ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY OPENS HERE THIS EVENING

Nearly 500 Pictures Sent in and 240 Are Hung—Most Brilliant Collection of Thoroughly Lawful Picture in Life of R.C.A.

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

Two hundred and forty pictures hang in four rooms at the Royal Canadian Academy, which opens tonight at the Art Gallery. There are optimists who imagine that the 200 in the corridor would be a better show. One thing plainly wrong with the pictures on view is that there are no bad ones. Excellence by the square yard. The exhibition is almost monotonously fine.

It is also in a much higher key than ever. Time was when a R.C.A. show was all degrees of shadow. Yeas by year the light and vibration creeps in, until now the R.C.'s are as keen as any Group of Seven. But of course there are no debatable pictures. All these are positively lawful. You have seen such subjects before. The Academy is the law. Always has been. Will be. The same classic tunes pegged into higher keys. Beethoven and Bach on new instruments. Absolutely no jazz.

With so many pictures detail criticism is futile. One grand feature of the Academy is that it fetches more of the Quebec painters. Dyonnet and Cullen are both on the hanging committee. They are veterans at our shows.

"Isn't Suzor Cote coming up?" I asked of Dyonnet.

"Oh, he is paralyzed," he said. "He has gone south. But he is as gay as ever."

There are three Suzor Cotés at the show, and good ones, though not new. He has a grace, a man from his old works. Cullen has one, a large and imposing rock portrait; real stony rocks with a glorious plateau of sunlight, the river and very little sky. Real Quebec landscape.

As the only catalogue to hand is a typewritten list of the whole 440 without numbers, I shall jot down only from memory a few impressions of pictures. The biggest of all is Chalener's Old Fowlers, a & Westmoreland's and glorious color. Not many painters filling so much wealth of intense color over vast an area with so much drawing. You look in vain for a Jeffrey and find it in the Loyalists Drawing Loois; so fine a drawing you wonder if you could not use such splendid history and character.

Homer Watson spanned his rocks and trees into silver this time; fine pictures; an old form with a new touch; notably in two of them, books for the hands—of one a marvellous book, and hands that are not just hung on the figure. His daughter also has an excellent portrait study in composite color. McGregor has two very fine portraits, one of his mother, one academic both remarkably good and simple. Comfort has one of a Young Man—W. O. Stables; as taut as a man of striking character. Manly Macdonald has a vigorous portrait of a lady.

There are a few of the type of McGillivray Knowles from Maine; the biggest is a patinating rock with weathering. Water is the medium, in a brass frame. Horrie didn't come out this year, but a wonder of jewelry effects; rocks in the same varicolored effects as the water. G. A. Reid comes out with a new study far from his usual manner; and a portrait, by the way, of a young girl.

Franz Johnston has four, all good, decorative, mostly from Quebec and Algoma; one of gorgeous moose- -mane Tapestry. The decoration here is first without sacrifice to topography.

Archibald Browne returns to his memorable moon this time, in a wintry atmosphere. Winter Moonrise: a big thing, much off the old watery motif. No more moonstip that a meteor. Lapine returns to horses this time with an epochal mural study. The Roundup, a very aggressive thing. There is an use to be pupil of Knight here, and now lives in Amherst, N.S., has a splendid Lunenburg Harbor with the unmistakable N. S. oxen.

A. Y. Jackson north picture. The light on some of these is exactly all Jackson's: old and spooky. There is a new flower here. Holmes has a new wildflower: Lillmer a powerful arresting Cathedral Mountain.

These are a few of the grand ensemble of great excellence in this pageant of splendors; enough to suggest the others. Stodgy pictures are not the day. There's something in store for the critics.

The sculpture exhibit is in a central corridor, and there are quite as many pictures. Here are some choice small studies by Henri Hertz with his Jazz Fiancer in the nude and his Charleston rhythm; Laliberte with his bacchanalian orgy: Suzor Cote with the Old Smoker, three more; Francois Lorrig with the Cloud—symbolic; and so on. The Cox collection room is a remarkable exhibit of old Dutch furniture that has seen better days; a few old French chairs or two, with tapestries and chandeliers to match.

The opening to-night will be one of the most brilliant in the history of the Academy.