

PUBLICITY VALUE OF FLOATS

BY K. P. KARAMCHANDANI, A.I.F.C., M.S. (U.S.A.)

Forest Utilization Officer, Bombay State, Poona

Publicity constitutes one of the most important activities of any commercial enterprise. The main idea behind such activity is to draw the pointed attention of the people who constitute the ultimate consumers to the variety of products produced by the manufacturers, thereby promoting better sales. The Forest Department is also a commercial concern but in addition it is similar to a research organization. In case of the Forest Department, therefore, the publicity has in addition a great educative value, since the mass of the people are given an opportunity to be made aware of not only the role that the forests play in the every day life of the people but also of the progress and development achieved by the department in its various spheres of activity.

Exhibitions have been accepted throughout the world as being the most effective media of publicity. Organizing of industrial show rooms and museums at important centres for the display of the products also serves as a useful means of achieving the same object. Showing of films and illustrated slides, distribution of hand bills and leaflets and publishing of photographs and charts are added modes of effecting publicity. But a novel form of publicity that has recently come into the limelight is the organizing of so-called "Floats" on important national occasions, such as, on the Republic Day. A float may be defined as a "showroom on wheels". It is required to be constructed on an ordinary open truck or on a trailer-cum-tractor. The overall specification would be different for different areas but in case of Bombay the measurements are usually confined to 35 feet in length, 12 feet in height and 8 feet in width. Illuminated floats and those giving movement to some of the parts have a greater visual and overall appeal.

The three most important factors in the designing and construction of suitable floats are (i) the idea, (ii) the presentation and (iii) the execution. The idea is the most important of these, for, on this depends the entire publicity value of the float. Since a float is a part of a procession and keeps on moving it remains before the eye of the people for a very short time. It is in this short time that the idea should go home to the public. Each float should, therefore, depict a single idea or activity, to be most useful. Combining a number of ideas in an attempt to show more activities of the organization has an effect of causing confusion and making the people "miss the bus" as one would say! Next in importance is the presentation of the idea; simplicity and effectiveness are the two watch-words of proper presentation. Execution on the other hand is both an art and science and needs study and experience.

In the Mayor's Cavalcade that was organized on the Republic Day, Jan. 26, 1957 in Bombay, the Forest Department participated by putting up a float (see photo 1). This was the first time that the Bombay Forest Department had organized a float and the most outstanding feature of this was that it was both designed and executed departmentally with the assistance of two local artists. The main idea of the float was to depict the welfare of *Adiwasis* and other forest tribes achieved during the last few years through the formation of Forest Labourer's Co-operative Societies. The floor of the truck was, therefore, suitably decorated with live trees, shrubbery and wild life so as to present an atmosphere of a forest and in the centre, a group of *Adiwasis*, four men and four women, were made to give a rendering of local song and dance items bearing on their welfare (see photo 2). The sides of the

float below the level of the truck-floor carried painted canvasses with suitable slogans depicting pictorially the role played by the forests and forest industries in the life of the people, the available area under forests, the need to grow more and the welfare activities of the Forest Department (see photo 3).

The front of the truck, that is, the bonnet and the drivers cabin, was covered with a bamboo-paper-hessian mould of a lion so that the float from the front looked like a live lion sitting on its haunches (see photo 4). The two large eyes of the lion served as the view spaces for the driver at the wheel and the mechanic sitting next to him. The entire lion mould was made in seven separate pieces which when assembled, measured $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth, 22 feet in length and 7 feet in height. Above the mane of the lion was mounted an illuminated map of the New Bombay State showing the distribution of forests in each division under the Second Five-Year Plan. Different schemes were represented by different coloured bulbs which were lighted from a 12 volt truck battery. Above the map was placed the board of the Bombay Forest Department. The rest of the float was suitably decorated with buntings and hydrogen filled balloons carrying names of important industries, industrial woods, etc.

It was indeed an unusual sight for the Bombayites to see an almost live lion moving in the Mayor's Cavalcade looking quite tame and swaying with the rythm of the dance and music! The Forest Department float proved to be very popular with the Bombay public because of the superb exposition of folk dances given by the *Adiwasis*. It fully achieved not only its primary object of publicity and propaganda but also highlighted the activities of the Department.

NEWS AND NOTES

Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi

NEW COTTON FOR MADRAS

Suitable for Summer-cropped Areas

New Delhi: Cotton farmers in Madras State are earning an extra gross profit of nearly Rs. 56 per acre by growing the new long staple cotton *Madras Uganda Number 2*, or *MCU-2* for short.

MCU-2 has been found to be suitable for growing in the 60,000-acre summer-cropped area in the Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli Districts of the State.

The new cotton is best suited for growing in the summer season from March to mid-August in these districts.

It has a staple length of $1\cdot1/32$ to $1\cdot1/16$ inches, and is suitable for spinning 36 to 38's counts with a count strength product of 1797 at 30's and 1591 at 40's and a Pressley Strength index of 7.03. It is considered to be one of the best quality cottons grown in this country on a commercial scale.

MCU-2 yields about three-fourths of a bale of lint per acre, and gins 34 per cent. Besides, it matures within the short space of 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ months, and so is ideal for growing in the summer-cropped area where paddy is sown in rotation with cotton.