

metres from the building site, produced plywood-sheathed exterior wall panels and gable ends, interior partitions framed for doors and corner connections, roof trusses, stairways and other pre-cut pieces. The factory was run by ten men and produced all components required for the 114-house project within two months.

European interest spreads

This project was visited and studied by groups of building officials, architects and engineers, and contractors from many Western European countries. Groups from Belgium and the Netherlands, in particular, found the techniques demonstrated to be adaptable to their home building requirements. With Canadian advice, local building codes were adjusted to take into account timber construction, based on the Canadian National Building Code. Builders of conventional-type homes in those countries have been able to adapt readily to what were for them new Canadian methods. In 1976 alone, about 50,000 new Canadian-style homes were built and easily sold in Western Europe.

Japan likes construction method

The Japanese, on the other hand, familiar enough with wood-frame structures, found their own traditional "post and beam" method of construction more suitable for custom housing than mass production. They were looking for faster and more economical construction methods, with an eye to energy conservation in the production of materials. They studied Canadian technology among others, and in 1973 the Canada-Japan Housing Committee was set up as a forum for exchange of information.... Builders from the heavy snow regions of Japan have shown particular interest in Canadian construction methods. To date, some 10,000 new units have been completed using Canadian techniques, and to a large extent, materials.

Other countries

Housing is also being exported to the Middle East, and some good-sized housing projects are under construction or have already been built in Iran, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Libya. For the most part they are industrial camps, similar to our mobile home developments, but also fully serviced by schools, hospitals, agricultural centres and warehouses. All the structures are prefabricated in Canada.

Other developing countries — most re-



Prefabricated wood structural components are erected on site.

cently Nigeria — have shown an interest in these factory-built industrial camps, and Canadian units have been purchased by Venezuela and Bolivia.

Working with these developing countries, and with Western European nations as well, Canada has been able to assist in the preparation or revision of building codes to take into account wooden platform frame construction. However, the future for export of Canadian prefabricated housing is somewhat limited, apart from temporary housing for industrial camps. Most client countries are anxious to build up their own construction industries and use their local timber resources. Over the longer term however, the demand for Canadian designs and construction technology also opens up export markets for Canadian materials, especially lumber and wood-based products.

Sometimes speed of delivery is the key factor in an export sale. This was the case in Atco Construction's successful bid to supply emergency housing in Friuli in Northern Italy in the wake of the disastrous earthquake of 1976. The requirement was for 1,000 units to be installed in 24 days. Atco was able to meet that deadline at an acceptable price, and they got the job. Other emergency situations of this kind have also been handled by Canadian industry, working with the Canadian International Development Agency.

Most promising over the long term are the requests that Canada is receiving, particularly from oil-rich countries like

Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Libya and Algeria, to provide government advisers to work with local authorities in drawing up building codes, organizing and supervising projects, establishing plants to prefabricate components and oversee their erection on site. Canadians could be called upon for such duties, with expenses and salary paid by the host country....

The Federal Government has a variety of programs to help Canadian businessmen in the construction industry gain entry into foreign markets. For example, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce offers help in arranging tours for industry groups to overseas locations. The Department provides introductions and guidance in doing business abroad, as well as commercial intelligence through Canadian trade commissioners abroad. Through the Program for Export Market Development, the Government underwrites half the cost of certain marketing expenses related to capital projects overseas, subject to repayment by the Canadian company if the market development effort is successful. Under the same program, the Department provides generous funding to companies willing to participate in trade fairs and industrial exhibitions abroad, as well as help to foreign business executives on company "shopping" visits to Canada.

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