

Postal Suites Bear Stamp of Luxury

By Jack Anderson

The Post Office is struggling so desperately to save money that it has cut back services and is planning to increase first-class postage to 10 cents. But the postal poobahs are sparing no expense to build splendid new offices for themselves.

They are moving their headquarters from an old Gothic building to the antiseptic environment of Washington's new L'Enfant Plaza. Postmaster General Ted Klassen's private office has already been installed, replete with a \$5,280 pantry, \$4,602 hand-woven African drapes that can be pulled by remote control and nearly \$6,000 worth of other furnishings.

But Klassen's quarters will look positively tacky compared to the penthouse that is planned on the 11th floor. The entire floor will be used for board of governors meetings, and it will take a lot of 10-cent stamps to pay for the fancy fixtures.

The plans call for impressive, hand-carved wooden

doors, emblazoned with the seal of the Postal Service, to greet the visitor as he steps off the elevator. It will cost the taxpayers \$3,550 just to get past the door.

In the conference room, a gaudy chandelier will hang grandly over the monthly meetings. The cost: \$3,718. If the poobahs should get hungry while discussing postal affairs, they won't have to walk down a flight to Klassen's 10th-floor pantry. A kitchen costing \$50,000 is planned for the board of governors to use once a month.

The palatial plans also call for glass and marble topped tables, 20 conference chairs at \$438.42 each, 52 dining chairs at \$212.40 each, four settees at \$749.43, six lounge chairs at \$480 apiece, eight occasional chairs at \$305.90 each and two sofas for \$1,147.05. The carpeting will run \$8,388.50.

Postal authorities assure us the penthouse area will also be used for press conferences and VIP visitors. Photo developing facilities are also planned for the 11th floor. As evidence of their magnanimity, the postal poobahs made their

old furniture available for sale to rank-and-file employees at low prices.

Footnote: Klassen has also been criticized for exorbitant spending on official trips. His entourage paid \$560 per night, for instance, for the "Presidential Corridor" at the San Francisco Hilton last April during a regional postal conference. A spokesman said that calling the hotel cost exorbitant was "a gross distortion."

Ervin's Whispers—One of Sen. Sam Ervin's famous, folksy stories wasn't intended for the ears of the public. He cupped his hand over the microphone as he whispered the yarn to Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) during the Watergate hearings.

Ex-Attorney General John Mitchell, looking back on his role in the Watergate scandal, had just told the senators he would behave differently if he had it do over again.

Eyebrows jiggling, Ervin leaned over and whispered to Baker that Mitchell's remark reminded him of a girl down in North Carolina who had been "dishonored" by a rich

man. The girl's father, brandishing a rifle, confronted the rich man.

"You have dishonored my daughter," said the angry father.

"But I am a rich man," said the accused. He promised to pay for his promiscuity—\$15,000 for a baby boy, \$10,000 for a girl.

"What if my daughter has a miscarriage?" demanded the father. "Will you give her another chance?"

Alienation of Gurney—President Nixon may have lost his strongest supporter on the Senate Watergate committee by forcing a constitutional confrontation over the White House tapes.

If the President had agreed to meet privately with Ervin, Sen. Edward Gurney (R-Fla.) would have resisted subpoenaing the secret tapes. But he felt the President left the committee no choice. "I'm disappointed," he said, "that there is no middle ground left."

He later joined the other six senators in issuing a subpoena to the President of the United States.