

PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING

Newest Capitol Group Addition

New State Building Lives Up to Capitol Group History

April 15, 1950, was another memorable day in the hectic history of the capitol group of buildings. With appropriate ceremonies, the new Public Service Building was officially opened for business. William Warren, United Press staff correspondent, sums up the capitol group history with these comments in a Salem **Capital Journal** story:

"It's a fine, brave building, this new Public Service structure, from penthouse flagpole to technicolor cafeteria in the basement.

"And it kept the hectic history intact.

Cracks in the plaster made a repair job necessary and held up official acceptance of the structure for a couple of months. But capitol attaches point out that the cracks were not the fault of the Sound Construction Co., builders of the five-story, \$2,000,000 edifice. The state itself specified pumice blocks for the partitions and these blocks continued to 'cure' after the plaster was on, causing the cracks.

"Oldest building in the capitol group is the supreme court building, and it launched the tradition of turbulent times amongst the state buildings in a big way. The supreme court building was built on the installment plan by legislative fiat.

"In 1911 the legislature appropriated \$150,000 to buy property and build the supreme court structure. And it specified, as if shaking a collective finger at the next legislature, that 'the cost of purchasing or acquiring such land and erection of a suitable building thereon, for the purpose mentioned

shall in no case exceed the sum of money above appropriated.'

"The property at State and 12th streets—next to the railroad tracks, incidentally, where the freights rumble past to postpone the ponderings of the high court men—was bought and the building started.

"Then funds for the job were exhausted and the building abruptly halted.

"When the 1913 legislature convened the lawmakers promptly said "pooh" to the 1911 legislative injunction against more dough and appropriated an additional \$136,000 to complete the structure, procure some furniture and landscape the grounds. The building was first occupied in February of 1914.

"Next oldest structure in the group, the state office building across the alley from the supreme court building, was completed in 1930, but only after a series of set-backs and bickering that echoed clear to the United States supreme court.

"Litigation started in 1927 and reached the U. S. high court before it was settled. It was to determine whether state officials could borrow the money to build a state building from a state department—in this case, the trust funds of the State Industrial Accident Commission.

"This was a new departure in financing the cost of construction of state buildings, with a plan of repayment from rentals plus 4½ per cent interest.

"Suit was brought by the Eastern & Western Lumber Co. against the state board of control in 1927, to en-