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COBOURG, ONTARIO

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1971


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## My Christmas

Winter work for 8

**\$19,000 from Ottawa  
to start Vic Hall work**

By MANDY MARTIN



A \$19,000 federal grant has been awarded by the federal government to the Society for the Restoration of Victoria Hall. The money is to be used to employ seven laborers and one draughtsman to dismantle the opera house and remove other temporary partitions within the





**CHRISTMAS IN COBOURG ....** Last night as the lights came on and the evening sky darkened, the town's old landmark, Victoria Hall, stood watch over its 111th Christmas season. This year, the

Old Vic received a Merry Christmas present itself, a federal grant of \$19,000 to start the first preliminary work on its restoration as a major Canadian historical monument.

said John Taylor, executive director of the Society. "We didn't think we would be able to start until fall."

The grant, provided under the local incentives program, was announced to the Society on Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Taylor said no restoration could be done on Victoria Hall until structural repairs are completed. "We will remove all the fittings in the opera house so that it is just a bare room," he said. "This will allow the restoration architect to get at the beams and joists for structural work."

The project scheduled to begin January 3, is expected to last at least 21 weeks and include additional work on the third and second floors.

"The opera house will take about two months to pull apart," said Mr. Taylor. "It has to be done very carefully. It is a slow process so that we don't lose any evidence that we might need in the reconstruction."

The Society will be hiring seven laborers and one draughtsman for the job. Actual materials for the project are expected to cost only \$500 and the seven laborers will earn \$90 a week. The draughtsman will earn professional fees.

The Society made the application for the grant directly to the Manpower and Immigration Department in Toronto. Three other work incentive grants have also been given in this general area.

The positions for the work are to be registered and hired through the Canada Manpower office in Cobourg and work is to start January 3.

## Drama Guild agrees to start

Directors of the Cobourg Opera and Drama Guild met with Restoration Society directors on Tuesday night, agreed that work could begin in clearing out the Guild's property in the Opera House, to prepare for restoration.

There are 430 seats in the Opera House, all of which must be removed, as well as the stage, lights, and costumes.

While there is no final decision made yet by town council, or the society as to whether the Opera House should be restored as a theatre or in its original state as a ballroom, the consensus emerging from the meetings suggests that a restored Opera House with sloping floor and fixed seats would have more community use than a ballroom or hall with flat floor.

When the hall was opened in 1860, the Prince of Wales attended a gala ball in the ballroom. Some years later, a sloping floor was built over it, and the ballroom became an opera house. The heavy floor is a dead weight on the structure.

At least three local groups are prospective users of a theatre-type opera house; the Opera and Drama Guild, Community Concerts, Oriana Singers, as well as public lectures, touring companies and perhaps summer theatre.