

DISTINCTIVE CANADIAN DESIGNS

How Canadian Manufacturers May Profit by Introducing Native Designs Into Their Products

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FASHION constantly demands new designs of our manufacturers, but the war prevents them from getting these designs in the usual way. The manufacturers are anxious for help, and this cutting off of the supply of designs from foreign sources may lead to the development of distinctive Canadian designs, with far-reaching results in the development of Canadian trade.

In the United States five hundred million dollars is spent yearly on silk, and over four hundred and fifty million dollars worth of this silk is woven in the United States. Thirty years ago over ninety per cent. was imported. Yet, though the silk is manufactured in the United States, the designs have been almost wholly foreign. The great war cut off supplies of new designs from Europe needed to keep pace with the fashion, but through the efforts of the American Museum of National History, New York, United States designers are now producing equally pleasing patterns in their own country. They are now using Peruvian, Mexican, South-Western United States, Plains, Korean, Chinese and Siberian native designs, taken from specimens in the museum. In the United States they do not seem to be trying to develop a United States art. They are merely trying to get new designs, and only for textiles. Canada should not only get new designs, but should also be concerned with developing an art that will characterize not merely Canadian textiles, but all Canadian manufactures, and help us to hold our own with other countries after the war. In Canada the archaeologists of the Geological Survey, Department of Mines, Ottawa, are taking up this work, and although the office has no facilities for making designs, nearly four hundred examples of motives for decorative and symbolic designs and trade marks have been selected for Canadian manufacturers and their commercial artists from prehistoric Canadian art and handiwork. This forms practically a complete series of prehistoric Canadian motives.

Mr. Joseph Keele, of the Ceramic Laboratory of the Department, has used some of these shapes and motives in the modeling of vases made to test Canadian clays. Many of these pottery products, after serving their purpose, were given to the Women's Canadian Club, who sold them for the benefit of the Red Cross. At the sale there was a greater call for the vases made after these Canadian motives than for any of the others.

Thirty Canadian manufacturers, representing at least nine different industries, a museum and an art school have already applied for copies of these motives. This is over twenty per

cent. of those informed of the opportunity. It suggests a still larger demand, since seven of the nine requests are from seven different trades. The trades represented include even more than this if all related work is counted. They are the clay, cotton printing, cotton fabric, rug, silverware, jewelry, stencil, paper, bookbinding, designing, printing and lithographing industries. One firm desired material for a trade mark, and another manufacturer, by asking if it will be necessary to send a designer to Ottawa, signifies a considerable desire to secure these motives. Several firms have already sent representatives to look into the matter. One sent two representatives from Toronto to Ottawa.

They all express themselves as surprised at the quantity and usefulness of the material, and two have already selected motives for their designers to use. One Canadian manufacturer writes that owing to the war, designing in Paris, France, is practically at a standstill, and will be until things right themselves. He is using practically the same designs that he had on hand for the last two years.

All this seems to prove that there is a demand for motives or inspiration for new and characteristic Canadian designs and trade marks. This demand we may expect to grow at the close of the war, when Canada makes special efforts to stand on an even footing with other countries in producing manufactures recognized all over the world as individually and characteristically her own.

Woman's Wear, a New York daily textile publication, took up this work vigorously in the United States, and has held two contests for designers, offering \$500 in prizes, and these prizes were supplemented by hundreds of dollars offered by textile firms in crying need of designs.

The American Museum had calls from representatives of Johnson, Cowdin and Company; Mr. MacLaren, business manager, wished to see if the collections contained art motives; Mr. Jacobs, mill expert, came to see if the designs were such as could be developed on the loom; Mr. Emil Speck, the designer, came to convert the motives he saw in the museum specimens into modern designs. He is now a constant visitor to the collections. Many other manufacturers are now doing likewise. These include Cheney Brothers, Belding Brothers, John Wanamaker, Joseph Berlinger, the Central Textile Company and H. R. Mallinson and Co. The products of the work of the silk companies alone now enable United States women to utilize in the fabrics they wear the great arts of the New World; and similar results are being obtained in other textile industries, especially in the manufacture of



PREHISTORIC CANADIAN POT

One of the many specimens dug up about forty miles south of Ottawa in a prehistoric Iroquoian village site by Dominion archaeologists. It has given inspiration for the designing of modern Canadian pottery.