

# Apartment work seen on increase

By CLIFFORD FOWKE  
Canadian Builder

Probably the most significant feature of building construction in Canada today is the manner in which the volume of apartment building is increasing during a period when most other sectors of the industry are leveling out.

Latest official estimates for dollar volume of building construction this year place the figure at \$4,684.4 million — a fraction of 1 percent above the 1962 level. This allows for about the same volume of industrial building as last year, a 9 percent decrease in the volume of commercial building, and a mild 3 percent increase in institutional building.

Residential building is one of the southern sectors with a total expected dollar volume of \$2,118.1 million, up fractionally from last year's \$2,100 million. But included in that total for residential work is a boosted figure for apartment building which, because of its volume, may represent an important turning point in building trends this year for homebuilder and building contractor.

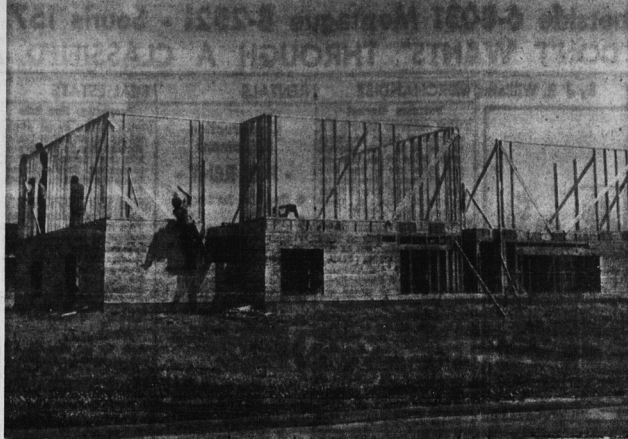
Each year since 1951, apartment building has been taking an increasingly larger proportion of the housing market, largely at the expense of single-family detached houses. In 1951 in centres of 5,000 population and over, apartments represented only about 18 percent of all housing starts as against 81 percent of some 70 percent for single detached houses. By 1955, the proportion of apartment units had crept up to nearly 26 percent while that of single detached houses had slipped to around 63 percent. In 1960, the respective proportions were apartments nearly 30 percent and single detached houses just over 49 percent.

Remarkable for its consistency, the trend has continued since. Last year, apartment units represented 41 percent of all housing units started in centres of 5,000 population and over, and single detached houses accounted for 49 percent.

But this year, estimates show that the volume of apartment units started in these centres across Canada has outstripped the volume of single detached houses. In the period between January and April of this year, out of a total of 22,379 housing starts, apartment units represented 47 percent and single detached houses only 43 percent.

Builders, of course, have been aware of the increasing bulk of apartment building in the general construction picture for some time. At first it was regarded as a local phenomenon. In several of our major cities, the rate of apartment building had previously exceeded that of the detached house, and it is assumed that the old balance between the single-family and the multi-family unit would re-assert itself in due course. But the consistent increase in apartment building over the past decade and the fact that, probably for the first time, apartment starts on a national basis are now outnumbering those of single detached houses, disprove this forecasting point of view.

It is here to stay, it suggests that because of various sociological and other factors, Canada may eventually lose its claim to being one of the countries with the highest proportion of home owners in the world. It suggests that many builders will have to revise their present patterns of operation to adapt to the new situation.



HOUSE BUILDING ACTIVITY IS BRISK ALL ACROSS PROVINCE

# Safer highways is goal of group's new manual

Another major contribution toward better, safer roads and a new impetus when a major conference is held in Whitehorse, Yukon, Sept. 18-19 under the sponsorship of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. Expectations are that the conference will draw strong representations from Alaska, Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia and Montana.

The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce now is urging the Canadian government to open negotiations immediately with the United States to determine whether a cost sharing arrangement can be worked out between the two countries for paving the long northern highway.

These representations also urge the federal government to sponsor engineering studies to determine over-all costs. A survey a few years ago by Battelle Memorial Institute, a Chicago engineering firm, estimated the cost would total \$102 million. That survey found a paved Alaska Highway would pay for itself in less than 20 years.

The 1,523 - mi. highway begins at Dawson Creek, B. C., ends at Fairbanks, Alaska. It is paved for the first 82.8 mi. out of Dawson Creek, with a gravel surface for the remaining 1,157.5 mi. to the Alaska border.

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He said the manual, a natural follow-up to 1960's CGRA-produced manual on uniform traffic control devices, "will in no way attempt to dictate policies but will simply lay down guide lines for adequate, and therefore safer, design."

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# Clay breaks giant dam

All water reservoirs leak a little, but the W. D. Hurst reservoir in Winnipeg is in a category all its own.

Last winter as much as 1.4 million gallons a day — 1.47 months — sifted through cracks. This was the latest in a long line of breaks placing the \$4.5 million reservoir since the 1960-61 winter, its first.

The reservoir was designed by the City of Winnipeg, approved by the Greater Winnipeg Water District, and incorporated in the design were recommendations from a consulting firm which warned of troublesome soil conditions. Private contractors built it.

In the past, clay swelling and shrinking around the two 40, 100,000 gal. cells pushed 8-in. concrete slabs out of place, nearly 6-in. in several places. PEABLES LARGEST

The reservoir was the largest on the Prairies at the time, and engineering steps were taken to overcome the clay problem — but the joints opened up despite precautions.

And on Feb. 5 troubles came from a new source. A sudden warm spell — and temperatures rose 40 deg. in 12 hours — after three weeks of sub-zero weather expanded the 3 - ft. thick ice cover and punched open the joints between the top two concrete slabs around most of the circumference of the basin-shaped reservoir.

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# Engineering studies are being intensified as draught continues

Engineering studies for the construction of a large water storage dam in the upper reaches of the Oldman River system in southwestern Alberta are being intensified as a result of the continuation of a severe drought into its fourth successive year across the southern end of the foothills province.

The contemplated dam would provide 100,000 acre-ft. of water, not less than 200,000 acre-ft. of water.

Four damsites now are being investigated — three in the canyon formed by the Oldman River cutting through the Livingstone Range of mountains, and a fourth as an alternative directly south of Pitcher Station.

The current investigations are being conducted under the direction of W. D. Gray, regional engineer for the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration offices in Calgary.

While the severity of the drought in the Livingstone region has spurred demands for the construction of the dam, Mr. Gray observed:

"It is altogether too early to make any forecasts as to if and will take place or its possible cost."

"At the moment, there is interest in possible storages on the upper reaches of the Oldman River system, but this has occurred several times in the past 50 years and the investigations have been dropped. . . . A LONG JOB

"Should construction ever

start, the job would last at least two years, more likely three, depending on the program that would have to be followed."

The most pressing need for the dam arises from the fact that the 180,000 - acre Lebthridge Northern Irrigation District, which draws its water supply directly from the Oldman River, has no river storage facilities, which leaves for impounding the usually variable spring runoff.

Now entering into the needs now are the water requirements of Lebthridge and Fort Macleod, which are located on the Oldman River and could face water shortages in times of low stream flow.

The Livingstone Gap canyon has been promoted for decades as an ideal site for a dam to store the waters of the Oldman River until they are needed.

Because of new water supply problems developing for the L.N.I.D., the city of Lebthridge and the town of Fort Macleod, Alberta government in 1958 requested the federal government's PFRA to report on the possible benefits of low stream augmentation and domestic and industrial uses that might be derived from water storage in the Livingstone Gap area.

Early this year, because of the drought worsening the situation, this Alberta government request was changed to cover storage possibilities in the upper reaches of the Oldman River system.

## BUILD GREAT DAM

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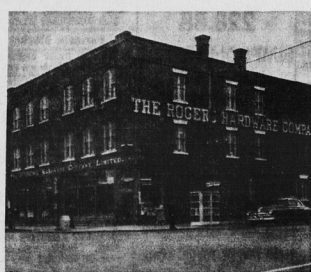
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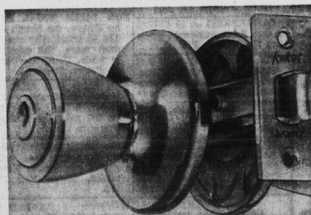


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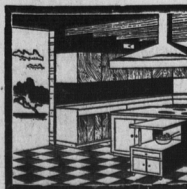
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