

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

by MARY M. ATWATER

Address all questions to Mary M. Atwater, Director of the Shuttle Craft Guild, Basin, Montana

Question: Where may I obtain reliable working drawings for the building of a loom? It is not a question of buying a manufactured loom — I wish the pleasure of building one.

Answer: The best set of working drawings I know of is the one included in a book: "Home Weaving", by Victor Beriau, published by the Department of Agriculture, Province of Quebec, Quebec, Canada. The drawings are for a four-harness counterbalanced loom of simple design, and the drawings are given in full detail. The drawings show a mounting with string heddles as well as one with metal heddles. The latter is, in my opinion, to be preferred. It is also better to purchase standard heddle frames as well as the metal heddles from a manufacturer as it is difficult to make these frames light enough and exact enough in the ordinary home work-shop. The Beriau loom does not provide a sectional warp-beam, but this convenience can be added very easily.

Working drawings of the best modern looms now being supplied by loom manufacturers are, — naturally enough — not available. And the drawings in the book mentioned are the only ones I consider thoroughly reliable.

A loom is a technical tool, and must be made with the greatest exactness. For instance the four main beams — warp-beam, slab-stock, breast beam and cloth-beam — must be exactly true in alignment. If the relation between these four beams is off as much as an eighth of an inch the weaving will run crooked. For this reason, if for no other, the frame should always be of hard wood. Otherwise it will soon warp and wrack with the beating and the strain of the stretched warps, and the loom will require constant trueing up.

In the experience of most people there is little, if any, money saved by building a loom at home; and the manufactured loom, if a good one is selected, will probably give better service. However if the pleasure is in doing the construction work oneself that is a different matter.