



# Charge trickery, double-dealing over hall

cil without a quorum "and the council broke up at 11.30 p.m."

The next meeting on December 4 hinged on the vote of censure. "The only business the council did was to sit four hours endeavoring to pass the minutes of the former meeting. In this they at length succeeded after boxing the compass in regard to the Market House. A resolution to strike the vote of censure from the minutes died without a seconder and another motion that the proceeding of council following the departure of three members was illegal, was defeated."

There were few changes in the municipal elections of 1866 and there were few meetings of council in the early part of that year. By July of 1866 The Champion was reporting lack of a quorum at meetings, with only three councillors appearing. A list of council work lying uncompleted was detailed, and the importance of getting on with sidewalk repairs was being stressed.

In August The Champion described a session as lively, "reminding one of the stirring times last fall", but the matter was on a report of the Court of Revision and Councillor McCallum resigned in protest from the streets and sidewalks committee. Council refused to accept it.

"It is no use talking about the Market House, it is built and must be paid for, and the only sensible course is to accept it as a fixed fact and make the best of it". The Champion editor of the day was urging. But the next week there was still no meeting of the council, when none of the members appeared for the regular session.

A ratepayer accused the council of trickery and double-dealing when he wrote that, had it not been for the building of the Market House, the rate for the year would have been considerably lower. "How the Council could pass a report palming the increased rate on the County and School Tax, it is difficult to say, but quite possible to conceive as they showed themselves during the whole of last year equal to anything that can be scared up in trickery and double dealing".

The pre-Confederation year was wearing on. The first telegraph line to the town was completed with an office in Lyon's store across from the town hall. It was being pointed out that doors on public buildings must swing outwards and the ones on the new town hall would have to be changed. The building committee was authorized to complete the tower on the town hall but this was to be months in coming, and to follow another controversial period in local politics.

On November 26 Council met informally when the contractor Joseph Martin, "wished them to occupy the Council room as it was now ready for their reception. The Council, however, was of the opinion that it would not enter until the contract was completed."

"There was no quorum as usual at the last meeting of the Town Council on Monday last", The Champion reported on December 6, 1866. "It will be necessary to hold a meeting before the nomination day in order to pass the election by-law". This the council did on December 10.

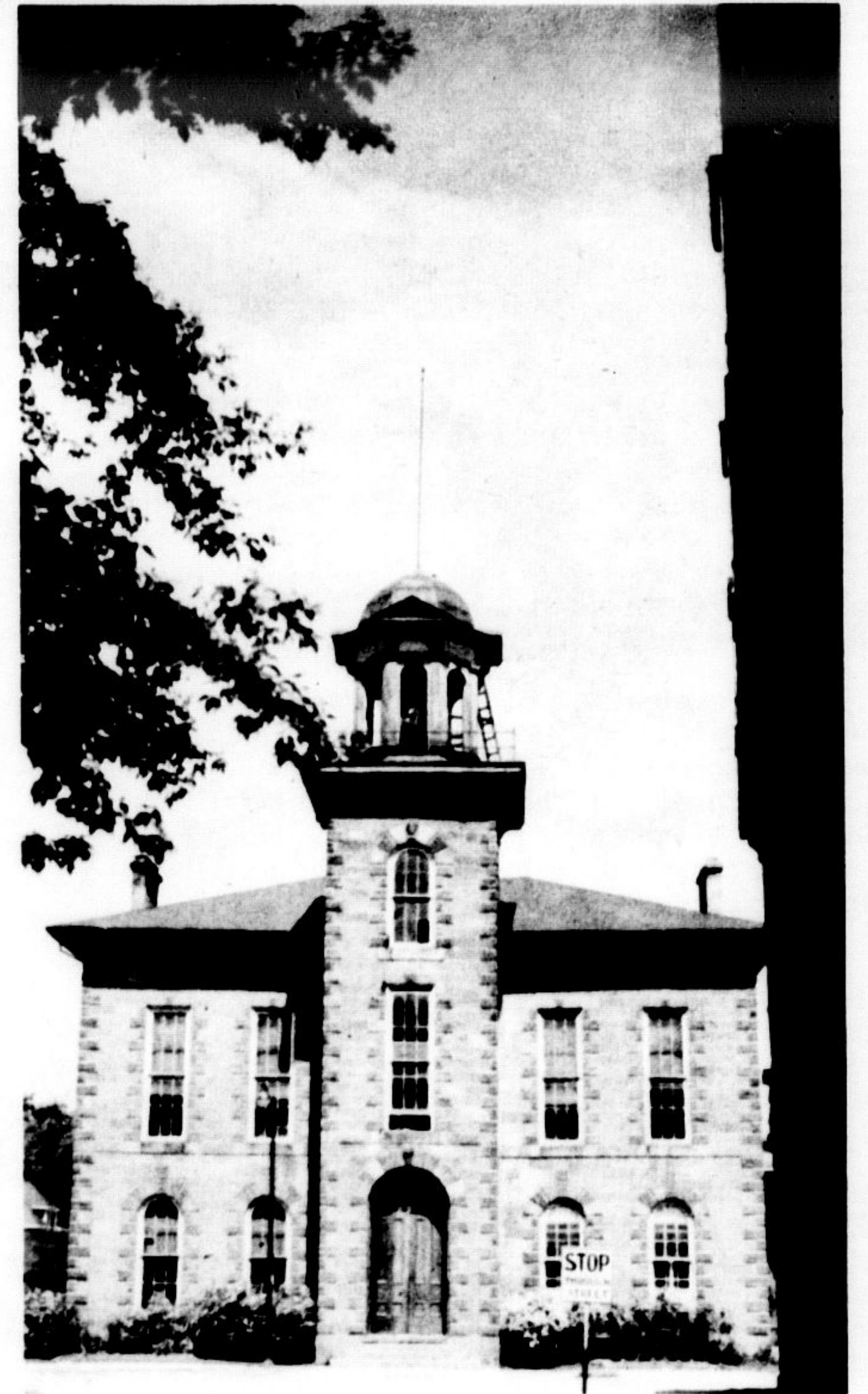
Mayor W. D. Lyon "positively declined" to seek re-election while there was apparently a feeling among his opponents that he should be compelled to serve until the Market House was paid for.

The 1867 council was elected, headed by Mayor George Smith with Reeve James McGuffin and Councillors R. A. Lyon, S. Morse, S. Centre, G. T. Bastedo, S. F. Taylor, C. Niehaus, Robert Matheson, J. P. Roper and J. B. Willmott. Three councillors were elected for three years, three for two and three for one. By February M. Niehaus had resigned and Mr. Dewar was elected by a vote of 13 to 3, after Sheriff McKindsay refused the position.

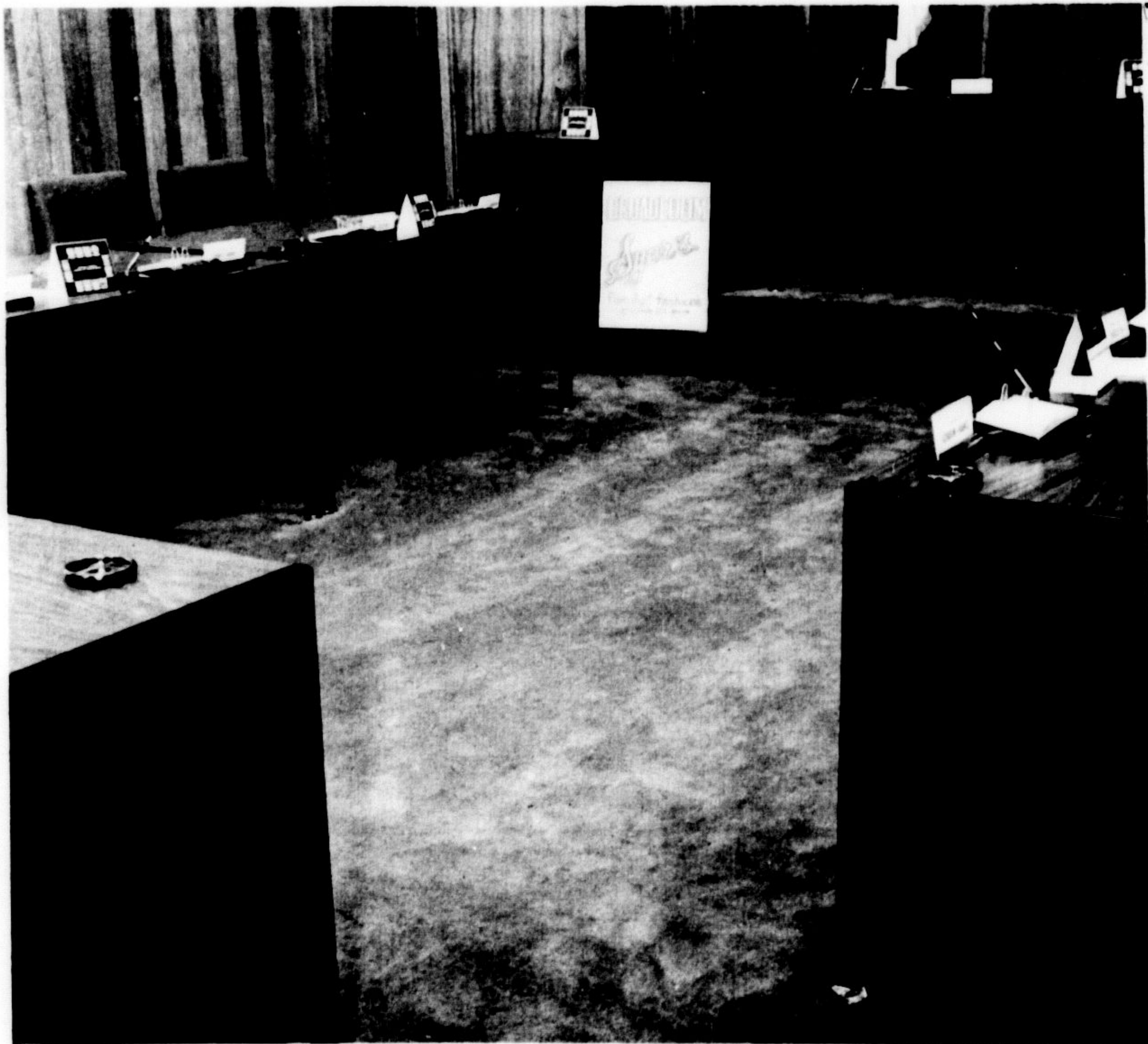
In March the council dismissed its clerk R. Todd, declaring "that whereas during the year 1866 and part of 1865 the business of the town has been very inefficiently performed by the clerk."

The year wore on, and in April the council approved moving the old market house to the opposite

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Local photographer E. Ross Pearen took this picture several years ago, showing the Town Hall complete with tower and front steps. In the early 1950's the tower was removed and the steps were moved inside the building.



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