

Affront to the Capitol

The Senate, in an excess of diplomatic zeal, is doing its best to have it both ways on the West Front of the Capitol. According to the Appropriations bill due on the Senate floor, \$1.75 million of the \$2 million already appropriated by the House would be voted to start work on the extravagantly unnecessary expansion scheme favored by Mr. Stewart, the non-Architect of the Capitol. At the same time \$250,000 would be appropriated for a study by the National Park Service on the feasibility of restoring the West Front.

That is certainly a glorious contradiction in terms and a superb double-headed political ploy—\$250,000 for preservation and \$1.75 million for destruction—take your choice. The \$1.75 million would just be the push to get the ball rolling on a grotesque \$45-million rebuilding scheme that could rise to \$70 million without even trying. It is a proposal to which the professional world of architects, historians and environmentalists and a large number of thinking and feeling citizens are violently opposed. It enjoys favor with few except the Architect of the Capitol and his architects who will do the job.

The Senate could demonstrate a fine sense of economy and art by eliminating the \$1.75 million and voting only the \$250,000 to the Park Service for an immediate preservation study. This is one case where the issue is clear: Spare Mr. Stewart's feelings or spare the Capitol.