

its major industrialized trading competitors. Both groups urged that increasing technological innovation in industry would be a key to future growth of the Canadian economy.

Solandt, however, would carry technology to produce economic growth only so far. In his final report he saw Canada on the horns of a dilemma: "In common with the rest of mankind, Canada is coming to recognize the need for slowing the rate of growth of population and the rate of growth of the kind of economic activity that makes extravagant use of scarce resources and imperils the environment . . . Thus, looking from a global perspective we see a need to slow growth in Canada, whereas looking from a National point of view we see a need to accelerate growth in order to provide full employment and to provide the resources of money and educated people needed to create the better society."

Solandt proposed a compromise, a period of economic growth through technology, then a slowdown in both population and economic growth and the emergence of "an increasingly service-centered economy based on the services needed to supply human needs rather than on production of manufactured goods to raise the GNP." In the process, Solandt said, Canadians would shift their expectations from "mindless consumption" to seeking a higher quality of life.

"Most people," he wrote, "are coming to see that the mere pursuit of affluence in material goods does not necessarily lead to the greatest national well-being . . ."

[CHEAP HOUSES]

Houses are being sold in the Atlantic provinces of Canada for \$9,000 to \$12,000 or so — smallish, but well built, comfortable houses on good foundations, with no down payment and low interest rates.

For the moment they're being sold only to relatively low income families (\$5,000 or \$6,000 a year or less) though people earning more are beginning to demand them. The Federal and provincial governments are nurturing the movement, but not actually putting cash into the houses.

They're shell houses — that is, completely weather-tight and finished on the outside, with plumbing, wiring, oil-forced air heat, insulation, bathroom walls and kitchen cupboards. Inside walls, finish flooring and extra cabinet work are left to the buyers to do themselves or to have done later. Still, the houses can be lived in quite comfortably for a winter or two as they are.

The idea of the finish-it-yourself home is not new. In some parts of the United States veterans returning from the Second World War could have a house for the cost of the materials and a

few days work by a gang of carpenters, and frontier house raisings seldom included the finishing touches. But lately there have been few such examples in the housing industry.

The Canadian movement began in Newfoundland in 1969. The policy of the Provincial Government then was to move fishermen from the outports, where life was considered to be out of tune with modern economics, to settlements inland. These people had always owned their own homes, though, and urban public housing did not sit well.

The system works like this:

The Federal Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides plans for a variety of houses of about 1000 square feet: two story houses, split levels, semi-detached and row houses. Builders make the houses on speculation, with the government sometimes guaranteeing to buy them if they're not sold in sixty days. Almost all are sold before they're completed. The CMHC also makes the loans and may lower its 8-¾ interest rate down as far as the 7-⅞ minimum, depending on family income. In Nova Scotia, the Provincial Government will subsidize another 2 per cent, giving the buyer a rate as low as 5-⅞. There are plans for municipalities to subsidize loans as the buyer's income decreases, lowering the rates to as little as 2-¾ per cent. There are income reviews every two years. At the highest subsidy levels, each branch of government pays \$10 to \$12 a month per loan. The municipalities make more than that on the property taxes.

The buyers make no down payment — their finishing work is considered their equity.

The CMHC has found the plan works best with small builders, where big company overhead and profits don't have to be sustained. Since such carpenters are often not hustlers, the CMHC helps them find land, (a typical lot costs \$700 to \$900), advertise the homes and so on.

It appears the trend will continue — the only hold-up being a shortage of "serviced" land — that is, land in which water and utilities are available. CMHC policy encourages building on land with public water and sewage rather than on land where wells must be dug and septic tanks laid. For builders the movement takes the risk and some of the hassle out of speculation, as well as some of the profits. Buyers get better homes, plus the satisfaction of controlling and choosing many of their features. One of the biggest gains is the social benefit derived by taking people out of public housing. When buyers leave public housing the government saves money: public housing units cost from \$20,000 to \$22,000 in the Maritimes and they require subsidies of between \$100 and \$140 a month.