

# Toronto housing demand expected to break records

In last year's survey, it was predicted that 1977 would be the year of the home-buyer and that sales transactions would be strong. They were and we expect the same for 1978 as most factors are in favor of today's homebuyer.

According to research by A. E. LePage total 1977 Metro Toronto residential real estate transactions processed through the registry office reached 32,066, an increase of 2,296 transactions or 7.2 per cent over the 29,770 transactions recorded for all of 1976. These figures reflect all residential sales which include private, exclusive and M.L.S. sales.

Today's homebuyer is probably in the most advantageous position experienced within the last few years due to the tremendous supply of housing that is available. This means a greater selection within an affordable personal limit plus an excellent supply of financing available at 1974 mortgage rates.

At time of writing, there were approximately 17,000 homes on the Toronto Real Estate Board's Multiple Listing Service and approximately 24,000 newly-completed homes registered on the HUDAC Warranty program in the Toronto Watershed area.

The breakdown of these homes, according to the Toronto Homebuilders' Association, is 16,000 condominiums, 3,600 semi-detached and 4,400 single family dwellings. Thus, the home-buyer has about 41,000 homes to select from.

Apartment construction Up Slightly  
Apartment construction in Metro reached 8,234 units

built compared to 5,580 built in 1976. This is down considerably from the 10,650 suites built in 1975. Apartment construction in Mississauga in 1977 was expected to be below the 1976 figure of 1,551 units constructed as building department figures show 1,145 units were constructed in the first nine months.

These figures do not break down the percentage of the units that are true rental versus condominium ownership or public housing. However, sources at the building departments state that almost half are rental. Thus, the rental picture does not look encouraging. One of the strongest reasons for what rental construction there has been, is the Multiple Unit Residential Building (M.U.R.B.) personal income tax incentive.

Also, this reduced level of apartment construction in the rental sector does not appear to be a positive contribution to Metro's already dangerously low apartment vacancy factor of 1 per cent. This low availability of rental units coupled with an increasing net migration factor of about 30,000 people a year into the Metro area will place increased pressure on rents. Even with rent control legislation, a constant rent increase is expected.

In fact, this pressure already has mounted as evidenced by the average rent increase granted by the Ontario Rent Review Board in Metro Toronto of 12.3 per cent. The limit granted each year before October 27 was previously 8 per cent and has since been reduced to 6 per cent in accordance with Federal Wage Increase

guidelines. Thus, the average annual rent increase granted is almost double the limit because landlords can justify their increases on a cost basis.

Average Metro rents, according to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation figures, are \$204 for a bachelor, \$252 for a one bedroom, \$297 for a two bedroom and \$332 for a three bedroom unit.

An interesting fact is that with A.H.O.P. assistance and a maximum downpayment of \$2,000 or better, a three and four bedroom townhome or apartment condominium can be purchased for \$50 or \$80 a month more than the average rent of a three bedroom apartment. This includes principal, interest, taxes and common fees and allows the purchaser to possess some equity in the property. Also, a garage, recreation room and two appliances are basic in many projects.

Condominiums still prove to be a very viable investment today, especially by the first time homebuyer and

their increase in worth has risen faster on the average than the single semi-detached home.

Research statistics show the 1977 average price of an apartment condominium increased 7.7 per cent to \$45,001, the row condominium increased 5.4 per cent to \$54,125 from \$51,350 and a single semi-detached home increased 4.6 per cent to \$71,500 from \$67,880. These calculations were based on 32,066 residential transactions processed through the registry office in 1977. Of this total figure, there were 7,326 new homes with the balance being resales.

A breakdown by type of dwelling shows this figure contained 23,341 single semi-detached home sales, 2,767 row condominium sales and 5,958 apartment condominiums. Thus, the total condominium ownership sales of 8,725 represented 27.2 per cent of total Metro residential sales.

Another interesting factor is that during the past two years condominium owners

have been trading up to single and semi-detached homes because they have accumulated considerably equity through their condominium ownership.

Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board expects Metro Toronto's present population of 2.2 million will reach 2.4 million by 1980 and by the year 2001, Metro's population is expected to reach 2.8 million. This will be a net gain of approximately 600,000 people over the next 23 years. Or, it would be com-

parable to adding the entire population of Edmonton to Toronto's.

From these population projections it's clear that Toronto still will remain the number one growth centre and the business capital of the country.

This also translates into excellent news for present and future property owners because as the population grows, continued demand will be placed on the housing market and prices should continue to be attractive.



by Richard Charles

## Like a house on fire

You may have seen those pictures that show heat as if it were light. This is called infrared photography, and with it you can see the heat escaping from homes in cold weather. A house or a whole town filmed from the air will often look as though it were going up in flames. That's how bad the heat losses usually are.

As individuals, few of us can afford to throw money away on heavy fuel bills. As a nation, we can't afford to use precious energy resources to warm up the sky and the snow piles around our homes. Thorough insulation can cut the year's heating bill by as much as half, and similarly save resources that produce the heat. The size of these savings will depend, of course, on how much you can improve your insulation.

That's not all. Better insulation makes a home more comfortable. You can feel a difference (as much as 4° to 8°C) between sitting beside an exterior wall that is well insulated and one that is not. Turning up the thermostat will not make up the difference; in fact, it makes things worse by increasing the temperature differential between the cold wall and warm central air. This increases the speed of the convection currents which feel like drafts.

Two handy terms to know in discussing insulation are "heat flow" and "resistance value". Heat flows by conduction (as you soon find when holding a hot potato), by convection (as with warm air rising) and by radiation (as with the sun's warmth). All three kinds of heat flow have their uses, but they also rob us of heat unless there's insulation.

Resistance value (R) is an insulating material's ability to keep the heat from flowing through it. The thickest insulation may not be the best; it's the kind of material that counts. The R value is stamped on the cover of most packaged insulation material - if not, ask the dealer. As an example, a six-inch layer of a good insulator like glass fibre has an R value of 20, but the same thickness of gypsum board scores only R4.

The minimum recommended R values for insulation in various parts of the home are: ceilings 28, walls 12, basement walls (less than half exposed) 8, basement walls (fully exposed) 12, floors (over unheated garage or crawl space or overhang) 20, floors (over unheated basement) 8 to 12.

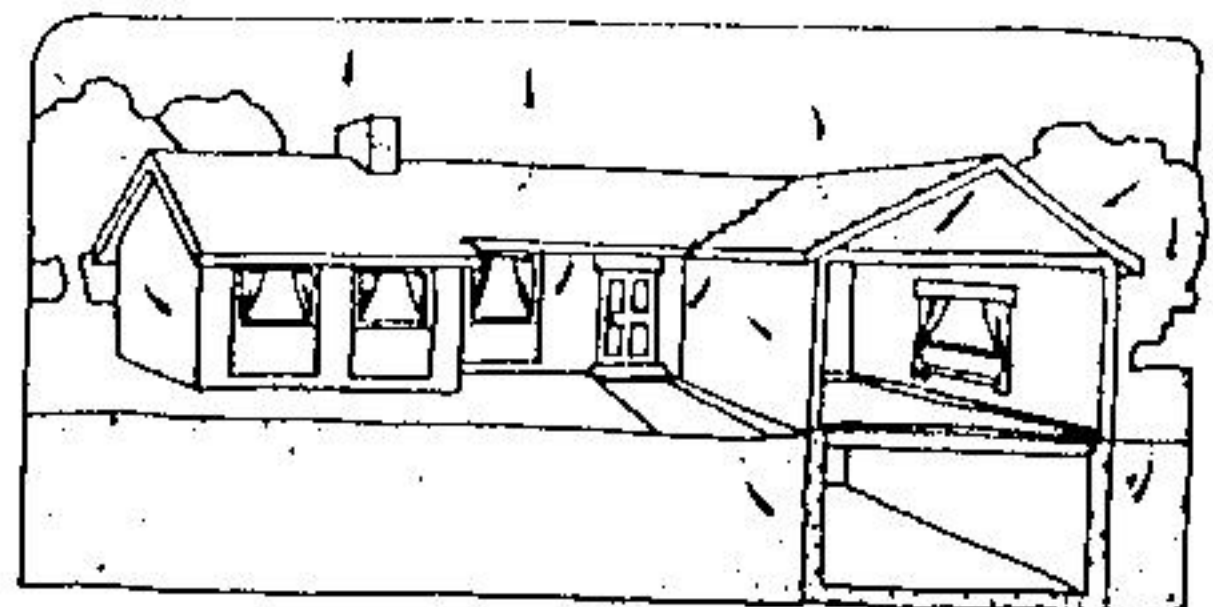
The first step toward cutting heat losses from your home is to check the fit of doors and windows, where the walls meet the foundation, and the present insulation in the ceilings (attic), walls, basements and floors. You can get an insulation expert to do this, or try it yourself along the lines suggested by the Office of Energy Conservation, Department of Energy Mines and Resources in a booklet called "Keeping the heat in." This is available from Box 3500, Station C, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4G1.

On the face of it, the least protected areas of a home call for attention first, but other things for you to consider are whether the work will be easy and relatively inexpensive, time-consuming and moderately expensive, or somewhat difficult and more expensive. The time of year is another factor.

The amount of insulation you can add to your home may depend on the way it is built - some houses cannot be improved beyond a certain level. There are many ways to insulate, and some that even your local expert may not be familiar with. You can find out about the alternatives and a lot more in "Keeping the heat in."

One final word. Don't be put off if insulation sounds like a big and complicated deal to you. There are lots of little things you can do yourself to save fuel and make your home more comfortable in winter. And even some of the larger jobs are not all that tough. Whatever you can invest in insulation is bound to repay you.

For information on government grants for re-insulation, write to: Canadian Home Insulation Program, P.O. Box 700, St. Laurent, Quebec H4L 9A8; or phone collect (514) 341-1151.

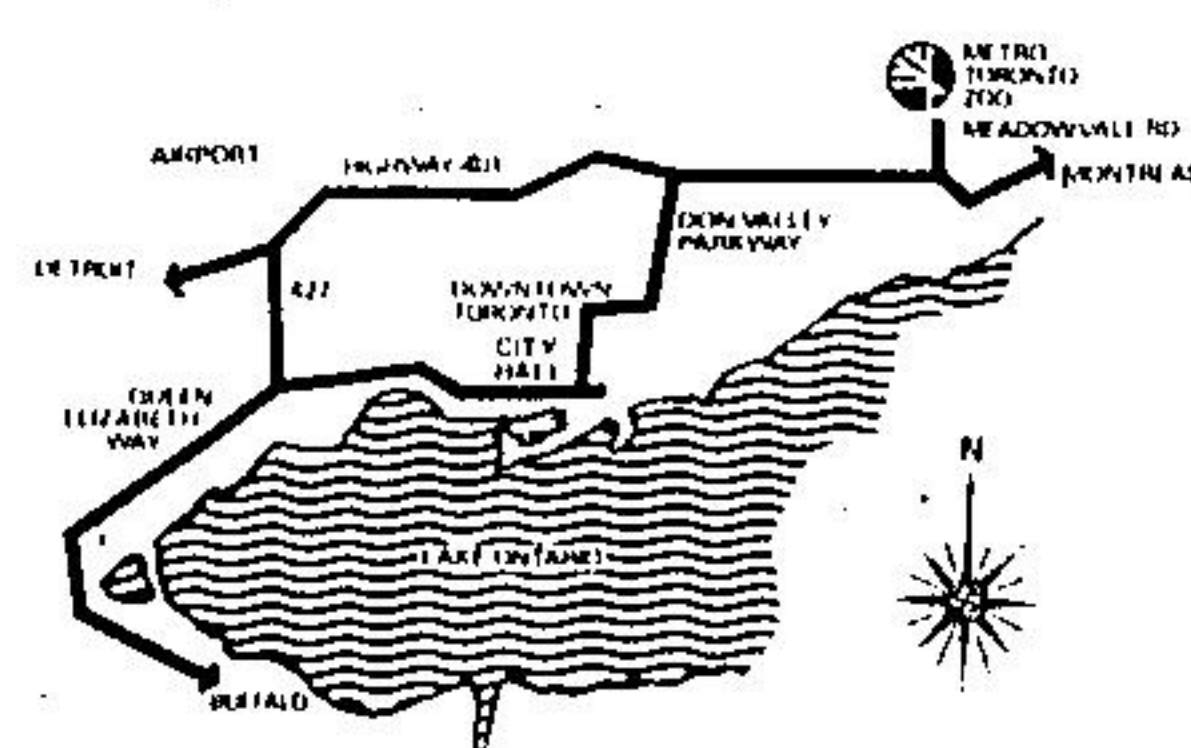


## News from the Canadian domain at Metro Toronto Zoo

Spring sprung up all over in the Canadian Animal Domain at Metro Toronto Zoo this year. Almost every species in the valley boasted offspring. There were 11 valuable Dall's sheep lambs, and the Zoo's first pronghorn antelope was born - to a mother painstakingly hand-reared in the home of Overseer Herb Southam. As a youngster the mother had broken her leg, and Herb and his wife Mabel nursed her through, surmounting impossible odds. Now she's a successful mother, enjoying her huge wilderness

paddock in the Rouge River Valley. Pronghorn are capable of running at up to 100 kilometres per hour, and are native to the western prairies. The Zoo's first born is possibly also the first pronghorn to be born "east of the Mississippi".

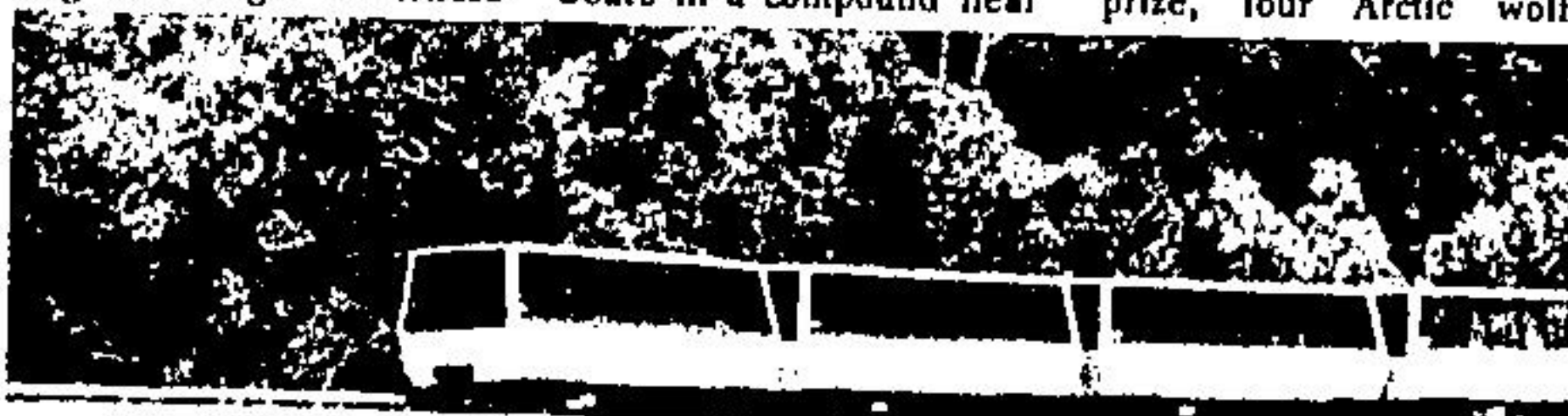
A herd of rare wood bison were placed in the Domain by the federal government for safekeeping last winter, and now there are three calves. There's a coyote pup, co-existing happily with its parents and two grizzly bears in a compound near



Weston Station. There are innumerable fawns, to both black-tailed and white-tailed deer, and the Zoo's prize, four Arctic wolf

pups. The train ride into the Rouge River Valley is free with admission, and a highlight of any Zoo visit. The train is air-conditioned in summer, heated in winter. The valley provides a virtually undisturbed forest setting for the large Canadian animals.

Admission to the Zoo is \$3. for adults; \$1.50 for seniors and teens 12 - 17; children 11 and under are 50¢; under 5 - free. There are many facilities, including a Family Centre (for nursing and diapering your baby), restaurants and snackbars, wheelchairs and strollers. Special discounts for groups, free guides when available. Please book at least 14 days in advance. The Zoo guidebook for \$1 is a worthwhile purchase. It describes several Zoo trails, evaluating each with regard to weather and the amount of time you have. For further information, call (416) 284-0123 (recorded); or 284-8181. Write: Metro Toronto Zoo, Box 280, West Hill, Ontario, M1E 4R5.



The Canadian Domain Ride at Metro Toronto Zoo moves silently past a herd of rare Wood bison.