

Form of Construction

Canada is one of the world's largest producers of timber and it is not unnatural that a great deal of wood is used in the construction of Canadian houses. Almost three-quarters of the new houses are of frame construction, using 2 x 4 studs as skeletons. The outside save frequently finished in wood siding, but brick veneer, stucco and other materials are also popular.

Nearly a quarter of the new houses being built are constructed of masonry--solid brick or stone--cement or cinder blocks. The masonry itself may be used as the outside finish or stucco may be applied. The remainder of the new houses perhaps five per cent, are either prefabricated homes, assembled on the site from wood frames built elsewhere, or other types, such as trailer homes.

Housing Research

New materials are constantly being introduced in the building trades by private enterprise. Laboratory tests on new materials are carried out by the National Research Council and research on wood and wood products is conducted by the Federal Forest Products Laboratories. The laboratories of the Department of Public Works test paints and investigate paint uses.

The traditional materials of house building--wood, brick and plaster--have also appeared in new guises. Plywood, in particular, is being widely used for panelling, in sub-flooring and in the construction of cupboards.

Plastics, commonly used in other industries but still relative newcomers to the housing field, are being resorted to for counter tops, wall panelling, water pipe, baseboards and tiling. Hardwood flooring is still used extensively, but composite-material floors, such as rubber or asbestos, are gaining in popularity and have become almost standard in modern bathrooms. Asbestos shingles and siding materials that require no painting have won wide acceptance.

Typical House

The typical house being built today differs in many respects from the house of 10 to 15 years ago. Indeed, even in comparatively modern subdivisions it is possible to distinguish the more recent buildings from those of a few years ago.

In contrast to earlier years when the traditional house in town or country tended to be one and a half to two stories high, most of the houses being constructed today are bungalows. This trend, which first became evident in the years following the war, has become more pronounced in recent years and today eight out of every 10 houses are of this type.

The average Canadian house has become larger in recent years. The average floor area of houses financed under the National Housing Act now exceeds 1,100 square feet and lenders are hesitant about making loans on houses of less than 1,000 square feet because of the difficulty of resale. Most new homes have three bedrooms. In more expensive houses two-car garages are becoming common.