

**Fabricate, furnish hotel rooms**

# Revolutionary construction system starts at modern plant near Acton

A new system which constructs, equips, decorates and furnishes rooms in a factory and then assembles a finished building on site, will be introduced in Canada this summer by a subsidiary of The Oshawa Wholesale Limited. The rooms are to be built at a new plant on Highway 25 between Acton and Milton.

First project to be undertaken by the company, Systems Construction (Ontario) Ltd., is the 252-room Yorkdale Holiday Inn at Highway 401 and Dufferin Street, opposite Yorkdale Shopping Centre. The hotel's 240 bedrooms will be assembled and can be completed right up to the bed linen in the local plant in 60 working days and installed on site in 24 working days.

A 250-room Holiday Inn on Dixon Road near Toronto International Airport is being negotiated.

The system reduced construction time by as much as 30 percent without increasing cost. Company officials say it could revolutionize building of town houses, apartments, senior citizen housing, hotels, nursing homes, hospitals and student housing.

Participating with Oshawa, which owns more than 60 per cent of the new company are real estate developer Murray Webber and general contractor P. R. Connolly.

The off-site construction system was developed and first tested by one of the world's largest general contractors, H. B. Zachry Construction Co., of San Antonio, Texas. Zachry built the 500-room, 23 story Hilton Palacia del Rio Hotel in time for San

Antonio's HemisFair in 1967 in a record-shattering nine months, half the normally required time.

Systems Construction (Ontario) Ltd. has acquired Canadian and Caribbean Islands rights to the technique from Zachry. A \$1,500,000 62,000-square foot assembly plant is nearing completion and now beginning operations here.

Here is how the system works: Construction process of the room units begins with affixing of electrical conduits and outlets for hydro, telephone, television and intercom to reinforcing steel mats. The mats are lifted into steel forms, rods and reinforcing steel are connected and the forms hydraulically closed to exact room unit size. The 12-foot Holiday Inn units will be cast open at one end for windows and with a door frame at the opposite end.

Lightweight structural concrete is poured and vibrated into the forms, then steam cured to speed setting. The entire unit is lifted out of the form the following morning, the one-day casting cycle now complete.

An overhead travelling crane transports the room units to the plant's finishing area for installation of partitioning, curtain wall and windows, doors, plumbing, heating and air conditioning units and fixtures, painting, vinyl wall covering, carpets, draperies, lamps and furniture, even mirrors and paintings. All materials and furnishings are pre-ordered and warehoused in the plant, ready for use when required. Since rooms can be positioned

on the building structure more quickly than they can be fabricated, stockpiling of finished room units is necessary. They will be stored in the plant yard — with doors and windows locked.

On the jobsite, meanwhile, foundations, convention and dining floors and the elevator and stair core are being constructed by conventional means. On pre-set schedules, room units are transported to the jobsite on float trailers from which they are lifted by a giant mobile crane and helicopter lift rig, for positioning on the building structure. Ten rooms per day will thus be lifted into place.

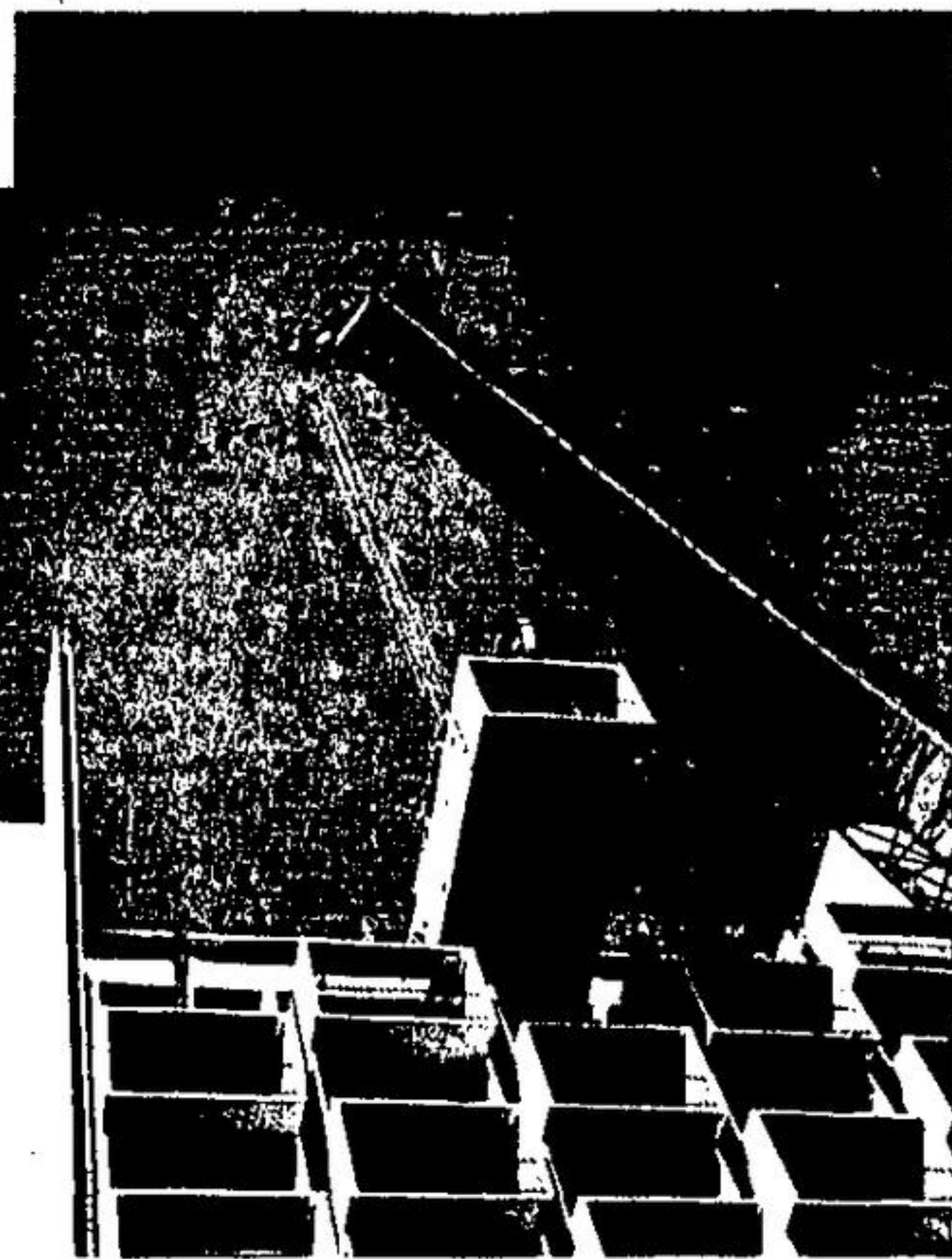
Since wiring and plumbing are ready for connection through a chase in the wall fronting on the corridor, workmen are not even required to enter the finished and furnished room to complete service hook-ups.

All that remains is for the chambermaids to make the beds and hang the towels.

Although first tried only three years ago by Zachry in Texas, the idea of off-site construction, according to Mr. Webber, dates back 500 years to Leonardo da Vinci, who wrote: "Let the houses be transported and arranged in order, and this can be done with ease because these houses are first made in parts upon the open places, and are fitted together with their timbers on the spot where they are to remain."

"While the thought may be ancient, only the advent of modern highway systems and equipment made its application possible," Mr. Webber said.

Mr. Webber predicted system construction would prove popular because buildings can be erected in up to half the normally required time, thus reducing the non-revenue producing con-



**A BEAUTIFUL LANDING**—Prefabricated hotel room units are hoisted into place at the rate of 10 a day, using a crane. This type of hotel room unit is being constructed at the nearby plant of Systems Construction (Ontario) Ltd.—(Photo by Tell-Pics, Texas)

struction period. He anticipates saving will increase as efficiency of the system is enhanced through experience.

At commencement of operations, the company will have a capacity of 1,000 units a year. With modest expansion of plant facilities, capacity can be increased to 1,500 units a year.

Expansion to other Canadian metropolitan areas is also contemplated.

The new plant, located on the Peddie farm two miles north of Milton, was a "secret" operation when construction began last February. Information on the building's purpose leaked out in May at an Oakville planning board meeting.

The units may be seen easily from No. 25 highway by Actonians driving south to 401 highway.



**THE NEW HILTON HOTEL** Palacia del Rio, in San Antonio, Texas was the first building ever erected using the new construction system. It was built in a record nine months to be ready for HemisFair '67. A similar system is being used at the new plant.—(Photo by Tell-Pics, Texas)

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