

# 3000 changes in court plans

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A state Senate committee investigating the delays and soaring costs of the partially-completed Middlesex County courthouse in Cambridge yesterday heard the project's former prime contractor charge that the architect constantly "interfered" with his work by issuing thousands of change orders.

"I estimated there were 3,000 change orders, and the consultants said there were even more," said George Ungar, president of Gevyn Construction Corp. of Mamaroneck, N.Y., a firm fired last May by the county commissioners.

"We were forced to make changes that later were considered not necessary. With that kind of interference and harassment by the architect, and by the owners in part, you cannot complete a job," Ungar said.

Ungar's firm was awarded the construction bid in October of 1967, and since that time the estimated cost of the courthouse had risen from \$16 million to \$40 million.

The original estimate was made in 1963 when plans called for an 18-story structure. Revised plans called for an additional three stories. Ungar had predicted in July that the courthouse would cost some \$40 million to complete.

Sen. Beryl Cohen (D-Brookline), who chaired the committee's four-week-old investigation, asked Ungar if he was

aware that the architect, Edward Tedesco of Winchester, had urged in a letter that the county commissioners not award the contract to the Gevyn.

Ungar said he did not know of Tedesco's letter to the commissioners until "immediately after the awarding of the contract."

One of Ungar's two attorneys at the hearing, Leslie A. Hynes of New York, said that "three part-time commissioners" do not have the technical qualifications to supervise properly such a large project.

Shortly after the project was awarded, Ungar said he discovered the foundation was "in danger of collapse" and that "fissures had developed in the streets." He repeatedly stressed that this problem was not "of our making."

Ungar said that then a "save harmless agreement" was executed between him and the county commissioners, which fixed the responsibility for the condition of the foundation on the commissioners.

"You had the county commissioners over a barrel," Sen. George Kenneally (D-Dorchester) said. Ungar answered: "I think it was the other way around."

Sen. Cohen said a Boston insurance man, after being informed of the "save harmless agreement," told him it was the first time he ever heard of one in which the owner assumes responsibility. Usually, the contractor takes the responsibility," the insurance man wrote Cohen.