.L.T., as revealed by their seasonal programs, the organi-
zation ceases to be a disseminator of the finest plays, from
Greek tragedy to modern farce, that the theatre has to offer.

\[\text{13 Cheney, The Art Theatre, p. 167.}\]
It also ceases to fulfill its obligations to train the playgoers, increase their comprehension of the drama, and enlarge their vision of the stage.

A study of the L.L.T.'s Major Production Record Chart from 1934 to 1956 reveals that the organization has never been unduly high-brow in its choice of plays. It could be said, and has been, that the plays chosen by the L.L.T. for its major productions are very similar to those produced by many amateur groups. However, such a statement should not be made to justify nor to endorse the selection. Indeed, it is a matter of regret that such a statement is a valid one. It has been stated previously that the plays chosen by a little theatre group should be more high-brow than low-brow and that they should be a step ahead of the community's tastes. The plays selected by the L.L.T. have not always been of this calibre. The L.L.T.'s repertoire would be a more admirable one if it contained more classical plays, was less derived of current and past Broadway hits, was less stereotyped in its variety, and more courageous in the production of the new, the novel, and the unconventional. The L.L.T.'s failure to produce more of these types of plays is due to the same pursuit of box office hits and fear of the nontraditional that Elmer Rice has said are responsible

\[14\] See Major Production Record Chart, p. 191.
for the plays chosen by the majority of the little theatre groups in the United States.\textsuperscript{15}

What was the nature of the L.L.T.'s repertoire following the acquisition of its 10,636 members? The plays selected from 1950 to 1956, as listed on the Major Production Record Chart, are comparable in quality, and as varied in type, style, and periods of setting and costumes as the plays produced by the organization prior to 1950. The quality of the plays selected may not have noticeably improved, but at least it was maintained. One would be tempted to believe that the active workers either continued to select their plays oblivious of the presence of their undiscriminating members or simply refused to lower their former standards to appease the theatrical tastes of such members. Either that, or as dedicated workers in a community theatre they are determined to improve and train these playgoers, thereby converting the potential liability which they represented into an actual asset. Whatever the reasons, it cannot be said of the L.L.T., as revealed by its choice of plays, that the existence of these casual playgoers reduced it to a low-brow theatre. Instead, as the succeeding paragraphs will attempt to prove, it was largely these members who became most vociferous and cancelled their subscriptions whenever the organization courageously

presented a play that was among the finest of its type. This will provide evidence that the L.L.T., although playing to "an audience that is large, rather than discriminat-
ing," did not lower its standards of production.

The alarming number of cancellations, which occurred each season following the organization's peak membership in 1949-50, prompted the Subscription Membership Committee to conduct a survey to discover the reasons for them. These cancellation surveys were conducted from 1951 to 1955.16

An analysis of these charts, correlated with the plays produced and the members' reactions to them, will reveal that the casual, indifferent theatregoers, whose memberships had helped the organization to achieve 10,636 members, represented the majority of the cancellations from 1950 to 1955.

During the 1950-51 season two plays which received a somewhat critical reception were The Glass Menagerie and On Borrowed Time. The former was described as much too depressing or not funny enough; the latter was said to be too strange or weird. It is most unlikely that such comments were made of those two fine plays by the members in pursuit of good theatre. At the conclusion of that season, 

16Analysis of Cancellations in the 1951-52 Membership Campaign, p. 198 and Analysis of Cancellations for 1953 to 1955 p.199. These charts, due to their incompleteness and the tendency of former members to give either no reasons or reasons other than the real ones, are not completely accurate. They do, however, provide some insight into the various motives which prompted former subscribers to cancel their subscriptions.
1,884 members cancelled their subscriptions for 1951-52. Of the 616 who gave the canvassers their reasons for cancellation, 18 per cent stated that they had developed other interests, 4 per cent were no longer interested and 2 per cent were honest enough, even at the risk of losing face, to say they did not like the choice of plays.

Among those who were subscribing members for the 1951-52 season there were many who found The Voice of the Turtle completely lacking in good taste and blatantly "sexy." These members were able to derive some pleasure from the realistic details of the set, for it provided them with the luxury of being able to exclaim over the functional kitchen equipment which even had real water coming out of the taps! Shadow of the Tree was critically dismissed by many as being "too depressing," while Edward My Son was not "funny enough." The exponents of these and similar irresponsible criticisms, criticisms which were seldom directed at the standard of production of the plays, were to a great degree among the 1,622 members who failed to renew their subscriptions at the end of that season. Of the 84.7 per cent who gave their reasons, the percentage who were involved in other interests had increased to 20.9 per cent, while 5.4 per cent were now no longer interested. To have found other interests that were of such a nature as to make attendance at the Grand for six evenings during the fall and winter prohibitive would seem to be a very dubious reason for a cancellation. Would there not be some justification
for categorizing such former members as indifferent playgoers? Such an assumption would certainly be valid for the 5.4 per cent group. Despite the protests and criticisms directed at the plays by many members during the season, only slightly more than 5 per cent stated that their reason for cancellation was because they did not like the choice of plays. The only logical conclusion that would seem to reconcile this discrepancy is that either out of deference to the canvassers or to maintain some semblance of theatre-consciousness other reasons were given.

This conclusion is substantiated by what transpired during the 1952-53 season. There were violent reactions by various members to some of the plays produced that year. Members walked out during the performances, wrote letters of protest to the newspaper and to the L.L.T., and orally discredited the plays for divers reasons. The culprits were *Dark of the Moon* and *Death of a Salesman*. The result was that 1,940 members cancelled their subscriptions for the 1953-54 season. Yet when the reasons for these cancellations were finally tabulated, an incongruous figure of 6.5 per cent was recorded for those who had cancelled because of the choice of plays selected in the 1952-53 season. What is equally incongruous is that *Dark of the Moon* went on to win the Western Ontario Drama Festival and was chosen to compete in the Dominion Drama Festival, while *Death of a Salesman* captured the best actor award for a play not
invited to the former festival. This would surely seem to substantiate both the statement that the L.L.T. did not lower its standards and the assumption that the majority of those who were cancelling their memberships were entertainment-seekers in the narrowest meaning of the term.

When the 1954-55 membership campaign was concluded, the L.L.T. was confronted with the biggest reduction in membership it had ever experienced. It had a subscription membership of 7,959, 1,644 less than in the previous season. It had lost 2,178 former members through cancellations. Some illumination as to why this dramatic loss in membership occurred is provided by the Chairman of the Play Reading Committee. At the organization's annual meeting for the 1953-54 season he stated that: "We need to keep in mind that it is the tired businessman who pays the shot."

Neither the Cocktail Party nor Anne of a Thousand Days had proved to be very entertaining for this particular type of member. This was the type of member who was largely responsible for the 7 per cent who cancelled because of the plays produced and the 14 per cent who had become embroiled in other interests. It certainly was not the ardent theatre-goer to whom the Executive Secretary referred, at a meeting of the Board that very fall, when she said: "Twenty per cent
of our members have belonged continuously since the organization's first season.\footnote{17}

The cancellation figures for 1955-56 are significant for they confirm the interpretation of the pattern of cancellations that the preceding investigation has endeavoured to establish.

The L.L.T. presented its first production for the 1955-56 season to 7,636 subscription members. This figure represents a loss of only 624 former subscription members and a reduction in membership of 323 from the previous season's membership total. Of the 58.8% former subscribers who gave their reasons for cancellation, only 5.3% had managed to find other interests, 1.2% were now no longer interested, and a mere 1.5% did not like the choice of plays. Yet the same standards of production and play choice had been maintained by the L.L.T. in its 1954-55 season. The dissimilarity of these percentages therefore becomes all the more notable when compared with those recorded from 1951 to 1954. Such a comparison, when made with an awareness of the pattern of the cancellations that the organization experienced following the achievement of its 10,636 membership would seem to justify the following conclusions.

\footnote{17Report of the Executive Secretary at Board meeting of October 22, 1955 (unpubl.).}
Many of the casual playgoers, who were a part of the 1949-50 audience, having satisfied their curiosity and lost their dubious interest, began to cancel their subscriptions by 1951 and continued to do so in such large numbers that there were few of them left to be recorded among the 1955-56 cancellations. The L.L.T., while maintaining its standards, had managed to convert some of them and retained the majority of its more dedicated theatregoers. The series of cancellations, ironically, created a more desirable type of audience for the organization, and the organization could now become more stable in the annual rise and fall of its membership.

**Bill-Setting Committee**

The Bill-Setting Committee, with the assistance of the Play-Reading and the Producers Committees, is primarily responsible for the plays which are finally chosen for each season's bill. The word "finally" is indicative of the effort made by the organization to ensure the selection of plays that will be suitable for its audiences. The fact that they have not always been so by no means discredits the organization's play-selection process which is an extremely sound and thorough one. The degree of success that it achieves is dependent upon those who use it.

The three committees, which consist of approximately forty-five persons, work for at least eight months of every
year in order to prepare the season’s bill of major productions. On or before January 1 each year the producers, those who will direct the L.L.T.’s plays, submit the names of at least three plays, which they would like to have considered, to the Play-Reading Committee. Anyone in the organization, including subscribing members, may also suggest plays to this committee. From forty to sixty different plays have been submitted each year. Those that are unknown or unfamiliar to the members of this committee are read by at least three of them, and if these plays have production possibilities all the members, usually five, read them. The members card-catalogue the plays read, including pertinent information as to the size of the cast, staging and costuming requirements, a brief summary of the plot, and the direction and production possibilities for either the L.L.T. or other amateur groups. The existence of this file, which contains one-act as well as full-length plays, has been of tremendous assistance to churches, schools, and other groups who have been in pursuit of a play suitable for them to produce. From the plays contained in this permanent file as well as from those submitted in the current year this committee, by April 1, prepares a list of from twenty-five to thirty plays that it feels would be suitable for the coming season.

The Producers Committee receives this list and promptly swings into action. For about two months, two or
three weekly meetings are held at which the members consider the suitability of the plays on the list. The members found that reading the plays aloud "was the most satisfactory method yet used, although it meant concentrated work."\textsuperscript{18}

Particular consideration is given to their production requirements. There finally emerges from this elimination process a list of from twelve to fourteen plays that are combined to form a suitable bill of plays with a second and perhaps a third bill as alternatives.

The third stage of the L.L.T.'s play-selection process now takes place. The "bills" prepared by the Producers Committee are submitted by June 1 to the Bill-Setting Committee. This committee, which consists of two members from each of the Producers and Play-Reading Committees and the Vice-President in charge of the Group "A" Committees, who act as Chairman, then proceeds to carefully scrutinize the suggested "bills." During this process the chairmen of the various production committees such as Costuming, Properties, and Scenic Workshop, are called in for consultation. A tentative bill is then compiled by this committee.

The last step in the process is the approval or disapproval of the Bill-Setting Committee's efforts by the Board of Directors. More than once a play, or even the entire bill, has been rejected and the bill referred back

\textsuperscript{18}1950-51 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Producers Committee (unpubl.).
to the Bill-Setting Committee. The final result is a bill that, after a great deal of time and effort, has been very carefully chosen.

The selection of a bill of plays that will be worthy of an organization's time and effort, adaptable to its facilities, and satisfying to its audiences is a difficult and important task. The plays selected should not be the exclusive product of the whims or desires of a few potential directors, scene designers, or wardrobe mistresses who, for various reasons, wish to do this or that particular play. Such an eventuality the L.L.T.'s process of play-selection is designed to prevent. Not only does it consist of a Producers Committee responsible for the production of the plays selected but there are also the Play-Reading and Bill-Setting Committees.

The L.L.T.'s bill-setting process, requiring as it does the services of three committees, is a somewhat complicated, if not cumbersome one. The complexity of it has created, as practiced by the volunteer workers of the L.L.T., certain limitations. The channels of communication between the three committees have not always been maintained. This is particularly applicable to the Play-Reading Committee. Frequently, despite the extensive play production lists submitted by the Play-Reading Committee, the final season's bill has contained one or two plays not submitted by this committee. The reactions of the members of this
committee, on such occasions, have been those of surprise and chagrin. They ought to have been informed by the Producers and Bill-Setting Committees that production costs, royalty releases, setting requirements or the last minute withdrawal or unavailability of a director had necessitated the selection of a play or plays that had not been on the Play-Reading Committee's list. Whenever the members of any one of the three committees failed to fulfill, and on time, their particular tasks, their failure immediately impaired the efficiency of the other two committees. This situation, which might occur within any department of an organization dependent upon volunteer workers, can only be eliminated by a more conscientious effort on the part of the committee's members.

The limitations of the L.L.T.'s play-selection process, which are apt to exist wherever the human element is involved, have been compensated for by the satisfactory results that have been achieved.

**The Producers Committee**

The directors, who produce the plays selected by the Bill-Setting Committee, are chosen by the Producers Committee. This committee is responsible to the Board of Directors through the Vice-President in charge of the Group "A" committees. Its membership, over the years, has consisted of approximately seven to nine Senior Play Directors and eight to ten Junior Play Directors. These directors and
their chairman are yearly appointed to this committee by the Board of Directors at its first meeting following the annual spring meeting of the L.L.T.

The category of Junior Directors, to distinguish them from those that had and were consistently producing plays for the L.L.T.'s major bill of productions, came into existence with the creation of the Studio Club in the 1939-40 season. Since that time the Junior Directors have been those who, after having successfully directed at least two studio productions, have been selected by the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Producers and Personnel Committees. As Junior Directors they then become eligible to produce a play on the major bill, which in turn qualifies them to become a Senior Director.

The Producers Committee has never rigidly adhered to this policy of distinguishing between its directors. Instead, as a categorizing device, it has remained most flexible and unsystematized. This has been necessary if only to be adaptable to the incalculability to which any amateur group is subject when it is dependent upon the services of volunteer directors.

The scarcity of Senior Directors or the inability or unwillingness of a Senior Director to produce a play in a particular season has frequently necessitated the services of a director who was not yet a Junior Director or who, as a new member of the organization, had had directing
experience elsewhere. When the selection of such a director has been made by the Producers Committee it has, occasionally, provoked some criticism by the active Junior Directors who are anxious to direct a major production. Their criticism was, of course, based upon their awareness of the established policy which the committee seemed, in these instances, to be implementing in a very arbitrary manner. The committee's defense, and a proper one, has been its desire to procure the best director available to ensure the best possible production.

The directors selected by the Producers Committee, from 1934 to the 1956 season, have all been non-salaried volunteer workers within the L.L.T. There are three factors that have made it possible for the organization to successfully operate without the services of a salaried director. These factors are the presence of several professionally trained workers when the organization was initially formed, the existence of the Studio Club, and the maintenance of an open-door membership policy. In the 1938-39 season an honorarium of $50 was established by the Board of Directors for the directors of the major productions. This amount was increased to $100 in February of 1952. This modest honorarium cannot be, nor was it intended to be, regarded as a fee. It was, instead, established to help defray the director's out-of-pocket expenses--expenses that any director
of a major production may incur, if only in the sponsorship of cast parties as a device to keep his players happy.

The directors chosen by the Producers Committee appoint their own assistant directors, who are usually Junior Directors, and their set designers. They must submit as early as possible prior to the dates of their productions the set designs to the Workshop Committee and detailed lists of their production requirements to the various Production Committees. To facilitate the work of the directors and their assistants the Executive Secretary, acting as an intermediary between the artistic and business committees, serves as a member of the staff for each production. No director, unless it is due to most unusual circumstances, ever produces more than one major production each season.

The Producers Committee as well as supplying directors for the major productions has other tasks that it fulfills. As has been previously noted, this committee works with the Play-Reading and Bill-Setting Committees in the selection of the plays to be produced each season. In conjunction with the Educational Committee it sponsors and conducts classes for the training of directors. Each season it also assists the Extension Committee with its ambitious program.
Production Standards

The system that an amateur organization uses to select its directors is no more important to the group's success than the standards of performance that its directors achieve with their productions.

The L.L.T. was fortunate that at the time of its inception it had several members with professional training and experience. Their efforts as actors, technicians, and directors soon caused the productions of the L.L.T. to become the envy of other amateur groups throughout Western Ontario. "Without the leadership of an expert director," John Wray Young has declared, "the non-professional theatre is only a body without bones." The presence of these talented members spared the L.L.T. from such a malformation. Three of the organization's original members had studied under Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskya in New York and had worked there professionally. Their initial impact upon the organization is reflected in the assertion that: "Capitalizing on the talents and experience of three members of its production staff, the L.L.T. has become a leading exponent of the Stanislavsky technique of dramatic expression." Another member had been a professional actor and director in England, while yet another had played professionally in the United States with Sarah Bernhardt. To these members,

19 Gassner, op. cit., p. 526.

20 "A Little Theatre with a Big Idea," New World Illustrated, VI (February, 1946), 44.
and there were others with similar background, Liz Gairdner attributed the L.L.T.'s ability to produce professionally paced entertainment, which enabled the L.L.T. to acquire, and quickly, a large public following. They were responsible not only for the L.L.T.'s high standards of production but they also provided the initial inspiration and the theatrical knowledge and instruction that an infant amateur organization so desperately needs.

The efforts of these experienced people to achieve and maintain a high quality of production not only won local, but also international recognition. In the fall of 1943 "because London's past record sparkles with deft performance, author Rose Franken gave the L.L.T. the right to present the first amateur production of her hit, Claudia." By 1945 the editor of the local newspaper, in an editorial dealing with the L.L.T., stated that "the acting has taken on a finish and style which compare favorably with many professional productions."

Within ten seasons of productions the citizens of London were judging the amateur work of the L.L.T. by the same standards as the best professional work. The organi-

21Liz Gairdner, "Amateur Theatre Smash Biz," Mac-

22Ibid.


zation must have earned the compliment. That it had done so was demonstrated by the readiness with which the citizens of London responded to the L.L.T.'s appeal, in 1945, for voluntary contributions to enable it to buy the Grand. Their prompt and generous response was an acknowledgment of the quality of the L.L.T.'s productions. As Edward Reveaux has stated:

Money follows value and gives it a price, but the value has to be there in the first place. Before anyone is asked to invest in a theatre group, that group should first prove it can produce theatre.\(^\text{24}\)

In 1948 the L.L.T., on a national level, proved its ability to produce theatre when Robert Speaight selected the organization's production of *Saint Joan* and the actress who played the title role as the best presentation and performance by an actress in the Dominion Drama Festival. He described the production as an experience rather than merely entertainment.\(^\text{25}\) His selection of *Saint Joan* is doubly significant for it also serves to strengthen the assertion that much of the L.L.T.'s initial success was attributable to the presence of professionally trained personnel. The director of *Saint Joan* was one of the L.L.T.'s personnel. The director of *Saint Joan* was one of the L.L.T.'s personnel.

\(^{24}\)Samuel Selden (ed.), *Organizing a Community Theatre* (Cleveland: National Theatre Conference, 1945), pp. 9-10.

three original members who had studied under Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskya.

The high level of production, achieved by the L.L.T.'s experienced personnel, was able to be maintained by means of the existence of the organization's open-door policy and its creation, in the fall of 1939, of the Studio Club. The L.L.T. in the fall of 1934 could easily have become a "closed shop" with its professionally trained members repeatedly being used as the performers, scenic artists, and directors. To have become such would have been at the expense of other potential participants who would gradually have been forced to remain spectators. As a theatre dedicated to service in the community neither the organization itself nor its experienced personnel permitted this to happen. The easy access to the L.L.T., which its open-door policy provided, resulted in its acquisition of a large number of potential performers and directors. They readily responded to and absorbed the experience and knowledge that the professional members of the organization willingly shared with them. They were then able to assist their tutors in the maintenance of the organization's production standards. In the succeeding years, they in turn became tutors to the incoming groups of novice actors and directors. This personnel production pattern has helped to ensure the continuity of the organization's standards of play production. The report of the Chairman of the Talent
Index Committee, which later became the Personnel Committee, indicates the degree to which this pattern was already firmly established as early as the 1939-40 season:

In the 1939-40 season, 17 plays were produced, 12 producers were used, 6 of these had not produced before, 40 actors from former productions and 50 new ones were used. Only 2 players have been used in more than 2 performances. . . . In the major productions—48 roles played by new people. In 10 Green Room [Studio] Productions—22 new players were used. 18 new people worked back-stage; 20 members worked on props. The subscribers can hardly say the London Little Theatre keeps using the same players over and over again.26

There were, instead, as reported by an active worker of the L.L.T., subscribers who expressed regret that they were not seeing more often in the productions some of the original members.27

The L.L.T. has always endeavoured to present performances that would bear the scrutiny of its most discerning members. To achieve this objective, it has tried to have the best possible directing, casting, and mounting. What is particularly unique about the L.L.T. is that while endeavouring to accomplish this efficient level of production, it has been able to maintain, by means of its open-door policy, the community service ideal of participation among the many. As stated in a 1953 mimeographed Bulletin; "The amount of voluntary work done by many people is

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26 1939-40 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Talent Index Committee (unpubl.).

27 Interview with Miss Margaret Glass, May 8, 1962.
unbelievable to those not closely in touch with the L.L.T. programme. We can, with justification, call our organization, a community theatre.\textsuperscript{28}

The Studio Club, which presented its first productions in January, 1940, became the means of helping to maintain the standards of performance of the L.L.T.'s major productions. The inexperienced performing and producing members were tested and trained in the productions of the Studio Club. After serving this apprenticeship and proving themselves in it, these working members were then able to graduate to the major productions. At least two seasons of directing in the Studio Club were required by the organization before a director was permitted to direct a major production. The creation of this policy in 1940, a policy to which it has more or less rigidly adhered, would seem to indicate that the L.L.T. had developed, at that time, a sufficient number of experienced workers to produce its major productions. The number of these workers, as of 1940, could now be maintained, even increased, by means of the graduates from Studio. This constantly expanding nucleus helped the L.L.T. to minimize the risk of jeopardizing its major productions through the premature use of inexperienced directors or performers.

If the theatrical arts of an amateur theatre organization are to develop, there must be a constant influx of

\textsuperscript{28}Bulletin D, 1953 Membership Campaign (unpubl.).
new talent. The L.L.T.'s open-door policy, and its Studio Club, have helped to fulfill this vital need.

The acquisition of a legitimate theatre was another factor which contributed to the L.L.T.'s high standards of production. With its rehearsal rooms, stage and technical plant all under one roof, every step in the production of a play could be more easily co-ordinated and controlled.

A high standard of acting and directing needs a high standard of technical production. In the achievement of this vital aspect of production, the Grand provided the facilities and the opportunities; the L.L.T. provided the talented and industrious backstage workers who capitalized upon them.

These workers and the scope and quality of their backstage efforts have been dealt with previously. However, an appraisal of the technical standards of the L.L.T. would be incomplete unless it was recorded that at the time the organization was founded, a more than adequate quality of technical production was automatically assured. There were two of its members who were not only skilled and efficient scene and lighting technicians but were dedicated to their tasks. One of these members, still active in the organization, has stage-managed and lit every Major, Studio, and Children's Theatre production since 1940. His backstage services, both before and during the presentation of a

29 Production Committees, p. 96.
production, have made a very important contribution to the technical merits of the L.L.T.'s productions.

The sum of money spent upon a production by an amateur group is certainly not indicative of its technical merits. Yet it can provide some indication of the degree of attention, if only financially, that the L.L.T. was able and ready to devote to its productions. The earliest production costs available are for the 1936-37 season. At that time, with a subscription membership fund of $3,808, five major productions were produced at an average cost of $560; $11,526 of the subscribers' $24,260 for the season when the L.L.T. acquired the Grand, went towards its six major productions, an average of $1,920; in 1949-50, the L.L.T.'s peak membership season, $6,934 of the $48,550 derived from the membership income went toward the six major productions. By 1951-52, with a reduction in membership compensated for by a raise of one dollar in its subscription memberships, a restricted budget resulted in the production of seven shows for $9,399, financed by the $54,243 derived from the membership revenue. In 1955-56, $6,035 of the $41,277 membership income was spent on the six major productions, an average of approximately $1,050. But for the high costs of production in the 1945-46 season, which were due to the renovations and

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30 His proficiency was recognized by the Dominion Drama Festival when he was appointed Stage Manager for its competing productions.
alterations necessitated by its acquisition of the Grand Theatre, the L.L.T. from 1936 to 1956 has spent approximately one-fifth to one-eighth of its membership income each season on its major productions.

The L.L.T. like most amateur theatres, has never been so relieved from the necessity of making economic solvency its first consideration that it has been able to make the standard of its productions its primary concern. That it has endeavoured to do so, despite this prevalent limitation, is confirmed by one of its own members: "The policy of emphasis on the quality of productions has made progress possible. I doubt if equal progress would have been possible under a scheme of financial economy." The achievement and maintenance of this policy was a propitious combination of a large number of industrious and talented on-stage and backstage workers and a liberal yet prudent financial administration.

A high standard of performance and technical efficiency was not continuously achieved in each and every production of the L.L.T. The organization was no more invulnerable than any other producing group, amateur or professional, to the hazards of production. The statement

31 1949-50 Annual Report by the Chairman of the Finance Committee (unpubl.).
can be made, however, that the L.L.T.'s ability to minimize these, especially in the early stages of development when most amateur groups are especially vulnerable to them, was responsible for its sudden growth and continued success.
CHAPTER VI

THE LONDON LITTLE THEATRE'S
FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION

Dominion Drama Festival

The L.L.T. has never operated in a state of isolation. Instead, the organization, primarily through the work of its Extension and Public Relations Committees, has continuously kept closely in touch with the new and established dramatic groups in Western Ontario. The maintenance of this relationship has contributed to the success of these groups and the L.L.T. has profited immeasurably from its contact with them.

Isolationism, characterized by individual dramatic groups being content to "paddle their own canoes" oblivious of the rewards to be derived from mutual co-operation and a pooling of resources with similar struggling societies, if only within their own immediate area, too frequently has been the curse of the amateur theatre. This "curse" the L.L.T., on a regional basis, has endeavoured to avoid. On a national level its elimination was partially assured with the establishment of the Dominion Drama Festival.

In 1932 the Earl of Bessborough, who was at that time the Governor-General of Canada, was desirous of promoting
Canadian theatre by bringing together various regional and lingual groups throughout Canada. In this way the groups would not only be able to observe each other's work but would also have the opportunity for a free exchange of common interests and problems. To accomplish this desire the Earl of Bessborough summoned sixty representative men and women, from across Canada, to a meeting held in Government House, at Ottawa. The meeting culminated in the inauguration of the Dominion Drama Festival on October 29, 1932.

At this memorable meeting in the development of the Canadian amateur theatre, it was decided to hold the first national drama festival at Ottawa in April of the following year. From November to April the rehearsal rooms, the platforms and stages of the large cities, and tiny, remote hamlets across Canada were enlivened by the dramatic efforts of 110 producing groups (90 English and 20 French) preparing and producing one-act plays. These were to be adjudicated by a regional adjudicator with the top twenty-four productions being invited to compete at Ottawa in April. With the exception of the war years, 1940 to 1946 inclusive, this dramatic activity has been duplicated each season, climax ed by a national drama festival which has grown steadily in scope and in national importance.

The Dominion Drama Festival (D.D.F.) became incorporated by Royal Charter in the summer of 1935. The D.D.F.'s objectives were to encourage dramatic art in Canada by
holding dominion and regional festivals at which prizes and awards for distinctive effort in any of the arts relating to the drama would be granted. Their number has steadily increased as more individuals have offered cups, trophies, shields, and cash prizes. The giving of these prizes and awards was to be regarded, however, as merely an ancillary effort or activity. The D.D.F.'s main purpose was to bring together the dramatic groups scattered across Canada, to stimulate their interest in play production, and to provide encouragement and inspiration.

In a country so sparsely populated in relation to its vast area whose very geography, as noted by Alan Skinner, is more conducive to a sectional development rather than a national movement, and in which there are two great cultural divisions in the two languages French and English,¹ the consolidation of dramatic effort which the D.D.F. introduced into Canada helped to eliminate the 'curse' of isolationism at a national level.

An examination of the organization and accomplishments of the D.D.F., if only a cursory one, is essential in order that the role that the L.L.T. has played within it may be better understood and appreciated.

At the time of the D.D.F.'s incorporation the necessary administrative offices were established and the division

of Canada into regional units was accomplished. A President and two Vice-Presidents, a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen, and an Honorary Director were elected by the Board of Governors. The latter, in 1935, were appointed by the Earl of Bessborough, one-third of them to retire each year with their successors appointed by the general court of the Governors of the Festival which is held during the Final festival. There were sixty-five Governors in 1939; by 1955 there were one hundred and thirty-six. The Board of Governors appointed an Executive Committee that, with the constant expansion of effort by the D.D.F., has increased from eleven to sixty-two members. This committee is largely responsible for the operation of the D.D.F. between its annual meetings. It was this body of administrators, prior to the 1933 festival, that divided Canada into twelve regions. Each year a non-Canadian adjudicator judges all the Regional festival plays, selecting the semi-final winners who are to participate in the Final festival. The semi-final winners are chosen solely on the basis of merit of performance without regard to the regional divisions. The names of these winners are submitted by the Regional adjudicator to the Executive Committee and it issues the invitations to them to compete in the Final festival. The little theatre groups within each region select a Chairman who becomes an ex-

—The number of regions has vascillated from the original twelve in 1933 to fourteen.
officio member of the Executive Committee and is appointed an Honorary Governor. Each year a special festival committee is appointed in the centre where the Final festival is held. For five successive seasons, from 1933 to 1937, it was held in Ottawa at which time only one-act plays were presented. In 1938 at Winnipeg, full-length as well as short plays were adjudicated. Various cities across Canada have since acted as hosts for the Final festivals which, as of 1950, presented only full-length plays.

A monthly magazine, The Curtain Call, in 1933 became the official publication of the D.D.F. At a nominal subscription rate of one dollar a year or fifteen cents an issue, it monthly provided its readers with information on the activities of the D.D.F. and the little theatre groups across Canada that were affiliated with it, as well as articles on the various aspects of little theatre organization and production. Curtain Call became another effective instrument in helping to integrate and stimulate the dramatic groups in Canada.

The D.D.F. in September 1950 opened in Ottawa a central office with a permanent secretariat, an undertaking that can only be regarded as an act of faith considering the precarious financial position the D.D.F. was in at that time. The magazine, Curtain Call, was replaced, in July 1951, by an eight- to twelve-page newsletter, Theatre Canada, which has since been mailed from the central office to
approximately seven thousand persons six times a year. Another notable undertaking was initiated at this time. Discussions and conferences had always been a part of the week's activities at the Final festivals. However, through the efforts of the staff of the central office and the executive committee a Theatre Conference was created which has since been held at every Final festival. The Theatre Conference consists of a systematically arranged series of morning and afternoon sessions devoted primarily to a particular aspect of the theatre. Lectures, group discussions, and demonstrations are presented which are relevant to the theme selected for the Theatre Conference. The Final festival participants and the general public are admitted free of charge. A one or two day Directors Seminar, conducted by the Final adjudicator, came into existence at the Final festival of 1954. As it is conducted at the end of the festival, all the competing directors are able to attend.

The funds required to finance the D.D.F. were, until the summer of 1952, obtained from the following sources: (1) donations voluntarily contributed by individuals and corporations, (2) a nominal yearly participation fee levied upon each of the regional divisions ranging from $200 to $800, (3) the entry fees, which in the Western Ontario Region amounted to $20 in 1939, $75 in 1956, required of each production presented in the Final festival, and (4) the
regions were requested by the D.D.F. to appoint a certain number of Honorary Governors who upon appointment contributed $100. However, the right of the region to participate was not contingent upon these appointments. From these funds the casts of the winning Regional productions are given from $300 to $850 as grants-in-aid for transportation to the centre in which the Final festival is to be held that particular year, as well as free accommodation in a first-class hotel, with a per day meal allowance. Since 1954 the directors and stage managers of the plays that won in the Regional festivals, which were not invited to compete in the Final festivals, have also been invited to attend them in the same manner as the competitors. The travelling expenses and honorariums of the bi-lingual Regional and Final festival adjudicators, many of them coming from England, have also been the financial responsibility of the D.D.F. To maintain and successfully conduct its activities, the D.D.F. has required a yearly budget which has steadily increased from the $12,000 required in 1935-36 to $53,000 for the 1955-56 season.

The D.D.F., upon the decision of the Executive Committee, discontinued its operations during the war years from 1940 to 1946. When it resumed in 1947 the financial backing, which the D.D.F. had enjoyed through the individual contributions of wealthy Canadians, was no longer available. By September of 1951 the D.D.F. had a financial
deficit of $10,000. The possibility of the continued existence of the D.D.F., at that time, seemed particularly dubious. Fortunately, in 1952 an "angel," Calvert Distillers, Ltd., agreed to donate the sum of $15,000 per annum (this has since been increased to $31,000 per annum), it being understood that $100 would be awarded annually to each of the Regional festivals and $1000 at the Final festival to the productions receiving the highest marks. The Company also undertook to present the D.D.F., for annual competition, fourteen Regional trophies and a major trophy for the Final festival. This generous offer by Calvert Distillers Ltd., although initially greeted by an element of the general public and some of the participants within the D.D.F. with some degree of concern and hesitancy, was realistically and gratefully accepted. The Company has continued its financial support up to the present time.

The D.D.F., despite its financial instability, since its inception has made great progress in the field of community drama in Canada. It has been directly responsible for the appearance of hundreds of theatre groups. From 1947 to 1956 the number of annual entries in the festivals has increased from fifty to seventy. This festival participation has served as an effective agency in bringing together, in understanding and in the sharing of common purposes, groups of performers from all parts of Canada. Little Theatre organizations, tired of working in gloomy
isolation, with the advent of the D.D.F. are now a part of a national movement which gives them an objective and provides the necessary assistance to accomplish it. Numerous best performers of past festivals have found careers on the London and New York stages, many are now working in Canadian radio and television. Every year sees a number of Canadian written plays, for which there are special awards, entered in the festivals. The emergence, within the last ten years, of professional and semi-professional repertory companies, of summer schools of drama, and of playwriting contests held by the Western Canada Theatre Conference, the Ottawa Drama League Workshop, Queen's University, and the London Little Theatre, is largely the result of the interest created by the D.D.F.

As early as 1938, only five years after its first Final festival, a visiting adjudicator, Barrett Clark, recognized the significance of the D.D.F. when he wrote:

It [D.D.F.] certainly resembles none of the so-called Little Theatre Tournaments that have flourished in the States during the past twenty years, for these have attracted at best only an infinitesimal part of the public in certain limited territories and for short periods. Valuable as they are, they are in no sense more than occasional manifestations of interest and talent, whereas the Dominion Drama Festival is unquestionably a national affair.3

3Barrett Clark, "As I See the Canadian Stage," The Curtain Call, April, 1938, p. 4.
This is the very objective that originally motivated the Earl of Bessborough and that he expressed in his words of greeting to the play producing groups assembled from across Canada at the first Final festival. At that time he stated "the spirit of a nation, if it is to find full expression, must have a national drama." This has become the underlying purpose of the D.D.F. In its attempt to achieve this purpose the D.D.F. became the sponsor of the only annual event of its type in the world, certainly in the English speaking world.

The D.D.F. has not been without its limitations. A major restriction has been a predominant lack of adventurousness in the selection of plays produced in the Regional and Final festivals. Serving as a show-window for the best productions of little theatre organizations across Canada, the plays produced are often pedestrian and unchallenging imitations of recent Broadway and London successes. Nathan Cohen, as late as 1959, discredited this characteristic of the Final festivals when he wrote that "the Festival has become for all practical purposes a stale, flat, and unprofitable imitation of the commercial theatre." A Final

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festival in which the requisite for participation was the production of a great play of the past would be a commendable season's project. The value of such a creative experience for the producing groups is self-evident. If such a policy was created it would also be a means of acquainting the general public with this body of dramatic literature, which in itself would be a notable achievement. As Robertson Davies, Canadian playwright and editor of the Peterborough Examiner, has stated: "As far as the classics of the theatre are concerned, we are a nation of ignoramuses."6 One of Canadian theatres' real problems, on the other hand, is the lack of Canadian playwrights. The D.D.F. could do more to encourage the development of a Canadian dramaturgy. The sponsorship of an annual nation-wide playwriting contest with a guarantee of production to the winning playwrights could be a means of developing it. Through its efforts the D.D.F. has been responsible, unquestionably, for bringing into being countless dramatic societies across this country. However, it is a matter of regret that having spawned them, the D.D.F. "has tended to grow somewhat remote from some of the smaller groups."7 These groups, with the

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minimum of resources at their command, have found active participation within the organization to be prohibitive. The fact that it has never been financially self-supporting but, instead, has had to rely upon yearly donations and volunteer help, has forced the D.D.F. to exercise restraint in the implementation of more ambitious undertakings such as a National Theatre School. The enumeration of these limitations, however, when contrasted with the accomplishments, would seem to be idle quibbling.

Why the D.D.F., which by the spring of 1952 had become firmly established as a significant national movement in the cultural life of Canada, was permitted to be, at that time, on the brink of bankruptcy and dissolution by the Dominion Government, is difficult to understand. If not sufficiently motivated by a desire to contribute to the development of the arts, another motivation might have been the government's awareness that the D.D.F. had been, and could continue to be, a potent element in the furtherance of the integration of this country. Lacking such motivation the Dominion Government gave no financial assistance to the D.D.F. The failure of the Dominion Government to do so was prophetically anticipated by Robertson Davies when he wrote of the significance of the D.D.F.:

If it [D.D.F.] flourished on such a scale, proportionately, in the U.S.A., news of the prodigy would have been spread to the uttermost ends of the earth. For where else in the world will you find a national amateur theatre movement comparable with
our Dominion Drama Festival ..." It is one of Canada's cultural glories, but Canada characteristically does not know it. The Dominion Government is indifferent to it, and hundreds of thousands of citizens either know nothing of it, or are profoundly misinformed about it. It receives no penny from the public purse. And yet it engages the attention of much of the ablest artistic talent of the country, and it provides, in its final yearly festival, a week of drama which has won the sincere admiration of extremely able professional men of the theatre, who are brought here to judge it. I cannot think of any other country in the world where a comparable effort would be so persistently snubbed by the Government.  

Fortunately for Canada and its amateur theatre, the D.D.F. has continued to flourish despite the Government's neglect, thanks to Calvert Distillers, Ltd., and the voluntary work of its affiliated groups.

**Western Ontario Drama League**

The activities of the D.D.F. and the successful conduct of them are directly dependent upon the nature of the dramatic activities sustained and maintained locally. The amateur theatre groups functioning within the regional divisions are the very foundation of the D.D.F. The D.D.F. is but the superstructure. As such it can be only as strong as its foundation. The L.L.T., as an active participant within its regional division, has played a major role in contributing toward the solidity of the D.D.F.'s foundations.

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8Davies, op. cit., p. 376.
The Executive of the D.D.F., in the fall of 1932, selected the area commonly known as Western Ontario as one of the organization's twelve regions. This section of Ontario, within which the city of London is located, covers that part of the province west of Hamilton to Windsor, north to Kitchener, Guelph and Sarnia, and as far south as Lake Erie. At the time this region was created there was no L.L.T. There were, however, three actively producing amateur groups in London, the Meredith Players, the Half-Way House Theatre, and the London Drama League. The members of these groups promptly responded to the challenge which the creation of the D.D.F. and its divisional procedure provided. The product of their response and that of the members of the other consistently producing groups in this region, of which there were but five at that time, was the Western Ontario Drama League. Its creation, in December of 1932, made this region not only a unique one but also caused it to be the envy of many of the producing groups among the eleven other regions.

The primary responsibility of the regions was to hold annual Regional drama festivals. The originators of the D.D.F. felt that these would provide the participants with the opportunity to observe each other's work and to discuss their mutual activities and problems. Such a yearly get-together, while rewarding, was not regarded as adequate by the producing groups in Western Ontario. They wanted a
closer, more permanent union established among themselves that would be operative throughout the entire season. The formation of such a union would make it possible for them to exchange information easily, provide assistance, even, if necessary, personnel and equipment in order to facilitate their own operations. A familial relationship such as this union would create could largely eliminate the isolationism which they had been experiencing and which the D.D.F. itself hoped to minimize. To accomplish these objectives the eight producing groups, in December of 1932, formed the Western Ontario Drama League.

The administration of the Western Ontario Drama League (W.O.D.L.) is the responsibility of a Board of Directors composed of members from the various producing groups in this region. There are four Vice-Presidents, one each for the northern, eastern, western and southern sections of the region, who are also members of this Board. The new or established groups submit to these Vice-Presidents their requests for assistance in production, adjudication, and organization. These requests the Vice-Presidents endeavour to satisfy by means of the groups in their own section. If it is impossible to do so, they then solicit the help of any group in the other sections. At least two regional meetings are held each season by the Board of the W.O.D.L. with two representatives from each of the affiliated producing groups in attendance. These groups, who must be
truly representative of the whole community, pay, in order to be a member of the W.O.D.L., a nominal annual fee that is based upon their ability to pay and their membership. Upon this operational scheme, which has remained relatively constant since its inception, the W.O.D.L. has developed. The League began in 1932 with eight groups; in 1956 there were twenty-one groups. The record of this achievement, particularly as it reflects the contribution made toward it by the L.L.T., is worthy of investigation.

The L.L.T., when it came into existence through the amalgamation of three of the original member groups of the W.O.D.L., promptly joined the League. The organization has subsequently done more than its share to enable the W.O.D.L. to achieve its original objectives. The L.L.T. has provided the League with Presidents, Officers, and Administrators. Upon the request of the League, L.L.T. members have acted as lecturers, advisers, and adjudicators. The organization's costumes, lighting equipment, curtains, set-pieces, and play-collections have generously been made available to affiliated groups. Five of its members have provided five of the thirteen trophies, medals, and cash awards presented annually at the Regional festivals, and six of the nineteen Regional festivals sponsored by the W.O.D.L., from 1935 to 1956 inclusive, have been hosted by the L.L.T.

The first Western Ontario Drama Festival (W.O.D.F.) in which the L.L.T. participated was in the spring of 1935.
At that time it not only acted as host to the eleven visiting producing groups but also entered two productions, one of which, *St. Simeon Stylites*, was awarded the Hannah Shield as the best presentation of a one-act play. This was a considerable achievement for an organization barely seven months old. The achievement is indicative of the degree to which the L.L.T.'s original success was largely due to the presence of some professionally trained personnel.

Subsequent to the L.L.T.'s initial affiliation in 1935-36, the W.O.D.L. has experienced a marked increase in its membership and some notable changes in its administrative policies. To attribute either or both to the L.L.T.'s participation and leadership would be unwarranted; yet to minimize the L.L.T.'s contribution would be ill-advised.

There were fifteen groups affiliated with the W.O.D.L. by the 1935-36 season. The Executive, realizing that it would be impossible to invite all of them to the Regional festival, yet not wanting to prevent, arbitrarily, any of them from competing who wished to do so, instituted a policy of preliminary adjudications. A preliminary adjudicator was appointed to judge the productions which these groups had previously selected as the ones to compete for admission into the Regional festival. He adjudicated twenty-one one-act plays performed by these fifteen groups as part of their regular season's bill and selected ten casts, three of them
from the L.L.T., to compete in the Regional festival. This preliminary policy the W.O.D.L. has continued to employ.

In 1938 only four of the nine groups, who had been subjected to preliminary adjudication, were invited to the W.O.D.F. This decrease in participation was the result of the Executive's decision to admit to the W.O.D.F. only full-length plays. To these groups, one of which was the L.L.T., Malcolm Morely, the Regional adjudicator, referred when he stated that, "there were four full-length plays all approaching professional standards." From among them he chose the L.L.T.'s entry, Escape, as the winning production. This evaluation would seem to be warranted for this production then went on to be selected by Barrett H. Clark as the second best presentation in the Final festival of the D.D.F.

The Executive of the D.D.F. in the summer of 1939 announced its decision, because of the outbreak of war, to suspend operations. After much debate among the groups of the W.O.D.L., they decided to endeavour to continue with their organization. They wanted to keep their organization intact and by so doing be able to continue to pursue the aims for which they had organized in 1932. They did continue until the 1942-43 season when, largely due to transportation difficulties, they were forced to terminate the W.O.D.L. However, by the fall of 1945, one year prior to

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9Malcolm Morely, "Victoria to Windsor," The Curtain Call, April, 1938, p. 5.
the D.D.F.'s resumption of operations, the W.O.D.L. was in business once again with a membership of eight organizations, including the L.L.T. These groups produced for the 1946 festival mostly one-act plays, as had been their policy from 1939 to 1942. In 1947-48, with twelve community theatres as members, the W.O.D.L. reinstituted its policy of admitting only full-length plays to its festival. The number of groups to be invited, following their preliminary adjudications, was to be restricted to five. This policy, with the exception of the W.O.D.L.'s festival of 1956, to which six of the seventeen groups judged were invited, has been maintained up to the present time.

The work of the W.O.D.L. has not been limited to the sponsorship and management of its Regional festival. The W.O.D.L. has promoted playwriting contests, held technical seminars that were conducted by members of the affiliated groups and were open to any interested organizations, supplied organizational and technical assistance to new groups, and has functioned as the clearing-house and disseminator for the many and various problems submitted to it by its members. In fulfilling these tasks it is understandable that the W.O.D.L. has earned the praise and envy of many of other regions of the D.D.F. Lacking comparable organizations, their community theatre groups operate in relative isolation except for the get-together which the annual festivals provide. The W.O.D.L., whose existence and
successful operation is dependent upon its participating members, has eliminated this regrettable situation. In doing so it achieved, by 1955-56, a record membership of twenty-one producing groups.

There is no investigative procedure available which could accurately determine to what extent the success of the W.O.D.L. is the product of the contribution made by the L.L.T. Nevertheless, Charles Rittenhouse, when he wrote of his impressions as adjudicator of the 1947 W.O.D.L. festival, was not hesitant to state that: "The London Little Theatre has proved to be the spark plug for the whole acceleration of theatre in Western Ontario." 10

The quantity and quality of the L.L.T.'s participation in the W.O.D.L.'s Regional festivals, if not its contribution to the League, can be accurately determined. The organization has been a member of the W.O.D.L. from the fall of 1934 to 1956. During this period of time, the W.O.D.L. has sponsored nineteen drama festivals. Of these, six festivals (1935, 1936, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1946) were held with no preliminary adjudications. The L.L.T. participated in all of them. The policy of a preliminary adjudication, with a restricted number of groups invited to the W.O.D.L. festival, was practiced in the remaining thirteen festivals. The L.L.T. was invited to participate in all but one of these

festivals. The L.L.T., therefore, has had an entry in eighteen of the nineteen drama festivals held by the W.O.D.L.

The year in which the L.L.T. did not have an entry was in 1952 when its production of Shadow of the Tree, the play which had won the L.L.T.'s national playwriting contest, lost out in the preliminary adjudications. The production did, however, capture the Phelps Award presented to the best actor in a competing play not invited to the W.O.D.L. festival.

The L.L.T.'s record of awards won in the W.O.D.L.'s festivals is as impressive as its record of participation. L.L.T. productions have won nine of the eighteen festivals. These nine productions not only captured the Hannah Shield for the best production, which in 1953 was replaced by the Calvert Trophy, but also won other awards. The Brickenden Medal for the best actress was won by two of these productions, the Jordan Medal for the best actor was won by four of these productions, and one production won the Jamieson Shield for the best presentation of a Canadian play. In the nine festivals in which the L.L.T. did not win the best production awards, six of its nine entries received other awards. The Brickenden Medal was awarded to two of these productions, four won the Jamieson Medal, and three won the Fuller Shield for obtaining the second highest number of

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Festival Entries and Awards Chart, p. 201.
marks. The productions which competed in 1937, 1951 and 1954 received no awards. However, the L.L.T. was awarded, in 1937, the Meredith Achievement Trophy by the W.O.D.L. in recognition of its general work. On two occasions, in 1952, the only year in which the L.L.T. had had no entry in the W.O.D.L. festival, and again in 1953, two of its productions won the Phelps Award given to the best actor in a competing play not invited to the festival.

It is apparent, upon an examination of the number and nature of the awards won by the L.L.T., that in the post-war periods of 1947 to 1956, the L.L.T. was no longer dominating the regional scene. The organization had participated in everyone of the nine festivals held by the W.O.D.L. from 1935 to 1946 and won the Hannah Shield in five of these festivals. From 1947 to 1956, the L.L.T. was not invited to one festival and captured the Hannah Shield in only four of the nine festivals it attended. This loss of dominance could be, and to only a very limited degree, attributed to the fact that the visiting Regional adjudicators may have been unduly influenced, at times, by their awareness of the L.L.T.'s resources and past achievements. Such a possibility the Executive Secretary expressed in her Annual Report of the 1955-56 season when she stated: "The London Little Theatre has every production facility, so that other groups, which are more limited, get higher marks." However, to use this questionable rationalization as an explanation of the
L.L.T.'s loss of awards may be erroneous. Equally unwarranted would be the assumption that the L.L.T. had lowered its production standards. The reduction in awards is insufficient to justify such a supposition. Moreover, it would have to be made oblivious of the high degree of permanency, from season to season, of its producing members.

There is but one defensible interpretation of the L.L.T.'s post-war participation in the W.O.D.L.'s festivals. The standards of production of the smaller, and in some cases younger, community theatres were steadily improving. The L.L.T. had previously achieved an almost professional standard of production. This standard the L.L.T. continued to maintain while at the same time being unable to advance any further. Henri de Menthon's references to the L.L.T. would seem to agree with this interpretation.

I do not think groups like the little theatre here will be able to progress any further than they have come already. London's Little Theatre is a wonderful organization—I should say there is nothing quite like it in the world—and what it has achieved is truly amazing. But it cannot reach greater heights unless the people connected with it have more time to polish their acting, put in more work on the sets and so forth—and that means becoming a professional company.12

It was the recognition of this stalemate that prompted the Board of Directors to hire a permanent professional director in the 1956-57 season.

The steady increase in proficiency of the affiliated groups in the W.O.D.L., while contributing to the L.L.T.'s decrease in awards, can, ironically, also be interpreted as a tribute to the L.L.T. The L.L.T.'s production standards had undeniably served as a challenge and an inspiration to these groups. Their attempt to emulate them is a compliment to the L.L.T. As a community theatre dedicated to service in its community, the organization has never hesitated to share either its experienced personnel or its physical resources with any producing group desirous of assistance. The extent of this generous policy is recorded in the following statement:

Members of theatre groups in nearby cities and towns flock to L.L.T. productions to watch and learn. They dip into the extensive wardrobe and prop departments and make use of the wealth of technical knowledge in the London organization for help in organization, make-up, direction, and the other facets of theatrical knowledge.13

The smaller and less developed groups unquestionably profited from this liberal assistance provided them by the L.L.T.

There is another facet of the L.L.T. which is apparent in its participation in the W.O.D.L.'s festivals. The organization's desire to encourage Canadians to write plays, which was revealed by the plays produced in the Studio Club and its playwriting contest, is apparent in the plays entered in the festival competitions. The L.L.T. entered

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five plays written by Canadians in the festivals. It is especially significant that three of them, a full-length play, *There Will I Nest*, and two one-act plays, *Over the Boiler Room* and *Twenty-five Cents*, were written by members of the L.L.T. These three plays, as the Festival and Awards Chart indicates, won the Jamieson shield. The play *Shadow of the Tree*, as previously noted, won the Phelps Shield, and *Nellie McNab* captured both the Jamieson Shield and the Fuller Shield which is awarded to the production receiving the second highest number of marks in the W.O.D.L. festival.

The L.L.T., as winner in the Regional festival, has represented the W.O.D.L. seven times in the fifteen festivals sponsored by the D.D.F. It has been successful in winning eight awards. The Bessborough Trophy was awarded to the plays *Twenty-five Cents* and *Saint Joan* for winning the highest number of marks. *Twenty-five Cents* in the 1936 Final festival also captured the Sir Barry Jackson Trophy for the best presentation of a Canadian play as well as a special D.D.F. cash prize presented to the author who was a member of the L.L.T. The organization's production of *Saint Joan*, competing against thirteen other groups, not only won the Bessborough Trophy but also the Nellie Jefferis Trophy awarded for the best performance given by an actress in the Final festival of 1948. In 1935 the director and also leading actor, with the one-act play *St. Simeon Stylites*, was presented with a special cash prize donated
by Lady Bessborough. A sum of approximately $6000 was required to send the huge cast, costumes, and settings of *Dark of the Moon* to Victoria for the 1950 Final festival. The L.L.T. as winner in its Regional festival had won $100, and $600 was given it by the D.D.F. for travelling expenses. A benefit performance of the production and the voluntary contributions made by interested citizens made it possible for *Dark of the Moon* to compete in the festival at Victoria. The production won the Martha Allan Trophy for the best visual presentation.

The Final festival of 1956 was held at Sherbrooke, Quebec. At this festival the L.L.T.'s production of *Mrs. McThing*, which had won in the W.O.D.L. festival, competed against seven other groups from across Canada. The Henry Osborne Trophy for the best performance given by an actor was won by a member of the cast of *Mrs. McThing*.

The L.L.T. as a member of the D.D.F. had done more than merely compete in the Final festivals. In the spring of 1939, 1947, and 1951, the L.L.T. acted as host to the D.D.F. On each of these occasions the members of the organization willingly and successfully planned and conducted the program of activities for the six-day festival. In 1952, 

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14 In this Final festival the largest number of plays written by Canadians, since the discontinuance of the one-act play in the 1950 festival, was entered. Of the plays competing, 20 per cent were by Canadian writers with 55 per cent in English and 45 per cent in French.
upon the request of the Final festival committee, the L.L.T. arranged a display of costumes from three of its productions—Saint Joan, Sole Heir, and Pride and Prejudice. Several of its members have been Honorary Governors and several have acted on the Executive Committee of the D.D.F. In recognition of their outstanding contributions to the development of theatre in Canada, five L.L.T. members have received the Canadian Drama Award. This award, which was instituted in 1934, is sponsored by the British Columbia Drama Association.

Hume Cronyn, a native son of London, whose elder brother was one of the original founders of the L.L.T., presented the best actor award at the Final festival held in London in 1951. In his presentation he stated that the D.D.F. was a logical springboard for a professional Canadian theatre. Although neither he nor Alexander Knox, who had been a student at the University of Western Ontario and who opened that same Final festival, had participated in any of the Final festivals prior to their professional careers, they had been, undoubtedly, initially inspired by their contact with the L.L.T. There have been many working members of the L.L.T. who, through their experience and training in the organization, have entered the professional theatre. Others have done so by means of the national recognition

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that, as L.L.T. participants in the Final festivals, the D.D.F. provides. 16

The evolution of an amateur, within a little theatre group, into a professional performer is an achievement of which any such organization can be proud. The significance of this evolution Frederic McConnell aptly described when he stated:

The translation of the person and spirit of the competent artist to the rank of a professional theatre worker is part of the process whereby the community can be enriched through a realization of the skill of its citizens. And it is important to view this translation of unrealized ambition to realized fulfillment in terms not of numbers but of intrinsic quality. It is something to find and recruit an artist for life service out of the community itself— even though that artist be only a single individual. 17

The L.L.T. has been finding and recruiting such artists so successfully that today it is regarded as one of the most productive incubators in Canada for the professional theatre. The number and, more especially, the quality of the artists, which the L.L.T. has produced, are a tribute to the organization and its standards of production.

16 London Little Theatre's Amateur to Professionals List, p. 204.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The L.L.T., from an inconspicuous and relatively unimposing beginning in 1934, advanced, by 1956, to a position of national importance in Canadian theatre. This singular achievement was not solely the result of fortuitous circumstances. It was, instead, primarily accomplished, as manifested by this investigation, through the propitious decisions and policies made and maintained by this organization.

There were two fortuitous factors that were, admittedly, largely responsible for the L.L.T.'s initial success. The city of London, with a relatively large population, a high degree of civic pride, progressiveness and wealth, an educational and cultural centre yet devoid of a professional theatre, provided the ideal environment within which a little theatre group could develop to best advantage. The second factor was the presence of a group of men and women with professional theatre training and experience. The existence of these two favorable factors did not, however, automatically guarantee the organization's progress and development. These were dependent upon the extent to which the L.L.T., through the artistic skill and enterprise of its...
members, proved to be worthy of the community's continued support. This requisite, indispensable for the survival of any amateur group, the L.L.T. accomplished. It did so to such an extent that it acquired the largest membership of any little theatre organization in North America, if not in the world. Factors other than fortuitous ones were responsible for this achievement.¹

The determination of the amalgamating groups that their union would be founded upon sound business practices resulted in the establishment of a policy from which they never departed. At least 50 per cent of the members of the Board of Directors have consistently been some of the city's most prominent businessmen and executives. This solid administrative foundation, as revealed in this investigation, was initially counterbalanced by a producing unit of skilled theatre personnel. The expansion of this unit was assured by means of the L.L.T.'s open-door membership policy, which simultaneously helped to justify its being labelled a "community theatre," and the creation of its Studio Club. It was this combination of businesslike and theatrical acumen which resulted in the organization's financial and artistic success.

¹These divers factors are so interdependent that the sequence of the enumeration of them is not intended to be indicative of their relative importance to the L.L.T.'s success.
Many an amateur theatre venture in Canada has died from a combination of two maladies: its product has just not been good enough and its operation has not been wisely financed. These two afflictions are interlocking, for lack of money leads to poor work and poor work keeps money out of the theatre. The L.L.T. did not succumb to either of these maladies.

The acceptance of the L.L.T. as a vital institution in the city of London and the expansion of its dramatic activities were the result of two major decisions which were made the right way and at the right time. The first was the L.L.T.'s decision made in 1939, and remade in 1940, to continue its operations during the war. The organization's commendable war effort and the maintenance, even extension, of its production activities earned the community's respect and admiration. By 1945 the roots of the L.L.T. had become so deeply implanted in the community that the organization's second decision, to buy the Grand Theatre, promptly won the sanction and financial support of the citizens of London.

The acquisition of the Grand Theatre provided new avenues of development and opportunities for self-expression for the enterprising workers of the L.L.T. It also enabled them to improve the calibre of their productions. The multiplicity of their activities, as revealed in this investigation, and the high standard of their productions, attested to by the exceptional size of the subscription
membership, established the organization, both locally and nationally, as an enterprising and highly successful institution. This reputation was simultaneously achieved by virtue of the L.L.T.'s contribution to the development of Canadian theatre.

The L.L.T.'s production standards and its liberal policy of assistance were, respectively, the source of inspiration to many play-producing groups in Western Ontario, and the means by which they could improve the quality of their own productions. The sponsorship by the L.L.T. of a School of the Theatre and a national playwriting contest, its admirable record of participation as a member of the D.D.F., and its promotion of the professional theatre indicate the degree to which the organization endeavoured to contribute to the growth of Canadian theatre. In a more general manner the organization augmented this contribution because of its desire for dramatic experimentation.

Each successive producing season from 1934 to 1956, the active members of the L.L.T. participated in new and rewarding areas of theatrical activity. The creation of the Children's Theatre, the production of films, the church and high school drama festivals, the radio series, and a production of a centennial pageant, written and produced by L.L.T. members, are but a few examples of the scope of the organization's activities. Although, as has been previously observed, it is to be regretted that more of these were not
maintained from season to season, the conclusion is warranted that their existence, if only temporary, served the purpose of keeping the volunteer workers interested and enthusiastic.

The L.L.T.'s readiness to exploit every area of creative expression in the theatre was, undeniably, a policy which served to increase the organization's skill and stature and to make membership within it, either as a worker or non-worker, an exciting and rewarding experience. This is the creativeness which Norris Houghton stated "a people's theatre . . . must develop . . . to justify and to ensure the perpetuation of its expansion." New workers were constantly being attracted to the organization to fulfill the interesting and challenging tasks that its activities provided. And the commendable quality of these served as a compelling motivation for subscription membership in the organization.

The L.L.T.'s deliberate and courageous policy of experimentation appears to have been responsible, at least partially, for the existence of another factor that contributed to the L.L.T.'s progress. Its scheme of organization, although well established by 1945, was not so rigidly codified that it prevented flexibility and adaptation to new areas of theatrical creativity. Indeed, the L.L.T.'s

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eagerness for new theatrical experiences necessitated a flexible administrative policy. The ease with which new committees were added and changes of policy introduced within the existing ones indicates the lack of rigidity of the organization's system of operation.

There is, however, another factor which also contributed to the organization's ability to adapt to the adventurous spirit of its members. This was the L.L.T.'s fixed rule that its President's tenure of office should be for two years only, and its Board of Directors should, each year, consist of new as well as current members. This executive policy helped to prevent the Board of Directors, which had the prerogative of encouraging or restricting the creative activities of any of the organization's members or committees, from becoming either too cautious or too rash in the administration of its duties.

The effectiveness of any amateur theatre's organization and administrative policies is, in the final analysis, dependent upon the individuals responsible for their implementation. The L.L.T.'s active personnel must have been intensely interested in the theatre, their attitude toward it must have been one of seriousness and dedication, and their performance in the fulfillment of their various tasks, must have been characterized by a willingness to co-operate and to make sacrifices in order to achieve the maximum
results for their organization. These are, admittedly, arbitrary assumptions that are tenable solely upon the L.L.T.'s phenomenal success and progress from 1934 to 1956.

A more defensible conclusion, based upon the initial success of the L.L.T., as revealed in the investigation, can be propounded with reference to the organization's personnel from 1934 to 1945. The untrained amateurs, whose active membership in the L.L.T. was facilitated by its open-door policy and Studio Club, were particularly responsive to the instruction and example that the professional members provided. The latter, because of their readiness to share and delegate production and administrative responsibilities, undoubtedly, caused the new members to feel they were essential cogs in the machinery of the organization. This feeling of being needed, which should pervade the active membership of every amateur producing group, ensured the continued support of these new workers. The maintenance of this policy by the experienced members, who participated in the founding of the L.L.T., indicates that their devotion to the development of their infant organization supplanted that element of exhibitionism that is so often present among the originators of an amateur theatre group.

It was the combination of these various factors which assured both L.L.T.'s stability and capacity for growth. The first three or four years of production can be very perilous, sometimes disastrous ones, for an amateur group.
The businesslike approach of the Board of Directors and a producing group guided by a number of professional amateurs assured the infant organization of a healthy and robust childhood. Maturity, if accompanied by success, can be an equally dangerous stage in the life-span of an organization. It was at this time that many of the L.L.T.'s workers, in a desire to be noticed, could have diluted the esprit de corps, thereby destroying the co-ordinated application that had been so notably present in their conduct of the L.L.T.'s operations. The L.L.T.'s desire to exploit and experiment with every aspect of production might have been replaced by smug complacency. From 1947 to 1956 the L.L.T. could easily have succumbed to these potential perils of success. The organization did not because of the steady flow of new and adventurous workers and the far-sighted planning, rather than concern for immediate pursuits, of the older members. The result was the emergence of an organization that had successfully survived the pitfalls that accompany the process of maturing.

It was during these years, 1947 to 1956, as revealed in its festival participation, the L.L.T. developed to the point where, with reference to the quality of its productions, the Executive Secretary stated: "We are holding our own but not advancing." The L.L.T., having surmounted the 1954-55 Annual Report by the Executive Secretary (unpubl.).
many and varied hazards that confront an amateur group, having acquired its own home and earned the support of a large percentage of the city's population, had reached such a high standard of efficiency and artistry in its productions that the volunteer workers were unable to surpass these achievements.

This conclusion, based upon the results of this study, is further validated by the statements contained in an unpublished report submitted by the organization's first Vice-President at the L.L.T.'s annual spring meeting of 1955-56:

The L.L.T. is at the crossroads. It has reached a stage of development where new methods and new techniques are necessary. To solve our problems we need a professional Artistic Director who will be responsible for the planning and supervision of all productions and educational activities.

The realistic appraisal of the L.L.T.'s situation, which this report contained, prompted the members of the organization to hire a professional director during the 1956-57 season.

The desire of the L.L.T.'s working members to constantly improve the standard of their production activities has been revealed throughout this study. Their acquisition of a professional director was the logical course of action for them to take in order to accomplish this objective and to ensure their organization's future growth.
The members of the L.L.T., by their decision, confirmed Kenneth Macgowan's statement that "the history of the successful little theatre . . . is a progress from amateurism to professionalism by slow stages."\(^4\) Whether the future growth of the L.L.T. will also substantiate this statement could be the subject for another investigation.

APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION RECORD CHARTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Number of Performances</th>
<th>First Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. A Matter of Husbands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Gallant Lady</td>
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<td>3. The Nightingale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. The Devil Among the Skins</td>
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<td>5. Romany Ch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Trial and Error</td>
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<td>7. The Astonished Heart</td>
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<td>8. A Marriage Proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. The Merchant of Venice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. The Taming of the Shrew</td>
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<td>1940-41</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. To the Dead Man</td>
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<td>2. The End of the Beginning</td>
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<td>3. The Intruder</td>
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<td>4. Sham</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Behind the Lace Curtain</td>
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<td>6. Mr. Hackett's Alibi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Five at the George</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. If the Shoe Pinches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Season</td>
<td>First Meeting</td>
<td>Number of Performances</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941-42</td>
<td>1. The Man with the Bowler Hat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. The Language of Love</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. For Better for Worse--written by an L.L.T. member</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Lake Dore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Third Meeting</td>
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<td>5. Strange Road</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. The Plumbers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fourth Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Glorifying Aggie</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. A Night at an Inn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifth Meeting</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Breathes There the Man--written by an L.L.T. member</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. The Catalogue</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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1942-43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Meeting</th>
<th>Number of Performances</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. According to the Prophet--adaptation by an L.L.T. member</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Joint Owners in Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Meeting</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Lampshade</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. People with Light Coming out of Them</td>
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<td>Third Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Trojan Women</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Season 1943-44
First Meeting
1. The First Dress Suit
2. Thank You Doctor
Second Meeting
3. The Bard of Bakersville High School (presented by students of Central Collegiate Institute)
4. The Happy Journey (presented by students of Beck Collegiate Institute)
Third Meeting
5. Springtide
Fourth Meeting
6. Three Scenes from Little Plays of St. Francis

Season 1944-45
First Meeting
1. Cry Havoc
Second Meeting
2. Twelfth Night
Third Meeting
3. The Enchanted Cottage

Season 1945-46
No productions

Season 1946-47
First Meeting
1. The Scapegoats—written by an L.L.T. member
Second Meeting
2. Banquo's Chair
3. The Hungerers
4. Brothers in Arms (Simcoe Little Theatre)
Season
1946-47 (cont.)
Third Meeting
5. The Man in the Bowler Hat (Beck Collegiate)
6. The Giant's Stair
7. Nellie McNabb (Beal Technical School)

1947-48
First Meeting
1. Hedda Gabler

Second Meeting
Produced by University of Western Ontario Students
2. Cupid Rampant (Arts '50)
3. Le Bourgeoise Gentilhomme (Le Cercle Francois)
4. Suppressed Desires (Arts '48)

Third Meeting
5. The Chameleon
6. The Marriage Proposal
7. In an Egg Shell—written by an L.L.T. member

Fourth Meeting
8. Day before Dawn

1948-49
First Meeting
1. Over the Boiler Room—written by an L.L.T. member
2. Sitting Bill—written by an L.L.T. member

Second Meeting
3. Uncle Vanya

Third Meeting
4. Christ's Comet

Fourth Meeting
5. Granite
Season | Number of Performances
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1948-49 (contd.) | 1
6. Ile | 1
7. Legend | 1
8. Orlando | 1
1949-50 | 1
First Meeting | 1
1. King Cole | 1
2. Overlaid | 1
Second Meeting | 1
3. Pique Dame | 1
4. Leather Jacket and a Red Dress—written by an L.L.T. member | 1
5. Orange Blossoms | 1
Third Meeting | 1
6. Ghost Train | 1
1950-51 | 1
First Meeting | 1
1. They Came to the City | 1
Second Meeting | 1
2. He Who Gets Slapped | 1
Third Meeting | 1
3. The Little Foxes | 1
Fourth Meeting | 1
4. Quiet Evening—written by an L.L.T. member | 1
5. Three Little Pigs Went to Market—written by an L.L.T. member | 1
6. August Heat | 2
Fifth Meeting | 2
7. Ghosts | 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>First Meeting</th>
<th>Number of Performances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1951-52    | 1. *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion*  
2. *Jenny in the Orchard*  
3. *Mooney's Kid Don't Cry*  
Second Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 4. *Desire under the Elms*  
Third Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 5. *To Dream Again*  
Fourth Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 6. *The Sole Heir*  
Fifth Meeting    | 1                                     |
|            | 7. *Socrates*                                                           |                        |
| 1952-53    | First Meeting                                                                 | 1                                     |
|            | 1. *My Heart's in the Highlands*  
Second Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 2. *Man of Destiny*  
3. *And Battles Long Ago*  
Third Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 4. *The Seagull*  
Fourth Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 5. *Knock*                                                            |                        |
| 1953-54    | First Meeting                                                                 | 2                                     |
|            | 1. *The Taming of the Shrew*  
Second Meeting   | 1                                     |
|            | 2. *The Florist Shop*  
3. *Frankie and Albert*  
4. *Rise and Shine* |                        |
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<td>5. The Grass Harp</td>
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<td>9. Burning Bright</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Enchanted</td>
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<td>2. Summer and Smoke</td>
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<td>3. The Heiress</td>
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<td>1955-56</td>
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<td>2. The Cherry Orchard</td>
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<td>3. The Beautiful People</td>
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<td>4. The Last Temptation—written by an L.L.T. member</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>5. The Honour and the Glory</td>
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<td>6. The Ugly Duckling</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>1. Springtime for Henry</td>
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<td>3. The Housenaster</td>
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<td>4. Ten Minute Alibi</td>
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<td>5. George and Margaret</td>
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<td>1. Three Live Ghosts</td>
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<td>5. Candida</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Claudia</td>
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<td>3. Watch on the Rhine</td>
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<td>1. Ah Wilderness</td>
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<td>5. Springtide</td>
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<td>1. Call It a Day</td>
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<td>5. Uncle Harry</td>
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<td>6. You Can't Take It with You</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Number of Performances</td>
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<td>1946-47</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. While the Sun Shines</td>
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<td>2. Ten Little Indians</td>
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<td>3. The Corn Is Green</td>
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<td>4. Pride and Prejudice</td>
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<td>5. Winterset</td>
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<td>6. Mr. Pim Passes By</td>
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<td>1947-48</td>
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<td>1. The Male Animal</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Circle</td>
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<td>3. Saint Joan</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Dear Ruth</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Guest in the House</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I Remember Mama</td>
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<td>1948-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Dream Girl</td>
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<td>2. Years Ago</td>
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<td>3. The Laughing Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. All My Sons</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Two Mrs. Carrolls</td>
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<td>6. As You Like It</td>
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<td>1949-50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. It's a Boy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. An Inspector Calls</td>
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<td>3. Thunder Rock</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Plays the Thing</td>
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<td>5. Pygmalion</td>
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<td>6. Grand National Night</td>
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<td>7. A Pig in a Poke--written and directed by an L.L.T. member for the Scholarship Fund</td>
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<td>1950-51</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Glass Menagerie</td>
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<td>2. Three Men on a Horse</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. On Borrowed Time</td>
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<td>4. Life with Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Hasty Heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. At My Heart's Core</td>
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<td>1951-52</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Voice of the Turtle</td>
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<td>2. Shadow of the Tree--winning play of L.L.T.'s Playwriting Competition</td>
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<td>3. Light up the Sky</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Performance</td>
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</table>
| 1951-52    | 4. *What Every Woman Knows*  
5. *The Sole Heir*  
6. *Edward My Son*  
7. *Up She Goes*—musical written by an L.L.T. member |
|            | 1952-53  
1. *Treasure Hunt*  
2. *Death of a Salesman*  
3. *Dark of the Moon*  
4. *Boy Meets Girl*  
5. *Dead Sea Apple*  
6. *The Happy Time* |
|            | 1953-54  
1. *Travellers' Joy*  
2. *The Cocktail Party*  
3. *Arms and the Man*  
4. *Black Chiffon*  
5. *Anne of the Thousand Days*  
6. *Bunty Pulls the Strings* |
|            | 1954-55  
1. *My Three Angels*  
2. *The Patriots*  
3. *The Curious Savage*  
4. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*  
5. *Affairs of State*  
6. *This Happy Breed* |
|            | 1955-56  
1. *Time out for Ginger*  
2. *Awake and Sing*  
3. *Mrs. McThing*  
4. *The Women*  
5. *Disraeli*  
6. *Peg O' My Heart* |
|            | Number of Performances | Subscription Price |
|            | 9 | $6.00 |
|            | 9 | $6.00 |
|            | 9 | $6.00 |
|            | 9 | $6.00 |
|            | 7 | $6.00 |
APPENDIX C

MEMBERSHIP RECORD CHARTS
## Studio Club Membership Record Chart

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<th>Season</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Single Admissions</th>
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<td>1949-50</td>
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<td>1950-51</td>
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<td>318</td>
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<td>444</td>
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<td>301</td>
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<td>1955-56</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
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### Subscription Membership Record Chart 1934 to 1956

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<th>Membership Total</th>
<th>Membership Increase and Decrease</th>
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<td>1935-1936</td>
<td>1100</td>
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<td>1936-1937</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>+200</td>
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<td>1500</td>
<td>+200</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>+400</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-1940</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>-300</td>
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<td>1940-1941</td>
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<td>1941-1942</td>
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<td>7,959</td>
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<td>1955-1956</td>
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## Analysis of Cancellations in the 1951-1952 Membership Campaign

**Percentage of Cancellations of Former Members**: 20%

**Percentage of Cancellations of Waiting List**: 40%

**Memberships Cancelled**: 1,884

**Memberships Cancelled with no reasons given**: 616

**Memberships Cancelled with reasons given**: 1,268

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<th>1952 Waiting List</th>
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<td>Left city temporarily</td>
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<td>Unable to contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack transportation from a distance</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>New babies or sitter trouble</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Deceased</td>
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<td>Other interests</td>
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<td>Financially unable</td>
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<td>Complained of raise in price</td>
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<td>Husband trouble</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>No one to go with</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>No longer interested</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not like choice of plays</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferred to friends</td>
<td>129</td>
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**Total Cancellations**: 1,268

**Total Per Cent**: 100

**Total 1952 Waiting List**: 217
Analysis of the Cancellations for the 1952-53 to the 1955-56 Seasons

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<td>Left city temporarily</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<td>Unable to contact</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<td>Lack of transportation</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>Illness</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>Babies and sitter trouble</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>No one to go with</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>No longer interested</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<td>7.0</td>
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<td>Going with friends</td>
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<td>Number of Cancellations</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>2,178</td>
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APPENDIX D

FESTIVAL ENTRIES AND AWARDS CHART
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Entries</th>
<th>Awards Won</th>
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| 1935 | W.O.D.F. | Saturday Night  
St. Simeon Stylites | Hannah Shield  
Jordan Medal  
Special Award--Lady Bessborough |
|      | D.D.F.   | St. Simeon Stylites |  |
| 1936 | W.O.D.F. | Noah  
Candle-Light  
Twenty-five Cents | Fuller Shield  
Hannah Shield  
Jamieson Shield  
Sir Barry Jackson Trophy; Best Canadian Play |
|      | D.D.F.   | Twenty-five Cents |  |
| 1937 | W.O.D.F. | The Man Who Wouldn't Go to Heaven  
Altruism | Meredith Achievement Award for General Work |
| 1938 | W.O.D.F. | Escape  
D.D.F. | Hannah Shield  
D.D.F. Escape | |
| 1939 | W.O.D.F. | Here Will I Nest  
Baa Baa Black Sheep | Jamieson Shield  
Brickenden Medal |
| 1940 | W.O.D.F. | Nellie McNab | Fuller Shield  
Jamieson Shield |
| 1941 | W.O.D.F. | Dear Octopus | Hannah Shield  
Jordan Medal  
Brickenden Medal--won by all the women in the cast |
| 1942 | W.O.D.F. | The Language of Love | Hannah Shield |
| 1946 | W.O.D.F. | People with Light Coming out of Them | Fuller Shield  
Jordan Medal |
| 1947 | W.O.D.F. | The Corn is Green | Brickenden Medal |
| 1948 | W.O.D.F. | Saint Joan | Hannah Shield  
Jordan Medal  
Brickenden Medal  
Bessborough Trophy  
Nellie Jefferis Trophy |
|      | D.D.F.   | Saint Joan |  |
| 1949 | W.O.D.F. | Over the Boiler Room | Fuller Shield  
Jordan Medal |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Entries</th>
<th>Awards Won</th>
</tr>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>Thunder Rock</td>
<td>Hannah Shield</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D.D.F.</td>
<td>Thunder Rock</td>
<td>Jordan Medal</td>
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<td>Martha Allan Trophy</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>On Borrowed Time</td>
<td>Phelps Shield</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>Shadow of the Tree</td>
<td>Phelps Shield</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>Death of a Salesman</td>
<td>Phelps Shield</td>
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<td>D.D.F.</td>
<td>Dark of the Moon</td>
<td>Calvert Trophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>The Cocktail Party</td>
<td>Jamieson Shield</td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>The Patriots</td>
<td>Calvert Trophy</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>W.O.D.F.</td>
<td>Mrs. McThing</td>
<td>Henry Osborne Trophy</td>
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<td>D.D.F.</td>
<td>Mrs. McThing</td>
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APPENDIX E

LONDON LITTLE THEATRE'S AMATEURS TO PROFESSIONALS LIST
London Little Theatre's Amateurs to Professionals List

Jack Hutt
Ed Stevenson
Walter Massey
Robina Richardson
Christine Thomas
Gertrude Allen
Daphne Dyer
Leonard Patrick
Alan Gibson
Jerry Campbell
James Reid
Olga Landiak
William Drew
Victoria Mitchell
John Horton
Neil Carson
Igor Gavin
Rowena Rae
Lucy Warner
Tony Robinow
Vincent Perry
Robin Wood
Colin Bower
Ken Baskette
Victor Braun
Marjorie Sage
Willard Sage
Mary Ashwell
Rick Jones
Tommy Hunter
Lynn Henderson
Cecilia McDonald
John Tyrrell
Lilyan Adams
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Heilweil, David. "Business or Art?" Theatre Arts, XXXIII (December, 1949), 49-50.


Moore, Mavor. "A Theatre for Canada," The University of Toronto Quarterly, XXVI (October, 1956), 1-16.


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________. "It So Happened." Radio address, Radio Station CFPL, London, Ontario, May 9, 1949. (Typewritten.)

Minutes, Committee Reports, and Scrapbooks of the London Little Theatre.

Newspapers


Other Sources

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Ian Arnold McDonald, was born in Abbey, Saskatchewan, February 3, 1918. I received my Teacher's Certificate from the Moose Jaw Normal School in 1938 and my Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1943. From the School of Speech, Northwestern University, I received my Master of Arts degree in 1947. During the summers of 1948 and 1949, I studied at the Brander Matthews Theatre, Columbia University. I held the position of Vice-Principal on the Public School Staff of the city of Saskatoon from 1943 to 1947. From 1942 to 1948 I was a member of the Drama Department of the University of Saskatchewan. I have been a member of the English Department at the University of Western Ontario since July 1948.