

A Monument To J. Edgar Hoover

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FBI Building Most Expensive Ever

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new FBI building, starting an 11-story climb from a vast pit beside Pennsylvania Avenue, is a monument to J. Edgar Hoover and to the inefficiency of government construction techniques.

There is no doubt in official Washington that the building, to be completed in 1974, will be named for and dedicated to Hoover, the FBI director for 47 years.

Equally certain is that the massive, yellowish concrete building will cost taxpayers at least \$42 million more than expected, making it the most expensive government building ever.

When Congress approved the building in 1962, completion was expected in four to five years at a cost of \$60 million. Instead, the government is tak-

ing nearly a dozen years and \$102 million to do the job.

"I am convinced that the ancient Egyptians were able to build their pyramids in far less time than it is taking to erect our new building," Hoover himself complained in a recent speech.

He noted some critics have maintained the only reason he is staying on as director is to be present at the dedication.

"This is nonsense," said Hoover. "At the rate the building is going up, none of us will be around by the time it is completed."

More than two years were lost waiting for Congress to appropriate money for the building it had already approved. Based on the \$102-million final cost divided by the current one per cent per month increase in construction expenses due to in-

flation the delay also added \$25 million to the cost.

It took nearly three years to get the design approved by the Fine Arts Commission, the National Capitol Planning Commission and the Pennsylvania Avenue Commission.

Members of these commissions were responsible for seeing to it that the design would be consistent with a plan to make the avenue, inaugural route of the presidents, the most splendid in the nation. They couldn't do it any earlier because they hadn't agreed on a plan for the avenue.

Meantime, alternations to the building design were made to accommodate FBI growth and changing requirements.

The General Services Administration, responsible for constructing and maintaining federal buildings, had no estimate

of the cost of these design changes and delays before the start of construction.

After construction finally began in 1967, contractors lost nearly six months because of strikes and further modifications. This cost taxpayers an extra \$1.3 million.

These problems are common to all buildings under construction and are largely unavoidable, said the GSA. Incurring large inflationary and start-up costs because of waits for money from Congress also is common to all federal construction, though not on the \$25 million scale of the FBI building.

The GSA contends these expenses could be eliminated if Congress would grant authority to establish a revolving building fund.