



Hassle over accepting new building in 1867

side of the road on the understanding they could continue to use it until the other hall was ready. The location of this first town hall and its type of construction were not indicated in the newspaper references.

But all was not well on the new building either. Contractor Joseph Martin met the building committee and issued his ultimatum that the town pay him the \$5,000 plus interest on \$1,000 from the first of December, when he claimed the building was completed. Extras of \$250 were also to be paid and he would allow out of these amounts one month's rent for the old town hall and market building.

The committee, however, was of another mind. They reported the front of the building, the floor of the basement and the painting had not been completed according to the contract, and refused to recommend acceptance of the building. Legal counsel from the city was to be engaged for its opinion on the liabilities of the council.

Christopher Patters, barrister of Toronto, advised the council it was in possession of the building since they owned the site and that they could enter anytime. If the contractor remained he would be a trespasser.

In late July of 1867 the committee recommended acceptance of the town hall paying \$5,000, less \$250 for rent of the town hall and completion of the basement floor. It was allowed, however, that if the contractor put in a substantial ground floor he would be allowed \$200 provided he also completed the fill around the building.

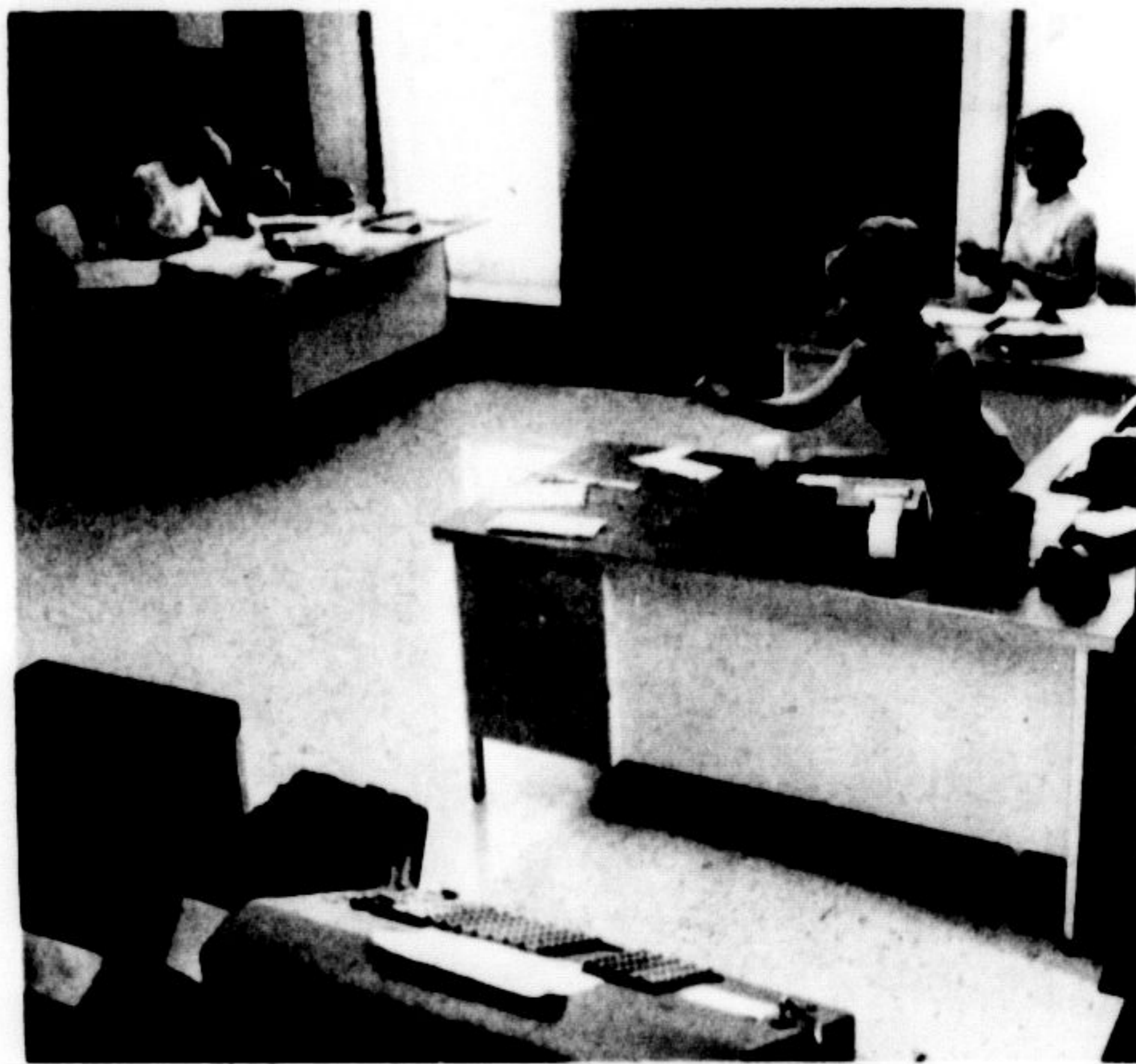
By September the building was given to the town and a new pair of scales for weighing hay and produce had been installed at the rear of the building.

"**The new market building** has been delivered over to the town by the contractor Joseph Martin Esq., who has done the job in a workmanlike manner. Although in some respects, such as a portion of the facing and the ground floor is not up to the

contract, and some deductions have been made in consequence, yet the building is a credit to the Town and whatever may be thought of the policy of building such a costly structure for a town the size of Milton, no one can deny that on all public occasions it will be a great convenience", wrote Robert Matheson, editor of The Champion.

The first meeting in the new building was on Monday, September 16, 1867, and one of the first problems was to complete the financing of the project. Debentures totalling \$3,000 were necessary and there were some criticisms levelled at the councils of 1865 and 1866. They failed to levy \$1,200 annually and the 1867 council was faced with the full payment as well as arranging funds for the completion of the tower and the seating accommodation.

"**It may be asked**, why go to the expense of finishing the tower and seating the Hall, but the first is necessary to save the building from injury and the second is required to make use of the Hall and to derive revenue from it".



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The first revenue of \$131 came when the building was opened with a reunion in October 1867, and local talent contributed to the "decided success". The \$131 went toward paying for the new pianoforte as the densely crowded hall reverberated to the "richness of tone" produced on the piano supplied by the enterprising firm of Heintzman and Co.

The tower on the town hall had still not been completed and by February of the next year it was causing the council some concern. A resolution to proceed with its completion was defeated, and members finally agreed to roof it to prevent damage to the tower.

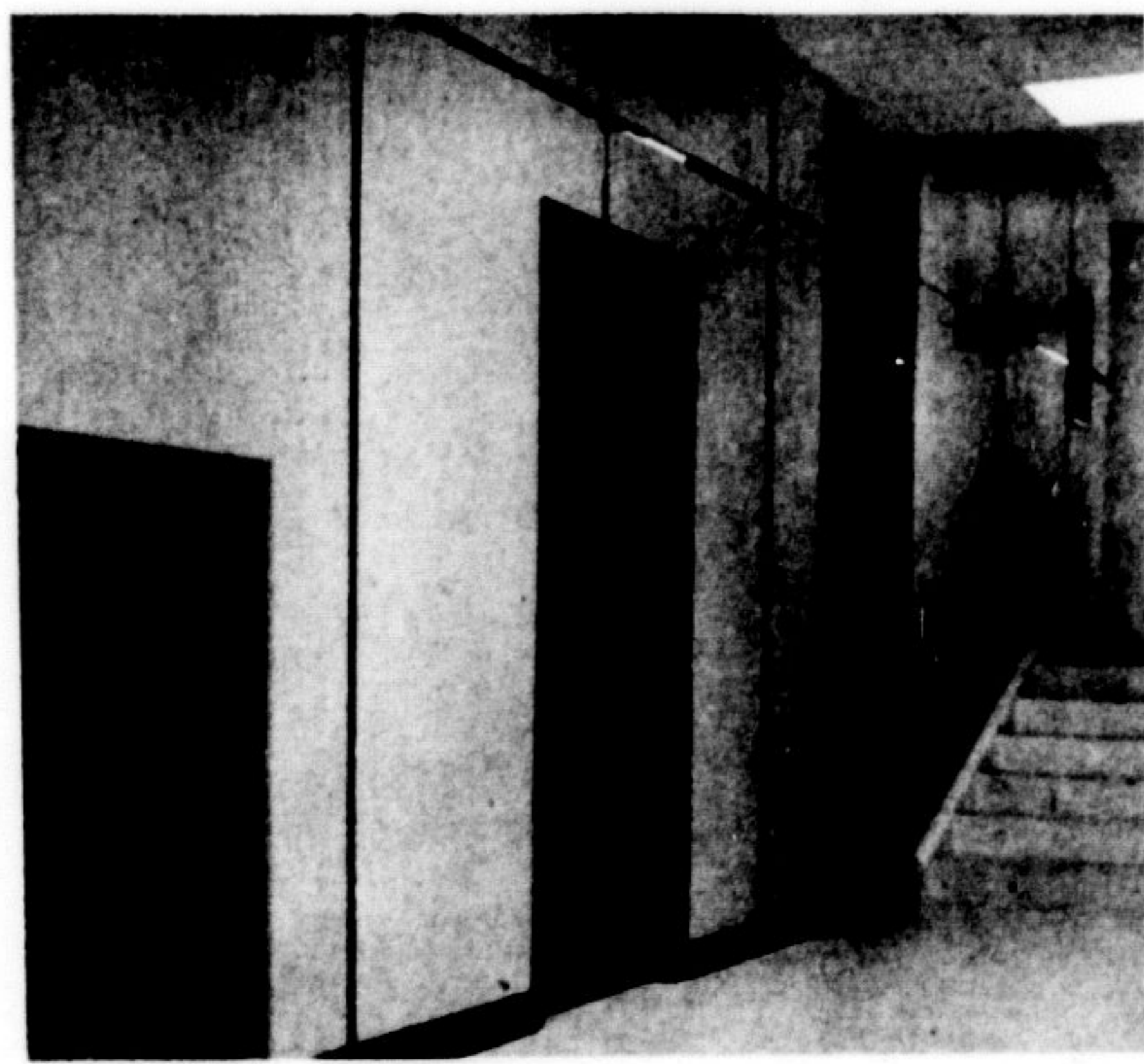
The final settlement with the contractor was still outstanding too, contrary to earlier indications of settlement. Payment of interest on a note was the subject of a "lengthened discussion" on March 16, 1868. Members finally agreed "that in justice to the ratepayers the council had no right to pay one cent of interest, as the settlement with Mr. Martin in July last was considered as final, that no claim was then put up by Mr. Martin for interest and that indeed, at that time the town had made a compromise condoning certain penalties, and certain deficiencies in the building and that Mr. Martin had then accepted the settlement in full".

The roofing of the tower had apparently not proceeded very swiftly and at a meeting in May "after a spirited debate" it was decided to call for plans and specification for a dome and then advertise for tenders. Little is recorded on the acceptance of the tenders and their amount but the erection of the dome was proceeded with, and in June it was reported the dome was completed and council was requested to inspect it.

What they saw didn't apparently make them happy because they reported doubts that the work had been done in a "substantial and workmanlike manner, and thus touched off a crowning debate on the whole project".

James Smith of Toronto, the architect for the dome was to be hustled to town to inspect the product of his design, but the cost was not to exceed

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