

# AN ART GALLERY FOR CALGARY

(By WINNIFRED REEVE)

With all due respect to the laudable intention of the Woman's Canadian club to establish an art gallery in Calgary, it may be said that unless very careful discrimination and judgment is observed in the matter of choice and acceptance of pictures our gallery is destined to be more or less of a joke from an art point of view.

Better bare walls than walls decorated with second rate or third rate work.

Before a picture is accepted it should be examined by a jury of artists or people who know something about art. In all cities where there are art institutions and galleries the matter of accepting and hanging a picture is one of very serious consideration. A picture is not accepted and hung be-

cause such and such a person or club donates it; but purely because of its intrinsic merit. Otherwise an art gallery would be something like many homes we know of where the walls are adorned by "real hand paintings" done by Charlie or Johnnie or Jennie or Susie or Aunt Annie or Uncle George. They are not there for purposes of beautifying the walls, but because one of the family or a friend painted them. We all have suffered under the shadow of such abortions of art.

But an art gallery is a noble institution and those behind it should be possessed with noble aspirations for it.

If the Woman's Canadian club earn-  
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ostly desires to start an art gallery in this city, and wishes it to be one that will reflect credit upon the members of that club and this city, then it seems to me the first work is to appoint an art director and critic, to whom the club can refer whenever a picture is under consideration. If our gallery is not to be the subject of sneer and ridicule, then nothing must be admitted that will not stand the highest kind of art test. We should not be influenced or flattered by gifts from individuals who know nothing about art. Their intentions may be of the best, but we know what hell is said to be paved with.

Furthermore, we should not pursue or beg sketches from traveling artists, who might toss a sketch or painting to us like a bone to a dog, and then go away and laugh at us. Perhaps such an artist would be flattered by having his work hung in our potential gallery; it is certain it would never be hung in his home city.

I am very well acquainted with some of the greatest illustrators of the United States and England. A corner in many galleries is reserved for the work of the illustrators. Incidentally, I might point out that a mistake was probably made in describing Mr. Peters, a number of whose pen and ink newspaper sketches the Women's Press club put in a big frame and presented to the "art gallery." Mr. Peters is not, as described, "the black and white artist of Life." That is an erroneous designation. "Life" is printed only in black and white, and so far as I can recollect has not appeared in any other color. The world-famous illustrator and editor, C. D. Gibson, is the chief staff artist of "Life." Mr. Peters, with many other artists, contributes to its pages.

Now if we truly contemplate the noble institution of an art gallery for the city of Calgary, there is rare material right to our hand. We do not need to solicit the work of visiting American artists. We have artists at home whose work excels that of many of the strangers who come here to paint. Furthermore, it would be quite fitting that such a gallery should have among its first paintings the work of native artists, or artists living in this country for the purpose of painting our matchless scenery.

In Banff one of the greatest of artists has long made his home. I refer to Belmore Browne, whose exhibits in New York city are an annual event. His work has had the very highest commendation from critics and connoisseurs. His paintings are hung in the chief galleries of the world. At the Venice exhibition, where the work of only eighty artists from the continent of North America is shown this year, prominent among them is a beautiful painting by Belmore Browne, "Spring in the Canadian Rockies." Why not, then, a picture by Belmore Browne? Surely there is some lover and patron of art in this city who would buy one of Mr. Browne's lovely paintings of our own Rockies and donate it to the newly formed Calgary art gallery.

Modestly living in our midst here,

In the city of Calgary is an artist who has achieved fame in the United States and abroad. Mrs. Edna Maritt Wilcocks has been for a number of years painting and exhibiting pictures around Banff and Calgary. Besides her scenic work, Mrs. Wilcocks has done some fine examples of portraiture. Why not a painting by Mrs. Wilcocks in our Calgary gallery? If her paintings are good enough to be hung in galleries in New York city and Portland, why not in Calgary where she makes her home?

And touching upon the work of artists visiting our city, Leonard Davis had an exhibition at the Palliser hotel last winter of paintings of scenes in the Rocky mountains, and others painted on the ranch of the Prince of Wales, that when shown in New York created something of a sensation.

A couple of winters ago a young artist named Alfred Kihn spent the season camping in a shack with his young wife on the Morley Indian reserve. He emerged with some remarkable color drawings of the Stoney Indians. These were exhibited at the hotel at Lake Windermere, when the William Thompson memorial was celebrated, and were shown in Calgary, and I believe in Banff. As in the case of Mr. Davis's paintings, Mr. Kihn's work made a great impression when shown in New York. We had the opportunity of obtaining a choice from this collection.

When Mr. Walter, the Icelandic-Canadian, was in Calgary what an opportunity was lost to secure a painting of genuine beauty and worth. Though he was a week in this city and but three days in Edmonton, he sold not a single canvas in Calgary, while Edmonton purchased more than \$3,000 worth of paintings by this artist.

Besides the work of the artists who live here and those passing through, we have in Calgary some magnificent canvasses by world famous artists. These probably could not be purchased, but their owners might be approached with a view to an exhibition. People who love great paintings enough to buy them generally like to share their beauty with others. Many of the displays in art galleries of the world are drawn from private collections lent for special occasions.

Judge and Mrs. Winter possess some masterpieces, paintings, etchings, steel engravings and prints. This collection has been in the city a great number of years. It is to be hoped it will never leave Calgary. It is probably the greatest collection we have in this city.

Perhaps some day a real lover of art will open our "art gallery" with a fine showing of the splendid work of our resident artists and the masterpieces that have come from abroad.

## EDMONTON WOMAN IS ARRESTED FOR FORGERY

EDMONTON, Alta., April 29.—Arrested here yesterday on a charge of forgery, Mrs. Isabella Kew will be arraigned this morning in police court. The police hold ten bad cheques, they declare, varying in amounts from \$5.00 to \$25.00, which have been dishonored as forgeries by the banks upon which they were drawn, and returned to the hands of the merchants who cashed them.