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School Drama Seen Assured In Providence

By **WILLIAM H. YOUNG**

Journal-Bulletin Washington Bureau

Washington — Federal funds for a theater to provide performances of classical drama for Rhode Island school children are now assured, Rep. John E. Fogarty announced last night.

He said Providence stands "at the top of the list" of cities being considered as sites for three theaters of drama that will be financed by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Office of Education.

Final federal approval of the project for Providence, however, must await the filing of a formal application by local officials, Mr. Fogarty said.

He made the announcement after conferring in his office with School Supt. Charles A. O'Connor Jr. of Providence and Jack Morrison, who represented the Office of Education.

According to the officials, there are two major conditions that must be met by local of-

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officials before the theater project is given final approval:

- School officials of the 39 cities and towns must agree to submit a combined application for grants for the theater under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

- Local interests must provide a suitable theater for the dramatic productions.

Mr. O'Connor said the plan is for the City of Providence to act as the administrative agent for the theater project. He said he will try to arrange a meeting of Rhode Island school superintendents in the near future to discuss the grant application. The state Department of Education, he said, will be asked for assistance in arranging the meeting and preparing the application.

No arrangements have been made, as yet, to provide a theater for experimental school drama project. Mr. Fogarty suggested, however, that the Albee Theater in Providence would be an ideal building.

The Albee, built as a theater for stage performances, and later used as a movie theater, was purchased last fall by B. A. Dario after it closed its doors.

Mr. Dario has announced plans to develop the theater as a performing arts center for the state under a nonprofit foundation. The theater already has been the site of a successful Christmas festival and subsequent legitimate theater performances.

Representative Fogarty said that he knows that Mr. Dario "has a real interest in this theater project. I would assume, in view of the interest he has shown in the city and in promoting the arts, that he would be willing to take care of the local contribution." Mr. Fogarty said, however, that he had not discussed the availability of the Albee with Mr. Dario.

Mr. Morrison declined to give an estimate of the total cost of the proposed Providence project because some members of the advisory committee on the school aid program have not yet been consulted on the plans.

Mr. O'Connor said, however, that local school systems would have to commit about one-third of their potential entitlement under title III of the Elementary and Secondary Act to the project to finance it. Title III provides funds for experimental demonstration programs in education.

Mr. Morrison said some funds would also be obtained under

Title IV, a section providing funds for research.

As envisioned by the Office of Education, the theater project would operate for 32 weeks, from fall through the spring. During this time, about four classical dramatic productions would be presented to all junior and senior high school children in the state.

The grant funds would pay for transporting the children to the theater and for texts of the plays presented for study before and after the performance.

The school aid funds would finance operation of the theater once it was established. Funds from the National Endowment for the Arts already have been earmarked by the National Council on the Arts for expenses of organizing a theater company.

The council has set aside a total \$500,000 for that purpose for projects in three cities.

Mr. Fogarty and Sen. Claiborne Pell were among the principal sponsors of the legislation that created the National Endowment for the Arts in the last session of Congress.

The theater company to be formed for the dramatic program would present afternoon performances each weekday for the school audiences. Mr. Morrison said the same company, operating under a different organizational name, could present three evening performances, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, for the public with an admission charge.

For the evening performances, Mr. Morrison said, the theater company probably would present different dramas, partly to give the actors a change from steady repetition of the productions for the school audiences.

Mr. Fogarty said the admission fees from these evening performances could pay the cost of housing the free matinees for students in the theater.

VT. RATIFIES

Montpelier, Vt. — (UPI) — Vermont yesterday became the 22nd state yesterday to ratify the presidential succession amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Gov. Philip H. Hoff signed a joint resolution adopted by both branches of the legislature ratifying the 25th Amendment.