

East Block gets new old look

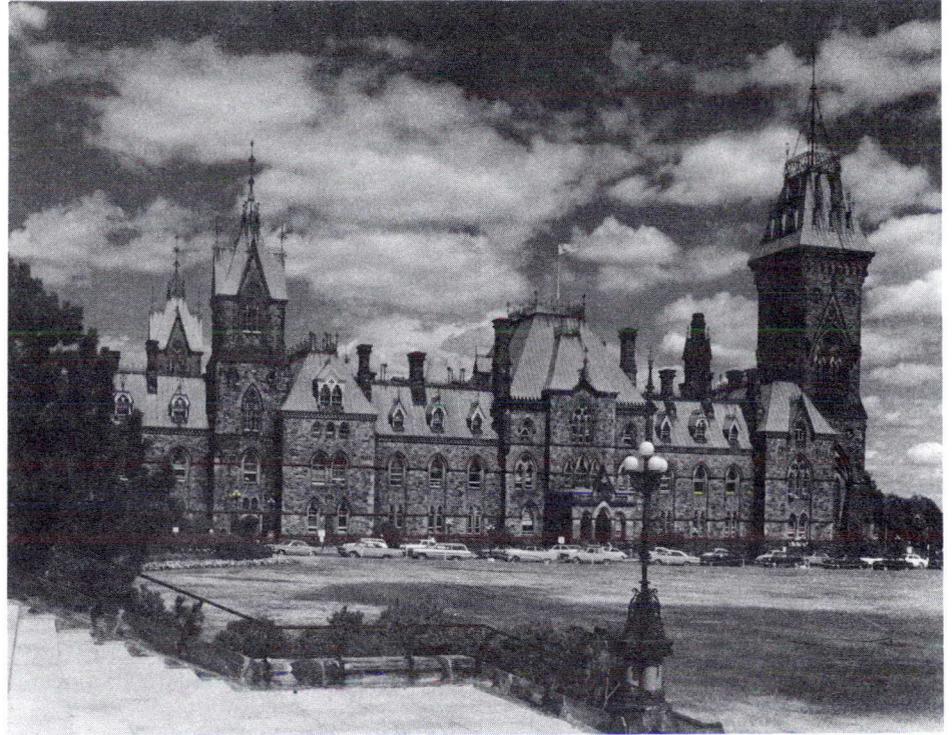
A "peaceful occupation" of one of Ottawa's Parliamentary buildings, by a Department of Public Works project team, was recently announced. It will supervise an \$8-million restoration and renovation program, which should be completed in about two-and-half years.

The Government intends to improve the 105-year old building as a place of work while at the same time restoring its fabric and maintaining its original appearance.

Since the East Block is the only building on Parliament still in its original condition, inside and out, and because of its historical importance — many far-reaching decisions were made there — careful attention will be paid to the fabric of the building and caution will be taken in maintaining its unique architectural character.

Sir John A. Macdonald's office will be restored, as will the Governor General's office and entrance, the Privy Council Room and entrance, and all main entrances and staircases.

Antique furniture, some used by the Fathers of Confederation, has been turned over to the Museum of Man for safekeeping and restoration where



East Block, part of Ottawa's Parliamentary buildings, will soon be restored.

necessary. Certain pieces will be loaned back to furnish the historic rooms. All office furnishings will be contemporary in design but will blend in with the architecture.

The Speaker of the House of Commons recently indicated that on completion

of the restoration by 1979, the East Block would be for Parliamentary use. It is expected that this will enable tourists to visit it, as they now do the Centre Block, to see the rooms and halls where so much of Canada's history has unfolded.

Progress in decentralization

Jean Chrétien, President of the Treasury Board, reviewed on July 5 the progress made by the Federal Government over the last year in its policy of decentralizing units of government from the national capital region. The Minister was speaking in Bathurst, New Brunswick, where the Central Index and Annuities Branch of the Unemployment Insurance Commission would be relocated, thereby creating some 400 jobs in that community.

"The primary purpose of the relocation program is to contribute to economic growth. Regional economic growth is one of the major objectives of the Federal Government. It is therefore logical that the relocation of federal functions, jobs and salaries be used as an instrument for the promotion of economic activity in the less advantaged regions of Canada," Mr. Chrétien said.

The President of the Treasury Board said the concern for the promotion of economic growth was reflected in the decision to locate some 400 jobs with an annual payroll of more than \$3 million in Bathurst; in the decision of the Department of Supply and Services to relocate about 400 jobs in its Superannuation Branch to Moncton, N.B.; and in the relocation by Supply and Services of some 260 jobs to Matane, Quebec, in the Cheque Redemption Service.

The Department of National Revenue announced last winter that regional tax data centres would be established in five localities across the country. This will involve the creation of some 80 permanent and 630 temporary jobs in St. John's, Newfoundland, of some 100 permanent and 800 temporary jobs in the Chicoutimi-Jonquière area of Quebec, of some 125 permanent and 1,100 temporary jobs in the Shawinigan area of Quebec, of some 125 permanent and 1,000 temporary jobs in Winnipeg,

Manitoba, and some 100 permanent and 870 temporary jobs in Surrey, British Columbia.

Mr. Chrétien pointed out that, between 1971 and 1975, the Government approved the relocation of only 662 jobs from the national capital region. "In the last year alone, since I created the task force and announced that decentralization is a high priority of the Government, approval has been granted and announcements have been made with respect to the relocation of about 1,600 permanent and of about 4,400 temporary jobs from the national capital region."

Union consultation

Mr. Chrétien concluded by pointing out that the policy of relocation was being carried out in close consultation with public service unions. "A committee of the National Joint Council is actively engaged in finding solutions to any problems created by relocation."