

INDIAN CARVINGS ON THE MARKET

Representations of wild creatures — birds, beaver, otter, fish — carved from northern woods and rubbed smooth by the hands of the Indian men and women of Great Whale River in Arctic Quebec, are now appearing in Southern Canada. Each carving reflects in its form and line the carver's knowledge of animals he has trapped for food and fur. With a selection of Eskimo fine crafts from other Arctic communities, the wood carvings will be featured in the display of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources at the Spring Gift Show taking place in Toronto, Ontario, from February 24 to 27.

Indian carvings now on sale are the result of two years work by Northern Affairs staff. They were originally produced as toys, but it is hoped that they will become as well known as other northern fine art products and add to the craft-producing reputation of the residents of this community on the east coast of Hudson Bay.

AN ART COMES TO LIGHT

The idea for the carving project was conceived when an elderly Indian one day showed a carving he had made to a Northern Affairs project officer. It was rough and dirty when taken from his pocket, but even in that state it had lines that caught the eye. Other members of the community, when asked if they too had carvings, produced an assortment of elongated figurines of beaver, otter and other northern animals. By dint of patience and persistence, the carvers were persuaded that people in the South would be interested in buying their carvings, which could become a new source of income.

In the months that followed, a variety of carvings of fish, birds and animals was produced, observed from nature by Indian trappers and fishermen. While the carvers worked, they were encouraged to criticize one another's work. Further refinements came when a board of three members was elected by the carvers to assess the carvings. The board met once a week, and all carvers brought their work to be assessed and bought or rejected.

In 1963, the membership of the Eskimo Co-operative at Great Whale River was expanded to include the Indian carvers, and all carvings are now purchased through this organization. The board is still active, and a young Indian woman checks and tags all carvings, and packs the finished products for shipment.

The carvings are made from wood found in the vicinity of Great Whale River, mostly black northern spruce, which is gathered when people go to the bush to collect firewood. Often the wood that is used has been naturally dried by the wind, sun and winter snows. Green wood is also selected for its shape, and is taken home and dried.

PROCESS OF CREATION

Axes are used to rough out the desired shape when the wood is properly seasoned. A draw knife is then used to shape the carving further. This knife is usually made by the carver, and is normally used for shaping snowshoe frames. A variety of wood files also help in the shaping. The finished carvings are sandpapered.

The last step in making a carving is the finish. Hard floor wax is applied by women, and a warm glow is produced by time and care in rubbing the carving with soft clean cloths and paper. Some of the artists polish their carvings with a soapstone; working it back and forth over the carving, they produce a smooth finish with little gloss.

One of the better carvers is Sampson Masty, who heads the board that selects the carvings. He hunts and traps in winter and does odd jobs about the settlement. Another good carver is the Eskimo trapper Elijah Kawapit, who spends all winter on the trap-line and comes into the community in the summer.

FINAL WHEAT PAYMENT, 1962-63

The Canadian Wheat Board announced on February 14 the final payment on wheat delivered to it during the crop year 1962-63.

During the year, producers delivered 469,927,091 bushels, including 44,371,524 bushels of Durum Wheat. The amount of the final payment to be distributed to producers is \$199,736,575 and of this amount \$28,744,066 will be distributed to Durum Wheat producers. The average final payment for Durum is 64.78 cents a bushel and for grades of wheat other than Durum 40.181 cents a bushel. These average payments compare with 65.913 cents a bushel for Durum and 42.974 cents a bushel for other grades of wheat, delivered by producers in the 1961-62 crop year.

MINISTER'S COMMENT

The following statement concerning the wheat payment was issued by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Minister of Trade and Commerce:

"I am sure the Western producers, and Canadians generally, will share my satisfaction with the all-time record final payment of \$200 million announced by the Canadian Wheat Board today.

This is the farmer's own money, representing the proceeds of the sale of his wheat in world and domestic markets. The final payment represents the difference between the average price which the Canadian Wheat Board was able to obtain for the farmers' wheat and the initial payment made to farmers at the time of delivery....

The Canadian Wheat Board is a producers' marketing agency, and I am sure producers will join with me in congratulating the Board on a very successful year of merchandising. The Canadian Government will continue to give strong support to the Board in its efforts to sell wheat to best advantage throughout the world."

NEW CANADIAN ENVOY TO FRANCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, has announced the appointment of Mr. Jules Léger, at present Canadian Ambassador to Italy, as Ambassador to France, to succeed Mr. Pierre Dupuy, who has been appointed Commissioner-General of the Canadian World Exhibition, 1967. Mr. Léger's successor in Rome will be announced shortly.

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