

## New year completion date set for solar house

Canada's first house to be heated solely by the sun's energy is scheduled to be completed Jan. 15, according to Toronto builder Robert McClintock. The experimental home, known as Provident House, will be located in Carrying Place Estates, King Township, north of Metro.

As a one-family dwelling

with a floor space of 2,793 square feet, the house is on two storeys with four bedrooms. It was designed by Professor Frank Hopper of the University of Toronto.

Provident House is a co-operative enterprise involving several ministries of the federal and provincial governments. It will be closely monitored for a five-year period to determine if residential homes can economically use solar energy, under Canadian climatic conditions.

The project is being aided by grants from the federal Ministry of Urban Affairs and by the Ontario Ministry of Energy. The latter is co-ordinating the work of all Ontario ministries in energy conservation techniques.

The Ontario Ministry of Housing is directly concerned with solar heating as applied to residential housing and is currently involved in a projected senior citizen building in Aylmer, a first in large-scale utilization of solar heat.

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research and publicity in 1976 in order to meet changes rather than react to them.

Brochures, continuation of the association's information publication "Spotlight", a speakers bureau and media advertising are all planned for the coming year.

"We will not be undertaking unrealistically involved programs," Mr. Bennell continued, "rather they will tend to be simple, yet effective plans which the association is capable of carrying out."

Looking to 1976 Mr. Bennell made predictions on the industry's future in the coming year. He stated that he felt that 1976 will see 25,000 housing starts take place in Canada with 95,000 occurring in Ontario.

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The government, he forecasted, will take a greater interest in the home building industry and the mortgage interest rates will drop below 11 percent "but only just, and will remain at that level for most of the year."

An increased supply of serviced lots and a levelling off of lot prices will be witnessed in the latter half, he said. Shortages of labour in some trades will be experienced causing a real concern during the active summer months of building.

Material prices will continue to escalate notwithstanding the federal prices and income policy "but not to the same degree as if such a policy was not announced."

"The resale market will strengthen in the summer and this will have a beneficial effect on new houses, many of which will take advantage of one of the multitude of government programs that are either announced or will be in the early part of 1976."

His final prediction for 1976 was "Government handouts, those which will expire at the year end, will be replaced by allowing some mortgage in-

terest to be tax deductible. It will be cheaper to operate and more effective for the consumer."

Summing up 1976 for the home builders Mr. Bennell stated "All in all, I am guardedly optimistic about 1976. It will be a good year for the industry, not isolated from problems. Not a boom year, which I personally detest, but a year when, with your sustained efforts, will be a satisfying one."

## etown resident d of Toronto Builders Assoc.



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vice-president of Wimpey Homes Ltd, Wimpey Developments Ltd. in 1973 and Wimpey Developments Inc. and Wimpey Western Ltd. in 1974.

Mr. Bennell is currently responsible for the organization's overall North American development prospects, which includes its land development, residential and industrial-commercial operations.

He has been active in providing communications with municipalities and other bodies involved with the building industry. He's currently the national director of the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada, director of the National Home Show Committee, member of the Urban Development Institute, past chairman of the Urban Development Institute for the Halton Regional Liaison Committee and member of the Sheridan College Community Planning Advisory Committee.

Despite his many other duties Mr. Bennell remains a concerned father of four children. His interests, besides family, include flying, squash and minor sports.

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## Lift up spirits as you take down the tree

The Christmas season is the most joyous time of the entire year and it's always a little sad to see it come to an end. All the beautiful decorations are boxed away, favorite carols will not be heard for another year, children return to school and adults to their jobs and gray January sets in.

One way to ease the melancholy of the passing season is to pick up on the words of a favorite Christmas song and reserve the 6th of January for a "Twelfth Day of Christmas" party. The tedious and depressing job of dismantling the tree will seem brighter when shared with relatives and friends in a still-festive style.

Before the work begins, have everyone guess the number of ornaments on the tree, then give a prize to the one who finally comes closest to the exact number. Serve everyone a holiday cupcake with a candle on it for making a New Year's wish. If there's a "psychic" in the crowd gather 'round for some fortune telling.

Remember that the warmth and pleasure of good hospitality is never out of season, and that with your own thought and imagination you can make the end of the Christmas season a special, enjoyable occasion.

## Tree farms produce a 'perfect' Christmas tree

Christmas expectations always include a "perfect" tree—stately, well-shaped, full-branched, fragrant. And, we imagine it will have grown to perfection deep in a quiet forest. Not so, say forestry experts.

The ideal Christmas tree seldom, if ever, exists in nature, according to the American Forest Institute. Virtually all the 35 million evergreens used annually in American homes are raised — and carefully groomed for appropriate appearance — on special Christmas tree plantations.

### Five favorites

There are about 40 varieties of Christmas evergreens, says AFI. But, five or six account for almost three-quarters of the commercially-raised species.

Perennial favorites are: Balsam fir (fragrant, stays fresh longer); Douglas fir (elegant, with ornamental needles); Scotch pine (full branches, clustering needles); red pine (graceful branches with turned-up tips); and blue spruce (symmetrical, with silver-blue color).

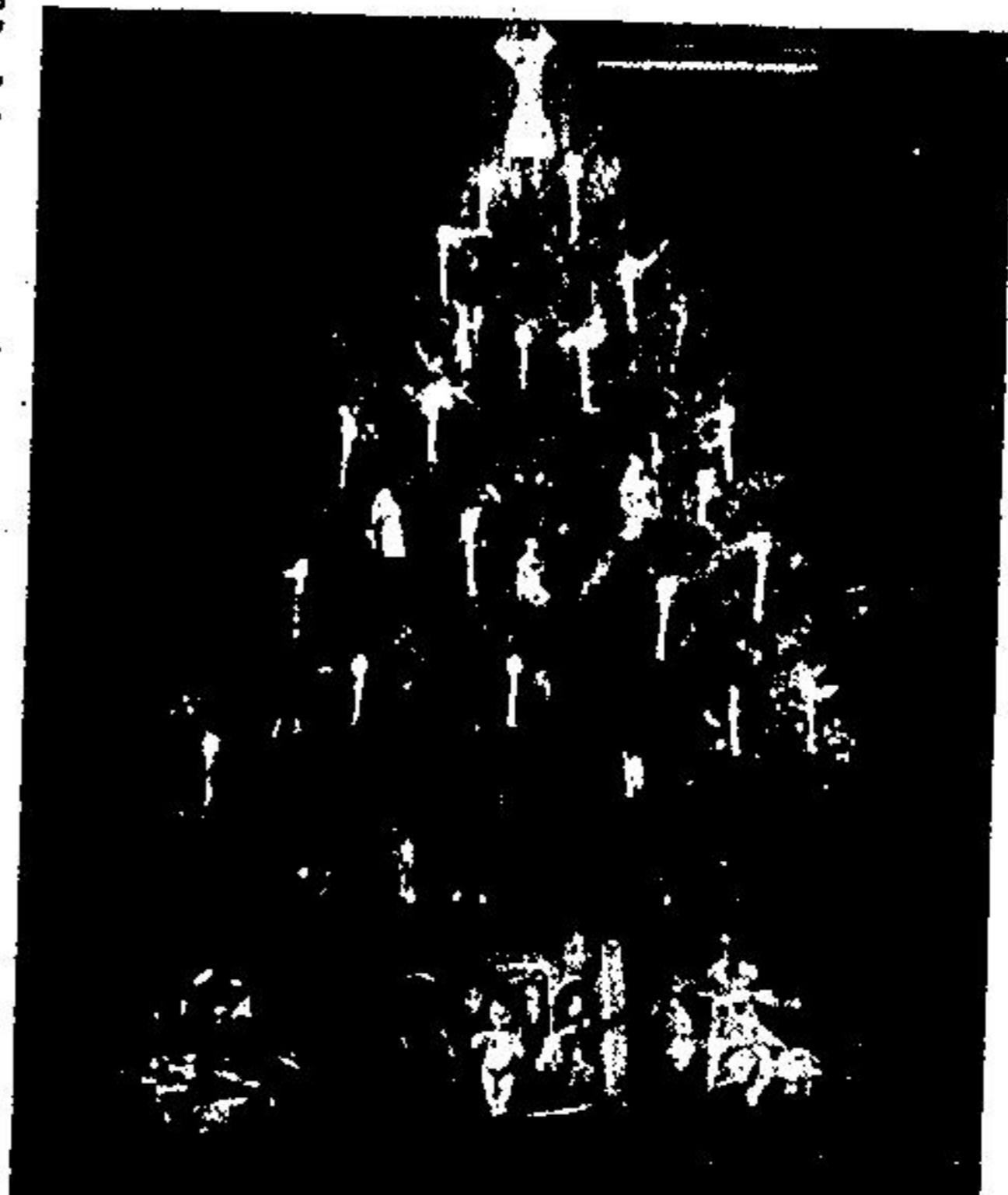
### Grown on farms

The trees are grown on some 450,000 acres of tree farms in almost every state. It takes about six to 12 years to raise a Christmas tree, and in that time a lot of work goes into the grooming process.

Foresters work almost like cosmeticians to correct esthetic faults. They may brace the tree trunk to eliminate kinks, shear branches to prevent uneven development, and prune them to encourage thicker growth. The trees are also assured just the right amount of sunlight and moisture, and protected against insects, disease, frost or unseasonable warmth.

### Suggestions on care

All this care is calculated to bring an attractive Christmas tree to market. If you want to keep it that



ONE THING EVERYONE WANTS for Christmas is a "perfect" Christmas tree: beautifully-shaped, fragrant and full. About 35 million live evergreen trees are used in American homes each year to help celebrate the holiday season. The American Forest Institute points out that their use does not deplete the forests, because the trees are specifically grown — and specially groomed — for holiday use on Christmas tree "plantations."

way through the holidays, AFI offers these suggestions:

### Fresh tree

• Be sure the tree is fresh when you buy it. Needles should not break when gently bent. The bottom of the stump should be wet and sticky with sap. Lift the tree a few inches off the ground, then bring it down sharply on the stump end. If substantial numbers of needles drop off, the tree is too dry.

### Plenty of water

• When you get the tree home, make a fresh diagonal cut in the stump end to allow greater absorption of water. Be sure water in the tree stand remains above the cut. Place the tree away from all heat

sources: radiator, ducts, even the T.V.

### Safety checks

• Keep safety in mind. Be sure there are no exposed wires or frayed insulation on the light strands, and no cracked or broken light sockets. After Christmas, you may want to saw the trunk into fragment firewood. But, never burn a bundle of branches in the fireplace. Instead, use the tree limbs and needles for mulch to help your springtime garden grow.

If you're ecologically-minded, says AFI, remember that Christmas evergreens use only solar energy to grow. But manufacturing artificial trees from plastic or aluminum requires use of oil and electricity.