

Thus changing social patterns, urbanization and population increase, combined with continuing immigration and replacement of deteriorated housing stock, will set the pattern for Canada's housing requirements in the coming years.

In response to these housing demands, the Federal Government is undertaking intensive studies to ascertain long-term housing needs and, with the help of private investment and initiative, will provide for the construction of about 1,000,000 new housing units between 1975 and 1980. Federal responsibility for housing is discharged through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a Crown company set up in 1946 to administer the National Housing Act.

High ownership percentage

Canada has a strong agrarian heritage. The country was pioneered by owner farmers rather than tenant farmers, among whom the leaseholds and "lifetime" mortgages found in Europe were almost unknown. So it is not surprising that 1971 figures indicate that a high proportion — more than 60 per cent — of Canada's total housing stock of about 6,000,000 units is owner-occupied.

To the average man, the price of a new house represents about three times his annual income, and not many can afford to make such a purchase in cash. Usually a house is purchased by means of a mortgage, a long-term loan made on the security of the property itself. Loans of this type are made by a variety of institutions, such as banks, life-insurance companies and loan or trust companies. Mortgage loans may also be made by credit unions, fraternal organizations and even private individuals. The Federal Government and most of the provincial governments also help families to own their own homes. In fact, 20 per cent of the 3,500,000 housing units started since 1954 — more than 650,000 dwellings — have been financed under the National Housing Act.

In recent years, federal participation has been increasingly directed to the needs of low-income groups. In 1975 alone, the Federal Government provided for the construction of more than 40,000 units for families in the lower half of Canada's income range.

Most mortgages are amortized. The borrower agrees to repay, in equal monthly instalments, part of the principal with the interest due on the amount still owing. In this way, the loan is fully repaid at the end of the mortgage period. Between 1967 and 1975, 98 per cent