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sciousness of the jeering crowds ply did he believe that if only

they could be made to understand how good his system was, they would surely support it. In those pre-World War I years of optimism, of reform, of idealism, Robert Moses was the optimist of optimists, the reformer of reformers, the idealist of idealists.

So great a nuisance did he make of himself that in 1918 Tammany Hall decided it had to crush him. It did so with efficiency. At the age of thirty, with the grading papers for his system being used as scrap paper, the Central Park shelters and great highways unbuilt, Robert Moses, Phi Beta Kappa at Yale, honors man at Oxford, lover of the Good, the True and the Beautiful, was out of work and, with a wife and two small daughters to support, was standing on a line in the Cleveland, Ohio, City Hall, applying for a minor municipal job—a job which, incidentally, he didn’t get.

When the curtain rose on the next act of Moses’ life, idealism was gone from the stage. In its place was an understanding that ideas—dreams—were useless without power to transform them into reality. Moses spent the rest of his life amassing power, bringing to the task imagination, iron will and determination. And he was successful. The oath that was administered to Robert Wagner in City Hall on January 1, 1954, should have given Wagner supreme power in New York. That was the theory. In democratic America, supposedly, ultimate power rests in the voters, and the man for whom a majority of them cast their votes is the repository of that power. But Wagner knew better. The spectators may have thought that he had a choice in dealing with Moses. He knew that he did not. Why, when Moses pushed the appointment blank across his desk, did the Mayor say not a word? Possibly because there was nothing to say. Power had spoken.

With his power, for twenty years prior to the day he strode out of City Hall in triumph (and for an additional fourteen years thereafter), Robert Moses shaped a city and its sprawling suburbs—and, to an extent that would have astonished analysts of urban trends had they measured the implications of his decades of handiwork, influenced the destiny of all the cities of twentieth-century America.

The city in which the shaping by his hand is most evident is New York, Titan of cities, colossal synthesis of urban hope and urban despair. It had become a cliché by the mid-twentieth century to say that New York was “ungovernable,” and this meant, since the powers of government in the city had largely devolved on its mayor, that no mayor could govern it, could hope to do more than merely stay afloat in the maelstrom that had engulfed the vast metropolis. In such a context, the cliché was valid. No mayor shaped New York; no mayor—not even La Guardia—left upon its roiling surface more than the faintest of lasting imprints.

But Robert Moses shaped New York.

Physically, any map of the city proves it. The very shoreline of metropolis was different before Robert Moses came to power. He rammed bulkheads of steel deep into the muck beneath rivers and harbors and crammed into the space between bulkheads and short immensities of earth and stone,

shale and cement, that hardened into fifteen thousand acres of new land and thus altered the physical boundaries of the city.

Standing out from the map's delicate tracery of gridirons representing streets are heavy lines, lines girdling the city or slashing across its expanses. These lines denote the major roads on which automobiles and trucks move, roads whose very location, moreover, does as much as any single factor to determine where and how a city's people live and work. With a single exception, the East River Drive, Robert Moses built every one of those roads. He built the Major Deegan Expressway, the Van Wyck Expressway, the Sheridan Expressway and the Bruckner Expressway. He built the Gowanus Expressway, the Prospect Expressway, the Whitestone Expressway, the Clearview Expressway and the Throgs Neck Expressway. He built the Cross-Bronx Expressway, the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, the Nassau Expressway, the Staten Island Expressway and the Long Island Expressway. He built the Harlem River Drive and the West Side Highway.

Only one borough of New York City—the Bronx—is on the mainland of the United States, and bridges link the island boroughs that form metropolis. Since 1931, seven such bridges were built, immense structures, some of them anchored by towers as tall as seventy-story buildings, supported by cables made up of enough wire to drop a noose around the earth. Those bridges are the Triborough, the Verrazano, the Throgs Neck, the Marine, the Henry Hudson, the Cross Bay and the Bronx-Whitestone. Robert Moses built every one of those bridges.

Scattered throughout New York stand clusters of tall apartment houses built under urban renewal programs and bearing color, splashed on terraces and finials, that in the twentieth-century American cityscape marks them as luxury dwellings. Alongside some of these clusters stand college lecture halls and dormitories. Alongside one stand five immense dingy white expanses of travertine that are Lincoln Center, the world's most famous, costly and imposing cultural complex. Alongside another stands the New York Coliseum, the glowering exhibition tower whose name reveals Moses' preoccupation with achieving an immortality like that conferred on the Caesars of Rome (feeling later that he could make the comparison even more exact, he built Shea Stadium, remarking when it was completed, "When the Emperor Titus opened the Colosseum in 80 A.D. he could have felt no happier"). Once the sites of the clusters contained other buildings: factories, stores, tenements that had stood for a century, sturdy, still serviceable apartment houses. Robert Moses decided that these buildings would be torn down and it was Robert Moses who decided that the lecture halls and the dormitories and the cultural center—and new apartment houses—would be erected in their place.

The eastern edge of Manhattan Island, heart of metropolis, was completely altered between 1945 and 1958. Northward from the bulge of Corlears Hook looms a long line of apartment houses devoid of splashes of color, hulking buildings, utilitarian, drab, unadorned, not block after block of them but mile after mile, appearing from across the East River like an endless wall of dull brick against the sky. Almost all of them—ninety-five looming over the river in the first two miles north of Corlears Hook—are public

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housing. They—and hundreds of similar structures huddled alongside the
expressways or set in rows beside the Rockaway surf—contain 148,000 apart-
ments and 555,000 tenants, a population that is in itself a city bigger than
Minneapolis. These buildings were constructed by the New York City Hous-
ing Authority, 1,082 of them between 1945 and 1958. Robert Moses was
never a member of the Housing Authority and his relationship with it was
only hinted at in the press. But between 1945 and 1958 no site for public
housing was selected and no brick of a public housing project laid without
his approval.

North of the public housing are two immense "private" housing devel-
opments: Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. Moses was the domi-
nant force in their creation, too (as he was in the creation of an even larger
"private" housing development in the Bronx, Co-op City). And still further
north along the East River stand the buildings of the United Nations head-
quarters. Moses cleared aside the obstacles to bringing to New York the
closest thing to a world capitol the planet possesses, and he supervised its
construction.

When Robert Moses began building playgrounds in New York City,
there were 119. When he stopped, there were 777. Under his direction, an
army of men that at times during the Depression included 84,000 laborers
reshaped every park in the city and then filled the parks with zoos and
skating rinks, boathouses and tennis houses, bridle paths and golf courses,
288 tennis courts and 673 baseball diamonds. Under his direction, endless
convoys of trucks hauled the city's garbage into its marshes, and the garbage
filled the marshes, was covered with earth and lawn, and became more parks.
Long strings of barges brought to the city white sand dredged from the ocean
floor and the sand was piled on mud flats to create beaches.

And no enumeration of the beaches, parks, apartment houses, bridges,
and roads that Robert Moses himself built in New York does more than sug-
gest the immensity of the man's physical influence upon the city. For the
seven years between 1946 and 1953, the seven years of plenty in public
construction in the city, seven years marked by the most intensive such con-
struction in its history, no public improvement of any type—not school or
sewer, library or pier, hospital or catch basin—was built by any city agency,
even those which Robert Moses did not directly control, unless Robert
Moses approved its design and location. To clear the land for these improve-
ments, he evicted the city's people, not thousands of them or tens of thousands
but hundreds of thousands, from their homes and tore the homes down.
Neighborhoods were obliterated by his edict to make room for new neighbor-
hoods reared at his command.

And his influence upon New York went far beyond the physical. In
twentieth-century America, no city's resources, not even when combined
with resources made available by the state and federal governments, came
close to meeting its needs. So cities had to pick and choose among these
needs, to decide which handful of a thousand desperately necessary projects
would actually be built. The establishment of priorities had vast impact
on not only the physical but the social fabric of the cities, on the quality

of life their inhabitants led. In New York City, for thirty-four years, Robert Moses played a vital role in establishing the city's priorities. For the crucial seven years, he established *all* its priorities.

Out from the heart of New York, reaching beyond the limits of the city into its vast suburbs and thereby shaping them as well as the city, stretch long ribbons of concrete, closed, unlike the expressways, to trucks and all commercial traffic, and, unlike the expressways, bordered by lawns and trees. These are the parkways. There are 416 miles of them. Robert Moses built every mile. Still within the city limits, stretching northward toward Westchester County, he built the Mosholu Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway. In Westchester, he built the Saw Mill River Parkway, the Sprain Brook Parkway and the Cross County Parkway. Stretching eastward toward the counties of Long Island, he built the Grand Central Parkway, the Belt Parkway, the Laurelton Parkway, the Cross Island Parkway, the Interborough Parkway. On Long Island, he built the Northern State Parkway and the Southern State Parkway, the Wantagh Parkway and the Sagtikos, the Sunken Meadow and the Meadowbrook. Some of the Long Island parkways run down to the Island's south shore and then, on causeways built by Robert Moses, across the Great South Bay to Jones Beach, which was a barren, deserted, windswept sand spit when he first happened upon it in 1921 while exploring the bay alone in a small motorboat and which he transformed into what may be the world's greatest oceanfront park and bathing beach. Other Long Island parkways lead to other huge parks and other great bathing beaches. Sunken Meadow. Hither Hills. Montauk. Orient Point. Fire Island. Captree. Bethpage. Wildwood. Belmont Lake. Hempstead Lake. Valley Stream. Heckscher. Robert Moses built these parks and beaches.

The physical works of Robert Moses are not confined to New York and its suburbs. The largest of them are hundreds of miles from the city, stretched along the Niagara Frontier, and—in distant reaches of New York State known to natives as “the North Country,” north even of Massena, a town where frost comes in August and the temperature can be thirty below by November—along the St. Lawrence River.

North from Massena the land rolls barren and empty. Only an occasional farmhouse interrupts the expanse of bare fields and scraggly woods. You can drive for twenty miles without passing another car. But turn a bend in the road and there is the St. Lawrence—and, stretched across it, one of the most colossal single works of man, a structure of steel and concrete as tall as a ten-story apartment house, an apartment house as long as eleven football fields, a structure vaster by far than any of the pyramids, or, in terms of bulk, of any six pyramids together, a structure so vast that the thirty-two bright-red turbine generators lined up on its flanks, each of them weighing fourteen tons, are only glistening specks against its dull-gray massiveness. And this structure, a power dam, is only the centerpiece of Robert Moses' design to tame the wild waters of the St. Lawrence, a design that includes three huge

York City, for thirty-four years, Robert Moses set the city's priorities. For the crucial priorities.

Reaching beyond the limits of the city into the suburbs as well as the city, stretch long the expressways, to trucks and all commercial highways, bordered by lawns and trees. 416 miles of them. Robert Moses built them, stretching northward toward Westchester Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway, the Saw Mill River Parkway, the Sprain Brook Parkway. Stretching eastward toward the Grand Central Parkway, the Belt Parkway, the Cross Island Parkway, the Interborough Parkway, the Northern State Parkway and the Tappan Zee Parkway and the Sagtikos, the Sagtikos. Some of the Long Island parkways and then, on causeways built by Robert Moses to Jones Beach, which was a barren, undeveloped strip of land. The first happened upon it in 1921 while on a motorboat and which he transformed into a bathing park and bathing beach. Other huge parks and other great bathing beaches. Montauk. Orient Point. Fire Island. Long Beach. Hempstead Lake. Valley Stream. All these parks and beaches.

Moses' projects are not confined to New York and its suburbs. Hundreds of miles from the city, stretched out in the distant reaches of New York State, "the Empire State," north even of Massena, a town where the winter temperature can be thirty below by the thermometer.

barren and empty. Only an occasional scattered fields and scraggly woods. You can see another car. But turn a bend in the road, stretched across it, one of the most massive structures of steel and concrete as tall as the pyramids, or, in terms of bulk, so vast that the thirty-two bright-red pylons, each of them weighing fourteen thousand tons, its dull-gray massiveness. And this masterpiece of Robert Moses' design to control the river, a design that includes three huge

control dams built to force the river through the power dam's turbines. After the dams were built—and the steel forests of transmission towers which distribute the electricity created by water passing through turbines—Robert Moses adorned their bulk with a garland of parks, of campgrounds, picnic grounds, overlooks, of beaches built beside lakes that he built, and of miles and miles of more parkways. And at Niagara, Robert Moses built a series of dams, parks and parkways that make the St. Lawrence development look small.

One measure of the career of Robert Moses is longevity. His power was measured in decades. On April 18, 1924, ten years after he had entered government, it was formally handed to him. For forty-four years thereafter until the day in 1968 when he realized that he had either misunderstood Nelson Rockefeller or had been cheated by him and, in either case, had lost the last of it—he held power, a power so substantial that in the fields in which he chose to exercise it, it was not challenged seriously by any Governor of New York State or, during a thirty-four year period, 1934 to 1968, in which it extended over city as well as state, by any Mayor of New York City. He held this power during the administrations of six Governors—Alfred E. Smith, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Herbert H. Lehman, Thomas E. Dewey and W. Averell Harriman, as well as Rockefeller. He held it during the administrations of five Mayors—Fiorello La Guardia, William O'Dwyer, Vincent Impellitteri, Robert F. Wagner, Jr., and John V. Lindsay. And in 1974, at the age of eighty-five, he was fighting with desperate cunning to get it back.

Another measure of his career is immortality. Men strive for a sliver of it; Robert Moses had it heaped upon him. Not only is there a Robert Moses State Park on Long Island, there is another Robert Moses State Park at Massena. There is a Robert Moses Causeway on Long Island, a Robert Moses Parkway at Niagara. The great dam at Niagara is named for him. And over the entrance to the dam at Massena, in letters of stainless steel each three feet high, gleam the words "Robert Moses Power Dam."

Another measure is in statistics. By the 1960's, expenditures for public works in America were federal-sized, and a federal cabinet officer might have charge of the distribution of billions of dollars. But merely distributing money is not building. In terms of true building—personal conception and construction—Robert Moses was unique in America. Without including the cost of schools, hospitals, garbage incinerators, sewers and other improvements whose location and design he approved but which were physically constructed by others, without including the amount of money poured by private sources into construction that also had to be approved by him—including, in fact, only those public works that he personally conceived and completed, from first vision to ribbon cutting—Robert Moses built public works costing, in 1968 dollars, twenty-seven billion dollars. In terms of personal conception and completion, no other public official in the history of the United States built public works costing an amount even close to that figure. In those terms,

...essentially America's most prolific physical creator.
He was America's greatest builder.

More significant than what Robert Moses built is when he built it. That was how he put his mark on all the cities of America.

When Robert Moses began building state parks and parkways during the 1920's, twenty-nine states didn't have a single state park; six had only one each. Roads uninterrupted by crossings at grade and set off by landscaping were almost nonexistent. Most proposals for parks outside cities were so limited in scope that, even if they had been adopted, they would have been inadequate. The handful of visionaries who dreamed of large parks were utterly unable to translate their dreams into reality. No one in the nation seemed able to conceive of proposals—and methods of implementing them—equal to the scope and complexity of the problem posed by the need of urban masses for countryside parks and a convenient means of getting to them. New York City residents heading for Long Island's green hills and ocean beaches, for example, had to make their way, bumper to bumper, along dusty rutted roads the most modern of which were exactly eighteen feet wide. Those who made it to the Island found that the hills and beaches had been monopolized by the robber barons of America, who had bought up its choicest areas with such thoroughness that there was hardly a meadow or strip of beach within driving distance of New York still open to the public. So fierce was their opposition—and so immense their political power—that New York park enthusiasts had stopped thinking of putting parks on Long Island.

But in 1923, after tramping alone for months over sand spits and almost wild tracts of Long Island woodland, Robert Moses mapped out a system of state parks there that would cover forty thousand acres and would be linked together—and to New York City—by broad parkways. And by 1929, Moses had actually built the system he had dreamed of, hacking it out in a series of merciless vendettas against wealth and wealth's power that became almost a legend—to the public and to public officials and engineers from all over the country who came to Long Island to marvel at his work. When Jones Beach, capstone of the system, opened, it opened to nationwide praise of a unanimity and enthusiasm not to be heard again for a public work until the completion of the Tennessee Valley Authority project a decade later—and the enthusiasm led directly to the creation of scores of state parks in other states, parks built on engineering and philosophic principles that came largely out of the old August Belmont Mansion on Long Island where Robert Moses sat, pounding his palm on what had been Belmont's dinner table and planning out a system far vaster than Long Island's for all New York State. Over the decades, the state park movement developed other leaders, but it was always to be in his debt. And there was never to be any doubt that the breadth of his vision kept him unique within its ranks. At the end of his leadership of the New York system, the total acreage of the state parks in the fifty states was 5,799,957. New York State alone had 2,567,256 of those acres—or 45 percent of all the state parks in the country.

To a few men, young engineers whose passion had been fired by a

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dramatic facet of their profession—the construction of highways—the Belmont Mansion was Delphi. They came to it to learn, not just the engineering of great roads, for they could learn engineering elsewhere, but rather a secret available at that time nowhere else: the secret of how to get great roads built. For them, the big table at which Moses sat was an altar on which they laid their dreams in the hope of learning the alchemy by which the dreams might be transmuted into concrete and asphalt and steel. And they were luckier than the Greeks, whose journey to their oracle was over narrow mountain paths. They were able to drive to the mansion on the Southern State Parkway and they could still recall, decades later, their awe at first seeing its stone-faced bridges and opulent landscaping. And when they were admitted to the Belmont dining room, they were not spoken to in riddles but in blunt lectures that contained a whole new doctrine on the building of urban public works in a democratic society. As the young men grew older, they became the road builders of America, the heads of state and city highway departments, key officials of the Federal Bureau of Public Roads, caterers of an orgy of public works without precedent in history. And as the roads they built rolled across America, the mark of Robert Moses was as much a part of those roads as the steel mesh on which their concrete pavement was laid. Bertram D. Tallamy, chief administrative officer of the Interstate Highway System during the 1950's and '60's, says that the principles on which the System was built were principles that Robert Moses taught him in a series of such private lectures in 1926.

Parkways were, in general, laid through thinly populated suburbs or open countryside and were designed to carry only cars. Expressways would be laid after World War II—through cities, and were designed to carry trucks also, to serve as arteries for the commerce as well as the pleasure of a people. When Robert Moses began building expressways, there were plenty of plans for expressways—but few expressways. Politicians boggled at two political problems that would attend the implementation of the plans: their fantastic cost and the necessity of removing from their path and relocating thousands, even tens of thousands, of voters. For years—decades—in every city in the country, the expressways remained on the drawing boards. In every city, that is, except one. In New York, immediately after World War II, Robert Moses began ramming six great expressways simultaneously through the city's massed apartment houses. A decade later, outside New York, there were still only a few stretches of urban expressway in the United States, but Moses' six pioneer expressways were largely completed. When, in 1956, sufficient funds to gridiron America with expressways were insured by the passage of the Interstate Highway Act, an act in whose drafting Moses played a crucial if hidden role, it was to New York that the engineers of a score of state highway departments came, to learn the secrets of the Master. The greatest secret was how to remove people from the expressways' paths—and Robert Moses taught them his method of dealing with people. This method became one of the trademarks of the building of America's urban highways, a Moses trademark impressed on all urban America. Robert Moses' influence on the development of the expressway system in the United States

was greater than that of any other single individual. He was America's greatest road builder, the most influential single architect of the system over which rolled the wheels of America's cars. And there was, in this fact, an irony. For, except for a few driving lessons he took in 1926, Robert Moses never drove a car in his life.

In 1949, the federal government enacted a new approach to the housing problems of cities: urban renewal. The approach was new both in philosophy—for the first time in America, government was given the right to seize an individual's private property not for its own use but for reassignment to another individual for *his* use and profit—and in scope: a billion dollars was appropriated in 1949 and it was agreed that this was only seed money to prepare the ground for later, greater plantings of cash.

Most cities approached urban renewal with caution. But in New York City, urban renewal was directed by Robert Moses. By 1957, \$133,000,000 of public monies had been expended on urban renewal in all the cities of the United States with the exception of New York; \$267,000,000 had been spent in New York. So far ahead was New York that when scores of huge buildings constructed under its urban renewal program were already erected and occupied, administrators from other cities were still borrowing New York's contract forms to learn how to draw up the initial legal agreements with interested developers. When Moses resigned from his urban renewal directorship in 1960, urban renewal had produced more physical results in New York than in all other American cities combined. Says the federal official in charge of the early years of the program: "Because Robert Moses was so far ahead of anyone else in the country, he had greater influence on urban renewal in the United States—on how the program developed and on how it was received by the public—than any other single person."

Parks, highways, urban renewal—Robert Moses was in and of himself a formative force in all three fields in the United States. He was a seminal thinker, perhaps the single most influential seminal thinker, in developing policies in these fields, and the innovator, perhaps the single most influential innovator, in developing the methods by which these policies were implemented. And since parks, highways and urban renewal, taken together, do so much to shape cities' total environment, how then gauge the impact of this one man on the cities of America? The man who was for thirty years his bitterest critic, Lewis Mumford, says:

"In the twentieth century, the influence of Robert Moses on the cities of America was greater than that of any other person."

With his power, Robert Moses built himself an empire.

The capital of this empire was out of public sight—a squat, gray building crouching so unobtrusively below the Randall's Island toll plaza of the Triborough Bridge that most of the motorists who drove through the toll

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booths never even knew that the building existed. And most of them were ignorant also of the existence of the empire.

But men whose interest in geography centered on the map of power knew of its existence very well indeed. They realized that although theoretically it was only a creature of the city, it had in fact become an autonomous sovereign state. And, realizing that—although its outward form was a loose confederation of four public authorities, plus the New York City Park Department and the Long Island State Park Commission—it was actually a single-headed, tightly administered monarchy, these men described it with a single name, derived from the bridge and the Authority that were its centerpieces: "Triborough."

Anyone who doubted Triborough's autonomy had only to look at its trappings. The empire had its own flag and great seal, distinctive license plates and a self-contained communications network, an elaborate teletype hookup that linked the gray building and the provincial capitals at Belmont Lake, Massena and Niagara. It even had its own island—Randall's—on which it administered every structure and every inch of land. Randall's Island was near the geographic center of New York, but the waters of the East River, Bronx Kill and Hell Gate were a moat between it and the city, and from the air, with its hundreds of acres of lawn, the island appeared separate, a bright green oasis, sharply defined by a blue border, in the midst of the city's vast grayness. And the separateness was more than symbolic: no inhabitant of the city could drive across the island without paying Triborough a tribute in coin.

Triborough had its own fleets, of yachts and motorcars and trucks, and its own uniformed army—"Bridge and Tunnel Officers" who guarded the toll booths, revolver-carrying Long Island Parkway Police who patrolled the suburban parks and roads—responsible to no discipline but that of Robert Moses. To command the army, under Moses, it had its own generals and admirals, senior officers of the United States Army and Navy who, upon retirement, took service under its banner. It had its own constitution: the covenants, unalterable by city, state or federal government, of its bond resolutions. It governed by its own laws: the Rules and Regulations that it promulgated to regulate conduct within its dominions. And, most significantly, it had its own source of revenue: the quarters and dimes that poured in a silver stream into the toll booths at which it collected tribute.

It was a vast empire. In 1960, the year of its furthest expansion, the land area under its direct control—the parks of Long Island and New York City, the highways and highway-bordering playgrounds in the city and the enclaves in which are placed the upstate power dams—totaled 103,071 acres, 161 square miles, an area half as large as New York City. But the best measure of the size of the empire was its wealth; its annual income—the toll-booth revenue, the fees it received for the use of electricity produced at Massena and Niagara, the yearly budgets of the Long Island State Park Commission and the City Park Department—ran as high as \$213,000,000; the surplus of just one of its four constituent public authorities, the Tri-

borough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, ran to almost \$30,000,000 a year.

The courtiers and courtesans of this empire wallowed in an almost Carthaginian luxury. Favored secretaries, for example, had not only bigger cars than city commissioners (as well as round-the-clock chauffeurs so that they could be on call twenty-four hours a day) but also higher salaries. As for the men closest to the throne, the cadre of Triborough administrators known as "Moses Men," not even his most suspicious critics ever came close to guessing the extent of the wealth he poured into their hands. He made not a handful but scores of men—a low-salaried draftsman who caught his eye, a struggling young hot-dog seller, architects, engineers, contractors, bankers, restaurateurs, concessionaires, developers—millionaires and multimillionaires.

Within this empire, Robert Moses lived like an emperor.

Like an emperor, his every wish was foreseen. On Sundays, when he rested, one of the three boat captains who took turns skippering his favorite yacht waited by a telephone, sometimes for the entire day, just in case he might decide that he wanted to go fishing. Like an emperor, he preferred his own table; people who wanted to dine with Moses had to come to him. And to insure that he could entertain them on an imperial scale, luxurious dining rooms were set up adjacent to the four offices—one at Randall's Island, one at Belmont Mansion and two in downtown office buildings—among which he divided his time. Although only one of them could be used at a time, each of them was equipped with a full-time staff of chef and waiters.

Luncheons were only one aspect of his hospitality. When a dam or park was to be opened upstate, chartered planes flew hundreds of guests not just to the opening but to a whole weekend of lavish receptions. In New York, highly paid Triborough officials had as their principal duty the entertainment of Moses' guests. They conducted tours of the empire, pointing out its principal natural features—the towers of the Triborough Bridge, marching like the façades of twin cathedrals across the East River, the long lawns of Riverside Park—and repeating, at each monument, the legends, burnished by time and constant retelling, of how Robert Moses had created it. And the thousands of guests at the summer capital of the empire, Jones Beach, were entertained—in a million-and-a-half-dollar restaurant whose main purpose, judging from its financial statements, was to entertain them; in a four-million-dollar stadium that he had turned over to his favorite bandleader, Guy Lombardo, virtually as a gift on which Lombardo reaped immense personal profits, so that Lombardo's orchestra would be constantly on call—on a scale and with a sumptuousness that was as close as anyone in America ever got to the entertainment afforded by a monarch.

The wealth of the empire enabled Moses to keep many city officials in fear. With it, he hired skilled investigators he called "bloodhounds" who were kept busy filling dossiers. Every city official knew about those dossiers, and they knew what use Moses was capable of making of them—since the empire's wealth allowed him to create an awesomely efficient public relations machinery. They had seen him dredge up the dark secrets of men's pasts and turn them into blaring headlines. On the occasion of Paul Screvane's appointment as city representative to Moses' 1964-65 World's Fair, Mayor Wagner said to

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ment to keep many city officials in the dark, called "bloodhounds" who were not to know about those dossiers, and to keep them from knowing of them—since the empire's principal duty efficient public relations marked the secrets of men's pasts and turn of events. Paul Screvane's appointment as Mayor Wagner said to

him: "Paul, my experience with Moses has taught me one lesson, and I'll tell it to you. I would never let him do anything for me in any way, shape or form. I'd never ask him—or *permit* him—to do anything of a personal nature for me because—and I've seen it time and time again—a day will come when Bob will reach back in his file and throw this in your face, quietly if that will make you go along with him, publicly otherwise. And if he has to, he will destroy you with it."

There were men whose past contained not even a speck of grist for Moses' mill. This, however, was no guarantee against attack. Perhaps their fathers had committed an impropriety. If so, Moses would visit the sins of the fathers on the children. A respected financier, rising in a City Planning Commission hearing to oppose a zoning change sponsored by Moses, was astounded to hear Moses reply by reading into the hearing transcript newspaper accounts of a scandal, unconnected in any way with zoning, in which the financier's father had been involved—forty years before, when the financier was eight years old.

And if Moses possessed no derogatory information at all about an opponent or his forebears, this was still no guarantee against attack. For Moses was an innovator in fields other than public works. He practiced McCarthyism long before there was a McCarthy. He drove Rexford G. Tugwell out of his City Planning Commission chairmanship—out of New York, in fact—helped drive Stanley M. Isaacs out of his borough presidency and destroyed the public careers of a dozen other officials by publicly, and falsely, identifying them as "Pinkos" or "Planning Reds" or "followers of the Oppen," the Soviet secret police. There were two widespread Communist witchhunts in New York City, one in 1938 and one in 1958. Both relied heavily on "information"—much of it innuendo or outright falsehood—leaked to newspapers by Moses.

The fear in which Moses was held because of these factors was intensified by his memory. Cross him once, politicians said, and he would never forget. And if he ever got the chance for revenge, no consideration would dilute his venom. For a twenty-year period that did not end until 1968, Moses was given by the State Department of Public Works a secret veto power over the awarding of all state contracts for public works in the New York metropolitan area. No engineer who had ever forcefully and openly disagreed with a Moses opinion ever received even one of the thousands of contracts involved.

Moses was able to shape a city and to build an empire because the supple mind that had conceived of a Minor Sports Association for Yale and innovations in the civil service system for New York City—and also of substantial portions of the New York State Constitution—had focused on the possibilities of an institution still in its infancy as an urban force when he came to it in 1934: the public authority. He raised this institution to a maturity in which it became the force through which he shaped New York and its suburbs in the image he personally conceived.

ing out what he was doing, and this was an important consideration with him. If, throughout his half century and more in the public eye, he displayed an eagerness and a flair for publicizing certain aspects of his career and his life, he displayed an equal eagerness and flair for making sure that only those aspects—and no others—were known. There were, for example, men and women who knew Robert Moses for half a century who never knew that he had a brother, or that in the city in which Robert Moses lived in luxury, that brother spent the last thirty years of his life in a poverty so severe that he lived in a fifth-floor walkup flat in an old tenement huddled against the piers of South Ferry.

The official records of most public agencies are public records, but not those of public authorities, since courts have held that they may be regarded as the records of private corporations, closed to scrutiny by the interested citizen or reporter.

This was very important to Robert Moses. It was very important to him that no one be able to find out how it was that he was able to build.

Because what Robert Moses built on was a lie.

The lie had to do with the nature both of the man and of the public authority. Moses said that he was the antithesis of the politician. He never let political considerations influence any aspect of his projects—not the location of a highway or housing project nor the award of a contract or an insurance commission, he said. He would never compromise, he said. He never had and he never would. That, he said, was the way politicians got things done, but he was no politician. He knew what should be done and he intended to do it the right way or not at all. He said this at the beginning of his career and he said it at the end; in 1961, at the trial of a borough president who had received favors from an urban renewal contractor, Moses, on the witness stand, was asked whether the contract had not been awarded as part of a "deal." Moses' face paled with rage. "In forty years of public life," he said, "I have never made a deal."

Public authorities are also outside and above politics, Moses said. Their decisions are made solely on the basis of the public welfare, he said. They have all the best features of private enterprise. They are businesslike—prudent, efficient, economical. And they are more. They are the very epitome of prudence, efficiency, economy. And they have another advantage over conventional governmental institutions as well. Since they finance their projects through the sale of revenue bonds to private investors, they therefore build these projects without using any public funds. Projects built by authorities, he said, cost the taxpayers nothing.

These statements were believed implicitly for almost forty years by the public to which they were made. And this is not surprising. For Robert Moses repeated his contentions a thousand times and for four decades they were repeated, amplified and embellished by a press that believed them, too.

Because of the forty years of adulation of the newspapers—and of the public that read the newspapers—for forty years nothing could stand in Moses' way. No Mayor or Governor dared to try to breast the wave of public

Operating through an authority, Moses could keep the public from finding out what he was doing, and this was an important consideration with him. If, throughout his half century and more in the public eye, he displayed an eagerness and a flair for publicizing certain aspects of his career and his life, he displayed an equal eagerness and flair for making sure that only those aspects—and no others—were known. There were, for example, men and women who knew Robert Moses for half a century who never knew that he had a brother, or that in the city in which Robert Moses lived in luxury, that brother spent the last thirty years of his life in a poverty so severe that he lived in a fifth-floor walkup flat in an old tenement huddled against the piers of South Ferry.

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opinion in whose curl Moses rode. One President tried. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the most bitter enemy that Moses ever made in public life, attempted as President to exact vengeance for humiliations previously received at Moses' hands. But although he made his move at the very zenith of his own popularity and prestige, the President found himself forced to retreat by a storm of acclaim for Moses that rolled not only through New York but across the country and that, ironically, left Moses embedded more firmly than ever in the public consciousness as the fearless defier of politicians. For forty years, in every fight, Robert Moses could count on having on his side the weight of public opinion.

The beliefs on which that opinion was based were never disproved or even seriously questioned, not even during the final, bitter decade of Moses' career, a decade during which his policies were subjected to steadily increasing criticism. For even during that decade, the criticism was of Moses' projects more than of the methods by which he accomplished those projects. The reason for this was simple. The vast majority of the public accepted the legend as fact. And even those skeptics who were disposed to test its truth had no facts with which to make the test, because the records of Triborough and the mouths of its ministers were so effectively sealed. If, however, they had been able to see the records and open the mouths, they would have learned that the legend was a gigantic hoax.

Prudent, efficient, economical? So incredibly wasteful was Moses of the money he tolled from the public in quarters and dimes that on a single budget alone he paid \$40,000,000 more in interest than he had to. Authority projects cost the taxpayers nothing? Covert "loans" made to authorities by the state—loans designed never to be repaid—ran into the hundreds of millions of dollars. The cost of city-purchased land on which authority facilities were built ran into the hundreds of millions. The cost of taxpayer-financed toll roads leading to authority facilities ran into the billions. And the loss in tax revenue because authority-controlled land was removed from the tax rolls drained the city year after year.

Most important, had the records of the authorities been open, they would have disproved another aspect of the lie: the legend that Robert Moses was not a "politician," that he operated at a higher level than that implied in the derogatory connotations attached to that noun, that he managed to create his public works at a remove from politics. Actually, as these records prove, Robert Moses' authorities were a political machine oiled by the lubricant of political machines: money. Their wealth enabled Moses to make himself not only a political boss but a boss who in his particular bailiwick—public works—was able to exert a power that few political bosses in the more conventional mold ever attain.

Even had the records been available, of course, the public might not have understood their significance. For Moses was a political boss with a difference. He was not the stereotype with which Americans were familiar. His constituency was not the public but some of the most powerful men in the city and state, and he kept these men in line by doling out to them, as Tammany ward bosses once handed out turkeys to the poor at Thanksgiving,

the goodies in which such men were interested, the sugar plums of public relations retainers, insurance commissions and legal fees. This man, personally honest in matters of money, became the locus of corruption in New York City. Robert Moses made himself the ward boss of the inner circle, the bankroller of the Four Hundred of politics. Far from being above the seamier aspects of politics, he was—for decades—the central figure about whom revolved much of the back-stage maneuvering of New York City politics. Triborough's public relations retainers ran to a quarter of a million dollars a year, its legal fees to a quarter million, its insurance commissions to half a million—a total of a million dollars a year. Moses parceled out retainers, fees and commissions to city and state political leaders on the basis of a very exact appraisal of their place in the political pecking order. And an examination of the records of the recipients leads to the conclusion that, year after year, it was the men who received Moses' turkey baskets who fought against any diminution in Moses' power—and for whatever public works project he was pushing at the moment.

Beyond graft and patronage, moreover, Moses also displayed a genius for using the wealth of his public authorities to unite behind his aims banks, labor unions, contractors, bond underwriters, insurance firms, the great retail stores, real estate manipulators—all the forces which enjoy immense behind-the-scenes political influence in New York. He succeeded in mobilizing behind his banner economic forces with sufficient weight to bend to his aims the apparatus so carefully established in City Charter and State Constitution to insure that, in deciding on such projects, the decisive voice would be that of the people. He used economic power for political ends—so successfully that in the fields he carved out for his own, fields in which decisions would shape the city's future for generations if not for centuries, he made economic, not democratic, forces the forces that counted in New York. And because he spoke for such forces, it was his voice that counted most of all.

"He gave everybody involved in the political setup in this city whatever it was that they wanted," one official recalls. "Therefore they all had their own interest in seeing him succeed. The pressure that this interest all added up to was a pressure that no one in the system could stand up against, because it came from the system itself." And since the mayor's power and career rested on this system, he was as helpless to stand against the pressure Moses could exert as was anyone else. When Robert Moses walked into Wagner's office on that Inauguration Day in City Hall and shoved the appointment blank across Wagner's desk, Wagner had no choice but to sign it. Given the circumstances of the Democratic Party in New York City, he *couldn't* let Robert Moses resign. What Moses had succeeded in doing, really, was to replace graft with benefits that could be derived with legality from a public works project. He had succeeded in centralizing in his projects—and to a remarkable extent in his own person—all those forces which are not in theory supposed to, but which in practice do, play a decisive role in political decisions.

Corruption before Moses had been unorganized, based on a multitude of selfish, private ends. Moses' genius for organizing it and focusing it at a central source gave it a new force, a force so powerful that it bent the entire

Wait Until the Evening

city government off the democratic process and undermine the democratic process and build its parks, bridges, highways on his whim alone.

In the beginning—and for decades—Moses was the servant of his dream. His phantasmic city-shaping visions could be implemented only if there was a demand that its possessor can use with increasing need for larger and larger dreams. A decade or more after his first success, he sought it only for the sake of his dream. Slowly but inexorably, he began to realize more, the criterion by which Moses' projects would be built came to be not the ends of power a project could give him, but the means—the means of obtaining it.

As the idealism faded and the means became the end, the principles of the Good Government Movement once espoused became principles of expediency. He invented a civil service system without regard for service requirements. The insistence on efficiency and sophistry that twisted every fact of city life were preconceived decades earlier.

Robert Moses was America's greatest city planner in the New World.

But what did he build? What was his legacy to the city?

To build his highways, Moses drew more people than lived in Albany, Duluth, Akron, Baton Rouge, Miami to the hearts of a score of neighborhoods, communities that had been forgotten, parts of the city that made New York what it is.

By building his highways, Moses was literally starving the subways and the streets. He swelled that flood to city-destructive proportions, rural and empty suburbs, sprawling, low-density development, mass transportation, he insured that for generations, if not centuries, that the New York City of the future would be an irritating and unlivable place for its residents.

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city government off the democratic bias. He had used the power of money to undermine the democratic processes of the largest city in the world, to plan and build its parks, bridges, highways and housing projects on the basis of his whim alone.

In the beginning—and for decades of his career—the power Robert Moses amassed was the servant of his dreams, amassed for their sake, so that his gigantic city-shaping visions could become reality. But power is not an instrument that its possessor can use with impunity. It is a drug that creates in the user a need for larger and larger dosages. And Moses was a user. At first, for a decade or more after his first sip of real power in 1924, he continued to seek it only for the sake of his dreams. But little by little there came a change. Slowly but inexorably, he began to seek power for its own sake. More and more, the criterion by which Moses selected which city-shaping public works would be built came to be not the needs of the city's people, but the increment of power a project could give him. Increasingly, the projects became not ends but means—the means of obtaining more and more power.

As the idealism faded and disappeared, its handmaidens drifted away. The principles of the Good Government reform movement which Moses had once espoused became principles to be ignored. The brilliance that had invented a civil service system was applied to the task of circumventing civil service requirements. The insistence on truth and logic was replaced by a sophistry that twisted every fact to conclusions not merely preconceived but preconceived decades earlier.

Robert Moses was America's greatest builder. He was the shaper of the greatest city in the New World.

But what did he build? What was the shape into which he pounded the city?

To build his highways, Moses threw out of their homes 250,000 persons more people than lived in Albany or Chattanooga, or in Spokane, Tacoma, Duluth, Akron, Baton Rouge, Mobile, Nashville or Sacramento. He tore out the hearts of a score of neighborhoods, communities the size of small cities themselves, communities that had been lively, friendly places to live, the vital parts of the city that made New York a home to its people.

By building his highways, Moses flooded the city with cars. By systematically starving the subways and the suburban commuter railroads, he swelled that flood to city-destroying dimensions. By making sure that the vast suburbs, rural and empty when he came to power, were filled on a sprawling, low-density development pattern relying primarily on roads instead of mass transportation, he insured that that flood would continue for generations if not centuries, that the New York metropolitan area would be—perhaps forever—an area in which transportation—getting from one place to another—would be an irritating, life-consuming concern for its 14,000,000 residents.

For highways, Moses dispossessed 250,000 persons. For his other

projects—Lincoln Center, the United Nations, the Fordham, Pratt and Long Island University campuses, a dozen mammoth urban renewal projects—he dispossessed tens of thousands more; there are available no accurate figures on the total number of people evicted from their homes for all Robert Moses public works, but the figure is almost certainly close to half a million; the one detailed study by an outside agency shows that in a ten-year period, 1946 to 1956, the number was 320,000. More significant even than the number of the dispossessed were their characteristics: a disproportionate share of them were black, Puerto Rican—and poor. He evicted tens of thousands of poor, nonwhite persons for urban renewal projects, and the housing he built to replace the housing he tore down was, to an overwhelming extent, not housing for the poor, but for the rich. The dispossessed, barred from many areas of the city by their color and their poverty, had no place to go but into the already overcrowded slums—or into “soft” borderline areas that then became slums, so that his “slum clearance programs” created new slums as fast as they were clearing the old.

When he built housing for poor people, he built housing bleak, sterile, cheap—expressive of patronizing condescension in every line. And he built it in locations that contributed to the ghettoization of the city, dividing up the city by color and income. And by skewing city expenditures toward revenue-producing services, he prevented the city from reaching out toward its poor and assimilating them, and teaching them how to live in such housing—and the very people for whom he built it reacted with rage and bitterness and ignorance, and defaced it.

He built parks and playgrounds with a lavish hand, but they were parks and playgrounds for the rich and the comfortable. Recreational facilities for the poor he doled out like a miser.

For decades, to advance his own purposes, he systematically defeated every attempt to create the master plan that might have enabled the city to develop on a rational, logical, unified pattern—defeated it until, when it was finally adopted, it was too late for it to do much good.

“*One must wait until the evening . . .*” In the evening of Robert Moses’ forty-four years of power, New York, so bright with promise forty-four years before, was a city in chaos and despair. His highways and bridges and tunnels were awesome—taken as a whole the most awesome urban improvement in the history of mankind—but no aspect of those highways and bridges and tunnels was as awesome as the congestion on them. He had built more housing than any public official in history, but the city was starved for housing, more starved, if possible, than when he had started building, and the people who lived in that housing hated it—hated it, James Baldwin could write, “almost as much as the policemen, and this is saying a great deal.” He had built great monuments and great parks, but people were afraid to travel to or walk around them.

For all these reasons, this book attempts to tell two stories at once: how New York, forty years ago a very different city from the city it is today, became

Wait Until the Eve

what it has become; and how it became. It must try to be a history of what happened to the man. For, to tell these two stories are one story: to live if Robert Moses had never died. If the man who shaped it had lived, the fact that both before and after him many mayors such as John Purroy Mitchel and many mayors such as Red Hooker were utterly unable to meet the need for housing construction. Robert Moses may have used to his own ends to build public works that proved unequal to the building of a city-scale public works in a crowd of people whose lives of or displace thousands of people yet solved.

Moses himself, who feels that he will be justified by history, has left generations not yet born. Perhaps New York would have been a better city if it had waited.

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what it has become; and how the idealistic Robert Moses became what he has become. It must try to be a book about what happened to the city and what happened to the man. For, to an extent few people have really understood, these two stories are one story. Would New York have been a better place to live if Robert Moses had never built anything? Would it have been a better city if the man who shaped it had never lived? Any critic who says so ignores the fact that both before and after Robert Moses—both, under "reform" mayors such as John Purroy Mitchel and John V. Lindsay and under Tammany mayors such as Red Mike Hylan and Jimmy Walker—the city was utterly unable to meet the needs of its people in areas requiring physical construction. Robert Moses may have bent the democratic processes of the city to his own ends to build public works; left to themselves, these processes proved unequal to the building required. The problem of constructing large-scale public works in a crowded urban setting, where such works impinge on the lives of or displace thousands of voters, is one which democracy has not yet solved.

Moses himself, who feels his works will make him immortal, believes he will be justified by history, that his works will endure and be blessed by generations not yet born. Perhaps he is right. It is impossible to say that New York would have been a better city if Robert Moses had never lived.

It is possible to say only that it would have been a different city.

they wanted to hike, there were the woods; if they wanted to swim, in mountain lakes and bathhouses and picnic outfits; if they wanted to picnic, the trail was designed to preserve the view; if they wanted to camp out, there were campsites next to cool mountain brooks. This was done over Letchworth State Park, and Niagara State Park, newspapers in Buffalo over Niagara Falls. But these newspapers, and New York City newspapers, and New York City newspapers. So no newspaper, no matter what newspaper, no matter what newspaper writers called "Robert Moses' program" the full extent of the program's success.

the construction of these parks and parkways in 1928 was that they were, for the first time, proposed in the New York State Constitution in 1922 and 1923. They were located in the mountains of their development—down the mountainsides, many lockers and parking spaces had made for them.

immense in scope. By the end of the century, even Jones Beach, which was either reality or well on its

14. *Changing*

LASHED BY HIS DESIRE for the realization of his dreams, Bob Moses had changed even before he became president of the Long Island State Park Commission on April 18, 1924, from the idealist who put his faith in truth and reason to the pragmatist who put his faith in power. But the acquisition of power in his own name on that date, and his use of power thereafter, broadened the change, accelerated it, intensified it, raised it to an entirely new level.

For once Bob Moses came into possession of power, it began to perform its harsh alchemy on his character, altering its contours, eating away at some traits, allowing others to enlarge.

The potential for these changes had always been there, like a darker shadow on the edge of the bright gold of his idealism. With each small increase in the amount of power he possessed, the dark element in his nature had loomed larger, becoming prominent enough for sharp-eyed men to begin to notice it. Had not Reuben Lazarus said, "When Smith brought him [up to Albany], he began to be, quite suddenly and quite noticeably, a lot more arrogant"? Such men concluded that Moses, even more than most other men, liked power in and for itself; some of them suspected that if Moses ever obtained in substantial measure power of his own, the alteration in his character would become a transformation.

But even sharp-eyed men could not be prepared for the extent of the transformation. For adulthood was, after all, only a part of the pattern of Moses' life, and they had not seen the other part of the pattern. They could not know, therefore, how far back in the over-all pattern the dark thread ran. They could not know how inextricably it was knotted into the pattern's most central design. They had seen Moses' fingers drum impatiently on a table when someone dared to disagree with him, but they had never seen drumming impatiently another set of fingers. They had seen Bob Moses tilt back his head and look down his nose in the prosecutor's stance, but, not having known Moses in his boyhood, they couldn't know where the tilt came from. They may have known Bob Moses, but they did not know Bob Moses' mother. They did not know Bob Moses' grandmother. And therefore they could not know the origin—or the depth—of his susceptibility to the infection of power. They could not know that the susceptibility lay not in Albany but in family—in heredity or upbringing or some combination of the two. He was "Bella Moses' son," the one of her children most like her, the one in whom

surfaced most strongly the mixed strain of passionate idealism and overweening arrogance that she had inherited from *her* parents, Grannie and Bernhard Cohen. When the idealism died, the arrogance was already well rooted and strong. If it was given nourishment, it would expand. And power feeds arrogance. As Moses obtained power, therefore, the traits symptomatic of his arrogance became steadily more noticeable. The pattern's hue darkened.

His mother had always displayed—as a Madison House trustee and as a wife—a conviction of her own infallibility and a predisposition to impose her will on others, an unwillingness to listen to others, a burning impatience to see her solutions to problems implemented, to Get Things Done. Moses' imagination seemed most easily fired, as his mother's had been, by physical problems and physical solutions, problems that could be solved by construction, by the shaping of concrete and steel. And the resemblance in traits between mother and son went beyond that. As a staffer at the Bureau of Municipal Research, he had displayed the same dogmatism and the same impatience. Bob Moses had wanted his own way—and he had wanted it when he wanted it.

And now that he had power, he was going to see that he got it.

He had never wanted to listen to people who disagreed with him. Now, in the main, he didn't have to. "When he talked to you," recalls Leonard W. Hall, then a state assemblyman, "he'd just tell you what he was going to do. If you disagreed with him and tried to explain your feelings, or even started asking questions, he would cut right in, slash at you, without answering the questions, making you feel stupid for asking. And if you were talking to him on the phone, he'd just hang up on you. I remember talking to him on the phone and disagreeing with him about something and I was in the middle of a sentence and the damn phone was slammed down."

Moses had always displayed contempt for people he felt were considerably beneath him, the colored "subject people" of the British Empire, for example, or civil servants who hadn't attended Oxford or Cambridge. At the Municipal Civil Service Commission, his irritation at having to interrupt his work for public hearings indicated a tendency to feel that the public he was serving was beneath him, that its suggestions about its own destiny were not worth listening to. Now that feeling about the public was intensified. When the Governor's office received a letter making a suggestion about parks or criticizing one of the regional commissions, the letter was invariably referred by George Graves, Smith's secretary, to Moses for a suggested reply that could be sent back over the Governor's signature. Now, more and more frequently, Moses would suggest that no one bother to reply at all.

His contempt was not limited to the public. It included, apparently, most state legislators. If he wasn't hanging up on them in mid-sentence, he was treating them with extravagant disdain. "They didn't dislike him just because politically he was cutting them to pieces," Hall recalls. "They disliked him personally. He acted with a complete arrogance. He insulted those men to their face." Sniffing at the patronage possibilities at Jones Beach as though they were sea air, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Jeremiah F. Twomey of Brooklyn asked Moses to drop around for a chat

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before the Finance Committee bill. According to Hall, to whom

"Twomey says, 'Bob, it and I was wondering if we could

"Bob answers very softly have in mind, Jerry?" he asks. softly, very politely, 'Do you Jerry, completely taken in, though reasonable, mentions a couple anything else on your mind, Jerry? Moses says, 'Jerry, you can't

Moses had always been for him. Now he could do so

The park philanthropist fast enough for him.

There were many reasons whose chairmen comprised different philosophy of parks in the main, elderly men, men "conservation" rather than "recreation" still meant "conservation" to country who would lean as he fields and tennis courts rather. The regional commissioners, parks to preserve as much of civilization. When they saw piece of woodland, they put and presented it to the state not provide sufficient funds. put up the money themselves too, spending weekends and needed repairs with their own carefully the men they wanted gone—and these men, too, tion in which they had received parking fields, for restaurateurs ideals they had sworn themselves "develop" those parks, well long as it was done slowly wanted to make sure that qualities they treasured.

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before the Finance Committee hearings on a Jones Beach appropriation bill. According to Hall, to whom Twomey told the story:

"Twomey says, 'Bob, it looks like there'll be a lot of jobs out there, and I was wondering if we could get a couple.'

"Bob answers very softly, very gently, very politely. 'What did you have in mind, Jerry?' he asks. Jerry mentions one job, and Moses says very softly, very politely, 'Do you have anything else on your mind, Jerry?' Jerry, completely taken in, thinking that for once this fellow is going to be reasonable, mentions a couple of other jobs, and Moses says, 'Do you have anything else on your mind, Jerry?' Jerry says, 'Well, that's about all.' And Moses says, 'Jerry, you can take that bill and stick it up your ass!'"

Moses had always been impatient. Most men didn't move fast enough for him. Now he could do something about it.

The park philanthropists on the State Council of Parks didn't move fast enough for him.

There were many reasons. For one thing, most of the regional commissions whose chairmen comprised the council were made up of men with a different philosophy of parks from his. This was understandable. They were, in the main, elderly men, men out of the days when parks had meant "conservation" rather than "recreation." Even during the 1920's, of course, parks still meant "conservation" to most park experts; there wasn't one in the country who would lean as heavily as Moses to thinking of parks as baseball fields and tennis courts rather than as glades and forests and hiking trails. The regional commissioners, men of the older era, had become interested in parks to preserve as much of nature's beauties as possible from a ruthless civilization. When they saw the developer's bulldozer imperiling a favorite piece of woodland, they purchased the woodland with their own money and presented it to the state, and when they realized that the state would not provide sufficient funds to preserve it as it should be preserved, they put up the money themselves, year after year, and they put up their time, too, spending weekends and vacations on inspection trips, often making needed repairs with their own hands. In drawing up their wills, they chose carefully the men they wanted to administer the properties after they were gone—and these men, too, felt that preserving the properties in the condition in which they had received them was a sacred trust. Proposals for huge parking fields, for restaurants—these seemed to them to conflict with the ideals they had sworn themselves to preserve. If the state now wanted to "develop" those parks, well, certainly some development was necessary; as long as it was done slowly and carefully, it could be worked out—but they wanted to make sure that the development did not destroy the natural qualities they treasured.

There were other reasons, too, for Moses' impatience with the regional commissioners. At bottom, the philosophy of government on which they had been weaned emphasized the rights of the individual. They believed, therefore, that governmental power should be used with the utmost restraint. They were, frankly, dismayed by the way Moses had used entry and appropriation against Havemeyer and Macy, by the way he had threatened to use

it against the North Shore barons. And they didn't intend to use such techniques themselves, even if using slower techniques meant that parks and parkways in their areas wouldn't be acquired as fast as Moses wanted.

A more important source of conflict in their dealings with Moses, however, had nothing to do with philosophy. It was simply that the old men wanted to remain in charge of the parks they loved.

Moses had let them believe that they would remain in charge. He had given them no hint of his true purposes. For Moses had needed them. He had needed their prestige, their reputation (as strong with legislators as with the public) for uprightness, for unselfishness and for devotion to the cause of parks. He had needed the backing of their names.

And they had given him that backing. During the debate over the \$15,000,000 bond issue, they had made use of their influence in their home counties to mute upstate resentment toward such a large spending proposal. Judge Ellis J. Staley of Albany had spoken night after night to civic groups in Albany, Troy and Schenectady. Judge Alphonse Trumbore Clearwater, elderly and ailing, had climbed out of a sickbed in Kingston to tour Ulster County so successfully that that bastion of conservatism had, to Al Smith's astonishment, actually given the referendum a majority. During the Taylor Estate fight, the old park men had let Smith invoke their names—"everyone knows Judge Clearwater"—to dramatize the fact that even these dyed-in-the-wool Republicans could not support the Republican legislative proposals for parks. GOP leaders had told them that Smith was using them to destroy their party. Many of the park men had felt there was some truth in this. But parks came first with them. And when Smith, through Moses, had asked them to come to Albany, they had come.

They had given Moses the help he asked because they believed what he had told them. When he assured them—as he did over and over both in letters and to their faces—that under his park plan they would "continue their duties and powers," that they would continue to administer the parks they loved, that the State Parks Council was merely an "advisory agency," they believed him. And when the bill creating the State Parks Council was signed, their leaders had elected him its chairman.

But now Moses didn't need them any more.

Not a month after his election, Judge Staley, who administered John Boyd Thacher Park near Albany for the American Scenic and Historical Preservation Society, routinely sent to the state a request for \$15,000 to build a new caretaker's cottage. State officials told the astonished judge that all such requests now had to go through the State Parks Council, through Moses. And Moses disapproved the request. "The height of impertinence," Staley told the society's trustees. They agreed. "It is highly desirable," they said in the minutes of their meeting of May 26, 1924, "that there be a clear understanding of the difference between the powers of the Council as 'a central advisory agency' and the executive powers of 'the existing commissions, boards and organizations governing the . . . parks.'"

They got their clear understanding. When, during the summer of 1925, they submitted to the council their budget requests for 1926, Moses curtly

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disapproved many of them. When they came to state budget officials as to back telling them that under the requests had to be transmitted to meeting at 261 Broadway, Judge council's powers were "advisory," coldly. Might he suggest that the

The old park men read the done.

The realization grew.

Moses had written the Parks he had been elected chairman, men, they had approved them, reading the bylaws, they realized in its chairman. The council which would weigh the requests created by them but appointed by him—places council staff members hire. The whole council staff was rewas was empowered in the bylaws tocluding their state parks.

The old men reluctantly accepted a second one-year term—and such that while their commissions could did not control a majority of the were in Moses' hands: Moses directly connected with parks, the director of the State Museum new regional commissions which to administer but which Moses men now understood—be replaced had appointed men who would had many reservations about about his plans for specific about his eagerness to develop Heckscher was fifty miles from Rochester—without providing than auto; the truly poor man pointed out; how were they to such points, they were voted manship in 1925, 1926, 1927

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disapproved many of them. When they tried to circumvent Moses by sending them to state budget officials as they had in the past, the officials sent them back telling them that under the new Parks Council law, all park budget requests had to be transmitted to the state through the council. At a council meeting at 261 Broadway, Judge Clearwater "reminded" Moses that the council's powers were "advisory," not "supervisory." Really? Moses replied coldly. Might he suggest that the judge read the law?

The old park men read the law—and began to realize what they had done.

The realization grew.

Moses had written the Parks Council bylaws. At the first meeting after he had been elected chairman, when he was still charming the old park men, they had approved them, believing them only a formality. Now, reading the bylaws, they realized that all power in the council was centralized in its chairman. The council's finance committee, the key unit which would weigh the requests of the regional commissions, was not elected by them but appointed by him—and he had appointed to three of its five places council staff members hired by and responsible only to the chairman. The whole council staff was responsible to the chairman. And this staff was empowered in the bylaws to draw up the plans for all state parks, including *their* state parks.

The old men reluctantly decided they would have to deny Moses a second one-year term—and suddenly realized, when they tallied up votes, that while their commissions controlled a majority of the state parks, they did not control a majority of the State Parks Council. Six of its eleven votes were in Moses' hands: Moses' own; two cast by Smith appointees not directly connected with parks, the State Conservation Commissioner and the director of the State Museum; three cast by the presidents of three new regional commissions which did not at the moment have any parks to administer but which Moses had insisted—for reasons the old park men now understood—be represented on the council and to which Smith had appointed men who would take Moses' orders. The old park men had many reservations about Moses' over-all park policies as well as about his plans for specific parks. For one thing, they were concerned about his eagerness to develop parks that were far outside city limits—Heckscher was fifty miles from Times Square, Letchworth fifty miles from Rochester—without providing any means of transportation to them other than auto; the truly poor masses of the cities didn't own automobiles, they pointed out; how were they to reach these parks? But every time they raised such points, they were voted down. And Moses was re-elected to the chairmanship in 1925, 1926, 1927 and 1928.

Some of Moses' fights with the elderly park philanthropists could be viewed as conflicts of philosophy—as his determination not to allow his dreams to be thwarted by other men's smaller-scale vision—although the closer one

examines their details, the more it appears that the crucial conflict in each was between his demand for speed and their feeling that since once nature was altered by man, it could never be restored to its original condition, any changes in the magnificent gorges and mountains which had been entrusted to them must be considered with painstaking care and designed to blend in with the existing topography; the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, for example, did not object to making Letchworth State Park more accessible to the public and to furnishing accommodations for families wanting to stay overnight; they just wanted the proposed inn—and large adjoining parking garage—built on the rim of the beautiful Genesee River Gorge rather than right in its heart, as Moses proposed. On other battles between Moses and the old park men, however, it is more difficult to place any philosophical interpretation. The nature of these fights hints that power was now, for the first time in his life, becoming an end in itself, that he was beginning to crave it now not only for the sake of dreams but for its own sake, that although, through his bill drafting, he had given himself much of the power in the field of parks, he was no longer satisfied with much of the power, that he now wanted *all* the power in the field.

The suspicion is aroused most strongly by his treatment of the commissioners of the state park at Niagara.

There were five Niagara commissioners—all of them elderly men—but the two most active had long been Judge Clearwater and Ansley Wilcox.

"Everyone knows Judge Clearwater," Smith had said, and, in regard to the Central Tier at least, the Governor may have been very nearly right. At seventy-seven Alphonse Trumbore Clearwater of Kingston was a legend throughout the band of thinly populated counties that stretched three hundred miles across the middle of the state. Tall and thin, with a face that would have been cold were it not for the upward turn of the corners of his mouth, he was a wing-collared embodiment of devotion to the public good. He had been both district attorney of Ulster County and a lawyer who, in an era in which the poor often went unrepresented in court, represented the poor—and as both prosecutor and defender his brilliance and, despite a dry and precise speaking style, his remarkable oratorical ability made him a lawyer other lawyers feared to oppose. While still young, Judge Clearwater had been president of the State Bar Association and a Justice of the State Supreme Court; men said he could, had he wished, been Governor. But he did not so wish. Instead of a politician, he became a historian, and he served his state by studying its history—scholars regarded his knowledge as unequalled—and by selecting from appointments proffered by its Governors not those that would have brought him fame but those that would enable him to help preserve its locales of history and beauty, such as Niagara State Park. His selflessness was widely known; although he had renounced politics, his voice was regarded by politicians as the most influential in the Central Tier. When in 1925 a desperate Moses, assuring Clearwater that the Parks Council would be only an "advisory" body, had asked the judge to help him in the Taylor Estate fight, he had come, old and ill, to Albany to stand before a hostile Republican caucus and argue in Moses' behalf. When legis-

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lators had begun criticizing Moses extravagant, Clearwater had written just"—and that line of criticism I men, Clearwater had been Moses'

Ansley Wilcox, who had seen forty years, was a chubby old gentleman successful attorney, he lived in fashionable Delaware Avenue. Born at Yale and after graduation by the ideals of the municipal reforming, fruitlessly, for a civil service began to fight for parks. While still the gorge overlooking Niagara I rooming houses that were creeping his own time appraising the land \$1,500,000 to condemn it and, in had persuaded the Legislature to State Park, which by the 1920's famous park in the country. If I have noticed more than a few re-

But Moses wasn't interested need Clearwater any more. The sion in fact—were a constant irritation Niagara commissioners of excess their aims for improving the Niagara to deteriorate, and for extending and bridges—all along the Niagara important respects, identical with

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To speed the refurbishment elevator to carry tourists down to Winds, Wilcox had persuaded a kampf, president of the Niagara company engineers draw up plan could begin as soon as funds were he could to enable the commission the edge of the Niagara gorge to Niagara in the park referendum necessary right-of-way, he asked much of the land along the gorge mission acquired the rest of the

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lators had begun criticizing Moses' spending proposals for Niagara as extravagant, Clearwater had written him a letter saying "Your views . . . are just"—and that line of criticism had abruptly stopped. Of all the old park men, Clearwater had been Moses' most effective supporter.

Ansley Wilcox, who had served as a Niagara park commissioner for forty years, was a chubby old gentleman with a white walrus mustache. A successful attorney, he lived in a stately Georgian mansion on Buffalo's fashionable Delaware Avenue. But Ansley Wilcox had been a brilliant student at Yale and after graduation he had gone on to Oxford. Then, attracted by the ideals of the municipal reform movement, he had spent years campaigning, fruitlessly, for a civil service merit system for Buffalo. Then he began to fight for parks. While still in his twenties, he determined to rescue the gorge overlooking Niagara Falls from the factories, mills and cheap rooming houses that were creeping along its edge. Spending two years of his own time appraising the land, he had determined that it would take \$1,500,000 to condemn it and, in 1885, after a courageous and bitter fight, had persuaded the Legislature to appropriate the money and create Niagara State Park, which by the 1920's was nationally known, the single most famous park in the country. If Moses had studied Wilcox's life, he might have noticed more than a few resemblances to his own.

But Moses wasn't interested in studying Wilcox's life. And he didn't need Clearwater any more. The two old men—the entire Niagara Commission in fact—were a constant irritant to him. Why? No one could accuse the Niagara commissioners of excessive conservatism or of being too limited in their aims for improving the Niagara Park, long allowed by the Legislature to deteriorate, and for extending the park—along with connecting parkways and bridges—all along the Niagara Frontier. Their aims were, in most important respects, identical with Moses'. So was their insistence on speed.

Ansley Wilcox, in fact, had even more reason to want speed than Moses. In 1925, Wilcox was dying of what his obituaries would call "the wasting disease"—cancer. And Wilcox knew he was dying. He wanted desperately to see before he died at least the beginning of the refurbishment of the park he had created as a young man and had administered, frequently with his own money, for forty years, and at least a start on the park extension and parkway that would preserve forever the gorge he loved.

To speed the refurbishment, which included the acquisition of a new elevator to carry tourists down the cliffs near the falls to the famed Cave of Winds, Wilcox had persuaded another commission member, Paul A. Schoellkopf, president of the Niagara Falls Power Company, to have power-company engineers draw up plans for the elevator so that construction could begin as soon as funds were allocated. And he had done everything he could to enable the commission to get a fast start on the parkway along the edge of the Niagara gorge. Knowing that the \$1,000,000 allocated to Niagara in the park referendum would pay for only a fraction of the necessary right-of-way, he asked Schoellkopf, whose power company owned much of the land along the gorge, to agree to donate easements if the commission acquired the rest of the right-of-way. Schoellkopf, who knew the

nature of Wilcox's illness and the reason for his desire for haste, agreed. When a small but key parcel came on the market and Wilcox was afraid it would be purchased and developed by private interests, he and Schoellkopf purchased it and presented it to the commission as a gift. When two more key pieces came on the market in 1925, he persuaded Schoellkopf to have the power company purchase them and hold them until the commission received, at the 1926 legislative session, an appropriation to allow it to purchase them in turn. The admiration in which Wilcox was held helped the parkway along; several of his friends said they would buy parcels needed for the right-of-way and give them to the commission in his name, and Schoellkopf advanced money to speed the transactions. The only point of contention between the Niagara commissioners and Moses was that the commissioners wanted to carry out the Niagara development themselves, to keep, as Moses had solemnly promised them they could, power over the park's development and administration, to remain in charge of what was to them a cherished piece of nature instead of turning it over to a faceless bureaucracy in the Parks Council offices in New York City, three hundred miles away. In so wanting, they stood in the way of Moses' absolute control of state parks.

Clearwater, the Niagara Commission's representative on the Parks Council, was a larger irritant for the same reason. When the judge argued that the council was only an "advisory" body and that the regional commissions should be allowed latitude in their work, he was arguing, in effect, against absolute control of all state parks by Moses. And when Alphonse Clearwater spoke, the other council members sitting around the table with him seemed to remember more clearly the promises Moses had given them and the principles of park development that they had once been determined not to surrender. Several times, the judge had even swayed Robert H. Tremen, the chairman of one of the three new regional commissions, and the decisive sixth vote had been cast against a Moses proposal.

The refusal of the Niagara Commission to submit to his control had already, Moses complained, made him look "ridiculous." In submitting park spending plans to the three-man committee of the Governor, Hutchinson and Hewitt, Moses, anxious as always to obtain as much money as possible as quickly as possible, had asked for immediate allocation of Niagara's whole million-dollar appropriation. But when Hutchinson asked Wilcox if the commission really needed the whole sum in 1926, Wilcox refused to lie. He said that the commission could use no more than \$400,000 of the money in that year.

The Niagara Commission's independence was threatening to cause Moses serious problems. While the commission envisioned a complete parkway system around Niagara Falls, he wanted it to extend all the way to Buffalo, twenty-five miles away. The Niagara commissioners had no objection to the plan, but they didn't want to be responsible for it; they were not trying to build a vast park system; they were interested only in the land they knew and for whose protection they had been fighting for so many years. Furthermore, the parkway Moses wanted would be primarily in Erie County; they felt the newly created Erie County Park Commission should

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have jurisdiction over it. But then on the Niagara Frontier only Moses was afraid that under the law they would lose it. When Moses asked them to buy the Erie County section of the parkway, the whole million was needed and he would give it anyway—as long as in return a portion of the parkway in Erie County, an apparently minor point appeared to have its legal importance, possibly by park reorganization laws might be brought under control. Furthermore, the existence of the parkway was a threat to his assertion of absolute control over the parkway's maneuverings within the parks and to his ability to quietly work his will without controversy and the Legislature's interference. The Legislature would not be disposed to give Moses

So Moses moved against the parkway; they had a superintendent and day-to-day affairs, Moses' "superintendent officer"—who they suspected would be

Then there ensued in April 1926 meetings at which the commission's authorized representative, Clearwater, was so severe that doctors gave him a heart attack. His substitute, was too weak to take the place of his friends of the two old men rejected. Rumors—were being circulated that someone—Wilcox felt sure that the Niagara Commission, in making a deal with Moses, was making a deal to the interests of Schoellkopf's interests. Moses wrote a letter to Wilcox—Wilcox was persuaded Smith to sign it—a deal between the Niagara Commission and the power companies, including the reservation of land sold by them to the commission.

"I also wish to learn," said Moses, "the park commission has laid out a plan for the Niagara Riverfront . . . of land along the banks of the river to be in the hands of the power company."

Wilcox could hardly believe the letter, but Moses' arrangements with the power company were

But Wilcox had gotten caught in

Moses called a meeting with the Governor's letter. Wilcox

his desire for haste, agreed. Market and Wilcox was afraid the interests, he and Schoellkopf on as a gift. When two more persuaded Schoellkopf to have them until the commission appropriation to allow it to pur-

Wilcox was held helped the they would buy parcels needed ommission in his name, and nsactions. The only point of and Moses was that the com- elopment themselves, to keep, ould, power over the park's harge of what was to them a ver to a faceless bureaucracy hree hundred miles away. In solute control of state parks. representative on the Parks ison. When the judge argued nd that the regional commis- s, he was arguing, in effect, Moses. And when Alphonse sitting around the table with mises Moses had given them y had once been determined even swayed Robert H. Tre- gional commissions, and the es proposal.

o submit to his control had liculous." In submitting park : the Governor, Hutchinson as much money as possible allocation of Niagara's whole inson asked Wilcox if the 926, Wilcox refused to lie. than \$400,000 of the money

was threatening to cause envisioned a complete park- it to extend all the way to commissioners had no ob- esponsible for it; they were e interested only in the land been fighting for so many ould be primarily in Erie y Park Commission should

have jurisdiction over it. But the bond issue gave money for improvements on the Niagara Frontier only to the Niagara Commission, and they were afraid that under the law they would be forced to assume responsibility for it. When Moses asked them to give \$100,000 of their million for planning of the Erie County section of the parkway, they objected because they felt the whole million was needed around the falls, but they said that they would give it anyway—as long as in return a law was passed making clear that the portion of the parkway in Erie County was not their responsibility. This apparently minor point appeared to worry Moses beyond all relationship to its legal importance, possibly because asking the Legislature to pass new park reorganization laws might give it the opportunity to oust him from control. Furthermore, the existence of open conflict within the Parks Council was a threat to his assertion of absolute dominance over it; as long as maneuverings within the parks empire he was creating were kept quiet, he could quietly work his will within it; let it once become a source of controversy and the Legislature might well begin stepping into it, and the Legislature would not be disposed to allow his dominance to continue.

So Moses moved against the Niagara commissioners. First, although they had a superintendent and an engineer to direct the commission's staff and day-to-day affairs, Moses demanded that they appoint an "executive officer"—who they suspected would be one of his men. They refused.

Then there ensued in April and May 1926 a number of Parks Council meetings at which the commission had no representative present. Clearwater, its authorized representative, was suddenly struck down by an illness so severe that doctors gave him no chance of living. Wilcox, his authorized substitute, was too weak to take his place. And council members who were friends of the two old men reported that in their absence rumors—vicious rumors—were being circulated about them in whispers at council meetings. Someone—Wilcox felt sure he knew who—was hinting darkly that the Niagara Commission, in making its park and parkway plans, had sold out to the interests of Schoellkopf's power company. On June 3, Smith wrote Moses a letter—Wilcox was always to believe that Moses wrote it, and persuaded Smith to sign it—asking Moses to investigate "transactions and relations between the Niagara Reservation Commission and the power companies, including the reservation of easements by the power companies on land sold by them to the commission."

"I also wish to learn," said the innuendo-loaded letter, "whether this park commission has laid out a program which will insure the protection of the Niagara Riverfront . . . or whether they are just buying isolated pieces of land along the banks of the river and leaving the rest of the land in the hands of the power company and other private interests."

Wilcox could hardly believe what he read. Moses, he was sure, was behind the letter, but Moses had known and approved of the commission's arrangements with the power company.

But Wilcox had gotten only a taste of what was in store for him.

Moses called a meeting of the Parks Council for June 26 to consider the Governor's letter. Wilcox, Schoellkopf and the two other Niagara Com-

mission members, Robert W. De Forest and Robert H. Gittins, met and prepared resolutions giving their side of the story and sent them to Moses, asking him to have them read to the council. No Niagara commissioners were present at the council meeting—Clearwater and Wilcox were unable to travel—and they learned after the meeting that Moses had not even told the council about the existence of the resolutions and instead had persuaded it to appoint a five-member committee to investigate the matter at a hearing at the Parks Council office in New York City on July 15. The committee, the Niagara commissioners realized, was packed against them; there was one old park man, Major William A. Welch of the Palisades Commission, on it, and its chairman, Jay Downer of Westchester, although an engineer friendly to Moses and an exponent of the new park theories, was regarded as a man of integrity, but the third member was a representative of Conservation Commissioner Alexander MacDonald, and Moses and his friend and aide, Henry Lutz, were members *ex officio*, so Moses had three votes out of the five.

Whether the only available record of the hearing is complete is impossible to ascertain. The only transcript available was made by Rose Pedrick, Moses' secretary, and Wilcox later complained in a letter to Moses that "several times the stenographer was told to omit things, or portions of the discussion, which were really of the greatest relative significance." These omissions appear at two crucial points in the transcript as "discussions off the record" and once Miss Pedrick refers to an "argument between Mr. Gittins and Mr. Moses" without telling what the argument was about.

Complete or not, however, the transcript is interesting.

What are the specific charges against us? Wilcox demanded as soon as the hearings began. There are no charges, Downer hastily replied. This is not an investigation—"Take that word from the record. This conference; it is a conference. Substitute the word 'conference.'"

You mean there is no one willing to stand up here to our faces and make charges? Wilcox asked. "No, sir. No, sir," Downer replied. "No charges have been made by anybody so far as I know." The only reason the committee was interested in the commission's relations with the power company, he said, was that the Legislature might be reluctant to allocate money for land along the gorge until the power company gave definite written assurances, preferably legal options, that it would give the commission easements over the intervening lands it owned so that the Legislature could be assured that the parkway would be continuous. The only thing the committee wanted was an assurance from Wilcox and Schoellkopf that their informal agreements would be formalized.

Well, Wilcox said, there is a letter written by Governor Smith, "implying that we are handling the thing not for the public interest but for the interests of other people . . . of the power company . . . plainly implying it, so much so that he might as well have charged it in terms . . . just as plainly as if it were put in a little more brutal language, charging us with collusive and improper relations. . . . If the English language has any mean-

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ing, it means that." Where d formation, outright lies, in fa hastily, "Mr. Downer, may I the question of where the G we have no right to go into hearing, which would go on t ness to Wilcox and to De F ill that he had been in bed sioners would seek to learn if there were no charges, tl Throughout the hearing, De focus attention on a number the power company. Near th the hearing. "Just one min question that appears in the committee listen while he rea the parkway plan, and preser ting anything from the inform state land worth hundreds c talked about "transactions a the power companies includ companies on land sold by he said, no power company sion or made any reservatio And Downer, as if his sense Moses, said for the record tl self and had been "impress company] . . . had planned t

"We have no time to w reputation as to any collusi go into any such question," do not believe any such thir it. We know your reputation . . . There is no such thin Wilcox insisted that he be informal agreements with S to find with that transaction Moses, who had repeatedl during discussions of the ot Now he said, "I would like money in the case of the t furnished by the power co was, Mr. Moses?"

Downer's anxiousness in Smith's—or Moses'—let the committee's approval c piece of land that had just

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ing, it means that." Where did the Governor get his information—false information, outright lies, in fact—on which the letter was based? Moses said hastily, "Mr. Downer, may I interrupt a moment. . . . Personally, I regard the question of where the Governor got his information as something that we have no right to go into." And Downer hastily agreed. Throughout the hearing, which would go on for six hours, at a high cost in pain and weariness to Wilcox and to De Forest—who was seventy-nine years old and so ill that he had been in bed for more than a month—the Niagara commissioners would seek to learn what the charges against them were and why, if there were no charges, they had been summoned to New York City. Throughout the hearing, Downer would evade a direct answer, trying to focus attention on a number of minor matters that had nothing to do with the power company. Near the end of the long day, Downer tried to conclude the hearing. "Just one minute," Wilcox said, and insisted that "the big question that appears in the Governor's letter" be discussed. He made the committee listen while he read into the record Schoellkopf's contributions to the parkway plan, and presented proof that the power company was not getting anything from the informal arrangement and in fact was donating to the state land worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Governor's letter talked about "transactions and relations between the . . . Commission and the power companies including the reservation of easements by the power companies on land sold by them to the Commission," Wilcox said. Why, he said, no power company had ever "sold an acre of land to our Commission or made any reservation [easement] whatever on any land whatever." And Downer, as if his sense of fairness had at last won over his loyalty to Moses, said for the record that he had, in fact, toured the Niagara site himself and had been "impressed with . . . the many things that they [the power company] . . . had planned to do for the furtherance of the parkway."

"We have no time to waste in hearing any defense of gentlemen of your reputation as to any collusion with anybody, and this committee will not go into any such question," Downer said. "We are not interested and we do not believe any such things and have nothing in our minds in regard to it. We know your reputations too well to believe you would do such a thing. . . . There is no such thing in the minds of this committee." And when Wilcox insisted that he be formally exonerated of any wrongdoing in his informal agreements with Schoellkopf, Downer said flatly, "I have no fault to find with that transaction," a position with which Welch heartily agreed. Moses, who had repeatedly interrupted Downer and the commissioners during discussions of the other, minor subjects, had been noticeably silent. Now he said, "I would like to ask as a question of fact whether or not the money in the case of the two parcels we discussed before was or was not furnished by the power company." And Downer said flatly, "What if it was, Mr. Moses?"

Downer's anxiousness to avoid discussion of the "big question" raised in Smith's—or Moses'—letter deprived Wilcox of an opportunity to get the committee's approval of acquisition by the power company of a key piece of land that had just come on the market and that Wilcox was eager

to have Schoellkopf snap up and turn over to the commission for the parkway before someone else bought it and began to build on it. This, Wilcox was to say, was a bitter disappointment to him. "The opportunity . . . is slipping and my interest and ability to act are waning," he wrote, "and I fear this promising plan may come to naught." But at least the commissioners felt they had been exonerated.

But they had not reckoned with the full extent of the change in Robert Moses. The Niagara commissioners felt sure that Downer's report on the hearing would be fair. And they were right. The committee chairman wrote that Schoellkopf's only relationship with the commission had been to assist it and to have his power company assist it, at considerable expense to both himself and his company. Such criticisms as Downer did make of the commission's operations, based on the minor matters discussed at the hearings, dealt with technicalities, and so did his recommendations for changes in its procedures. But when the Parks Council met on July 24—with Wilcox, exhausted by the earlier trip to New York and the strain of the hearing, again confined to bed and absent—Downer's report was not distributed. Neither was its summary, which contained the exoneration. Instead, its list of "recommendations," which concentrated on the technicalities and did not include the exoneration or even mention the "big question," was read—so hastily that an aide Wilcox had sent to take notes was able to gain only a general idea of its contents—and the innocuous recommendations were adopted.

Wilcox's aide asked Henry Lutz to send a copy of the report to Wilcox, and Lutz promised he would do so. On July 30, Wilcox had not received it, and he sent Lutz a telegram asking for it. Lutz did not even reply.

On August 3, Wilcox, in bed, unable to determine what the report about him said or if it had been sent to the rest of the Parks Council, wrote Lutz. His letter was, considering the provocation, one of remarkable courtesy. The harshest line in it was its last: "If there is a copy of that report in existence or available, I should be glad to have it as soon as convenient."

Lutz did not reply. But Moses did. The first sentence of his letter to Wilcox was: "I will pass over without extended comment the unpleasant tone of your letter. I presume that you have become so accustomed to addressing people in this way that you are hardly aware of its effect on others." He was writing, Moses said, to defend Lutz from Wilcox's attacks. Downer's report, Moses said, was not ready, although the Parks Council had adopted its "conclusions" and "the action taken by the Council has been outlined to the Governor." An astounded Wilcox realized that Moses had sent a copy of his, Moses', letter to the seventy-two other regional commissioners without sending them a copy of Wilcox's letter—and therefore the commissioners could have no way of knowing that Wilcox's letter had not in fact been unpleasant, and they could not know the events that had led up to it.

Since Wilcox's letter was not insulting, why did Moses say it was? In Wilcox's view, Moses realized that the Downer report would not make the Niagara commissioners look bad to the other regional commissioners and

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would not justify to Smith and them, that he therefore needed a main one, and that he seized the cloth out of which to manufacture was consistent with his other three regional commissioners by the Niagara Commission, —he had not even let them see the commission's resolutions that gave at the Council meeting Downer's 'fault, however minor, with exoneration the commission Wilcox of writing an abusive letter to the regional commissioners. It was not abusive. It is impossible to determine to hound from men whose only crime was the power in that organization they loved, the park that one had given so much of their

When he received Moses' letter home, weak and in pain, he sent it to his office to dictate a reply in substantial stretches, and it was not without some discourtesy and dishonesty, evolution of Robert Moses.

"You speak from a high

Seemingly, this should bring not merely a sense of dominance without opposition in all matters some special consideration owing to their age and long experience with them an intimate knowledge of the members of the State Council able to guess at; and owing to his Clearwater, our President, and But it has not produced any Commission and its members a degree which cannot be explained

Your rage toward Justice is a "poisonous thing." And but the fact that, while suppressed on occasion to speak [have] beaten them more than Wilcox denied that his "Neither you nor any

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would not justify to Smith what he had almost certainly told Smith about them, that he therefore needed another issue to divert attention from the main one, and that he seized on Wilcox's innocuous letter as the whole cloth out of which to manufacture it. In any case, his handling of the letter was consistent with his other actions in the matter. He had sent the seventy-three regional commissioners copies of Smith's letter implying wrongdoing by the Niagara Commission, but he had not sent the regional commissioners—he had not even let them know of the existence of—the Niagara Commission's resolutions that gave its side of the story. He had read at a Parks Council meeting Downer's "recommendations" which seemed to find some fault, however minor, with the commission, but not the summary which exonerated the commission of the major charges. And now he accused Wilcox of writing an abusive letter to a council employee, without allowing the regional commissioners to see the letter for themselves—and to see that it was not abusive. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Moses had determined to hound from the state park organization a group of elderly men whose only crime was their refusal to allow him to exercise unbridled power in that organization and to remove them from control of the park they loved, the park that one of them had created, the park to which they had given so much of their lives.

When he received Moses' letter, Wilcox, who had been confined at home, weak and in pain, since his trip to New York, left his bed and went to his office to dictate a reply. He was unable to stay there long or to work in substantial stretches, and it took him five days to finish it. But he finished it. And although its main purport was to exonerate himself from charges of discourtesy and dishonesty, it was also a telling document in charting the evolution of Robert Moses.

"You speak from a high position," Ansley Wilcox wrote.

Seemingly, this should bring with it a feeling of responsibility and consideration, not merely a sense of dominating authority and a desire to have your own way without opposition in all matters, large and small. It might have led you to show some special consideration to the Niagara Commission and Commissioners, owing to their age and long service and the experience of all of them, giving them an intimate knowledge of many special local problems which you and other members of the State Council, however wise and experienced in general, are only able to guess at; and owing to the desperate illness and disability of Judge Clearwater, our President, and partial disabilities of Mr. De Forest and myself. But it has not produced any such consideration—quite the contrary. . . . Our Commission and its members have been treated by you unfairly and brutally to a degree which cannot be expressed in polite language.

Your rage toward Judge Clearwater and me, Wilcox wrote Moses, is a "poisonous thing." And what, Wilcox asked, is the reason for it? Nothing but the fact that, while supporting in general your park policies, we have "ventured on occasion to speak out in meetings views opposing your policies, and [have] beaten them more than once. This could not be forgotten."

Wilcox denied that his letter to Lutz had been abusive.

"Neither you nor anyone can point out anything offensive in my letter

to Mr. Lutz, except to one conscious of trying to play tricks, who finds himself caught and exposed . . . I was feeling indignant, but I had a right to be indignant," Wilcox wrote. You accused us of dishonesty—yes, it was you; you were responsible for the vicious rumors that came up in Parks Council meetings when neither Clearwater nor I were present to repudiate them; you wrote the letter signed by Smith; "the letter does not sound at all like Governor Smith, and it does sound like you"—and then when Downer's report showed us to be innocent, you did not let us or anyone else see the report. Probably the Governor has not seen it either, Wilcox wrote. "You say . . . that 'The action taken by the Council has been outlined to the Governor.'" I am sure it has—"by you, I suppose, and in your own way."

Wilcox's letter, which detailed his "transactions and relations" with the power company, covered ten single-spaced typewritten pages. "That it is too long, I know well," he concluded. "Few will read it and probably none will appreciate it."

The old man was right. His letter lay unread in an unopened folder in a dusty Albany warehouse for forty-two years. And although, in the forty-third year, the folder was opened (by the author) and the letter was read, and although it provided the first detailed account of the changes wrought in Robert Moses by his hunger for power, it could not right the worst of all the injustices Moses perpetrated on Ansley Wilcox. During Moses' long reign as State Parks Council chairman, the plaques previously placed in Niagara State Park by Wilcox's friends to commemorate the contributions to the park made by him and the other old Niagara commissioners were systematically removed—to be replaced with plaques bearing Moses' name. When the parkway along the Niagara gorge was built, it was named after Moses and so was the power dam that became the centerpiece of the park. By the time Moses' reign was over, it would be impossible to find anywhere in Niagara State Park even a single hint that anyone except Moses had been responsible for its creation.

Wilcox's letter had no appreciable effect on Moses. With it, Wilcox sent a request for the names and addresses of the seventy-two other regional commissioners, "to whom you sent your abusive and misleading and unfair and domineering letter," so that he could send copies—along with copies of his letter to Lutz—to them so that they could judge for themselves. Moses never replied. Instead, he continued his assault on the old men, if by more roundabout means. If he could not oust them quickly, his actions seemed to indicate, he would wear them down.

First, a series of charges were filed against the commission's superintendent and chief executive officer, Emil R. Waldenberger. The commissioners investigated and cleared him. Then Moses told Smith that because of the illnesses of Judge Clearwater, Wilcox and De Forest, the commission was "not functioning," and in March 1927 Smith asked De Forest, in the most delicate of terms because of De Forest's great prestige, if he might not prefer a post on the State Housing Board instead. De Forest had, in fact,

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long wanted to resign. But the would rather not put myself in t

In reality, Clearwater had months before. De Forest sent the judge wrote a letter of his o

"The Governor's letter . . . he wrote. "I have for him a greatness and none of its limitations.

"Unfortunately, some men him and to a considerable extent they abuse to gratify their ambitions them he at times has been misi

The commission *has* been Governor like to know how? A tentative land-acquisition negotiations months.

He knew why Moses wanted Niagara affords opportunities other of the State Parks, and . . . who desire to dominate it in their own glorification." Furthermore: those of Moses' policies with view be a somewhat widespread feeling for him, Mr. Moses expects an members of Council . . . and that un

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But time is not on the side was slow but steady. In July 1927, the commission was dissolved, and Smith accepted Moses' resignation, and Smith accepted Moses' resignation. Moses convinced the Governor could not be adequately carried out by a member its executive officer was Governor not to sign any appointments. The other regional commissioners gave the new one in order even to keep functioning forced to turn it over to some of Niagara State Park, Robert

He won every fight in the most recalcitrant regional commission expired, by men amenable to the central staff, which, through Lutz that votes within the council was of a single vote, two new members appointed by Smith, and the park whose members were appointed

Parks had never been a function of park commissions

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long wanted to resign. But the old men were loyal to their compatriots. “I would rather not put myself in the position of a deserter,” he replied.

In reality, Clearwater had confounded his doctors and recovered—months before. De Forest sent a copy of Smith’s letter to the judge, and the judge wrote a letter of his own. He still had the gift of words.

“The Governor’s letter . . . seems like a wound in the house of a friend,” he wrote. “I have for him a great admiration. He has all the elements of greatness and none of its limitations.

“Unfortunately, some men greatly his inferior have secured access to him and to a considerable extent have his confidence, which unhesitatingly they abuse to gratify their ambitions, their interests and their animosities. By them he at times has been misinformed.”

The commission *has* been functioning, the judge wrote. Would the Governor like to know how? And he proceeded to list page after page of extensive land-acquisition negotiations that had been carried out in recent months.

He knew why Moses was lying, the judge wrote. “The situation at Niagara affords opportunities for spectacular publicity not offered by any other of the State Parks, and . . . there are members of the Council of Parks who desire to dominate it in order to capitalize those opportunities for their own glorification.” Furthermore, he was not afraid to speak out against those of Moses’ policies with which he did not agree. “Now there seems to be a somewhat widespread feeling that because of the Governor’s friendship for him, Mr. Moses expects an attitude of abject acquiescence from the members of Council . . . and that unless he receives it, reprisals may be expected.”

Moses let the “not functioning” issue drop.

But time is not on the side of old men. The progress of Wilcox’s disease was slow but steady. In July 1927, he was forced to resign from the commission, and Smith accepted Moses’ recommendation on his replacement. Then Moses convinced the Governor that the activities of the Niagara Commission could not be adequately carried out unless the commission made the new member its executive officer with full powers to act for it. He convinced the Governor not to sign any appropriations for the Niagara Park unless the old commissioners gave the new one this power. In order to realize their dream, in order even to keep functioning the park they loved, the old men were forced to turn it over to someone else. At the end of the fight for control of Niagara State Park, Robert Moses had won.

He won every fight in the State Parks Council. By the end of 1928, most recalcitrant regional commissioners had been replaced, as their terms expired, by men amenable to administration of their parks by the council’s central staff, which, through Lutz, took orders from Moses. To further insure that votes within the council would no longer hinge on the changeable margin of a single vote, two new members were named, the State Historian, directly appointed by Smith, and the president of a new regional commission, all of whose members were appointed by Smith.

Parks had never been a source of power before. Since the traditional function of park commissions had been to preserve the land in its natural

state, the later developments—construction contracts, jobs—that made parks a source of power had never been a significant consideration. Parks were a source of power now, but the old park men didn't want power. They just wanted to be left alone to preserve and pass on beauty to other generations, and when, as in the case of the Erie County Parkway, the chance for power came their way, they backed away from it.

Politicians failed to grasp the new reality until too late. By the time they finally realized—one can see the realization growing in their correspondence of 1927 and 1928—that a new organ of state government was being created that would dispense yearly millions of dollars in construction contracts and thousands of jobs, Moses had the state park system too firmly in his control for it to be pried loose. He would remain president of the Long Island State Park Commission and chairman of the State Parks Council until 1962, and during the thirty-eight years of his reign over state parks these parks would, even as his activities expanded into other fields, be a constant source of power that he could use to expand his influence in those fields.

In politics, power vacuums are always filled. And the power vacuum in parks was filled by Robert Moses. The old park men saw beauty in their parks. Moses saw beauty there, too, but he also saw power, saw it lying there in those parks unwanted. And he picked it up—and turned it as a weapon on those who had not thought it important and destroyed them with it. Whether or not he so intended, he turned parks, the symbol of man's quest for serenity and peace, into a source of power.

Moses could have done nothing, of course, without Al Smith's constant support.

The old park men pleaded with the Governor for justice. "I am very sure that on the same knowledge of facts there would be no difference at all as to any park matters between you and me," De Forest wrote, and others, too, told him he was being misled. They asked the Governor for appointments so that they could tell him their side of the disputes.

But the appointments they were given were few and far between. And although they didn't know it, most—perhaps all—of the letters they wrote Smith complaining about Moses were sent by Smith's office to Moses for "suggested" replies—and the replies Moses suggested were generally sent out over Smith's signature without a word being changed.

The pattern was the same in Moses' relations with the Legislature. He might have told Jerry Twomey to stick a bill up his ass, but, Twomey told Len Hall, "within two days, Al Smith had me on the phone and I had to put the bill through." The Legislature might rage at Robert Moses—Twomey wasn't the only legislator insulted to his face, Hall not the only one on whom he slammed down the telephone—but no legislator dared to stand up to a Governor who was a master of every method of bending men to his will. As long as Al Smith stuck by Moses, the Legislature could do nothing about him.

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And Al Smith stuck. In the threatened by political embarrassments, New Yorker who had been a victim of the office. According to one Smith biographer, "to settle this park fight?"

"'Yes,' the Governor said.

"'Then I'll tell you how to

"'How?'

"The visitor banged his fist

"'Get rid of Moses!' he said

"The Governor leaped to his feet

"'Get out of my office, you

Why Smith stuck was a question

One was that he was a politician

been a handicap to the Governor. The parks built were a priceless asset to Smith. The short-story-writing engineer in awarding contracts but who was not Smith once said, "He may be a politician and the Governor might have been desperate to derail the Governor. The state GOP ran against him. Livingston Mills. Campaigning attention on the unprecedented. The Governor easily diverted the attention. Mills was one of the North Shore millionaires on Long Island [and] New York coming down into the term—the first Governor to do so—and he credited a large part of

Smith was not only a politician. The simple Tammany code, the first to his appointees was legendary. saying, he never interfered with handling it.

And Smith knew that not more than Moses. When his daughter, the person who best understood Moses, she would begin her argument for Father, you know."

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And Al Smith stuck. In the midst of the Thayer bill fight, with Smith threatened by political embarrassment because of Moses' actions, a wealthy New Yorker who had been a victim of Moses' insults stormed into Smith's office. According to one Smith biographer, he asked angrily, "Do you want to settle this park fight?"

"Yes," the Governor said.

"Then I'll tell you how to do it."

"How?"

"The visitor banged his fist on the Governor's desk.

"Get rid of Moses!" he shouted.

"The Governor leaped to his feet, his face suddenly purple with rage.

"Get out of my office, you idiot!" he roared."

Why Smith stuck was a question that had many answers.

One was that he was a politician. In capitol corridors, Moses may have been a handicap to the Governor, but in voting booths the parks that he built were a priceless asset to Smith. About Colonel Frederick Stuart Greene, the short-story-writing engineer who refused to consider politicians' wishes in awarding contracts but who got roads built that won voters' appreciation, Smith once said, "He may be a devil in May, but he's an angel in November," and the Governor might have said the same thing about Moses. In 1926, desperate to derail the Governor before the 1928 presidential campaign, the state GOP ran against him its strongest candidate, Congressman Ogden Livingston Mills. Campaigning vigorously, Mills tried to focus voters' attention on the unprecedented expenditures of Smith's administration, but the Governor easily diverted them by reminding them, over and over, that Mills was one of the North Shore barons, "that small handful of wealthy millionaires on Long Island [who] said: 'We do not want the rabble from New York coming down into our beautiful country.'" Smith won a fourth term—the first Governor to do so since De Witt Clinton a century before—and he credited a large part of his 257,000-vote plurality to the parks issue.

Smith was not only a politician; he was a Tammany politician. In the simple Tammany code, the first commandment was Loyalty. Smith's loyalty to his appointees was legendary. Once he gave a man a job, he was fond of saying, he never interfered with him unless he proved himself incapable of handling it.

And Smith knew that none of his appointees worked harder for him than Moses. When his daughter Emily, her father's confidante and perhaps the person who best understood him, was asked why her father stuck by Moses, she would begin her analysis by saying simply, "Bob worked so hard for Father, you know."

Beyond politics was the fact that the boy from the Fulton Fish Market wanted so passionately to improve the lives of the people of the Fourth Ward—and of a hundred Fourth Wards throughout the state. And parks were, unlike improvements in teachers' salaries or other highly praised but unmeasurable accomplishments of his administration, an accomplishment that he could see, an accomplishment whose visible, concrete existence could

prove to him that he had indeed done something for his people. When he saw families picnicking under the tall trees at Valley Stream or swimming at Sunken Meadow, he could feel that he had measurably improved their lives. So many of the things that made him most satisfied with his administration had been the result of Moses' work.

As for his refusal to listen to Moses' opponents, Smith was well aware, as a politician, that every public improvement caused outcries. "You can't get a road built if you're going to listen to every farmer who doesn't want it to go across his land," he often said. Listening to protesters undermined his appointee, and got himself involved in enemy-making situations. Staying out of such situations—leaving responsibility with his appointee—enabled him to stay out of the fights which attended upon the building of public improvements while still allowing him to take full credit for their completion. Moreover, most of Moses' opponents, after all, were upstate legislators or politicians. Smith knew the depth of their reactionism, their narrow-mindedness, their utter inability to understand the needs of the city masses. As Emily put it, "Father wouldn't care what Bob did or said to the GOP legislators. After all, Father was fighting them himself. And Father thought the legislators really were terribly wrong. He felt the things Bob wanted to do were right."

In the opinion of those close to the Governor, he didn't realize how drastic the methods were that Moses was using to accomplish his aims. He didn't understand that Moses was going beyond the actions of other appointees, handling protesters with needless harshness, stirring up protests by his arrogance, creating problems where there need not have been problems. "Particularly with little people," Emily says; "I didn't think that Father really knew how Moses was treating them." And there was, of course, no reason why the Governor would; they didn't have his ear or, since he seldom read even memos from appointees and almost never letters from the public, his eye. And the press, which might have publicized their complaints, was firmly in Moses' corner.

And behind the political considerations there were the personal. Al Smith was a fighter, and he liked fighters. One night Smith heard Richard Childs, introducing Moses at a dinner, smilingly tell his audience: "You all know Bob, of course. He's so forthright and honest that if he saw a man across the street who he thought was a son of a bitch, he would cross the street and call him a son of a bitch, lest by passing him in silence, his silence be misconstrued." Smith roared at the description—and, thereafter, when someone would criticize Moses, the Governor would often give it himself, with evident delight.

And Moses reciprocated. He knew how much he owed Smith for the realization of his dreams. "We could have done nothing without him," he would say. He knew how much he owed Smith for rescuing him from a life of obscurity and failure. "Most of what little I know of the practice of government I learned from this remarkable Gamaliel," Moses would write. "Without him I would have been just another academic researcher." After the Governor's death in 1944, Moses wrote, "The few remaining members of

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the Smith brigade think of him often and at the strangest times, see him in moments of action and relaxation, inspiration and ease. We hear his rough voice. . . ."

Moses may have mocked to their faces men of wealth and influence and insulted the most powerful members of the State Legislature; he treated Al Smith with a respect that to those who saw the two men together was unforgettable. Said Belle Moskowitz's son, Carlos Israels: "When Moses was with Smith, he would always be spouting out ideas, pacing, gesticulating, talking. But it was the talking and gesticulating of an enthusiastic boy with his father, a father whom he admired and to whom he was very respectful." Joseph Proskauer said: "He acted to Smith as he acted to no one else, with deference and respect."

Smith was always "Governor" to Moses. He never addressed him—either in letters or in speech—as anything but "Governor." And this was a fact more significant with Robert Moses than it would be with other men. Moses would, during the forty years after Smith left Albany, serve under five other Governors. He never addressed them—in letters or in speech—except by their first names. He never called any one of them "Governor." For Robert Moses, there would always be only one Governor.

During the final years of Smith's reign, he and Moses became closer and closer. Smith saw that Moses was invited to the most intimate of Tammany soirees, the notoriously boisterous get-togethers at William F. Kenny's Tiger Room. The Tammany bigwigs who had looked at him askance soon came to like him and, when they mentioned this to Smith, the Governor would beam happily. Often, after dinner in the Executive Mansion or, in New York, in the Biltmore suite or a friend's apartment, Smith would say, if Moses had not been present at the dinner, "I wonder what Bob's doing tonight—let's get him." Someone would call Moses. When he arrived, Smith would say, "Bob, let's go to Dinty Moore's," and the two men would sit for hours in a back room specially reserved for the Governor, drinking beer, cracking crabs and talking. "That talk was something," Howard Cullman would recall. "You could tell just listening to the two of them that there were two men with real brains."

Not that the talk was all serious. Often, the Governor and Moses would, to the delight of listeners, go into a sort of rapid-paced comic dialogue on the Albany scene. Says Emily Smith: "It would be more fun to be there listening to Father and Bob than to be out at a theater or dancing somewhere." Or Smith would, if there was a piano handy, jump up, walk over to it and say to Moses, "Come on, Bob, let's show these people what we can do." One of the men who watched Smith and Moses harmonizing on such occasions says, "There was a tie there that was beyond business or politics." Says another: "You could tell just by looking at the two of them together that they liked each other a lot."

invidious reference to my brother Laurance. Laurance Rockefeller . . . has been associated with the state park system since his appointment by Gov. Herbert H. Lehman in 1939 as a member of the Palisades Interstate Commission." The resignations were regretted. But they were accepted. All of them.

"I don't think Mr. Moses realized what he was doing in the rush that day," Sid Shapiro says. "I don't think he really expected the Governor to let him resign [from all the park posts] and I don't think he ever expected him to let him resign from the Power Authority. When he did realize it, I think it broke his heart." Moses' statement had gotten him the kind of headlines he wanted—the *Times*, for example, gave his nepotism charge a big page-one headline—but at a terrible cost.

At one stroke, he had cost himself five jobs—five on top of the four city jobs he had lost two years before. Once, he had held twelve separate posts. Now he was down to two—the chairmanship of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority and the presidency of the World's Fair—three if one counted his informal (and, of course, still enormously powerful) designation as city representative on arterial highways.

And it wasn't the number of jobs he had lost so much as what jobs they were. "The Long Island parks—well, they were the thing he had done first, you know," Shapiro says. "He loved Long Island more than any other place. And Jones Beach and the rest of those parks—well, they were his baby. It mattered so much to him that they be kept beautiful—just as he wanted them—and that he be able to expand them the way they should be expanded. Nothing else mattered as much to him as those parks. And now he had lost them."

And not only had he lost control of his first great dream, he had lost a huge hunk of his power. His power had been derived partly from popularity and mostly from money—money that he had sole discretion to spend. The popularity had vanished some years back, but its loss had not mattered much so long as he didn't lose the money. But the money came from his network of four public authorities. Now, at a stroke, three of them were gone—including the biggest of them all, the State Power Authority that, with both Robert Moses Power Dams completed at last, was beginning to generate tens of millions of dollars in annual revenue.

To reporters, he said firmly that the matter was closed. "There is nothing I am doing about it," he said with a broad smile, announcing that he was leaving for a previously planned vacation in Puerto Rico—ironically, at Laurance's Dorado Beach Hotel. (MOSES TAKES OUSTER CALMLY, headlines said.) But behind the scenes he was maneuvering almost frantically to attempt to retrieve his mistake. His emissaries were working on anyone who had Rockefeller's ear; Van Arsdale and Brennan were soon asking the Governor to let Moses withdraw his resignations, even if that withdrawal meant that Moses would have to eat public crow.

A man closer to the Governor, however, had guessed the futility of

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such attempts. "[Moses] got frier try to persuade Rockefeller to let I "I must have had a dozen phone c discreet inquiry, an indirect inq take it back. I felt sorry for him.7 for Rockefeller to let Moses v Council resignation, perhaps, but of political insiders, exist. The e ized. Robert Moses had been fire

Citing "nepotism" as its ca with outrage, as did the *Journal*- tive columnists. "No public offic to Robert Moses in his devoted public service for nearly half a c man can be trusted with major Moses to resign. . . ." But in th flurry of editorials, and the editc have known he had lost when, a table to the editorial page of *Th* before had said: "You don't t incredible of all the prodigious ability to sustain, long after mc of responsibilities. . . . He has c public service, except the ability that, after the verbal skyrocket of the Governor's suggestion th planning for an orderly transiti can be made so dependent on dispensable man."

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such attempts. "[Moses] got friends of mine to come to me and ask me to try to persuade Rockefeller to let him take it back," recalls Thomas E. Dewey. "I must have had a dozen phone calls from people I knew. But I had made a discreet inquiry, an indirect inquiry; Rockefeller wasn't going to let him take it back. I felt sorry for him." For what might have been the one reason for Rockefeller to let Moses withdraw his resignations—not his Parks Council resignation, perhaps, but his others—did not, to his surprise and that of political insiders, exist. The expected storm of protest had not materialized. Robert Moses had been fired. And hardly anyone had really cared.

Citing "nepotism" as its cause, the *Daily News* reacted to the ouster with outrage, as did the *Journal-American* (WE NEED HIM!) and conservative columnists. "No public official in any part of the country is comparable to Robert Moses in his devoted and unending and mostly uncompensated public service for nearly half a century," George E. Sokolsky declared. "No man can be trusted with major affairs who asks such a man as Robert Moses to resign. . . ." But in the rest of the media there was only a brief flurry of editorials, and the editorial that mattered never came. Moses must have known he had lost when, on December 2, he turned at his breakfast table to the editorial page of *The New York Times* (which only three years before had said: "You don't bench Babe Ruth") and read: "The most incredible of all the prodigious qualities of Robert Moses has been his ability to sustain, long after most other men retire, a superhuman burden of responsibilities. . . . He has conquered every obstacle in four decades of public service, except the ability to make himself immortal. . . . We hope that, after the verbal skyrockets sputter out, he will recognize the wisdom of the Governor's suggestion that it was time—indeed, past time—to begin planning for an orderly transition of authority. . . . No government function can be made so dependent on a single individual that he becomes the indispensable man."

The young reporter assigned to cover the otherwise vacant *Newsday* city desk Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning—the paper had no Sunday edition then—found waiting for him a memo from an editor telling him to compile a summary of all the statements that the editor was sure would be pouring in for a big story on reaction in governmental circles to be written by state political editor Stan Hinden Sunday night for Monday's paper. But all Saturday there was exactly one such statement—a brief one from Democratic state chairman William H. McKeon charging the Governor with "cavalier treatment." Telephoning around for comment Sunday evening, Hinden found politicians rather reluctant to make any, and those they did make were carefully hedged. Aside from a few Democratic county chairmen backing McKeon, of a score of public officials telephoned, only Newbold Morris ("I can't believe it") was willing to go on record with the type of public statement the editor had expected. Pragmatists all, politicians had grasped at once the basic reality of the situation: the Governor, the man with the power, was the man they didn't want to offend. As for the public at large, aside from a spate—a brief spate—of letters-to-the-editor, there was hardly any reaction at all.

In political circles the illusion of Moses' popularity with the voters had lingered long after the reality was gone, partly because in those circles, many of whose members were making money off him, that popularity was undimmed, partly because politicians were close enough to him to be overawed by his personality so completely that they could hardly conceive of his falling into public disrepute. For decades, Governors had dreaded what would happen if they had to be the one to fire Bob Moses. Now one Governor had fired Bob Moses.

And nothing had happened.

The next meeting of the State Council of Parks was the first in thirty-eight years over which Robert Moses had not presided. It was the first meeting of the State Council of Parks *ever* over which Moses had not presided.

At that meeting, his successor read a eulogy with, observers say, obvious feeling. Then resolutions were adopted unanimously to change the names of not one, but three separate state parks, one at Niagara, one at Massena and one on Fire Island, to "Robert Moses State Park."

At a time at which the naming of public works after individuals had not reached the floodtide it was later to assume, this was an almost unprecedented honor. It is doubtful that any individual below the rank of President had ever had three separate major public works named after him at the same time. Coupled with the eulogy, it made the January 22, 1963, meeting of the State Council of Parks one of unparalleled tribute to Robert Moses. But Robert Moses had not presided over that meeting.

More important, he had not been present. For only the heads of the various regional park commissions could attend, and he was no longer the head of the regional park commission he had headed for thirty-eight years, the park commission that represented his youthful, and cherished, and most nearly perfect dreams.

During the following years, Robert Moses never admitted even once—not even to his closest friends; not even to Shapiro—how much the loss of the presidency of the Long Island State Park Commission meant to him. But people who knew him saw through his assumed indifference.

His successor as commission president, Perry Duryea, Jr., son of an old associate and an admirer himself, speaks of the "great emotional strain" that the seventy-four-year-old commissioner went through when discussing the parks with him. "He always considered the Long Island State Park Commission as his base," Duryea says. "Long Island was, after all, the place he knew best. This was really the Moses baby above everything else." Says Joe Ingraham: "He would never let on, but you could see it in everything he said—they broke his heart when they took that away from him."

Not only pride but politics prevented Moses thereafter from displaying open resentment. Having had a taste of Nelson Rockefeller once, he was not anxious for another one. He was, shortly, to swallow his pride and make up

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with the man who had so grieved Alexander Hamilton Bridge two years ago, to see Moses' reaction when he threw his arms around Rockefeller during his speech. (Rockefeller grieved him, too.)