

Development agency redesigns rickshaw for Third World

A Canadian development agency has redesigned the traditional heavy rickshaw for use in Bangladesh and it is expected that the new lighter version will soon be produced on a large scale for use in that country's crowded streets.

The agency, Inter-Pares, has developed its prototype rickshaw in Ottawa from local and imported materials.

The term rickshaw is short for the Japanese *jin-rick-sha*, meaning man-power-vehicle. The two-wheeled hooded vehicle appears in many variations in the Far East and it is popular because it is the only reasonable form of cheap transportation. In some areas, the rickshaw is guided by a man mounted on a bicycle attached to a seat for pedestrians; in other areas the man runs, pulling two poles attached to a seat on wheels.

The Ottawa-based organization is replacing the wood and metal seats with plastic reinforced with jute. The resulting product, resembling fibreglass, was developed by Inter-Pares in a Bangladesh factory it has established. These modifications make the load lighter and the rickshaw more practical for other uses than carrying passengers. With the present heavy rickshaw the average life expectancy of a rickshaw puller is 12 years.

Another design being considered has a platform at the back of the bicycle instead of a seat, so that supplies could be carried. A motorized rickshaw might even soon be used in Bangladesh.

Yet another possibility is an automatic gearing device, invented by Dykins Indus-

tries Limited in Montreal, which could soon be saving cycling rickshaw pullers time and effort.

The agency has been experimenting with different applications of the jute-plastic material. It is also being tested in insulating milk containers to keep the liquid fresh as it is carried by rickshaw through the streets of Bangladesh.

Inter-Pares was established in 1976 and the organization has initiated a number of programs in Canada, along with its overseas programs. It provides Canadian schools and colleges with social studies kits detailing life in various third world countries. It has set up the Inter-Pares news agency to provide teachers with up-to-date information about such issues as the new International Economic Order, the Law of the Sea Conference, and the problems of indigenous native societies by development along the Amazon River.

Its efforts in global education extend to financing exchanges between small Canadian and third world farmers and tours in Canada by Central American occupational health workers.

"Inter-Pares tries to identify co-operative groups and others in the third world community and we provide the channels for private Canadian money to fund these groups," according to its founder and director Tim Brodhead.

Inter-Pares hopes that by Christmas it will be linked with the London, England-based news service *Earthscan*, to provide Canadian media with environment-related news.

Canadian wood stoves popular

The Elmira Stove Works has expanded to become the biggest wood and coal cook stove company in North America.

The company has been building additions to their new plant in Elmira in southern Ontario and have two lines of cook stove on the market. They are now making their stoves in decorator colours and have been overwhelmed with the demand for them. Their famous "Oval" (the old Findlay Oval) was chosen for the Energy Efficient House being displayed at the Knoxville, Tennessee world's fair.

Business is booming for the company because the Mennonite and Amish communities in the Kitchener-Waterloo area provide a steady demand for the stoves, the parts and the servicing. They also provide the work force which makes the stove.

"It's an expensive product to build and the cooking surfaces have to be hand ground. Our Mennonite workers have the patience to do this properly," said sales manager Brad Michael.

Selected for world's fair

The mainstay of the company has been the traditional Oval which costs about \$2 295, and this is the wood and coal cook stove being shown in the energy efficient house at the world's fair. It has been the same design since 1906, but the company has changed the stove's staid image by offering it in almond and gold porcelain finishes along with basic black.

To meet the demand for a cheaper stove they produced the Julia, costing about \$1 760, two years ago. It is finished in a silicon coating instead of the more expensive porcelain and it does not have some of the detail.

The newest stove called the Sweetheart is not much bigger than an ordinary electric stove so it fits in most kitchens. It sells for \$1 295 but looks like the Oval and has the same quality detailing and finish, and the same firebox. The cooking surface is 55 centimetres by 81 centimetres wide and 81 centimetres high. The top of the stove is 130 centimetres high. There are six burner tops.

"We worked on it for the past two years," said Michael, "because there was a good market for small kitchens and cottages, but we've found that people are also buying these for ordinary houses. You can cook and heat with it and it has a water jacket, just like the Oval, to heat cold water for household use."



Inter-Pares director Tim Brodhead takes two passengers for a ride along Ottawa streets in the prototype rickshaw developed for Bangladesh.

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