

New materials are constantly being introduced. Laboratory tests on these are conducted by the National Research Council. Research on wood products is conducted by the Forest Products Laboratories of the Forestry Department. The Department of Public Works' research facilities are also employed.

The traditional materials of house building - wood, brick and plaster - have begun to appear in new guises. Plywood, fibre-board and acoustic tile for ceilings are a few examples. Plastics, though common in other industries, are relative newcomers to the building business. Even so, counter-tops in plastic laminates have begun to invade the kitchen and bathroom in recent years, as well as plastic floor tiling, wall-panelling and cold-water piping. Anodized aluminum siding requiring no painting is gaining popularity.

Today's typical house differs considerably from its counterpart of 15 - 20 years ago. In earlier years, the traditional Canadian style of architecture was a two-storey or one-and-a-half storey house. After 1945, there followed a pronounced trend toward bungalows. The majority of today's new houses are bungalows but there is evidence of a change in preference and a reversion to the older style. Although the split-level house is still popular, it represents only a small percentage of the total.

The average house has become larger in recent years, floor areas increasing to the point where more than 27 per cent of Canadian houses built in 1961 possessed 1,200 square feet or more of habitable space. In the same year more than three times as many houses were built with four bedrooms as were produced in 1956.

Larger houses have meant larger building lots. Serviced lots for houses built under the National Housing Act now average 6,000 to 7,000 square feet. The 60-foot frontage has become common in newer subdivisions. This represents a considerable increase over the 40-foot lot which was usual in pre-war days, even for suburban housing of good quality.

The increase in lot sizes has resulted in higher prices for today's houses, since almost all are built on freehold land the purchaser buys with the house. Where, in 1956, 14.6 per cent of the purchase price of an NHA property, was for land, in 1961 this proportion had increased to 17.5 per cent. Wider spacing of houses, necessitating longer sewer and water lines, has also added to costs. Where the municipality requires the builder to install these services, the costs have been transmitted directly to the buyer in the cost price. Otherwise, they have resulted in indirect payment through increased property taxation.

House prices vary considerably, but in 1961 the average price paid by a family borrowing under the National Housing Act was \$14,700, including land. The average NHA borrower's income in that year was \$5,810.

Climate plays an important role in house building, not only because of its effect on employment in the industry but because of its effect on the design of the house itself. While sub-zero temperatures are common in most parts of the country during the average winter, summer temperatures can easily reach 95 or 100 degrees Fahrenheit. When temperatures like these are combined with frequently-encountered high humidities, heat control becomes of the utmost importance.