

to a scale of prices established by the commissioners.

The Government approved this suggestion and awarded new contracts. By the month of October, 1865, the construction of the building was sufficiently ad-^{its}vanced to permit of ~~their~~ occupancy, at first by the Provincial Government. Two years later the provinces had decided to confederate, and the government buildings thus became the seat of the federal administration.

At the outset, the East Block had but two wings, one facing Wellington Street, and the other, Parliament square. It was not until shortly before the First World War that the other two sides of the quadrangle were completed. The building is of neo-Gothic style, matching the style of the other two buildings but more embellished with ornamentation; its architect evidently drew inspiration from his memories of Westminster. The East Block is of imposing dimensions: 319 feet of frontage on Parliament square, and 253 feet facing Wellington Street. The walls are of Nepean sandstone; the fireplaces are constructed of Arnprior marble, and certain decorative pieces are of Potsdam sandstone, quarried in the State of New York.

The East Block, within, was fearfully and wondrously designed, with a labyrinth of rooms on assorted levels, off various staircases, under gables, and even in the strange main tower with its features of a face.* Its smaller cells became repositories of half-forgotten archives. "If it does not possess a ghost," one account tells us, "the East Block has come close to having a secret dungeon." During the present restoration

* Bruce Hutchison speaks of "the crazy windblown turrets of the East and West Blocks" and "the horrified face, eyes wide, mouth open which the unwitting stone mason built into the south tower of the East Block". (The Unknown Country. p.89).