La. Old State Capitol Cracking, Shifting

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BATON ROUGE — Louisiana’s historic Old State Capitol is cracking and shifting, possibly the result of construction of a new municipal complex adjacent, engineers have reported, The Times-Picayune learned Friday.

"On every floor there is visible sign of the building moving or shifting," L. L. Robertson, assistant superintendent of buildings and grounds, notified the Division of Administration.

"Cracks have appeared in quite a few of the walls and baseboards in some areas have pulled away from the wall," Robertson wrote. H. Benny Turcan, assistant commissioner of administration, said a more extensive survey and report is expected next week from the Facilities and Planning Office.

 Asked what it would mean in money to correct the damages, Turcan could only reply "God only knows what it could cost."

 Asked whether this could mean the City of Baton Rouge or the contractor might be responsible for costs of repair or corrective measures, Turcan said, depending on the result of the report expected next week, "I guess so."

 The Old State Capitol, now a tourist attraction but housing some state agencies, was in use as the capitol prior to completion of the present capitol in 1932.

Damages first came to light recently, Turcan said, when workmen prepared to reroof the building. They found the walls at the top of the turreted landmark, situated on a bluff overlooking the river, were separating from the roof.

On two sides of the building, the City of Baton Rouge is constructing a $40 million municipal complex and convention center which has required extensive excavation and the driving of piles.

On a third side, the old terminal between the Old State Capitol and the river is being reconstructed as an arts and science museum and river overlook.