

new subway, another contractor had to chop open a thick, tiled wall. The gadget-laden intercom system boomed like a foghorn or croaked feebly and went dead. "You can hear a beep sound from 350,000 miles in space," grumbled Senator Warren Magnuson, of Washington, "but you can't make yourself heard over a microphone 6 inches from your face."

All this culminated in the scandal of The Carpet. Some Senators said that the elegant tile floor, costing \$100,000, was too slippery, and requested carpeting. This would have cost \$150,000 more and would have entailed unhinging 600 doors in order to shave off a half-inch of walnut from the bottom. But the more frugal-minded, led by Senator Paul Douglas, of Illinois, won a compromise: carpets would be optional for those who wanted them. Fifteen Senators did; the bill to taxpayers is a mere \$53,550.

In addition, Senators still quartered in other parts of the Capitol were generously compensated. Majority Leader Johnson wound up with a total of six suites scattered in the Capitol and old and new SOB's. The Senate also voted to spend \$40,000, originally assigned for "rusty plumbing," on a new swimming pool in the basement of the old SOB. The white-tile pool will be a handsome complement to the existing health suite which employs three masseurs.

Thus the Senate has become a citadel of comfort as well as rectitude, a place where members of the inner club can grump in snug surrounding about the decline of Republican virtue. Full credit for this goes to Mr. Johnson—and to Senator Dennis Chavez, chairman of the Senate Building Commission.

MIDDLE RAYBURN: THE THIRD HOB

Among Mr. Rayburn's many 10-gallon hats is the chairmanship of the House Building Commission, and in this capacity the Speaker kept a watchful eye on the upper Chamber's steam shovels. Only a few months after the new SOB was underway, Mr. Rayburn found that his Chamber's office buildings were cramped and inadequate. He advised the House Appropriations Committee that a \$2 million starter was needed on a new building, and 4 days later, the House as a whole approved his plan. Mr. Rayburn personally took the floor to urge swift passage. Phase two quickly followed as Architect Stewart announced plans for a \$18.5 million program to remodel the two existing House Office Buildings.

By the time the numbed House got around to debating the project, the foundation for the third HOB was already being dug. Nonetheless, an attempt was made on May 21, 1957, to strike out a \$7.5 million appropriation for the new building. Mr. Rayburn again took to the floor and patiently explained that it would be "false economy" to eliminate the funds, because excavations had begun.

Meanwhile, curiosity was expressed about what the new building would look like—and it was discovered in August 1959, that no plans had yet been presented. By then, some \$16 million had been spent on digging the biggest hole in town. Mr. Stewart's office reported that drawings were not available, but that Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, of Philadelphia, had prepared sketches which might be released some day. The Architect's aides did confide that the new building would be H-shaped, 4 stories high, and would contain 170 suites, 15 subcommittee rooms, and parking for 1,638 cars. As to cost, one breakdown includes \$64 million for construction and nearly \$8.5 million for related costs including \$1.4 million for a sewer to carry a creek beneath the building. But prices are going up, and Representative H. R. Gross, of Iowa, may yet be right in predicting that the total cost will ultimately reach \$82 million.

On October 15, 1959, a sketch was finally published. Critics said the new building was in conventional Federalesque, i.e., without any discernible style. But whatever the harsh contemporary judgment, when the third HOB is completed by 1962, it will surely be a vintage example of middle Rayburn, a suitable monument to the builder from Bonham.

JUDICIAL RAYBURN: THE COURTHOUSE

Lafayette Square, a small public park in front of the White House, still possesses something of the sleepy charm of the Capital's buggy and gaslight era. But, lamentably, not for long. Some of the old buildings surrounding the square have already been doomed as the site for a monster Executive Office Building. Most of the rest are about to be torn down to make way for a courthouse occupied by two Federal benches headed by judges from Texas.