

GROUP OF SEVEN'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The fiftieth anniversary of the official beginning of the Group of Seven was marked by a six-month retrospective exhibition of 200 of their works at the National Gallery of Canada, which closed on September 6. The exhibition will open at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts later this month.

The great popularity of the Group of Seven – for many Canadians, the only important artists their country has produced – is discussed in the catalogue by Dennis Reid, assistant curator of the National Gallery. Besides preparing the

catalogue, Mr. Reid organized both this exhibition and one for the Art Gallery of Ontario, reproducing the Group's first showing at that gallery in May 1920.

The "incredible staying power" of the Group, whose popularity has grown steadily through the years, is explained as follows by Mr. Reid: "All members of the Group except Harris had a firm training in the business of commercial art, and this undoubtedly led them to strive for qualities of eye-catching design and immediacy of impact.... What was needed, they felt, was a direct and unaffected mode of painting derived from an ex-



North Shore, Lake Superior

Lawren S. Harris



The Solemn Land

J.E.H. Macdonald

perience of the land that all Canadians, if they would only look about themselves, would have to acknowledge as being true and worthwhile."

Mr. Reid writes that the Group's painting was a reaction against the atmospheric, moody type of representation so fashionable at the time. The Group's members saw this as "being foreign to the true experience of the Canadian landscape, which, to them, was direct in its impact and almost overwhelming in its suggestion of immense grandeur and power".