

35 YEARS OF PLANNING - ONE NEW CENTENNIAL BUILDING

by CHRIS BRITTAIN

A new building is many things to many people. For the Fredericton employees of the Province of New Brunswick, the new Centennial Building is the culmination of some thirty-five years of planning and re-planning.

As the last of the government departments move into their new offices, they will be moving into a new century as well. From antiquated, crowded and scattered buildings, they go to a centralized headquarters that combines architectural beauty and functional excellence in a manner seldom found east of Montreal.

From the outside, the new building is massive, yet well-proportioned. The passerby's eye is caught by six gleaming stories of limestone, glass and stainless steel that stretch almost a city block along King Street.

The cost — six million dollars or one million for each of the six stories or about twenty-five dollars for each square foot of usable office space. In contrast to this, the Legislative building (across from the Art Gallery) cost \$72,000 to erect in 1882.

The cost of the new building is being shared by the Provincial and Federal Governments. Federal aid came in the form of a \$2.5 million Special Centennial Grant. This was arranged through the efforts of the Premier, the Hon. Louis J. Robichaud and the Hon. Maurice Lamontagne, Federal chairman of the Canadian Centennial Commission.

The architectural firm of Belanger and Roy of Moncton were commissioned to design the new building in 1962. Earlier working drawings and space studies done by the Government date back to 1931.

Construction began in February 1964. Atlas Construction Ltd. of Fredericton built the foundations and Modern Construction Ltd. of Moncton is the general contractor. New Brunswick building materials were used whenever possible.

Finishing touches are still being added on the fifth and sixth floors. The rest of the building is "open for business". The Department of Public Works was the first to move into the new building (in September of this year). Total occupancy of the entire six floors is not expected until the spring of 1967.

The lobby area is high, wide and handsome. It's uncluttered simplicity serves as a huge frame for an impressive mural that colorfully depicts N. B.'s industries. Visitors are surprised to learn that the mural is only a stop-gap fixture that will be replaced by a bronze sculpture by artist John Hooper of Hampton Village.

Four high-speed luxury elevators by Otis whisk employees and visitors from floor to floor at the rate of 450 ft. every minute. A separate elevator is reserved for top officials and still another for freight handling.

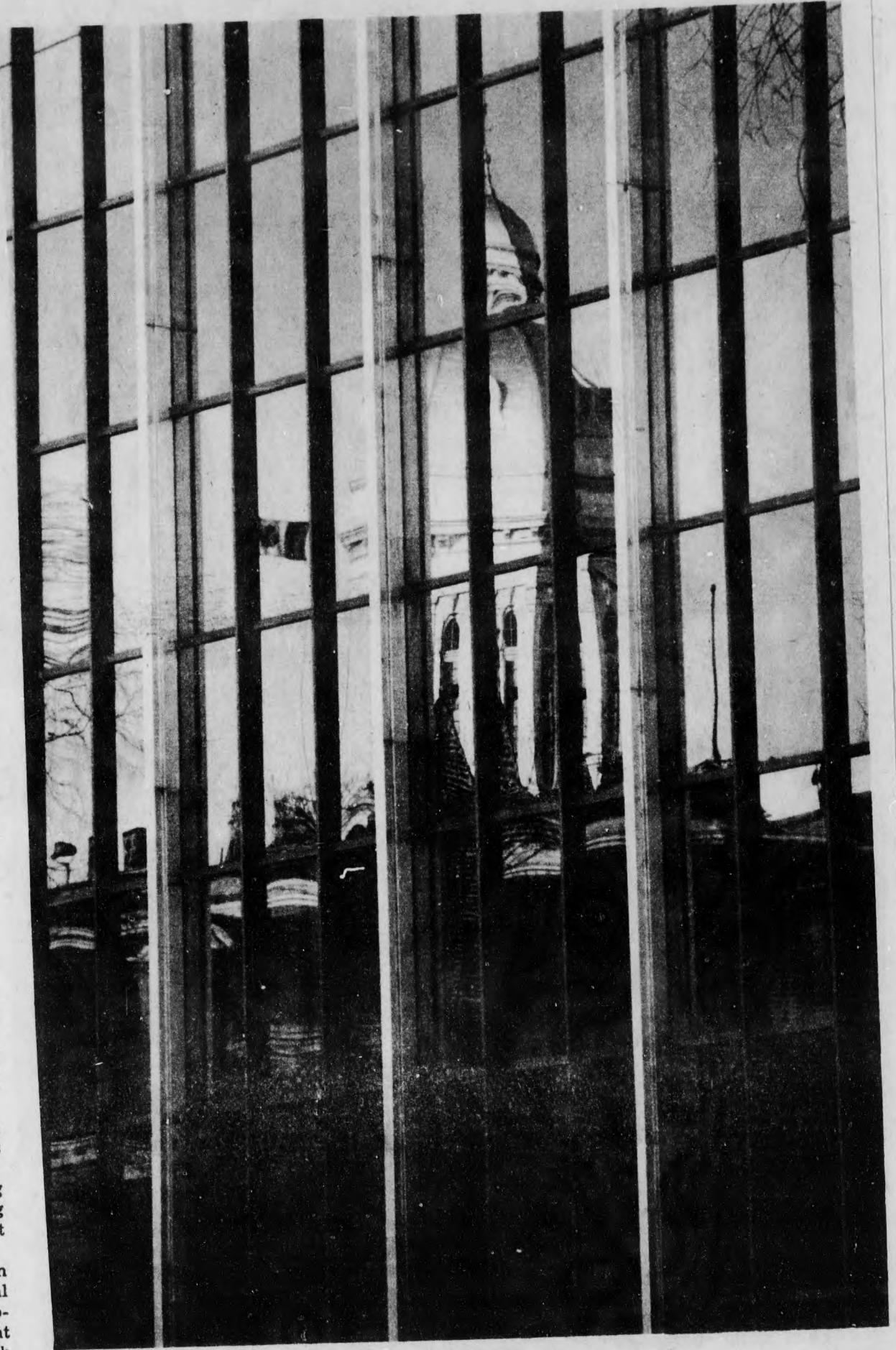
Facilities that are used by all departments take up most of the ground floor.

Cafeteria operations are handled by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind under the direction of Ken Cameron. The bright and pleasant dining area seats two hundred. In addition, 'coffee carts' are wheeled through the building at periodic intervals to provide government staffers with convenient coffee-breaks.

Press conferences will be held in a specially designed room that is readily accessible to the lobby area. Sound-proof booths are provided for TV and radio broadcasting equipment.

Mail is taken care of in a central mailing room. Outgoing mail from all offices arrives here via metal chutes. Incoming mail is sorted into pick-up boxes according to the Department concerned.

Computer service is made available to the Government in the form of a Model 415 Data Processing System by General Electric. The computer centre has its own environmental equipment, independent of the rest of the building. At the present time, the computer system is running 24 hours a day to catch



— Photo by J. N.-G.
"THE OLD AND THE NEW"



"Partial view of lobby showing two of the six elevators, the temporary mural, and the distinctive circular lighting. A Commissionaire is always on duty to guide visitors. Note the fluted marble columns."

up with a backlog of work. Engineering problems are still largely sent to the UNB Computer Centre. The new Government system specializes in payrolls, tax calculations and drivers' licence administration.

The system speaks COBOL computer language and has good expansion capabilities for future heavy work loads. The Toronto based firm of K-C-S Co. Ltd. (Computer Consultants) is aiding the government in setting up magnetic tape programs. J. R. McMil-

lan, one of the K-C-S analysts, has mentioned the need for personnel to run the computers. Inquiries from UNB students are welcome.

The entire building is air-conditioned throughout. The specially tinted windows do not open. Preset controls by Honeywell Corp. provide a tamperproof and consistent level of about seventy-five degrees. Sensing units feed back temperature checks to a master control panel which can be regulated to the nearest degree.

The air-conditioning system is based on the new "Centro-Vac" design by Trane. This consists of a complex of giant fans, outside 'cooling towers', electrically turned filters and miles of piping. The control panel and equipment are located in the penthouse on top of the building.

The building has five thousand amps. of electrical power on tap at all times. This is fed through wires hidden in metal trays that cross the floors of all offices. This means

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