HIGH COSTS FORCE 'U' TO TRIM BUILDING PLANS

By JEAN JAMES
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The story of the new mechanical-aeronautical engineering building, started last week at the University of Minnesota, has some unhappy chapters, three faculty members told the Board of Regents Saturday.

Building contracts awarded by the regents total $2,106,285.01 for the building which has been on the list of major projects at the university for more than 15 years.

But that total, in the present high cost era, no longer meets the needs of the departments, even though it is almost double the original legislative appropriation in 1939, the faculty members said.

PLANS TRIMMED

To keep within the appropriation some pet projects have had to be left out and parts of the building will not be finished until more money is available, they reported.

A budget cut of about $18,000 means that his big laboratory—big enough to hold a complete airplane — won't have any shelves and cupboards, John D. Akerman, chairman of the department of aeronautical engineering, said.

Another cut of about $20,000 puts a damper on one of Akerman's favorite dreams. For the basement of the A-E wing on the new building, he has been planning a cold room with a high altitude chamber in it able to simulate flight conditions at 70,000 feet and 70 degrees below zero. But the budget won't stretch to cover the needed compressor and refrigerating unit.

LABORATORY OUT

Left unfinished in the new build-

ing will be an important labora-
tory on the top floor of the mechanical engineering wing. Frank B. Rowley, chairman of the department, told the regents.

About $28,000 more will be needed to complete the laboratory, intended to house internal combustion and jet engines, Rowley said. Another $2,000 is needed for electrical wiring.

Because the money is not available, the top laboratory floor will be just a shell, he said, and it will cost more to make it usable later than it would to complete it now.

"That's a problem we've had to face squarely," W. T. Middlebrook, business vice president of the university, commented. "We've had to decide whether we should knock out the whole floor or get the shell and then try for more funds."

Ray C. Jones, university advisory architect, added the budget does not include enough for a lot of finishing in the building—painting and plastering.

All agreed, however, that it was imperative to build the building as soon as possible, despite the problems.

The present mechanical engineering building is old and overcrowded. The number of students who use the facilities has more than tripled since 1939.

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Work Begun ON NEW UNIVERSITY BUILDING

Construction on the University’s new Mechanical-Aeronautical Engineering Building has begun.

The new structure, which has been under consideration for the last 15 years, will adjoin the present Electrical Engineering Building and will face Church Street.

“U”-shaped, the Mechanical-Aeronautical Engineering Building, containing some 200,000 square feet of floor space, will form a huge “G” with its base on Church Street and will occupy a section of the present football practice field.

The west wing of the structure, joined on its south end to the Electrical Engineering Building and facing Church Street, will be approximately 230 feet long. It will house classrooms and offices principally and will be the same height as the Electrical Engineering Building.

Largest portion of the new building will be the north wing, which will extend eastward from the west wing and will parallel the Electrical Engineering Building and Electrical Laboratory. It will be about 385 feet long and 4 stories high and will contain shops and laboratories including a machine shop, forge, engine testing shop, a woodworking shop and a low temperature laboratory.

These shops and laboratories will be primarily for the use of the Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering Departments, but also will be available to other departments of the University’s Institute of Technology.

The Aeronautical Engineering Department will occupy the east wing, which will extend some 300 feet southward from the east end of the north wing. This wing will be in line with the present Experimental Engineering Building and will form the “top” of the “G”-shaped unit.

Contained in the east wing will be classrooms, drafting rooms, offices, laboratories and shops, including one shop large enough to accommodate a complete airplane.

A helicopter landing platform and a meteorological laboratory will be constructed on the roof of the wing which will match the north wing in height. The aeronautical wing also will include a high altitude testing laboratory in which it will be possible to reproduce the conditions of high altitude flight.

Contracts awarded for the construction of the new Mechanical-Aeronautical Engineering Building totaled $2,108,235.01, and included the stipulation that the building must be completed within 15 month.

Funds available for the construction of the building have been provided by the State Legislature during three recent sessions and total $2,169,000.

Under the original appropriation, $100,000 was allotted to the departments for furniture and equipment, but this amount has been absorbed by the building contract. This will mean that much painting, plastering and finishing will have to be eliminated.

Unfinished for now will be the Mechanical Engineering Department’s laboratory to house internal combustion and jet engines and Aeronautical Engineering’s cold room with a high altitude chamber.

Work on the building is progressing as fast as possible, although even when it is complete, the departments will have to get along for a few years with what equipment they already have or use surplus equipment.

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