

**Capitol Crime**

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sum of the first year's authorization of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The \$32 million authorized by the Preservation Act for a three-year period is less for the whole country's heritage than the cost of the Capitol mutilation alone.

In the light of this Congressional delinquency toward historic preservation, Congressional generosity toward historic destruction is even more appalling. It is doubly appalling after the murder and embalming of the East Front, under the same auspices. The Senate can take corrective action now by backing the most direct kind of restoration. This would cost about \$10 million, according to the American Institute of Architects, or less than one quarter the cost of the extension.

The Capitol is a public building, not a private club. It belongs to the nation. It will not be served by the profligate distortion of history and art.

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The so-called Architect of the Capitol, backed by an unthinking House, proposes to keep the nation's prime historic monument from falling down by erecting a \$45-million extension for the most ludicrously expensive restaurant, cafeteria and hide-away office space in the world—and all of it behind a new and preposterous false front.

It must be made clear—since it is being deliberately muddled in Congressional minds—that there are other, more sensible, appropriate and less costly ways to hold up the walls, and more responsible ways to get that space. The dome will not come tumbling down around legislators' ears as the only alternative to the present plan. The West Front obviously needs strengthening and restoration immediately. But that is all it needs, and all it should have, in the interest of historical and esthetic integrity.

Professionals have shouted themselves hoarse in the face of the elaborate schemes and reports from the office of the non-Architect of the Capitol, whose ossified imperial style and dogged amateur taste must be giving his distinguished predecessors, Bulfinch and Latrobe, sepulchral fits. But the amateurs on Capitol Hill go right ahead.

The House has already voted \$2 million to start the \$45-million attack. That \$2 million is exactly the