

of cedar steamed and bent to form the four sides. These were carved in low relief or decorated with a painted design. The designs on any of their work is as perfect and as accurate as if it had been laid out with geometrical instruments.

Unfortunately these old craftsmen no longer ply their trade. The white man has destroyed their race consciousness and with it the stimulus of their art. Except for a little basketry their handicrafts have been relegated to the museums. Enough remains, however, to form an invaluable mine of design and inspiration for the new generations to explore and revive, and it is in this connection that aboriginal Indian art should play a part in the development of Canadian art. Here is a fund of inspiration for white man and Indian alike to turn to profitable advantage. Designs for textile patterns and trade marks have been taken from European ideas—in other words Canada has been borrowing when she has always possessed an art of her own, equal to any in design. Here is a motive, delightful, new and Canadian, for commercial artists to use for the benefit of both trade and art.

Everywhere commercial designers are looking for new ideas, new motives for their work, and it is an extraordinary thing that this vast field of inspiration has been practically untouched, so that to-day Canadian manufacturers use European trade-marks, Canadian pottery makers and metal workers seek elsewhere for their designs, and weavers use foreign patterns in their cloths. The freedom of expression of Indian design is most needed to counteract the conventionalism so noticeable in European art. It is unaffected by any outside influences and so leads to new ideas. In using motives from prehistoric art careful study is necessary so that the motive will be suited to the material, and to the size, shape and use of the article to be decorated. Above all the original spirit must be kept, and the European influence stifled when adapting aboriginal art to commercial use. On no account should a suggestion of crude workmanship be tolerated. Pattern designers will find the original patterns and drawings most interesting and unique and easily adapted to modern use—either directly copied or as a basis from which to work. More motives can be drawn from modern Canadian Indian work than from prehistoric specimens; the modern art is further developed and is extended to silver and iron. Painting, embroidery, applique and tattooing on perishable material are all recent developments.

Some attempts have been made to adapt the designs to pottery, tiles, brass ware and other articles with pleasing results. Unfortunately it is not well advertised and consequently little known. Several companies have decorated parts of their hotels with Indian ideas; they have shown conclusively the adaptability of Indian art.

Very little of this true Indian art is known to the tourist. Indian novelties such as small birch bark canoes, bows and arrows, basketry and other trifles which crowd the windows of all novelty shops are made sometimes by Indians, but often by the factories. The original ideas have become tainted with European influences and are losing their native characteristics. The Indian has not been taught to value the work of his forefathers and has attempted to follow other designs and methods. To preserve the Indian crafts the old generation must be induced to pass on its knowledge, before it is too late and their skill lost forever. Such a scheme is difficult because the young Indian prefers to make money at other, more profitable occupations. If the tourist could be shown the superiority of the real product over machine-made, so-called Indian, objects, there is no reason why the trade should not become more profitable. Here is a chance, then, to build up a dying art, to give prosperity to the Indian, and to give to the tourist the genuine article of the Canadian Indian—an article which, in some regions at any rate, is indigenous to Canada and to no other country. Much has been done already, but it requires great patience, education and propaganda—surely it is worth any effort.