

The number of dwellings rented in 1981 was about 3.1 million, up from 2.4 million in 1971. Ontario had the most rented dwellings, about 1.1 million, with Quebec a close second with about 1 million. Yukon had the least with 3,590.

Dwelling size. The average number of rooms per dwelling increased to 5.7 in 1981 from 5.4 in 1971. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island each had the largest average number, 6.2 rooms. Newfoundland had increased from 5.8 and Prince Edward Island from 6.1. The average number of rooms in dwellings in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Quebec and Manitoba remained lower than in the rest of the country.

Shelter costs. Just over one-half of non-farm homeowners reported in 1981 that monthly housing costs, including energy, municipal services, mortgage and taxes amounted to \$300 or less. One-quarter reported their major payments to be more than \$500 each month. The national average payment was \$367 a month.

Alberta reported the highest average payment (\$463), followed by Yukon (\$457), Northwest Territories (\$407) and British Columbia (\$400). These provinces and territories also had a higher proportion of households with monthly payments of \$700 and more. In the other provinces, the proportion of households with major payments of less than \$300 a month ranged from 48.1% in Quebec to 73.5% in Newfoundland. Average major payments ranged from \$236 in Newfoundland to \$380 in Ontario.

More than one out of five (22.2%) one-family households without additional persons who owned their dwellings were paying 25% or more of their income in 1981 on the major shelter expenditures of mortgage payments, property taxes, electricity, fuel and municipal services.

Almost two-thirds of rented non-farm accommodation cost less than \$300 a month in 1981. In just 7% of tenant-occupied non-farm dwellings, the average monthly gross rental payments were \$500 or more.

One-third of one-family households living in rented dwellings were paying 25% or more of their income on gross rent; this includes cash rent, electricity, fuel and municipal services. More than one in 10 (11.7%) families expended 50% or more of their income on shelter.

Among the provinces, the proportion of tenant one-family households paying 25% or more of their income on gross rent was highest in Alberta (42.4%), British Columbia (41.2%) and Prince Edward Island (41.8%). Quebec had the lowest proportion (28.1%) of one-family households paying one-quarter or more of their income on gross rent.

Alberta had the highest average gross rent (\$384), followed by British Columbia (\$340) and Yukon (\$309). The national average was \$296 a month.

7.4.3 Period of construction

At the time of the 1981 Census, nearly 2.7 million of the 8.28 million private dwellings had been built since 1970. Almost half (45.8%) were constructed before 1961. In Alberta, 46.7% of the dwellings had been constructed since 1971. British Columbia had 39.6% of its dwellings constructed after 1971, Yukon 51.5% and Northwest Territories 52.8%. The proportion for the other eight provinces collectively was 29.6%.

Condition of dwelling. The June 1981 Census indicated that more than three-quarters (76.3%) of total dwellings simply required regular maintenance, while 17% needed minor repairs and 6.7%, major repairs. The distribution of dwellings according to their need of repairs was fairly consistent from province to province.

Nova Scotia at 10.1% and New Brunswick at 10.0% had the largest percentages of dwellings requiring major repairs. Ontario at 5.7%, Alberta at 6.0% and British Columbia at 5.5% had the lowest.

Length of occupancy. Between 1971 and 1981 the proportion of households continuously occupying the same dwelling for more than 10 years fell from 33.2% to 28.4%. The number of households in this category increased, however, to almost 2.4 million in 1981 from about 2 million in 1971.

The decrease in proportion was true of all provinces and Yukon. By the end of the 1971-81 period, households were showing a greater tendency to occupy a dwelling for one to five years (38.0% in 1981 up from 32.4% in 1971).

7.4.4 Heating fuel

Because of energy-related issues, data on home heating fuels have been receiving increased attention. Census data for 1981 showed that the number of dwellings using piped or bottled gas in 1981 was about 3 million, up from almost 2 million in 1971. Those using oil decreased to about 2.8 million from about 3.4 million. Dwellings which were electrically heated showed a large increase to about 2 million from almost 353,000, up 468.5% nationally in 10 years. Other fuels were used in about 342,000 private dwellings, up from about 301,000.

Heating equipment. In 1981 the number of dwellings with installed electric heat was five times greater than in 1971. Forced hot air furnaces nevertheless remained the country's most popular system, as they were used in almost half (49.1%) of all dwellings. Installed electric heating systems were used in 21.4% of dwellings. The growth in installed electric heating systems in Quebec accounted for 52.8% of the national increase. The use of heating stoves or space heaters declined as a main type of heating equipment, to 6.7% in 1981 from 17.3% in 1971 with this increased use of electricity.