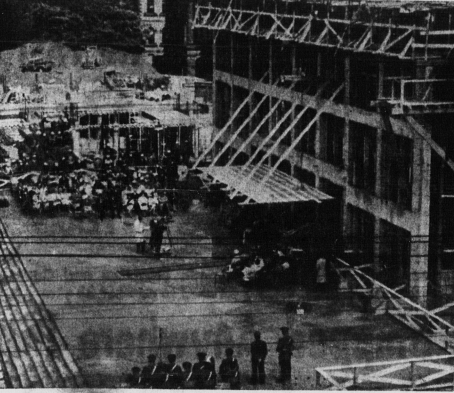


'A magnificent structure'



PREMIERS STANFIELD AND LESAGE AT SOD TURNING CEREMONY



PRIME MINISTER PEARSON OFFICIATED AT CORNER STONE LAYING

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factories, office buildings and the like are all affected by obsolescence, and their useful life is short and predictable. In the design of the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building the architect has an opportunity, rare in any generation, of designing a building for centuries. The competitor is wasting his time who thinks of this building as anything but a national shrine to which Canadians will forever pay homage as the birthplace of their nation.

"In former times, people built columns to commemorate historic events, and Pantheons as memorials to the great of a nation. Times have changed, and, in our democratic society, even war memorials have taken the form of buildings for public use. It seemed even more appropriate for the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building, honouring as it does the peaceful wedding of a nation by negotiation and good will, that it should have a useful and cultural purpose as well as a commemorative one. The combination of these goals—the commemorative and the permanent, housing the cultural and useful, represents the challenge to the architects of Canada who will take part in the competition."

TO FIT LOCATION
Not only had the Memorial Building to be suited to the commemorative and useful functions described, it had also to fit the location in the centre of Charlottetown next to the fine old Provincial Building. The latter, the place where Canada was born, is a handsome structure of dressed Wallace sandstone with Ionic porticos front and back. The new building could not overshadow or dominate it. More over consideration had to be given to the other buildings on surrounding streets so that the new building could fit with sensitivity into the site and into the city of Charlottetown.

"The design placed first," says the report on the competition, "seemed to the jury of award to more than justify the holding of the competition. As the first building to appear in Canada on the eve of the centenary celebrations for Confederation, it will set a standard of architectural excellence and suitability that will not likely be surpassed. It is rare for the architect in our modern society to solve the problem of a complex

permanent building on the town square of a city of 20,000. The chief charm of the winning design is its absolute appropriateness to the local scene and the city at large."

Sir Basil Spence, the eminent British architect, and a member of the jury, said the design "is of very high quality and shows great imagination and sensitivity... a beautiful expression of the event it commemorates." "It is a magnificent design," said Dr. E.R. Arthur of Toronto, the chairman of the jury. "I'm sure it will receive world-wide acclaim."

The visitor to the building immediately experiences the impact of style. It is plain yet striking, forceful yet not overpowering, monumental yet graceful. It has the simple lines of a modern building yet the grace and beauty of its Delphic architectural features associate it with the great classical traditions. Its clear, clean lines stand out majestically against the sky. The stepped stone at its base gives a feeling of close association with the surrounding area. A walk around the building gives the visitor dramatic vistas of line and form and of the Provincial Building, always a partner of its new neighbor.

One immediately thinks of five buildings. Actually there is one, for all facilities are connected on the first two floors; the upper floors appear as separate units. As a result, the structure is kept low so that it does not overshadow the historic buildings beside it or the other buildings nearby.

The great windows are dramatic, architectural masterpieces. They are situated in the corners for the obvious reason that theatre, library, art gallery and museum require unbroken wall space. Standing outside, one can glimpse through the windows many features of the interior of the building—graceful stairways, ceilings of unsurpassed

beauty and, everywhere, line and form in exciting variations. From inside, the windows reveal interesting views of the site and of the surrounding community. The glazing in the Memorial Hall, which is at the centre of the complex, permits views of the whole complex from inside and opens up the entire Hall to the gaze of people on the plaza and on the various floors of other parts of the building.

The theatre is one of the finest in North America. One can enter it from Grafton Street—up the broad steps, over the front plaza and through the great front concourse, or from Queen Street (where an auto can drive right to the door) through the lower foyer. The 1000-seat auditorium is unique in many ways. The design and embellishment are not in decorations but in the structure itself. The shape and proportions are remarkable. The ceiling is extraordinary: it is an uninterrupted expanse of coffers, each six feet deep and five feet square giving a rich magnificence and a sense of drama to the space. The orchestra pit is on an elevator; the auditorium floor is on another elevator—thus providing for open stage as well as proscenium performances. When the open stage is desired, the front auditorium seats move off mechanically and the floor comes back up again to stage level. At the same time the side panels of the walls of the auditorium move back mechanically, revealing side seats to make theatre-in-the-round.

Off the concourse is the restaurant which looks out on a sculpture court. It is designed for use in conjunction with events in the theatre, and it seats 60. Its kitchen is connected with the nearby convention areas and will serve up to 400 people.

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