

The peak years of expansion in the publishing industry have been 1943, 1944 and 1945. Books on war topics accounted for the first great increases. These were followed by a big output of fiction during the war years.

Retail book stores and public libraries agree that the demand for books in Canada has increased enormously since 1939. Book stores, whose sales are mostly to individual buyers, confirm the publishers' statement that books published in Canada now constitute at least 30% of the total sales, a proportion about twice as high as it was 10 years ago. The greatest demand in recent years has been for technical books on such subjects as engineering, town-planning, chemistry and aeronautics.

There are several reasons for the increased interest in books during the war years. One is the fact that Canadians individually have had more money to spend than ever before and a shortage of goods on which to spend it. The purchase of books as gifts and through book clubs has greatly increased. Probably material reasons have had less influence on reading and book-buying habits, however, than the more important fact that Canadians have been thinking more--and consequently reading more--about such matters as world affairs and Canada's part in them, economic problems, history, racial issues and social questions. Fiction which deals with history and social problems is especially popular.

Quality of Books: The physical quality of Canadian books has greatly improved in recent years. Canada is now turning out books which have won favourable comment from British and United States publishers. More attention is paid to format, choice of type-face, title page design, cover stamps and particularly coloured jackets. Leading artists are engaged on volumes which merit special attention. Canadian mills are now turning out a variety of fine papers equal to the best British grades, and during the war years Canada was in a more fortunate position with respect to paper supply than either Great Britain or the United States.

A few firms specialize in deluxe and gift pieces involving hand-tooling, silk and leather-lined cases and gilt edging. At the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco a few years ago an all-Canadian book produced by a Toronto firm obtained honourable mention as one of the best examples of bookmaking the world over. The book was printed with full-colour reproductions of Canadian landscape painting, bound in Canadian homespun and beaverskin, and the covers lined with birch-bark.

Everything that goes into the making of a book is now produced in Canada.

Growth of Canadian Literature in English: Pioneer writers in Canada were long tied to the literary traditions of England. It was not until the 1880's and 1890's that there began to emerge any writing with a distinctively Canadian feeling, and at first it was primarily poetic. Among the outstanding early poets were Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman, Duncan Campbell Scott and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts.

It is in the novel that Canadian prose writers have found their most effective medium of expression. The early Canadian novel tended to be romantic and pastoral, but during World War I, when Canadians awoke to a new sense of national consciousness, the novel began to be used as social comment. This tendency increased during the depression years of the 30's. Morley Callaghan, Mazo de la Roche and Frederick Philip Grove began publishing in the 1920's and were joined in the next two decades by a constantly growing number of first rate writers. Among scores are Hugh MacLennan, Thomas H. Raddall, Gwethalyn Graham, Angus Mowat, Philip Child and W.G. Hardy. A dictionary of Canadian novelists, now in preparation, contains upwards of 150 names.