

The indexes given in Table 18 show as far as possible the fluctuations in building costs and their effect upon construction work and employment. The relative proportions of material and wage costs in general building are difficult to determine since such proportions vary with the type of building and the centres studied.

18.—Index Numbers of Prices of Building Materials, and Wage Rates and Employment in Construction Industries, 1952-61

(A.v. 1949=100)

Year	Prices of Building Materials		Wage Rates in Construction Industries ¹	Employment in Building Construction ²
	Residential	Non-residential		
1952.....	124.9	123.2	129.5	127.9
1953.....	123.9	124.4	137.2	127.8
1954.....	121.7	121.8	141.1	111.1
1955.....	124.3	123.4	146.6	120.2
1956.....	128.5	128.0	152.4	145.5
1957.....	128.4	130.0	162.9	147.7
1958.....	127.3	129.8	173.6	130.1
1959.....	130.0	131.7	183.4	136.5
1960.....	129.2	132.3*	195.5	128.6
1961.....	128.4	131.1	199.7	122.5

¹ Compiled by the Department of Labour.

² As reported by employers with 15 or more employees.

Section 3.—Housing*

Subsection 1.—Government Aid to House-Building

Federal Assistance.—The role of the Federal Government in housing has expanded progressively since the introduction of the first continuing statute in 1935. Although the Government originally entered the housing field in 1918, when it made money available to the provinces for re-lending to municipalities for housing purposes, the first general piece of federal housing legislation was the Dominion Housing Act passed in 1935. This was followed by the National Housing Acts of 1938 and 1944, culminating in 1954 with the present National Housing Act, defined as "an Act to promote the construction of new houses, the repair and modernization of existing houses and the improvement of housing and living conditions". Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a Crown agency incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1945, administers the National Housing Act and co-ordinates the activities of the Federal Government in housing. The Corporation has the authority and responsibility for a variety of functions affecting housing in its long-term outlook as well as in its immediate requirements. It is empowered to act as an insurer of mortgage loans, as a lender or investor of public funds, as a guarantor and as an owner of property and other assets. It also acts as a research agency in fields associated with housing and enters into partnership with both provincial and municipal governments to assist in housing.

In general, the Government, through the successive Housing Acts, has attempted to stimulate and supplement the market for housing rather than assume direct responsibilities that rightfully belong to other levels of government or that could be borne more effectively by private enterprise. In each case the aim has been to increase the flow of mortgage money and to encourage lenders to make loans on more favourable terms to prospective owners.

The volume of house-building in Canada since 1935 has been spectacular. Close to half of the country's present stock of more than 4,730,000 houses have been built since the first covering legislation was enacted; about one-third of these were financed in one way or another under the Housing Acts.

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