

HOUSE No. 76.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

OFFICE OF THE STATE HOUSE CONSTRUCTION COMMISSIONERS,
BOSTON, Jan. 23, 1894.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.

In compliance with your instruction to report to the General Court the reasons why the extension to the State House was not in readiness for occupation by the Legislature and other departments of the State government on the opening of the present session of the General Court and also when the building will probably be ready for occupancy, the said Commissioners make the following statement:—

When the work was begun it was with the expectation that it could be completed by January, 1894. Our efforts and those of the architect were immediately directed to that end, and it would have been accomplished had there been no other causes of delay than are to be expected to a moderate degree in all great buildings. But in this instance we have had some serious detentions which arose from accidental causes and could not be anticipated, such, for instance, as the long strike in Pittsburg in 1891. This delayed the delivery of the steel work for the building so much that instead of getting on the permanent roof early in the fall of that year, we were obliged to put on a temporary roof and did not complete the permanent one until some time in the summer of 1892. This postponed the entire work a number of months and was beyond the control of the contractors for that work.

Perhaps the most important hindrance was the slow delivery of the marble, the contract for which was one of the largest for the building. At the time it was made the quarries at Lee, Massachusetts; had been long in disuse, and a good deal of time was required to get them uncovered and reopened for operation. The material obtained from the first quarry proved in a large degree unsuitable and below the stipulated standard. We were obliged to reject a great deal of it on that account. This quarry was abandoned and another opened which has proved to be of admirable character throughout the whole excavation. Soon after, however, an unfortunate fire at Lee entirely destroyed the works, and made some months delay. Had the quarries been in the condition in which they are today, there is no doubt that the entire marble for the building could have been delivered a year sooner than it was. The quality, however, is so satisfactory and so creditable as a production of our own Commonwealth as to have compensated in some degree for the slowness of delivery.

Owing also to the strike which existed for a long time throughout all the granite works in New England, we were prevented from getting, until recently, certain portions required for the Derne and Temple Street entrances.

Besides these difficulties previous to 1893, there has been the past year much delay in obtaining the interior ornamental iron work which is another large contract, and upon which the interior finish of the building largely depends. This iron work should have been delivered early in the summer, but was kept back several months in consequence of labor troubles.

The work is of excellent and most substantial character, and while it has been pushed, we believe, faster than other buildings approaching it in style and character, the foregoing are some of the principal causes which have prevented its entire completion.

Relative to the taking down of the rear of the present State House and rebuilding it together with that part over Mt. Vernon Street independent of the part north of Mt. Vernon Street the Commissioners in February, 1891, notified the Governor and Council that it would be necessary

then to commence the said taking down. As that would have necessitated a removal at once by the Secretary of State, Treasurer, Tax Commissioner and Librarian of their offices and of the property in their care and the expense of hiring large apartments elsewhere and of two removals, it was decided by the Governor and Council that these Departments should be retained and accommodated in their present quarters, and that the rear of the present structure should not be taken down until they could be transferred directly to the new building north of Mt. Vernon Street.

The interior work of the latter part is rapidly approaching completion and there is no doubt that it will be entirely ready for occupancy early in the summer. It would be practicable of course, although somewhat inconvenient, for some of the Departments to occupy their quarters before that time. Immediately upon the removal of the offices from the rear of the present building, work can be commenced there and upon the portion over Mt. Vernon Street.

Very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG,
B. D. WHITCOMB,
WILLIAM ENDICOTT, JR.,

State House Construction Committee.

