ANNALS OF POLITICS

THE POWER BROKER

I—THE BEST BILL-DRAFTER IN ALBANY

THE power of most public officials is measured in years. The power of Robert Moses was measured in decades. It was formally handed to him on April 18, 1924, ten years after he had entered government. He held it for more than four decades thereafter—until the day in 1968 when he realized that he had either misunderstood Nelson Rockefeller or been cheated by him and, in either case, had lost the last of it—and it was a power so substantial that in the fields in which he chose to exercise it no mayor of New York City or governor of New York State seriously challenged it. 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 LaGuardia, William O'Dwyer, Vincent R. Impellitteri, Robert F. Wagner, Jr., and John V. Lindsay.

And with this power Robert Moses shaped New York.

Any map of New York proves it. The very shoreline of the city was different before he came to power. He hammered bulkheads of steel deep into the muck beneath rivers and harbors and crammed into the space between bulkheads and shore masses of earth and stone, shale and cement that hardened into fifteen thousand acres of new land.

Standing out from the map's delicate tracery of gridirons representing streets are heavy lines that denote the major roads on which automobiles and trucks move—roads whose location 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 the four island boroughs are linked to it and to each other by bridges. Since 1931, seven major bridges have been built in the city—immense structures, anchored by towers as tall as seventy-story buildings, supported by cables made up of enough wire to circle the earth. Those bridges are the Triborough, the Verrazano, the Throgs Neck, the Marine Parkway, the Henry Hudson, the Cross-Bay, and the Bronx-Whitestone. Robert Moses built every one of those bridges.

Scattered throughout New York

stand groves of tall luxury apartment houses built under urban-renewal programs. Alongside some of these groves stand college lecture halls and dormitories. Alongside one stands Lincoln Center, the world's costliest and most imposing cultural center, and alongside another stands the New York Coliseum. Once, other buildings stood on the sites of the groves: stores, factories, tenements that had been there for a century, large apartment houses that were still serviceable and sturdy. Robert Moses decided that these buildings would be torn down, and it was Robert Moses who decided that the dormitories, the cultural center, the Coliseum, and the new apartment houses would be erected in their place.

The eastern edge of Manhattan was completely altered between 1945 and 1958. Northward from the bulge of Corlears Hook loom two miles of drab, hulking apartment houses. Almost all of them are public housing. Together with similar structures huddled alongside the expressways or set in rows beside the Rockaway surf, they contain a hundred and seventy-six thousand apartments and six hundred thousand tenants—a population bigger than that of Minneapolis. These buildings were constructed by the New York City Housing Authority, almost half 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 developments: Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. Robert Moses was the dominant force in their creation, too. And still farther north along the East River stand the buildings of the United Nations headquarters. Moses cleared away the obstacles to bringing the U.N. to New York and he supervised the construction of its headquarters.

When Robert Moses began building playgrounds in New York City, there were a hundred and nineteen. When he stopped, there were seven hundred and seventy-seven. Under his direction, an army of laborers that during the Depression included as many as eighty-six thousand men 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, tennis courts and baseball diamonds. Under his direction, endless convoys of trucks hauled the city's garbage into its marshes, and the garbage, covered with earth and lawn, 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.

Yet no enumeration of the beaches, parks, housing projects, bridges, and roads that Robert Moses built in New York does more than suggest the immensity of his physical influence upon the city. In the seven years between 1946 and 1954, seven years that were marked by the most intensive public construction in the city's history, no public improvement of any type—no school or sewer, library or pier, hospital or catch basin—was built by any city agency unless Moses approved its design and location. To clear the land for these improvements, he evicted hundreds of thousands of the city's people from their homes and tore the homes down. Neighborhoods were obliterated by his edict to make room for new neighborhoods reared at his command.

And his influence upon New York went far beyond the physical. In twentieth-century America, no city's resources—even combined with resources made available by the state and federal governments—have come close to meeting its needs. So cities have had to pick and choose among these needs—to decide which handful of a thousand desperately necessary projects would actually be built. This establishment of priorities has had a vast impact on the social fabric of the cities—on the quality of life their inhabitants led. For more than four decades, Robert Moses played a vital role in establishing New York City's priorities. For the crucial seven years, he established all its priorities.

Out from the heart of New York, often reaching beyond the limits of the city into its vast suburbs, and thereby shaping them as well as the city, stretch the parkways, which, unlike the expressways, are closed to trucks and all other commercial vehicles and are bordered by lawns and trees. There are four hundred and sixteen miles of parkways. Robert Moses built, or rebuilt, ev-

"Look! Your analyst will be on vacation. My analyst will be on vacation. Armistice in August, agreed?"

"Nice try, Archer, but it's no cigar."

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ery mile. Within the city limits, he built the Mosholu Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway, which stretch north toward Westchester County. He built the Grand Central Parkway, the Belt Parkway, the Laurelton Parkway, the Cross Island Parkway, and the Interborough Parkway, which stretch east toward the counties of Long Island. In Westchester, he built the Saw Mill River Parkway, the Sprain Brook Parkway, and the Cross-County 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 also built by Robert Moses, across the Great South Bay to Jones Beach, which was a barren, deserted, mosquito-infested sandspit when he first happened upon it in 1921, while exploring the bay alone in a small rowboat, 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—to Sunken Meadow, Hither Hills, Montauk, Orient Beach, 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 the 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 power dam as tall as a ten-story apartment house and 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. And this structure is only the centerpiece of Robert Moses' design to tame the wild waters of the St. Lawrence—a design that includes three huge control dams built to force the river through the power dam's turbines. After the dams were built, Moses adorned them with parks and campgrounds, picnic areas and overlooks, beaches built beside lakes that he also built, and miles and miles of additional parkways. And at Niagara he built a series of dams, parks, and parkways that make the St. Lawrence development look small.

As significant as what Robert Moses built is when he built it. When he began building state parks and parkways, during the nineteen-twenties, twenty-nine states were without a single state park; six had only one. Roads uninterrupted by crossings at grade and set off by landscaping were almost nonexistent. The handful of visionaries who dreamed of large parks in the countryside and of convenient means of getting to them were utterly unable to translate their dreams into reality. But in 1923, after tramping alone for months over sandspits and almost wild tracts of Long Island woodland, 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 hundreds of miles of broad parkways. And by 1929 he had actually built the system he had dreamed of, hacking it out in a series of merciless vendettas against wealth and wealth's power. In the decade following the opening of the Long Island system, public officials and engineers from all over the country came to Long Island to marvel at his work, and, in a rush to follow in his footsteps, park enthusiasts created scores of parks in their own states. The engineering aspects of these parks, as well as the philosophy on which they were built, came largely out of the old August Belmont mansion on Long Island, where Moses, who had turned the mansion into his headquarters, 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. When Moses resigned from the chairmanship of the New York system, in 1962, the total acreage of state parks in the fifty states was 5,799,057. New York State alone had 2,567,256 of those acres, or forty-three per cent of all the state parks in the country.

When Robert Moses began building expressways, after the Second World War, there were plenty of plans for expressways but few expressways. Unlike most parkways, most expressways were built through cities, and politicians boggled at two political problems that would attend the carrying out of the plans: their fantastic cost, and the necessity of removing from the expressways' paths and relocating thousands, even tens of thousands, of city residents. In New York, in 1946, Moses began ramming six great expressways through the city's massed apartment houses simultaneously. A decade later, there were still only a few stretches of urban expressways in the United States, but Moses' six pioneer expressways were almost completed. When, in 1956, sufficient funds to gridiron America with expressways were insured by the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act, it was to New York that the engineers of state highway departments came, to learn the secrets of the Master. The greatest secret was how to remove people from the expressways' paths. Robert Moses taught them which

people to deal with—the poor, the black, the helpless—and how to deal with them. He was America's greatest road builder—the most influential single architect of the system over which America's cars rolled. Bertram D. Tallamy, chief administrative officer of the interstate highway system during the nineteen-fifties and early sixties, says that the principles on which the system was built were principles that Moses laid down for him in a series of brilliant private lectures in the nineteen-thirties. And there was in this fact an irony: Except for a few driving lessons he took in 1927, 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 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 his profit. And it was new 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, a hundred and seventy-eight million dollars of public moneys had been spent on urban renewal in all the cities of the United States with the exception of New York; two hundred and sixty-seven million 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 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. By 1960, when Moses resigned from his urban-renewal directorship, urban renewal had produced more physical results in New York than in all other American cities combined. The federal official who was in charge of the program in its early years says that the most important influence on its development and its acceptance by the public was Robert Moses.

Parks, highways, housing—Moses was a formative force in all three fields in the United States. He was a seminal thinker, perhaps the most influential seminal thinker, in developing policies in these fields, and perhaps the most influential innovator in developing the methods by which these policies were put into effect. And since parks, highways, and housing do so much to shape a city's environment, he may have had a greater influence on the cities of America than any other single individual.

One measure of Moses' career is statistics. Not including the cost of schools, hospitals, garbage incinerators, sewers, and other improvements whose site and design he approved but that were physically constructed by others, and not including the amount of money poured by private sources into construction that also had to be approved by him—including only those public works that he personally conceived and completed, from first vision to ribbon cutting—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 anything even close to that figure. In those terms, Robert Moses was unquestionably America's most prolific physical creator. He was America's—perhaps the world's—greatest builder.

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

To build his highways, Moses threw out of their homes tens of thousands of people. He tore out the hearts of a score of neighborhoods—communities the size of small cities themselves, communities that had been friendly places to live in, vital parts of the city which 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 development pattern relying primarily on roads instead of mass transportation, he insured that that flood would continue for generations, if not centuries.

To make room for the Coliseum, Lincoln Center, and the United Nations—for a score of mammoth urban-renewal projects—he threw out of their homes many thousands of poor people, and he used the urban-renewal money available for housing to build housing for rich people, so that the poor had no place to go except into the slums or into borderline areas that then became slums.

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

When he built housing for poor people, he built housing that was bleak, sterile, cheap—expressive of condescension and contempt in every line. And he built it in places that contributed to the

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

Season late, day late, sun just down, and the sky
Cold gunmetal but with a wash of live rose, and she,
From water the color of sky except where
Her motion has fractured it to shivering splinters of silver,
Rises. Stands on the raw grass. Against
The new-curdling night of spruces, nakedness
Glimmers and, at bosom and flank, drips
With fluent silver. The man,

Some dozen strokes out, but now hanging
Motionless in the gunmetal water, feet
Cold with the coldness of depth, all
History dissolving from him, is
Nothing but an eye. Is an eye only. Sees

The body that is marked by his use, and Time's,
Rise, and in the abrupt and unsustaining element of air,
Sway, lean, grapple the pond-bank. Sees
How, with that posture of female awkwardness that is,
And is the stab of, suddenly perceived grace, breasts bulge
down in
The pure curve of their weight and buttocks
Moon up and, in that swelling unity,
Are silver, and glimmer. Then

The body is erect, she is herself, whatever
Self she may be, and with an end of the towel grasped
in each hand,
Slowly draws it back and forth across back and buttocks, but
With face lifted toward the high sky, where
The over-wash of rose color now fails. Fails, though no star
Yet throbs there. The towel, forgotten,
Does not move now. The gaze
Remains fixed on the sky. The body,

Profiled against the darkness of spruces, seems
To draw to itself, and condense in its whiteness what light
In the sky yet lingers or, from
The metallic and abstract severity of water, lifts. The body,
With the towel now trailing loose from one hand, is
A white stalk from which the face flowers gravely toward
the high sky.
This moment is non-sequential and absolute, and admits
Of no definition, for it
Subsumes all other, and sequential, moments, by which
Definition might be possible. The woman,

Face yet raised, wraps,
With a motion as though standing in sleep,
The towel about her body, under the breasts, and,
Holding it there, hieratic as lost Egypt and erect,
Moves up the path that, stair-steep, winds
Into the clamber and tangle of growth. Beyond
The lattice of dusk-dripping leaves, whiteness
Dimly glimmers, goes. Glimmers and is gone, and the man,

Suspended in his darkling medium, stares
Upward where, though not visible, he knows
She moves, and in his heart he cries out that if only
He had such strength, he would put his hand forth
And maintain it over her to guard, in all
Her out-goings and in-comings, from whatever
Inclemency of sky or slur of the world's weather
Might ever be. In his heart
He cries out. Above

Height of the spruce-night and heave of the far mountain,
he sees
The first star pulse forth. It gleams there.

I do not know what promise it makes to him.

—Robert Penn Warren

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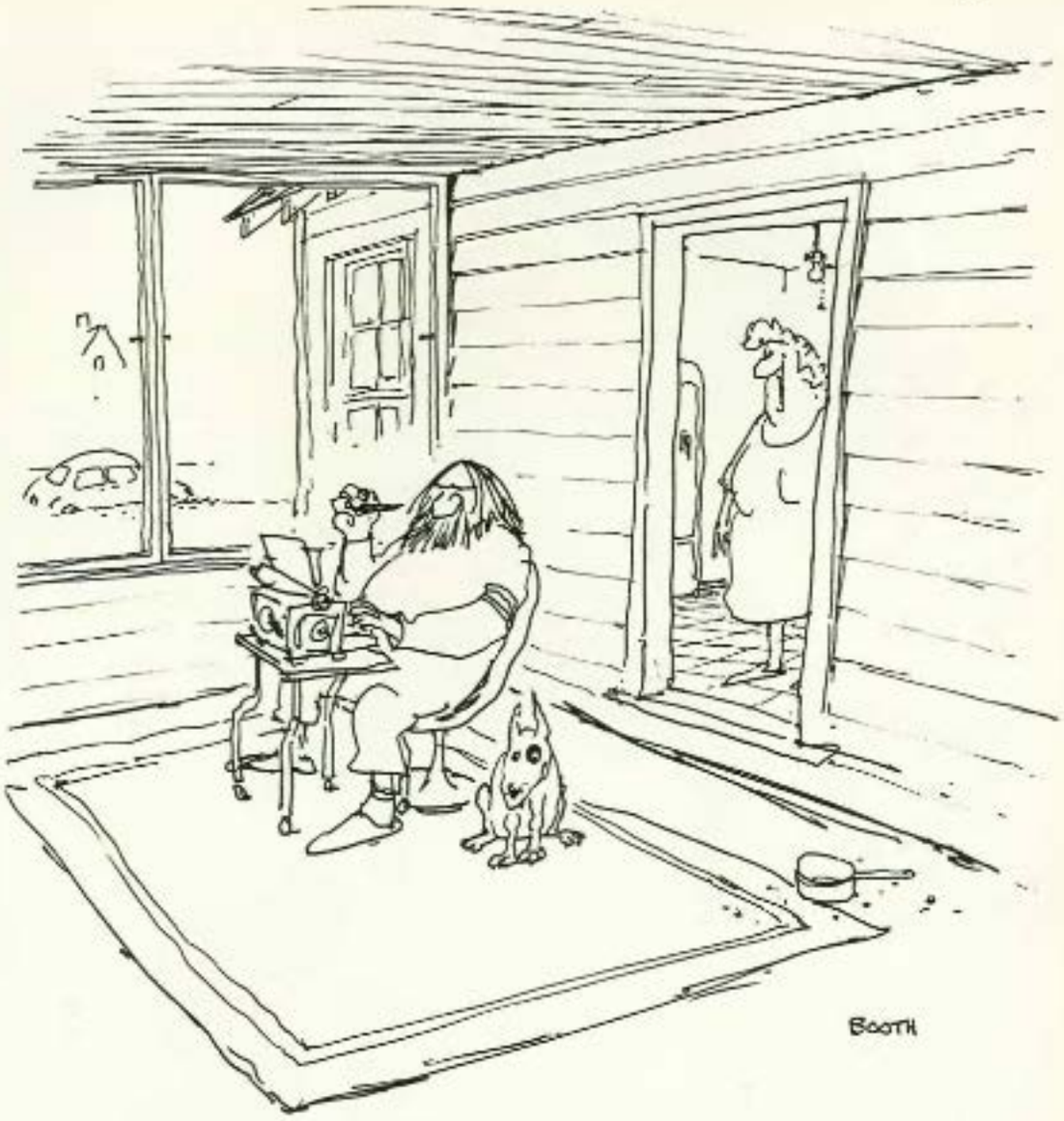
ghettoization of the city, dividing it up by color and income.

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

Robert Moses never held an elective public office. The one time he ran for one—against Herbert Lehman for governor, in 1934—he was defeated by more than eight hundred thousand votes. But he served in a multiplicity of appointive posts as city park commissioner, city construction coördinator, chairman of the Mayor's Slum Clearance Committee, chairman of the State Council of Parks, president of the Long Island State Park Commission, and chairman of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Jones Beach State Parkway Authority, the Bethpage State Park Authority, and the New York State Power Authority. And he developed his public authorities into a fourth branch of government, known as "Triborough," which was so powerful that he was, in effect, free from control by the officials who had appointed him. Through Triborough, he mobilized banks, labor unions, contractors, bond-underwriting syndicates, real-estate manipulators—a dozen key economic interests—into a unified, irresistible force, and with that force he warped the city off its democratic bias. During his decades of power, the public-works decisions that determined the city's shape were made on the basis not of democratic but of economic considerations. During most of his reign—including, despite legend, most of the LaGuardia portion of it—the city's people had no real voice in determining the city's future. He and he alone—not the city's people, not the government officials the people elected to represent them, not the power brokers who dominated some of these officials—decided what public works would be built, when they would be built, and to what design they would be built. He was the supreme power broker.

Moses' interest in power came late. Growing up in New Haven (where he was born, on December 18, 1888) and New York City, in a well-to-do German Jewish family, he was taught to cherish the ideal of public service, of "helping people." At Yale, he was known as a passionate idealist. Sitting up late night after night, his bedroom door closed against the noise of horseplay in the dormitory, he wrote dreamy romantic poetry for a college literary magazine about Beauty and Truth (and about the Mona Lisa, his favorite subject, whom he called "Our Lady Divine"). Fellow-members of the Class of 1909 who ventured behind the closed door saw that few of the

books stacked on Moses' desk had anything to do with his courses; his voracious reading, they realized, was not for marks but for knowledge. In a university that was still a tightly sealed society revolving around its fraternities and senior societies, Moses argued so earnestly that class offices should not be parcelled out among fraternities but filled according to merit, that the criterion shouldn't be who a man's friends were but what he could do, that one classmate said after listening to him, "I feel as if I've had an awakening tonight." When bull-session discussions turned to careers, Moses said that he was going into public service—that he wanted to help the underprivileged, the lower classes, the people ground down by forces beyond their control. At Oxford, where he was the first American in history to be elected captain of the Dark Blue water-polo team and of the august Oxford Union, he concentrated on civil-service reorganization, a subject based on the same principle he had espoused at Yale: that jobs and promotions in public life should be given on merit alone.



"Judy Klemesrud called. She had the wrong number."

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When Moses returned to New York, he obtained a Ph.D. in political science at Columbia University, and then went to work for a good-government organization called the Bureau of Municipal Research, which was an influential privately supported reform group. He wandered tirelessly around the city, and Frances Perkins, later Secretary of Labor but then a young reformer, who occasionally wandered with him, said that "everything he saw made him think of some way that it could be better," that "he was always burning up with ideas, just burning up with them." He dreamed not only of small improvements such as shelters in Central Park in which mothers could change their babies' diapers but of projects on a scale more vast than any the city had ever undertaken. Riverside Park, along Manhattan's western waterfront, was then a six-mile-long mud flat crumbling year by year into the Hudson River and slashed through along its entire length by New York Central Railroad tracks. Unpainted, rusting jagged wire fences lined the tracks, and the waterfront was filled not with recreational facilities but with tarpaper shantytowns and huge mounds of untreated garbage. South of the park, the tracks ran down Eleventh Avenue, along which, at street level, trains inched their way downtown, causing tremendous traffic jams and so many fatal accidents that Eleventh was known as Death Avenue. For fifty years, the city had been trying without success to find a solution to the problems posed by the presence of the railroad along the West Side. One Sunday in the summer of 1914, Frances Perkins happened to be standing beside Moses on the deck of a ferry taking a group of young reformers to a picnic in New Jersey, and as the ferry pulled out into the river and they leaned on the rail, watching Manhattan spread out behind the boat, Miss Perkins heard Moses suddenly exclaim, "Isn't this a temptation to you? Couldn't this waterfront be the most beautiful thing in the world?" As she looked at him in astonishment, Moses painted for her a picture of what the scene *could* be like on a Sunday: the ugly tracks completely hidden by "a great highway that went uptown along the water;" cars travelling slowly along the highway, their occupants enjoying the view; beside the highway, green parks filled with strollers, tennis players, and bicyclists; sailboats skimming on the river, and motor yachts tied up in gracefully curving basins. The thing that astonished her most, Miss Perkins recalled later, was that Moses "had it all figured out"—every curve the highway would have to take, every building that would have to be torn down to make way for it, the exact location of every tennis court and boat basin.

Later that year, Moses began working for the reform administration of Mayor John Purroy Mitchel, and in a year of unremitting labor he devised a civil-service system that made every aspect of a city employee's performance—including facets of his personali-

ty—subject to a mathematical grade. For the next three years, he fought for adoption of his system, battling a Board of Estimate dominated by one of the most corrupt political machines the United States had ever known. When he rose to defend his plan before Board hearings packed with his opponents a tall, slim figure in white (a Brooks Brothers tropical) among the burly, cigar-smoking Tammany politicians in their black derbies, which they wore even indoors—he could hardly be heard through the boos. Night after night, clutching a bulging briefcase crammed with facts and statistics that he almost never got to use, introduced as "Dr. Moses," in honor of his Ph.D., he stood before civil-service-employee associations, audiences of men who owed their jobs not to merit but to the ward boss, and spoke into hails of abuse. And observers said that the viciousness of the jeering crowds seemed to make no impression on him, so deeply did he believe that if only they could be led to understand how good his system was they would surely support it. "Once you saw him on those nights, you could never forget him," H. Eliot Kaplan, another reformer of that era, remarked. "Tall, handsome—he'd get up on the platform and go right to bat. He wouldn't pull his punches or try to modify the things he was saying so they'd be less unpopular. The more they booed him, the more self-confident, even arrogant, he seemed. In the worst of it, he went right on talking." When he argued for his ideas, he was careful always to have his facts ready, never to exaggerate them, and always to draw from them logical conclusions, for he believed that truth and logic would prevail. In those pre-First World War years of optimism, of reform, of idealism, Moses was the optimist of optimists, the reformer of reformers, the idealist of idealists. He made such a nuisance of himself that in 1918 Tammany Hall decided to crush him, and it did so with efficiency. In November of that year, less than a month away from his thirtieth birthday, with the grading forms for his civil-service system being used for scratch paper, with the Central Park shelters and the great highway unbuilt, Robert Moses, Phi Beta Kappa at Yale, honors man at Oxford, was out of work and was standing in a line in the Cleveland City Hall waiting to apply for a minor municipal job—a job that, incidentally, he didn't get.

"It only hurts when I'm laughing on the outside and crying on the inside."

Tammany was back in control in New York, so there was obviously no place for Moses in city government there. He had no connections in Washington. There was a new governor in New York State, elected in an upset—Alfred E. Smith—but Smith was a Tammany man and, in fact, one of the most vociferous opponents of Moses' civil-service proposals. Moses had met Smith several years before, when Smith was city sheriff, and had not been at all impressed by the short, paunchy Irishman with the red face, gold-filled teeth, and loud, rasping voice. "He is a typical Tammany politician," Moses said to a friend at the time. "What can you expect from a man who wears a brown derby on the side of his head and always has a big cigar in the corner of his mouth?" Smith was the very antithesis of Moses' ideal of a politician. Whether it was true that he had never read a book all the way through, as rumor had it, the story was plausible; not only had Smith never been to a university but he had never

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been to high school—and he boasted about it. His remark on the floor of the State Assembly that his only degree was F.F.M.—for the Fulton Fish Market, where he worked as a boy—was already a legend. There seemed to be as little likelihood of a place for Moses on the state level as on the city; in fact, there seemed to be no place anywhere for him to turn.

And then, one day late in November of 1918, Moses got a call from Belle Moskowitz. Mrs. Moskowitz wasn't "Mrs. M." then. The nickname came later, when, an almost legendary figure among politicians, she had more power and influence than any other woman in the United States—power and influence given to her by Al Smith. The nickname was used by Smith, by the young social workers and reformers she had recruited to his service, and by politicians who, on favor-seeking visits to Albany, noticed her sitting unobtrusively in a corner of the Governor's office—a short, plump, and motherly woman, placidly knitting while she waited for the Governor to turn to her, as he did before making any important decision, and ask, "What do you think, Mrs. M.?"

But in 1918 Belle Moskowitz was not a legendary figure, or even an especially impressive one, among New York reformers. The daughter of a Jewish watchmaker from Eastern Europe, she had been part of the reform movement for twenty-two years—ever since, at the age of eighteen, she had begun working with immigrants even poorer than herself at Madison and other settlement houses. But there was a difference between Belle and the average reformer: Belle Moskowitz's dreams became realities. For example, in 1909 the Women's City Club, under Mrs. Moskowitz's direction, began an investigation of the city's so-called dancing academies. The "academies" were the only easily accessible places of weekday recreation for the poor girls of the lower East Side who worked in garment-center sweatshops. These girls, many of them in their early teens, were unsophisticated. But the academies served liquor at tables on the dance floor, had rooms ready for hasty rental down adjacent corridors, and seemed expressly designed for what reformers euphemistically referred to as "the downfall of young women." Reformers had been railing against the academies for years, but previous cleanup efforts had followed the familiar pattern: investigations that caused newspaper furor and loud demands for change, verbal acquiescence by Tammany, and then, after the furor died down, business as before. Mrs. Moskowitz altered the pattern. Instead of loudly denouncing conditions at the academies, she quietly checked incorporation certificates to learn the names of their owners, and found that they included both Tammany leaders and community pillars. Instead of giving the names to the newspapers, which would have brought headlines but not results, since all her ammunition would have been used up, she went to the leaders and pillars and told them she would keep their names secret if they saw to it that regulatory legislation was passed—and strictly enforced. It was. "These laws," the *Times* editorialized, "did more to improve the moral surroundings of young girls" than any other single social reform of the period.

The gubernatorial election of 1918 was the first in New York State in which women were allowed to vote. During the campaign, Al Smith, uncertain how to appeal to the new voters, had felt he needed a woman active in female civic organizations who could sell him to such groups. Most of the female do-gooders around town wanted nothing to do with Smith's campaign. But Mrs. Moskowitz, who was interested in achieving her goals through practical politics, volunteered eagerly. Smith regarded most reformers as crackpots, and thought that in any case women did not belong in politics. He was prepared to listen to his new adviser with no more than token interest. Lost in Smith's crowded strategy sessions, Mrs. Moskowitz had trouble even making her suggestions heard. But Smith heard some, took some, and after a while began to notice something about them—they always worked.

On the November day when Mrs. Moskowitz called Moses, he didn't even know what activity she was currently engaged in. He wondered what she wanted. Governor-elect Smith, Mrs. Moskowitz told him, had decided to appoint a Reconstruction Commission to draw up a plan for the complete reorganization of the state's administrative machinery and the carrying out of sweeping social-welfare reforms. The Governor-elect, she said, intended to use the commission's plan as the basic program for his administration. Mrs. Moskowitz said that the commission would be composed of the state's most distinguished citizens, that Governor-elect Smith had appointed her its executive head, and that she was looking for a chief of staff to serve under her and head its work force, which would include at least fifty persons. The chief of staff, she said, would have a free hand in hiring the fifty and would also have complete charge of the day-to-day work of the commission. Would Dr. Moses be interested in the job? Dr. Moses said he would.

Reorganization of the state government was not a new idea. It had been a basic reform tenet for years, and in 1915 a Bureau of Municipal Research study commissioned by a state constitutional convention had found that the state had no fewer than a hundred and sixty-nine separate departments, bureaus, boards, agencies, and commissions, many with overlapping functions. Some agency heads were responsible to the governor, some to the Legislature, and some to officials who were themselves elected by the people and were hence not responsible to either the governor or the Legislature. Most important, the study found that the governor possessed little real authority. Not he but the chairmen of the various committees of the reactionary and corrupt Legislature controlled the state's purse. The document that was called a state budget was actually a collection of appropriations drawn up by these chairmen. No legislator—or other state official—reviewed the collection, balanced one appropriation against another, cut appropriations down to agreed-upon necessities, or measured them against estimated revenue. Even after the document was formally printed, individual legislators continued to introduce "private" bills of their own, generally for pork-barrel public-works projects, and these, when passed, did not appear in the "budget" at all. No one bothered to add things up, so when the Legislature adjourned, no one could be sure how much money it had appropriated. The governor technically had the power to veto appropriations, but a convenient state law forbade him to veto *part* of an appropriation item, and legislators simply made sure that each debatable expenditure was lumped with an essential one.

As a Bureau of Municipal Research staff member, Moses had worked on the 1915 reorganization report, and at first in his new job he expected the report of the Reconstruction Commission to be practically a duplication of it. But there was a big difference between working for the bureau and working for Belle Moskowitz. The bureau made recommendations; Mrs. Moskowitz made laws. The bureau got enthusiastic and excited; Mrs. Moskowitz

got things done. And no sooner had her chief of staff begun work than she began to teach him *how* things got done. When Moses submitted a preliminary outline of suggested commission goals, he included a phrase straight out of the reform textbooks and his civil-service reorganization days: "Elimination of unnecessary personnel." Mrs. Moskowitz struck the phrase out. Personnel, she said, were voters. You didn't antagonize voters. When Moses, copying a 1915 bureau recommendation, suggested that the unwieldy ten-member "council" that ran the Department of Agriculture and Markets be scrapped in favor of a single professional commissioner, she pointed out that the council memberships were distributed by the Legislature and were among the choicest patronage posts it possessed. The Governor would need the support of the Legislature to obtain approval for his program, she said. The council would remain.

Often, Moses would come bursting out of Mrs. Moskowitz's office cursing under his breath. But in spite of the cursing there was a difference in Moses. Before long, his conversation began to include the phrases of practical politics as well as those of scientific-management textbooks. His analysis of a state job began to take into consideration not only whether the position was necessary for the betterment of mankind but also who had appointed the man now holding the position. He learned to weigh the governmental gains that might be achieved by the elimination of the position against the political losses that the elimination might entail—how much it would antagonize the appointer and how great an obstacle such antagonism might be to the Governor's over-all program. The difference went deeper. Previously, Moses had been an uncompromising idealist, interested only in his dreams. He had scorned the considerations of "practical" politics. Practical politicians had crushed and destroyed his dreams and had come near to crushing and destroying him. But now, given a chance to learn the practical politicians' methods, Moses seemed almost enthusiastic about embracing them.

However, the commission's work meshed with Moses' personal convictions. Reorganizing government to make it more responsive to social needs was an aim he had enunciated for himself in his Columbia dissertation, and all his subsequent work in government had only strengthened his belief in the urgency of the need for such reorgani-

zation. Moreover, the scope and aim of the commission's work were consonant with the sweeping, soaring, almost visionary quality of Moses' idealism—for the reorganization plan represented a chance to change a state, the most populous and most influential in the nation.

The commission's recommendations, which took forty-two pages to summarize, were backed up with three hundred and seventy-two pages of remarkable detail, including a job-by-job analysis of every one of New York State's hundred and eighty-eight agencies. For internal changes within agencies or departments—and thousands of them were recommended—only "statutory changes," or new laws, would be required, the report concluded. For three of the proposed major governmental changes—the creation of sixteen departments, with provision that all existing state agencies and any that might be established in the future would be placed within them; the institution of an executive budget system; and the extension of the governor's term from two years to four—the state constitution would have to be amended, each amendment requiring passage by two successive Legislatures and approval by the state's voters in a referendum.

From the day the Reconstruction Commission report was published, on October 10, 1919, it was hailed as a historic document, not only by Smith, who had sponsored it, and the reformers, who saw in it the finest exposition of their philosophy, but, more important, by the men Belle Moskowitz had hoped would hail it—the Republican "federal crowd," influential national political figures whose backing Smith needed in order to remain in power. By the time the 1920 Legislature adjourned, it had been bludgeoned into passing bills incorporating most of the Reconstruction Commission's "statutory changes" and the sixteen-department constitutional amendment, known as the consolidation amendment. And although the Legislature voted down the executive-budget and four-year-term proposals, Moses felt confident that the whole program would be passed during Smith's next term.

But the next term was not Smith's. With the backing of many of the old-line reformers, independents, and Republicans who would normally have supported his opponent, Nathan L. Miller, the Governor ran one million ninety thousand votes ahead of his ticket. But the head of the ticket was the Presidential candidate James M. Cox, and Cox, along with the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee, young Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was caught up in the Harding landslide and lost New York State by one million two hundred thousand votes. In an era in which ticket splitting was far more unusual than it became half a century later, more than a million New Yorkers had split their ballot to vote for Al Smith. The phenomenon was considered unprecedented in American politics. But Smith was, for the first time in the seventeen elections he had run in, a loser—and Moses was afraid that the Reconstruction Commission program was, too. Without at least the consolidation amendment, the statutory changes were meaningless, and in 1921 Miller opposed the amendment's re-passage and the Legislature never let it or the executive-budget and four-year-term proposals out of committee.

To Moses, these developments must at first have seemed just another defeat in a life already filled with defeats. In reality, however, during these developments something new had begun to happen, something that would not only insure that the Reconstruction Commission's proposals would eventually become law but that would also change the course of Bob Moses' life.

Out of public office in 1921 and 1922, Al Smith was back in New York City, working as chairman of the board of a large trucking company. The company's owners were Irishmen from the Fourth Ward, the Old Neighborhood—friends of Al Smith's youth, who idolized him. Since the company's offices were on Canal Street, only ten blocks north of City Hall, an almost continuous stream of city officials—men who had risen through the Tammany organization with Smith—walked the ten blocks to drop in on "the Governor" and pass the time of day, hoping that Smith would accord them the supreme honor, an invitation to walk home with him across the Neighborhood to his apartment, on Oliver Street.

Moses, meanwhile, was working for a new reform organization, the New York State Association, in a shabby cubicle, at 305 Broadway, barely large enough for his desk and that of a part-time secretary. He was hardly in even quasi-official touch with government. Occasionally, he would have lunch with Ernie Willvonseder, a former Bureau of Municipal Research staff member who was now a lower-echelon city employee, or with one of the few other people he knew in the City Hall area, but more often he had to eat

"Do you know what I like about you, Rachel? You're old, like me."

alone. He had few visitors. But then in the late afternoon the phone would often ring. "Bob," Al Smith would rasp, "how about walking home with me?"

The two men made an odd pair as they walked through the winding, narrow streets of the lower East Side in the twilight—one of them tall, slim, handsome, and aristocratic in bearing, the other short, potbellied, florid. The taller man, who took long, springing steps, continually had to shorten his stride to let the other, whose gait was slow and extremely pigeon-toed, catch up. Their progress was further slowed by Smith's popularity. He seemed to know almost every man and woman who passed, and when one stopped to chat, he would stop, too, and talk without appearance of impatience, while his companion paced restlessly in little circles or, trying desperately to stand still and listen politely, nervously clenched and unclenched his fists.

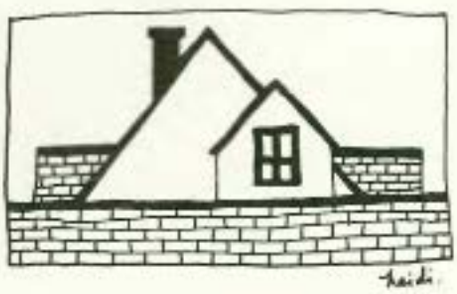
But between the chats with passers-by there was plenty of time for Moses and Smith to talk to each other, and not all the talking was done by Smith. In fact, as twilight walk succeeded twilight walk, more and more of it was done by Moses. The ideas that he had poured forth for almost a decade, the theories with which he had bored colleagues at the Bureau of Municipal Research, examiners at the Municipal Civil Service Commission, borough presidents, park commissioners, and a legion of minor city officials, were now poured forth again. The late-afternoon phone calls from Smith became more frequent. With regularity now when the two men arrived at the old red brick tenement in which Smith lived, Moses would be invited in for dinner.

One day, Moses barged into Ernie Willvonseder's office. He was striding fast, almost running, and was more excited than Willvonseder had ever seen him.

"Ernie," he said, "Al Smith *listens* to me."

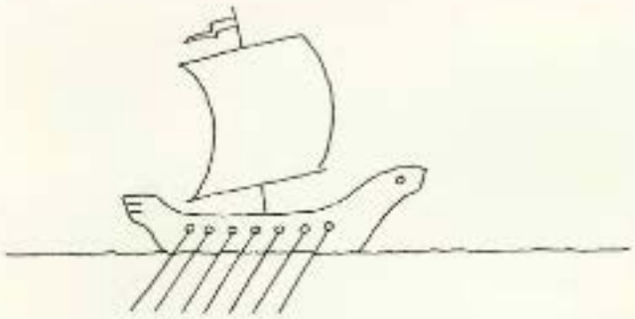
MANY people later saw in the bond between Moses and Smith a key to the shape in which the future of New York State and New York City unfolded, and wondered what had forged between the two men a tie so strong that, transcending pride and ambition, it could be ended only by death. Certainly there was nothing in their early lives to ally them. Moses' youth was set against a backdrop of Lucerne and Elberon, broad elm trees and leafy arbors, red damask and panelled walls, and coffee streaming from a spout of silver into bright, fragile cups. Smith spent his youth in the Fourth Ward, a wilderness of tenements stretching away from the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge. His grandparents had come to earth in that ward for no better reason than that they happened to see a "Rooms to Let" sign hung out only a few blocks from the South Street pier, where the Black Ball Line had deposited them in 1841—along with a shipload of other ragged Westmeath Irish—and they were too hungry and too tired to walk farther. They lived all the rest of their lives in the Fourth Ward. Al Smith's parents lived there, too, and Smith himself, who was born over a barbershop at 174 South Street, on December 30, 1873, spent all his youth and young manhood in the shadow of the bridge.

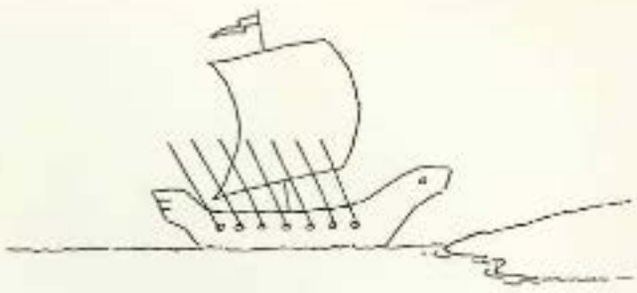
But if Moses and Smith had entered politics for different reasons and by different paths—one by studying textbooks and passing examinations, the other by rising slowly through the ranks of Tammany—they had come to share many goals. It took the reformers some time to realize this. Al Smith, they said at first, had absolutely no "general theory." His naïveté in matters of philosophy was ridiculous. When he talked about social-welfare legislation, it was in terms of "us" against "them," of "the people" against "the interests," of the Fourth Ward against the factory owners. But "the people," the Fourth Ward, did seem to mean something very special to him. No one could listen to him talk about how doctors' bills could eat up a man's savings and leave his family destitute, about how penniless mothers feared that "the charities" would take their children, about children who grew to manhood without ever having a pair of new shoes, without believing that his determination to help "the people" was real. No one could look at his face when he talked and not *know* it was real. First one and then another of the reformers began to tell their friends that they had really come to believe that maybe, just maybe, after decades of waiting, reform in New York had found at last, in the uneducated Tammany henchman, the instrument it had been waiting for: the champion who would fight for their dreams in the political arena and turn them into laws.



Smith, for his part, had no patience with reformers who, unlike Belle Moskowitz, didn't understand the importance of practical politics in getting things done, who refused to compromise, who insisted on having the bill as it was written, who raged loudly at injustice, who fought single-mindedly for an unattainable ideal. Their pigheadedness had the effect of dragging to political destruction the politicians who listened to them, of ruining careers that men had taken years to build. He had seen it happen. And, more important, what was the inevitable result of their efforts, courageous though these might be? Since the reformers refused to compromise and operate within the political framework—the only framework within which their proposals could become reality—the laws they proposed were never enacted, and therefore at the end of their efforts the people whom they had wanted to help, the people who *he* knew so well needed help, hadn't been helped at all. If anything, they had been hurt: the stirring up of hard feelings and bitterness delayed less dramatic but still useful reforms that might have been enacted. When the reformers were finished with all their hollering and were back in their comfortable homes, the widows of the Fourth Ward would still be forced to give up their children before they could get charity. What good was courage if its only effect was to hurt those you were trying to help? So Smith despised the noncompromisers, the starry-eyed idealists. He despised, in other words, most reformers. He despised what Bob Moses had been. But he didn't despise Moses.

There were other reformers who were personally friendly with the Governor, including some who were vital to his political future, but they were seldom invited up to the Oliver Street flat for dinner. For Moses, during 1921 and 1922, the invitations came more and more often. If, after dinner, old cronies from the Neighborhood dropped by to take Smith out to the local taverns for a drink and a song or two around the back-room piano, Smith always insisted that Moses come along. In fact, discovering that Moses had a passable bass to go with his own tenor, he insisted that Moses be a part of whatever quartet was hastily arranged for the evening's barbershopping, and if Moses tried to beg off, Smith would drag him out of his seat and make him stand beside him and harmonize. The attachment between the two opposites was puzzling to their friends,





but, whatever the reason for it, it was there. And when Smith won back the governorship in 1922, by three hundred and eighty-seven thousand votes—the largest plurality any gubernatorial candidate had ever been given in the state, and a plurality large enough to pull in behind him every other Democratic nominee for statewide office—he took Moses back to Albany with him.

Moses had no official position in any branch of the state government. He was still merely the secretary of the New York State Association. But he was a key figure in the political maneuvering during the 1923 legislative session, and he was now in the innermost circle of the Governor's advisers. It was exciting being part of that circle. It was exciting watching how the Governor maneuvered—watching him twist arms, offer incentives, and, with a guile unmatched in Albany, drop, one by one, the veils from in front of threats. It was exciting watching Jimmy Walker, the Democratic floor leader, make the deals by which other Democrats—and Republicans, when needed—were kept in line or brought into line: the judgeship traded for a senator's vote on a crucial issue, the "campaign contribution" promised for an alteration in a legislator's stand. Reform work was, more and more, an irritating intrusion on Moses' time. The hours he put in at the New York State Association office during the week became fewer and fewer. The gaps between issues of the association's publication, the *State Bulletin*, which Moses was putting out single-handed, grew longer and longer. And when the *Bulletin* did appear now, it did not resemble a reform pamphlet; more and more, it resembled a Tammany Hall broadside in support of Al Smith.

Reorganization, of course, was the key to all Smith's hopes—and the hopes of Mrs. Moskowitz and the other reformers around the Governor—for social reform. No sooner was he returned to office in 1923 than he sent the Legislature a special message, drafted by Moses, that restarted the three reorganization amendments down the tortuous road to law. In 1923 and again in 1924, the Legislature passed the amendment consolidating departments of the state government—each time after battles in which Walker and Democratic Assembly leaders fought for every vote, and in which Moses hurried up and down the marble stairs of the capitol between the Executive Chamber, on the second floor, and the Senate and Assembly Chambers, on the third, bringing the leaders fresh ammunition.

In 1925, the first year of his third term, Smith made reorganization a major issue, and the consolidation amendment was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum. Moses drafted the constitutional amendment and most of the hundreds of specific bills that gave effect to the amendment's provisions. When the reorganization took effect, Moses saw a project that reshaped the administrative machinery of an entire state become a reality, and it was a project in which he himself had been the principal mover. When Robert F. Wagner, Sr., was asked to name Smith's outstanding accomplishment as governor, he said flatly, "The reorganization." Smith agreed. If he now had the power that a governor was supposed to have, reorganization had given it to him.

And he knew who was responsible. Day after day during the reorganization fight, Smith had watched Moses drafting the bills that contained the details of departmental reorganization: which agency went in which department, which powers were given to each agency. Bill-drafting was called by Albany insiders "the black art of politics." An expert bill-drafter had to know thousands of precedents, so that he could pick out the one that, embodied in the bill he was working on, would make the bill legal, or so that by careful wording he could avoid bringing the new act within the purview of an old one that might make it illegal. He had to know a myriad ways of conferring or denying power by the written word. He had to know how to lull the opposition by concealing the real content of a bill. For years, everyone had said there was no doubt about the identity of the best bill-drafter in Albany: Alfred E. Smith. And Smith had never been shy about accepting that compliment. But now when someone brought up the subject, Smith said, "The best bill-drafter I know is Bob Moses."

Smith was a man who believed in paying his debts. In 1923, he found for Moses a state sinecure with high pay and a low work load: the directorship of a board to supervise the industries that, at Moses' suggestion, had been installed in state prisons.

Moses told Smith he didn't want the job.

"What do you want, then?" Smith asked.

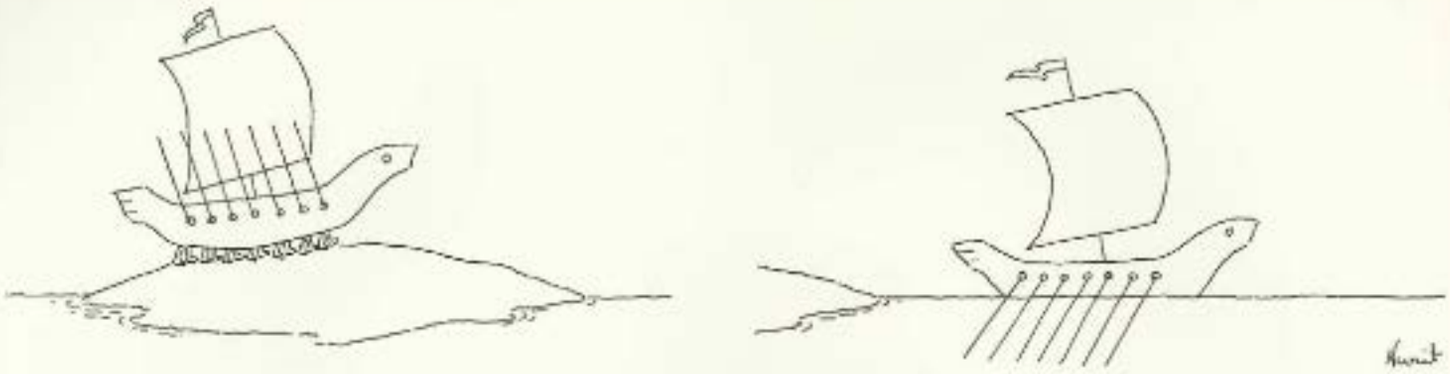
"Nothing," Moses replied.

Over and over during 1923 and the beginning of 1924, while Moses was driving himself in Smith's service, Smith asked him what he wanted. Over and over, Moses said, "Nothing."

And then, one day, there was something. The something was parks.

PARKS was a subject listed frequently during the nineteen-twenties on the agendas of New York good-government organizations. Parks had always been a concern of reformers, who were fond of referring to the need for "breathing spaces for the slums" or "lungs for the city." But other reform causes had been pressed with more urgency. There was so much open space in the city's outlying boroughs that there had seemed no need for hurry to reserve any of it, and the cost of condemning buildings in the slums, which were so heavily built up that there seemed no other way to obtain space there, was prohibitive. Other matters, it had seemed, should take precedence. There would be time to get to parks.

Now, suddenly, there wasn't any time. Between 1910 and 1920, the population of New York City had increased from 4,766,883 to 5,620,048, and as the twenties unrolled the rate of increase accelerated, most of it occurring outside Manhattan. When Moses



returned to the city from Oxford, in 1913, some of Brooklyn, most of the Bronx, and practically all of Queens were woods, meadows, or farmland. Now red bricks, like those that had imprisoned the lower East Side in tenements, were being cemented into building walls in Brooklyn's remaining green fields, and in the Bronx and Queens great stretches of meadow and woodland were blossoming hideously with developers' "Spanish stucco haciendas" and "Colonial farmhouses." Vacant land, the irreplaceable essential for parks, was vanishing in New York City.

Most of the land around the city was in private hands and was closed to the city's people. To the north, in Westchester County, there were indeed parks, the rolling hills and green playing fields that city dwellers sought, but Westchester towns had barred their parks to everyone not a local resident. Fifteen miles north of the city line, beyond Mount Vernon, Bronxville, Scarsdale, and White Plains, was an unrestricted attraction—Kensico Dam, surrounded by twenty-five hundred acres of trees and meadows. But the only way to get to Kensico was to drive through the narrow and often unpaved streets of the Bronx and then through the traffic-clogged downtowns of Westchester's cities. Families who left New York in the morning were lucky to arrive at Kensico by late afternoon. To the west of New York City, across the Hudson River, was a vast preserve open to the city's residents—Palisades Interstate Park. Founded in 1900, funded by the Rockefellers and the Harrimans with fifteen million dollars, it was considered—with its lakes, its landscaped drives, its herd of elk, and its buildings erected "to resemble the eternal hills themselves"—the finest park in the United States. But it was sometimes no more accessible than Kensico. Since there were then no bridges across the Hudson, and no tunnels except those that carried railroads (the Holland Tunnel was not opened until 1927), New Yorkers had to cross the river on ferries. A ferry carried twenty-four cars on each trip; often, at ten o'clock on a weekend morning, there would be hundreds of cars lined up at the ferry slips in Manhattan. And the ferries' New Jersey terminals were some miles south of the park. After disembarking, families faced a drive on two-lane roads through congested sections of Weehawken, Englewood, and Alpine. So desperate were New Yorkers that they made the trip anyway—in steadily growing numbers. (In 1921, attendance at the park was about three million. In 1922, it was more than four million.) Every year, the Rockefellers and the Harrimans built more playing fields and campsites, yet every year the playing fields and campsites were so jammed that on weekends Palisades Park, for all its beautiful woods and landscaped drives, seemed as crowded as the city its visitors had come to it to escape.

Increasingly, the eyes of the city's residents—and of the reformers interested in providing parks for them—were turning to the east, to Long Island. Brooklyn and Queens, occupying the westernmost sixth of Long Island, were inhabited in 1920 by two and a half million people, a population greater than that of all but fourteen states in the Union. But beyond the eastern border of Queens lay thirteen hundred square miles, or 878,080 acres, divided into the counties of Nassau and Suffolk and inhabited by less than a quarter of a million people, or one person to every four acres. With an area four times as large as the city's and a population less than one twenty-fifth as large, Nassau and Suffolk Counties seemed to offer a prodigal extravagance of space. In summer, the cool green hills and rolling surf of Long Island beckoned sweltering New Yorkers like a vast playground. Certainly the Island seemed open to them. Unlike the Hudson, the East River had been spanned by great bridges—the Williamsburg, the Queensboro, the Manhattan, and the Brooklyn. And running out from the bridges through Brooklyn and Queens to the very threshold of the suburban counties were three boulevards, Northern, Conduit, and Queens, one of which, Northern, was to be sixty feet wide. For Brooklyn and Queens residents, moreover, there was no necessity for either bridges or boulevards. Rural Long Island was just down the road.

On the Island's South Shore, the Great South Bay offered gentle waves and sandy beaches. But the bay was the haunt of the baymen, a close-mouthed, independent breed, some of them descendants of families that had "followed the bay" since the Revolution, others New England Yankees who had left their whaling boats for Long Island. Their lives revolved around the bay. When its tides were flood, no matter what the hour, through the thick, damp mist, hip boots slung over their shoulders, caps pulled low over their eyes, they trudged to their weather-beaten little trawlers and crept out into the fog, returning hours later so heavily laden that only the bows and sterns of the boats were out of the water. They loved the bay's sparkle in summer, its cool breezes; somehow they loved its treacherous shoals and tides and the hidden traps of swamp grass that tangled their boats' propellers. Forced off it by winter storms, they settled down in taverns near the piers that jutted into it, drinking (they were famous for their drinking) and spinning legends about it. Once you were "bay salted," they said, you would never leave. They were fiercely determined to keep it for themselves. The bay bottoms, as the hellfire preachers in their bare little churches constantly told them, were "sacred," their "priceless natural heritage." When it came time each year for the townships that bordered on the Great South Bay—Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Babylon, Islip, and Brookhaven—to issue licenses to mine the bay's underwater crops of shellfish, the baymen crowded into the town halls to listen while the licenses were awarded, and no outsider was ever given one. Distrusting anyone "from away," the baymen especially distrusted anyone

from New York. They hated the city—many boasted that they had never been there—and feared that at the first slackening in their vigilance its "foreigners," hordes of long-haired Slavs, hook-nosed Jews, and unwashed Irishmen, would descend on their beautiful beaches and befoul them. To keep such intruders away, on every piece of publicly owned waterfront property that might conceivably attract visitors from the city the township boards had created "parks" whose exclusive use was by statute reserved to township residents.

The baymen's landlocked cousins, the farmers of Long Island, were men of similar outlook. In no other county of New York State were the white hoods of the Ku Klux Klan as numerous as in Suffolk County. Three successive chairmen of Suffolk's Republican Party were members of the Klan, and anyone who needed an additional symbol of the Klan's power had only to look at the flagpole in front of the Islip town hall: the pole, read the inscription on an attached plaque, had been donated by the Islip branch of the Ladies of the Klan and gratefully accepted by the town board. (In 1928, when Al Smith ran for President, fiery crosses blazed on the hills of Alabama and Mississippi and on the hills of Suffolk.) Combining with the baymen to dominate the Suffolk political picture, the farmers had no difficulty in persuading town supervisors to make sure that there was not a single park in Suffolk open to city residents.

Yet it was neither the baymen nor the farmers who most firmly barred rural Long Island to those who hungered for it. The residents of New York City had a far more powerful enemy. It was wealth—vast, entrenched, impregnable wealth—and the power that went with it. For it was to Long Island that the robber barons of America had retired to enjoy their plunder. These were the men who, during "the 'feudal period' of our industrial development," as Matthew Josephson called the half century of unbridled industrial expansion following the Civil War, had harnessed America's vast mineral resources and tapped its long-stored capital to create needed industrial growth but, to turn that growth into personal wealth, had stationed themselves at the "narrows" of production—the key points of production and distribution—and exacted tribute from the nation. They were the men who had bribed and corrupted legislators—the Standard Oil Company, one historian said, did everything possible to the Pennsylvania Legislature except refine it—to let them loot the nation's oil and ore; men who, building their empires on the toil of millions of immigrant laborers, had kept wages low and hours long and had crushed the unions. Their creed was summed up in two quotes: Commodore Vanderbilt's "Law, what do I care about law? Hain't I got the power?" and J. P. Morgan's "I owe the public nothing."

The northern tip of Long Island's Glen Cove peninsula was J. P. Morgan's estate, the waters beside it were the anchorage for his great black yacht Corsair, and all the northern reaches of the peninsula were "Morgan country." His son—Morgan the Younger, reporters called him—and four partners of the House of Morgan lived there, and so did George F. Baker, who was the chairman of the board of the First National Bank of New York and the largest single stockholder of both A.T. & T. and First National Bank (his holdings in First National alone totalled $212,500,000), and who rode at the right hand of Morgan the Elder in the turn of the century's bloodiest stock-market raids. Baker was old now—eighty in 1920—but not too old to lift his sword; in 1930, when he was ninety and America was in the Depression, he climbed out of bed, pushed his doctors aside, went back to work, and, in a series of incredible stock manipulations, increased his fortune in that year alone by fifty million dollars.

To the south of the Morgans lay the demesnes of Standard Oil, where Charles Pratt and Stephen V. Harkness, partners of the first John D. Rockefeller, had carved out adjoining fiefs on either side of a small inlet. Pratt, on his, built six manor houses for his six sons. South of the Pratts, in the beautiful Wheatley Hills, there established himself Henry Phipps, full partner of Andrew Carnegie, and a man who, while Carnegie drove men to ordeals of sweat, grime, and injury in the roaring steel mills of western Pennsylvania, obtained the cash to let Carnegie build more mills by using a talent "for keeping a check in the air as long as any man." Around him in the hills Phipps gathered his children and grandchildren. To the west of the Phippses' lands, also in the Wheatley Hills, lay Harbor Hill, the four-hundred-and-eighty-acre holding of Clarence Hungerford Mackay, who was the board chairman and major stockholder of the Postal Telegraph and Cable Corporation, an international communications combine. North and west of Mackay stretched the fiefs of other barons of American business, and mingled with the barons were representatives of older wealth—won by gentler means—and of newer. There were six hundred estates on the North Shore by 1920, most of them of more than fifty acres, some of them of hundreds of acres, some of them of thousands. The turrets of the barons' castles loomed above the trees along the entire North Shore of Nassau County and fifteen miles deep into Suffolk.

Their world was a tight one, linked not only by money but by marriage, Whitney to Vanderbilt, Pratt to Tiffany, Phipps to Mills. And they intended to keep that world for themselves. The barons were willing, they told each other, to spend anything necessary "to keep our privacy"—by which they meant to keep the public out of their demesne. And in their view this demesne included the whole North Shore. The public officials they controlled allowed public roads not needed for the barons' own access to their estates to fall into disrepair, in order to discourage public use. Lest the public turn instead to rail transportation, a group of the barons, led by Charles Pratt, who had learned how to handle annoyances from his mentor, Rockefeller, bought sufficient stock in the Long Island Rail Road to dictate its policies, and saw to it that the railroad's North Shore lines were kept especially antiquated and rickety. The main attraction that lured the public to Long Island was bathing beaches. Along all the hundreds of miles of shorefront on the North Shore, there were open to the city residents only a handful of pitifully narrow strips of pebbles and weeds, for whose use they were charged exorbitant rates; of the forty-eight miles of shorefront in Huntington Township, for example, exactly twelve hundred and fifty feet were open to the public.

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and power. And the barons of the North Shore knew how to keep it impregnable. They were accustomed to dealing in the political marketplace. Of the ninety-five largest contributors to the Republican Presidential campaign of 1920, no fewer than thirty-three came from the North Shore of Nassau County. In recognition of the North Shore's unique importance to the G.O.P., the Party's National Finance Committee in the late nineteen-twenties contained forty-nine members—one from each of the forty-eight states and one from Nassau County. The North Shore also furnished the bulk of the war chest of the state Republican organization and of the smoothest-running county machine in the state—the Nassau County G.O.P. organization of Boss G. Wilbur Doughty. The barons knew how to get value for money spent. They saw to it that key legislative-committee chairmen were men who would take orders. They sent to Albany as the assemblymen and state senators from Nassau County young knights from their own ranks or young villagers whom they had picked out as promising men to enlist in their service. When the barons became tired of the petty annoyances attendant upon dealing with outside governmental bodies, they established their own, incorporating their estates, under a strangely permissive state law, into "villages" and other self-governing "municipalities," so that the measures necessary to keep out the city hordes could be legitimatized—given "governmental status," and enforced by "village police forces," which before incorporation had been the barons' privately employed guards.

So when the families of New York City reached Long Island, they found only frustration. If they were heading for the North Shore on Northern Boulevard, sixty feet of smooth macadam shrank to eighteen at the city line. The cars heading east had to cram into a single file. As they crept along, the paving of the boulevard deteriorated, so that each family had to watch the cars ahead jounce, one after the other, into gaping potholes and then wait for the jolts themselves. More and more frequently, they came to unpaved stretches in which, if there had been a recent rain, cars became mired, bringing the endless line behind them to a halt. If the earth was dry, thick clouds of dust hung over the unpaved stretches.

As the families drove, they could see on either side of them, through gates set in stone walls or through the openings in wooden fences, the beautiful meadows they had come for, stretching endlessly and emptily to the cool trees beyond. But the meadows and trees were not for them. The gates would be locked, and men carrying shotguns and holding fierce dogs straining on leashes would point eastward, telling the families that there were parks open to them "farther along." Later, in the towns of Oyster Bay and Huntington, they would come to parks, tiny but nonetheless parks. But as they approached, they would see policemen at the entrances, and the policemen would wave them on, explaining that the parks were reserved for town residents. There were, the policemen would say—falsely—parks open "farther along." Northern Boulevard was not, of course, the only route to the North Shore from New York. There was also Jericho Turnpike. There was one difference between Northern Boulevard and Jericho Turnpike. Jericho Turnpike was two feet narrower.

And the robber barons had not been satisfied by the riches of the North Shore of Long Island. Led by Horace O. Havemeyer, "the sultan of sugar," a group of them had seized the choicest areas of the South Shore—a series of promontories below East Islip which jutted out into the Great South Bay about midway of its forty-mile length. They lived there in a splendor equal to that of the North Shore, and they displayed an equal determination to keep their privacy unimpaired.

IN the past, the governments that created parks had been the governments that controlled the areas in which the parks would be situated. The township and village governments on Long Island would never create such parks. Conservationists had begun to talk about "state parks," but a state park had to be created by a state, and New York State's Legislature was dominated by the Long Island barons. A dozen proposals for Long Island parks had been put forward by good-government organizations and introduced in that Legislature, and not one had ever made it out of committee.

Reformers interested in creating parks were discouraged as much by the physical scope of the problem as by the political difficulties involved. Parks large enough to serve any appreciable portion of New York City's millions would have to be measured in the hundreds of acres, and since Long Island was run almost entirely by hostile local governments and landowners, how could those acres ever be obtained? By purchase? Long Island property was valuable—immensely valuable in the hills and along the beachfront, where parks should be situated. By condemnation? Condemnation of valuable property on the scale required would be fantastically expensive—in fact, would require sums for that purpose which were unheard of in America. And since the barons' battalions of lawyers could be expected to fight condemnation with every tactic available, the proceedings would take years. And if somehow the parks *were* created, how would people get to them? Long highways would be required, and their rights-of-way would necessarily cross hundreds, if not thousands, of different properties, and that would mean hundreds, if not thousands, of landowners who were ready to fight, and that would mean hundreds and thousands of additional condemnation proceedings. The reformers realized that even in the unlikely event that they won on Long Island, that they actually succeeded in unhorsing the powerful barons, they wouldn't know what to do with their victory. The problem was so big that the reformers thought it insoluble. As their park proposals died, one after another, in legislative committee, their park discussions came to concern themselves mainly with the creation of more small playgrounds in the city and with the improvement of playground equipment.

Often when Bob Moses went home at night, he would be coming from such park discussions, because Smith frequently employed him as his nonparticipating representative at reformers' conferences. Moses gave such discussions only cursory attention. With state reorganization, and coaching Jimmy Walker, and prison industries to think about, wordy debates over whether a playground site should be on Fourteenth Street or Fifteenth interested him not at all. But during the summer of 1922, when Moses went home he went to Long Island. Invited for weekends in Babylon by friends during 1921, he and his wife, Mary, whom he had met when they were both working at the Bureau of Municipal Research, had fallen in love "with the town, with the bay, with the whole South Shore," and in 1922 they rented a bungalow of their own for the summer. When the discussions on parks ended, he would hurry to the Long Island Rail Road station and catch a train on the South Shore line.

The trip from the city took over an

hour (forty-five years later, Moses could still reel off without effort the names of the stops as the conductors had chanted them: "*Val*ley Stre*am*, *Lyn*brook, *Ocean*side, *Rockville* Cen*tre*, Freeport, Merrick, Amityville, *Linden*hurst, and *Bab*ylon"), and the train was hot. Moses would try to bury himself in work, but every so often he would glance out the window. And after a while he began to notice that while most of the route was filled with one-family houses, between some of the villages there were thick, leafy bands of woods and, gleaming brightly through the trees, the blue water of ponds and streams. The woods were all to the north of the railroad—the left-hand side of the train going out to Babylon and the right-hand going into the city. Moses now began always to sit on the side nearer them. The men around him would be studying the stock-market quotations in their newspapers. Moses would stare out the train window.

One weekend, he went to the Babylon town hall and asked what the woods were. An old-timer told him he must be talking about the Brooklyn water-supply properties—the streams and the areas around them, in Nassau County, that Brooklyn, as an independent city, had bought in 1874, fenced off, and kept guarded, so that in case of a water shortage it would be able to dam the streams and use their water. On Monday morning, Moses stopped by the New York Municipal Building and asked a clerk in the Department of Water Supply, Gas, and Electricity if the city used those properties. Why, no, the clerk said, it never had. There had never been any need. And, come to think of it, now that New York had acquired the huge Croton and Ashokan reservoirs upstate and built aqueducts from them to the city, there probably never would be any. Suddenly the mind that had "burned with ideas" was burning again, and it was focussed on Long Island.

Most of the water-supply properties were set far enough north of Merrick Road, behind blocks of private houses, to be invisible from it, but Merrick Road was the only way of getting close to them. Moses, having never learned to drive, obtained from Smith the use of a car and chauffeur, and he also obtained a letter authorizing the guards at the properties to let him enter their gates. On weekend mornings, as the line of cars from the city crept east along the eighteen-foot-wide road, Moses, leaving Babylon, had himself driven west. Arriving at the spots he had noted from the train, he would or-

der the chauffeur to drive north along side streets until there was no more road, and then he would get out and walk through backyards and vacant lots and along footpaths until he reached the gates and could show his letter to the guards. Then he would plunge into the woods.

They contained surprises. Through the train windows he had glimpsed in the woods that lay between Merrick and Freeport a small pond. When he got into those woods on foot, he found the pond, but beyond it he could see another gleam of water. Reaching that, he found a larger pond, and beyond it another gleam. Beyond that, there was another. There were four ponds, linked by a stream that ran due north, and each was larger than the one before. Lilies floated in them. Pickerel and trout flickered beneath the lily pads. Huge oaks, beeches, birches, and pines surrounded him. And as he tramped steadily north, there seemed no end to them. He was not in a small woods, he realized, but in a forest—it later surveyed out at more than seven hundred acres—that lay untouched in the heart of Nassau County.

There were four more ponds—and seven hundred more wooded acres—stretching south from Wantagh all the way to the Great South Bay. There were five hundred and ninety-five more acres near Massapequa. Between Valley Stream and Lynbrook, there were only fifty acres, but in the center of them was a lake a quarter mile long. And then when he entered the woods between Lynbrook and Rockville Centre, Moses realized he had come to something that dwarfed all the others. The thin band of woods that he had seen from the train at that spot ran north of the tracks for more than three miles, broadening as it went. Within the woods were long, rolling meadows. He had heard that somewhere in the woods was a reservoir, where the stream had been dammed by Brooklyn municipal engineers decades before, and he pushed on, trying to find it. With branches slapping at his face and vines tangling his feet, he came at last to a man-made embankment. Scrambling up, he peered over its top, and there before him lay a body of water more than a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. It was much bigger than the big reservoir in Central Park, he realized. And around it, he guessed—and he turned out to be right—there was more land than there was in Central Park.

Back on Merrick Road, Moses saw the cars from the city still creeping along in the dust and heat—thousands of them, tens of thousands, crammed with people searching desperately for a little patch of green, a spot of clear water, few of whom were destined that weekend to find either. And behind him, not a quarter mile from the road but unknown to all but one in a thousand of the drivers on it—and closed to even that one—was land, a vastness of land, overflowing with the fruits they sought. Land that didn't have to be bought. Land that didn't have to be condemned. Land that was owned not by the governments of Long Island but by the government of New York City. Land that could be opened to the city's people merely by the turning of a key. Adding up the acreage of the various tracts of woods, Moses could hardly believe the figures. The total came to twenty-two hundred acres. And all five tracts were within thirty miles of Manhattan and within eleven miles of the city line. In fact, the woods between Valley Stream and Lynbrook were only two miles from that line.

Suddenly Moses was looking at everything on Long Island in terms of parks. Great South Bay, for example, and the barrier beach beyond—the strip of dunes and beach grass and wild marshes, about five miles offshore, that from the Babylon piers was a long, low line on the horizon across the bay. Baymen called it "the strand." Deserted except for a few tiny, scattered summer colonies, it had an aura almost of mystery. The baymen told stories of murders and duels to the death on it between sailors armed only with handspikes. The summer colonies had names—Short Beach, Gilgo—but the names didn't match those on the old maps Moses found in the Babylon library. The very shape of the strand was different from the outlines on the maps. That, the baymen explained to him, was because the ocean was constantly remolding it. Because the set of the Atlantic off Long Island was inexorably to the west, they said, sand and pebbles were continually washed up at its western end, and the beach grew longer every year. But storms, particularly the howling sou'easters, also swept away part of the strand each winter, slashed new inlets through its dunes, closed old ones. The name by which the easternmost section of the strand was known—Fire Island—was actually a corruption of "Five Islands," a name given to it during a period in the seventeenth century when it had been divided into five parts by four inlets, all

of which had since completely disappeared.

Fire Island stretched from Bay Shore, in Babylon Township, east to the Hamptons. The western section of the strand, separated from Fire Island by a narrow inlet, paralleled Long Island from Bay Shore all the way to Freeport. This section was known, vaguely, as Jones Beach. Even the oldest baymen weren't certain where the name had come from, but Moses was. In old books in the Babylon library he had read about Major Thomas Jones, a seventeenth-century Welshman whose valor at the Battle of the Boyne moved King James II to grant him a commission as a privateer. ("That was far from being a pirate," one of the old books emphasized. It "was a legitimate business.") Jones made a fortune legitimately plundering ships that did not fly the English flag. In 1695, he bought thousands of acres of the deserted strand from Long Island's fierce Indian tribes "for a barrel of good cidar," peopled it with crews that dashed out in longboats to capture whales drifting nearby, and made another fortune. Marrying beautiful Freelove Townsend, he erected a house—with thick walls, and slits for rifles—on one of the necks of land that at that time linked the strand to Long Island. After Jones' death, sou'easters tore away the necks, and the strand became an island itself. Between it and the mainland, the underwater reeds became thicker. The tides tugged at the sand underneath the Great South Bay, and the channels between the shoals became more and more crooked and treacherous, sometimes shifting course from week to week. By the nineteen-twenties, people who tried to sail or motorboat to Jones Beach had to get out and push their boats off sandbars so frequently that one bay captain referred to his weekend journeys as his "walks to the Beach." The summer-cottage colonies grew smaller and smaller. In winter, except for occasional wild-bird hunters and a few hermits who lived in caves hollowed out of the dunes, Jones Beach was deserted. Moses had bought an old bayman's ancient, broad-bottomed, very slow motorboat, partly covered with a canopy—a vessel that Mary named the Bob—and in it he putt-putted around the bay. Sometimes when he stepped out of his boat onto Jones Beach, he could not see another human being. In front of him would be nothing but a wide, straight strip of the whitest sand he had ever seen, stretching unbroken until it disappeared at the horizon, sliding on one side beneath the ocean surf, rising on the other into dunes covered with tufts of beach grass, little gnarled bushes, and stunted trees—with, between the dunes, marshes of a peculiar, striking grayish-green color, from which herons and gulls arose.

Moses saw that the empty strand, with its endless untouched vistas, could be a magnificent bathing beach, a bathing beach such as America had never seen. Jones Beach seemed so cut off from the world, but Moses realized with a start that when he stood on its western end he was less than twenty-five miles from Times Square. The problem, of course, was to get the people out there, and now in the evenings, in his Babylon bungalow, Moses began to study maps of Long Island. One night, he suddenly noticed that the water-supply properties off Merrick Road lay in an east-west row. A straight line could be drawn through them. Therefore, so could a road. If a road were built out from New York so that it crossed those properties, a substantial part of the right-of-way would not have to be bought or condemned. And since one of the properties, the one at Wantagh, ran all the way down to the Great South Bay, another road—connecting with the road that would lead out from New York—could be built south to the bay without the necessity of any purchase or condemnation at all. Once it reached the bay, it would be directly opposite Jones Beach. And since the bay was so shallow, a causeway from the end of the road to the beach would probably be easy to construct. "That was the idea behind Jones Beach and the Southern State Parkway," Moses recalled years later. "I thought of it all in a moment."

The line he had drawn on the map through the water-supply properties seemed to point like an arrow at Long Island's South Shore. Looking beyond its point, on the easternmost of the properties, Moses saw a series of peninsulas jutting out into the Great South Bay. He recalled that the peninsulas were said to be beautiful. On weekends now, Moses had himself driven east. From the car, he could see that most of the peninsulas were private estates, but in East Islip he noticed a large piece of property that, though it was fenced off, was covered with underbrush and weeds and appeared de-

serted. A real-estate agent told him that it had belonged to an eccentric old millionaire named Taylor and that Taylor's heirs allowed it to grow wild because they used it as a game preserve. If there were caretakers on the Taylor estate, Moses didn't see them when he returned to it. Tramping through the brush and the woods, frightening deer, startling coveys of pheasant, he came to a group of outbuildings, all deserted, and all except one, which had been turned into a hunting lodge, crumbling. An old mansion loomed over them, its paint peeling and its windows broken. In front of the mansion was a long meadow of uncut, waving grass which had evidently once been an imposing lawn. Beyond it was white sand and then the dark blue-gray of the bay, and beyond the bay, just a line on the horizon, the dunes of Fire Island. Stirring the trees, the grass, and the water was the gentle breeze that, Moses had learned from the baymen, invariably cooled the bay shore every day from about eleven o'clock in the morning until near sundown. To the east, across a little stream, was an expanse of carefully manicured grass—the golf course of the Timber Point Country Club, a private club that had been established recently by a group of millionaires led by Horace O. Havemeyer and his brother-in-law W. Kingsland Macy. Moses had taken to carrying a yellow legal note pad on his excursions. On it he now began to sketch the property, and on the sketch he drew lines to indicate where bathhouses for the bathing beaches would go, where a golf course would be built, where a public bridle path would wind through the trees, and where fences would be erected to pen the deer and pheasant so youngsters could watch them.

Were similar vacant properties to be found on the North Shore? Soon there was striding through woods and meadows overlooking Long Island Sound a tall, athletic figure dressed in corduroy pants, heavy shoes, and, usually, an old and stained windbreaker, and carrying in one hand a yellow legal note pad. Within weeks, Moses had discovered in Smithtown a vacant estate splendidly suited to his purposes. As he walked north through its thousand wooded acres, he noticed that they sloped steadily downhill, and he assumed they were sloping down to the beach. But when the woods ended, he found himself staring at a huge pale-green expanse of grass that was actually below the level of the beach beyond, and he thought in that instant of a name for a new park: Sunken Meadow. The road to Sunken Meadow? It could perhaps run from New York along the middle of the Island, where the only opposition would be from farmers, but Moses knew at once that the road wasn't going to go there. If scenery was an attribute of parkways, why, here was a chance to run a parkway through *real* scenery: the Gold Coast estates. At night now, Moses began to pore over maps of the North Shore, his pencil sketching out alternate routes. He saw on the map the names across which his pencil was moving: Phipps, Whitney, Garvan, Morgan, Aldrich, Vanderbilt, Kahn. And he saw in his mind a road bordered, beyond the grassy right-of-way, by the magnificent stands of trees that the robber barons had imported from Europe and by hedges neatly trimmed by their legions of gardeners. The pencil kept sketching.

Moses' mind leaped on. It took as its compass not an island but a state. New York State's other large cities—Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Schenectady, Syracuse, Troy, Utica—were growing, not as fast as New York City but fast. So was their need for state parks. The State Legislature, however, considering parks a luxury outside city limits, refused to give them any. In 1922, in all New York State there were, outside of the undeveloped forest preserves, only twenty state parks, most of them enclaves around famous old mansions, or Revolutionary War battlefields that had been bought by private philanthropists and donated to the state. Even when the state was given land, it didn't take care of it. In 1923, the total legislative appropriation for the upkeep of state parks was thirty thousand dollars. Permanent improvements—even comfort stations—were all but unheard of. Most parks could not be reached by automobile. So in 1922 those state parks that did exist in New York went all but unused.

Part of the difficulty, Moses had learned while he was running the Reconstruction Commission, went back to the old question of organization. Fearing—*knowing*—that the state would let the parks run down, their donors had turned the administration of the parks over to persons or societies dedicated to the preservation of historic or scenic attractions. Having no authority over private individuals or private organizations, the Legislature was

reluctant to give them money. State-park administration was one area in which the Reconstruction Commission's recommendations had been ignored. Now Moses asked the upstate park philanthropists to make new recommendations under the aegis of the New York State Association. He toured their parks with them, and delicately urged them to think in terms of improved roads and enlarged accommodations. And he urged them to start thinking in terms of a unified state-park system that would be a formal part of the state government. They need not worry about losing control of their beloved parks to faceless bureaucrats in Albany, he assured them; control of each park could be left in the hands of the men then administering it, and to insure that future appointments to the park commissions would not become involved in politics, the commissionerships could be unpaid jobs. But if there was a single state body controlling parks, he explained, the demands for funds from the different sources interested in parks could be funnelled into it and focussed, so as to put more heat on the Legislature. When the philanthropists' recommendations for their individual parks came in, he combined them into a report, "A State Park Plan for New York," writing it himself and issuing it in the name of the New York State Association.

The report was a seminal document in the history of parks in America. Its very scope was revolutionary: New York's park needs, it said, were so great that they could not be met by ordinary legislative appropriations; a bond issue would be required, and the amount of the issue should be fifteen million dollars. But it was not the scope that was most startling; New York and other states had floated bond issues for parks before, even if none of the issues had been nearly as large as the one that Moses proposed. Rather, it was the philosophy. The expenditure of proceeds from previous bond issues had been restricted to land acquisition, and in the word "acquisition" was embodied the philosophy that had always in the past governed parks in America: the belief that the sole purpose of parks was to enable people to commune with nature, and that parks should therefore be kept in their natural state. If city residents were no longer content with communing, if they wanted space not only for meditating but for swinging baseball bats, tennis rackets, golf clubs, and the accessories of the other sports that their new leisure time had enabled them to learn, this was a desire that had not yet been translated into government action in the United States.

But Moses translated it. The fifteen-million-dollar bond issue, he said, must specifically authorize the Legislature "to provide for permanent improvements as well as the acquisition of land . . . and the other facilities which make a park accessible and attractive to people." "Conservation," the previous park ideal, had to be combined with "recreation," he said. Furthermore, he said, "permanent improvements" meant not only improvements within parks but also ways of getting to them—"parkway and boulevard connections between state parks and between state parks and neighboring centers of population." And state parks should no longer be talked of as separate entities; there should be a state-park *system*. The state should be divided into ten regions, and all the state parks in each of those regions should be administered by a single regional "state park commission"—the Long Island parks, for example, by a Long Island State Park Commission. The presidents of those commissions should sit as a State Council of Parks, which would coördinate and unify park policy.

Moses' park report was soon being read, and hailed, by park planners all over the United States. But if its recommendations were to become reality, they would have to do so through a man who didn't read reports and who seemed highly unlikely to be a park enthusiast. If there was a sport in which the Governor was interested, his friends didn't know about it. He refused to go with them to football or baseball games, or even to boxing matches. When he took his family swimming, he remained on the beach—his little potbelly protruding through his bathing suit, a cigar clenched firmly in his teeth—eying the ocean warily.

When Moses began explaining his park plan, the Governor was dubious. Its cost astounded him. "You want to give the people a fur coat when what they need is red flannel underwear," he said once. But Moses had one advantage. Smith's mind was the type that responded most enthusiastically to what Frances Perkins called "the graphic presentation." The Governor, she has said, "wanted you to tell him what it looked like. Then he saw what it was like. . . . He got more information out of people who would tell him the exact

thing they'd seen, [who] described the detail that they themselves had seen." If he was anxious to improve the lives of the urban poor, he was most especially anxious to improve them through things he could actually *see* improving them; his governorship was distinguished by his emphasis on works of physical construction, solid and visible. Nothing was more visible than a park, and no one was a more vivid describer, a more graphic presenter, than Bob Moses. After Smith's reëlection in November, 1922, Moses persuaded him to visit the New York City water-supply properties. They were barren in winter, but, with his gift for words, Moses made the Governor see them as they could be in summer, with leaves on the trees and people sitting at picnic tables under them. Then, day after day, pacing restlessly back and forth in front of the Governor's desk, he poured out his ideas in a ceaseless flow of words. Sometimes the other members of Smith's inner circle had to smile at Moses' vehemence and earnestness. Once, as the torrent of words passed over him, the Governor gradually sank lower and lower in his chair, and, with Moses still talking, disappeared at last under his desk. But when he poked his head up, he was smiling. Moses persuaded Smith to attend a meeting of the New York State Association's park committee at the Whitehall Club in Manhattan, at which Moses himself made a lengthy passionate speech. At its end, Smith rose. "Bob, you win," he said. He directed Moses to draft a special message to the Legislature asking for the passage of legislation to establish a State Council of Parks and to authorize submission of the fifteen-million-dollar proposal to the people in a referendum. On April 18, 1923, two weeks after Moses finished the message, Smith delivered it.

Under state law, only one bond issue could be submitted to the voters each year. Smith had previously proposed an issue for new hospitals and mental institutions. Moses pleaded that parks should come first, but Smith disagreed. When the Governor delivered the message Moses had drafted, he announced that he would not push for adoption of its proposals until 1924. It was clear to his advisers that the Governor was worried about public reaction to an expenditure for parks that was of such unprecedented dimensions. The reaction was not long in coming. Smith's secretaries reported a most remarkable upsurge in the volume of his mail. It came from the City Club of New York and from the Pomona Grange. It came from slum dwellers and suburbanites. And, unlike the mail on most issues, this mail did not contain letters on both sides of the issue. There was apparently only one side to this issue, the Governor's secretaries reported: *everyone* was for parks. Hardly a newspaper in the state failed to write an editorial on the message, and not a single one of the editorials opposed it. And, significantly, the praise did not stop at the state's borders. From all over the country letters were sent to "Governor Smith, Albany" expressing the hope that the writers' own states might follow his example.

Al Smith had risen to the governorship on great issues, and he was not slow to recognize a new one when it came along. An Albany reporter watched the awareness growing on the Governor and his circle. "You could see them beginning to realize that doing what Moses wanted would be politically advantageous," he recalls. "One of them told me that supporting parks meant that the Governor would be helping the lower- and middle-class people, and thereby winning their support, and that the intellectuals would be for him because they saw parks as part of the new pattern of social progress. So you'd have the three groups you needed all supporting you. And besides, 'parks' was a word like 'motherhood.' It was just something nobody could be against." During the spring of 1923, Smith assured Moses that he would push for adoption of the park program in 1924.

In the summer of 1923, Moses went back to tramping around Long Island. "I went with him once," a friend has said. "We walked all day through one piece of beautiful wild country after another. And he never slowed down. He was tireless." Generally, Moses preferred to be by himself. He walked alone through vast empty, shuttered mansions, through potato fields where farmers worked peacefully, unaware that the man looking at them was planning to take their land away. Walls and guards kept him from getting a good look from public roads at the route he was considering for the northern parkway, but he discovered a country road that ran through many of the estates, and he spent days walking along it, a solitary figure with

a long stride. Through the trees he could see the great castles; at their gates, on little black-and-gold signs, he could see the names of the barons who had built them. And the barons, private behind their walls, did not know that staring at those walls was a man determined to tear them down.

Exploring the Montauk peninsula, Long Island's southern fluke, Moses found an irregular shoreline and a number of small islands that, he reported to Smith, "afford many miles of beaches, dunes and varied waters for cruising, fishing, swimming, golfing and other forms of recreation." Driving back along the southern fluke, Moses discovered other miles of unused beaches in Hampton Bays. He found still more on Long Island's northern fluke, Orient Point, where farmers lived in farmhouses built in the seventeenth century. Searching out deserted estates, he found two in the center of the Island, one owned by the son of the financier August Belmont, the other by a family named Yoakum. And, roaming one day far out in Suffolk County, near Wading River, he stumbled upon a magnificent brick-and-stone mansion, set on a bluff overlooking Long Island Sound, that not only was deserted but looked as if it had never been lived in. Inquiring later, he found out that it never had been. Roland G. Mitchell, a financier, who commissioned the architect Stanford White to design it, and who named it Wildwood, had died just as it was being finished, in 1906, and the spacious, high-ceilinged rooms had remained shuttered and unfurnished ever since.

Again and again Moses returned to the lonely strand—not only to Jones Beach but to Fire Island. He had learned that a state park, the only one on Long Island, was situated there, on the two-hundred-acre grounds of a hotel the state had bought in 1892 to house the passengers from a cholera-ridden German liner, the Normannia. In 1918, fire had destroyed the hotel and also a boardwalk and some comfort stations that the state had erected, and when Moses stepped out of the Bob he found Fire Island State Park deserted. Charred ruins lay on the sand. The only undamaged structure in the park was a nine-story-high wooden telegraph tower, from which news of the sighting of arriving clipper ships had once been flashed to Manhattan. Studying maps, Moses was puzzled. They showed the park as comprising the westernmost portion of Fire Island, except for a little enclave on the tip,

which was occupied by a lighthouse and an unmanned Coast Guard station. But as Moses stood alongside the lighthouse, the island stretched westward as far as he could see. Then he remembered what the baymen had told him about the set of the ocean. Since 1892, the waves had been piling sand on Fire Island's western end. He began to walk along the new land, and he walked for four miles. The Coast Guard station wasn't a little enclave anymore; its area, he calculated, was at least six hundred acres. And the station was deserted. No one even knew that the added six hundred acres were there.

By the end of the summer of 1923, Moses knew that his plans for Long Island had been far too modest. Now he wanted not just a state park on Jones Beach but another one—including the unmapped six hundred acres—across the inlet on Fire Island. He wanted state parks on the South Shore not just at the Taylor estate but in Hampton Bays and Hither Hills and at Montauk Point. He wanted parks on the Sound not just at Sunken Meadow but at Wildwood, Lloyd Neck, and Orient Point. And he wanted two in the center of the Island, at the Belmont and Yoakum estates. He wanted forty thousand acres of parks. He wanted not just a parkway along the South Shore and one along the North Shore but a parkway connecting them far out on Long Island, so that families from New York City could drive out on one, loop around, and drive home on the other. He also wanted two more parkways linking both the northern and the southern parkways with two causeways running to Jones Beach. He wanted still another parkway linking them with Fire Island. He wanted a hundred and twenty-four miles of parkways. And he wanted the parkways to be broader and more beautiful than any roads the world had ever seen, landscaped as private parks are landscaped, so they would be in themselves parks, "ribbon parks"—so that even as people drove to parks they would be driving through parks.

Near the end of the summer, Al Smith found himself being chauffeured around Long Island with Moses sitting beside him pointing and talking. Smith became enthusiastic about the plans. He asked Mrs. Moskowitz to look into the situation, and Moses gave her the full tour. She approved, and Smith told Moses that when the park program was submitted to the Legislature in 1924 it could be expanded. "Why don't you take the whole thing over yourself?" the Governor asked. "Why don't I make you president of the Long Island State Park Commission?"

Moses said that he would like the job.

DREAMS—visions of public works on a noble scale—had been marching through Moses' mind in almost continuous procession for a decade and more. Not one of them had marched out of his mind into reality. But during that decade Moses had learned what was needed to make dreams become realities: he had learned the lesson of power. And now he grabbed for power with both hands. As a reformer who believed in the principle of centralization in government, he had recommended in the Reconstruction Commission report that all state agencies be included in one of sixteen departments and no longer function as independent bodies. The heads of the agencies within the departments, he had recommended, should have absolutely no independence in budget-making. He had been eloquent on the point. "The more spigots there are in the barrel the more difficult it is to keep a watch on them," he had written. The report specified that parks would be administered by a bureau in the Department of Conservation, and that the bureau would be totally subordinate to the conservation commissioner.

But now Moses was interested in parks, and parks were to be an exception. Not on the surface, of course. On the surface, on the face of the bill that Moses drafted establishing a State Council of Parks, the council was to be included in the Conservation Department and subordinate to the conservation commissioner. The council's budget, in accordance with reorganization principles, could be submitted to the governor and the Legislature only by the conservation commissioner; a clause in the bill specifically said so. But another clause, farther down in the bill, said, "The budget shall be prepared by the State Council of Parks." Precedents had established the statutory meaning of the word "prepared." In this context, it meant that the council chairman—not the conservation commissioner—had the authority to screen the financial requests of the ten regional park commissions, weigh one against another, and decide which should be included in

the council's budget request. The conservation commissioner would get to see the regional commissions' requests only after the council chairman had finished with them, and so would not even know about requests made by regional commissions which the council chairman had turned down. All that the conservation commissioner was really empowered to do, therefore, was to receive a completed park budget and hand it to the governor exactly as he received it. And, the bill provided, the council chairman from whom he would be receiving the budget would be elected by the council—not appointed by the conservation commissioner or by the governor. Within the reorganized framework of state government, therefore, parks would be a separate, self-governing, very independent duchy.

As a reformer, Moses had fought for the principle of executive power commensurate with executive responsibility, and, believing in the principle, he had recommended in his Reconstruction Commission report that appointed officials should never have terms longer than the governor's term and that they should always be removable by the governor if they did not follow his orders. But now Moses was to be an appointed official, and although he could count on Smith's support, Smith would not always be governor. So there was another way. The bill that Moses drafted establishing the Long Island State Park Commission provided that the term of its president (himself) would be six years—three times as long as the governor's. And it further provided that no governor could remove the park-commission president just because the president was not following the governor's orders. Removal, the bill provided, could occur only after the governor had filed detailed charges of actual misconduct and a formal public hearing had been held, with both sides represented by counsel.

Yet it was not the violation of stated principles for the purpose of cementing himself in office which most clearly revealed the change in Moses. Rather, it was the method by which he insured that, once cemented, he would have specific powers sufficient for his purpose. The method was that of concealment and deviousness. No reformer, no idealist had believed more sincerely than he that the key to democracy was free and open discussion. No reformer, no idealist had argued more vigorously that all important legislative bills should be fully debated, and that the debates should be published, so that the citizenry could be informed on the issues. But free and open debate had not made his dreams come true; instead, politicians had crushed them. Now he was going to make sure that, with the exception of Al Smith and Belle Moskowitz, no one—not the citizenry, not the press, not the Legislature—would know what was in the park bills to be passed by the Legislature. The best bill-drafter in Albany set to work.

First and foremost, parks were land, and land was generally acquired by government through condemnation. But condemnation in 1924 was a slow process: the state could not take possession of property until a condemnation commission set its value, and the property's owner could appeal to the courts if he was not satisfied with the commission's evaluation. Thus the owner possessed in his opposition to the state a weapon, even if it was a small one—and in the hands of the barons of Long Island small weapons could become large. So one clause within Chapter 112 of the Laws of 1924, "AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR the location, creation, acquisition and improvement by the state of parks, parkways and boulevards in the counties of Nassau and Suffolk"—a clause buried deep within the act—empowered the Long Island State Park Commission to acquire land by appropriation "in the manner provided by Section 59 of the conservation law."

In 1924, "appropriation" had only one meaning in legislative context: the allocation of funds by the Legislature. Most legislators—probably all legislators—would have said, if they were asked, that that was the only meaning the word had ever had. And since Section 59 of the conservation law had been passed in 1884, most legislators had not read it. But the best bill-drafter in Albany had read it, and he knew that in that section "appropriation" had quite a different meaning. In 1883, the Legislature, worried about incursions by lumber companies into the Adirondack forests, empowered the Forest, Fish, and Game Commission to condemn the forests and preserve them. But during that year, between the start of the condemnation proceedings and the actual transfer of title, the lumbermen stripped the trees from the parcels being condemned. In 1884, therefore, the Legislature passed an act, Section 59 of the conservation law, empowering the state to "appropriate" forest lands, and defining "appropriation" as a procedure in which a state official

could take possession of the land by simply walking on it and telling the owner that he no longer owned it, and that if he wanted compensation he would have to apply to a condemnation commission. The "appropriation" method had never been used anywhere except in remote forests. It had never been intended for use in urban, suburban, or farm areas. Taking a man's land and telling him it would be paid for later and only if he applied for payment was simply unheard of if the land had any substantial intrinsic value, as it always did in settled areas. Moreover, the method had not been used *anywhere* for more than thirty years, because of doubts about its Constitutionality. But somehow the Legislature had never got around to repealing Section 59.

Deviousness was used in other sections of the 1924 bill. Section 8, for example, which was entitled "General Powers," supposedly enumerated the powers of the Long Island State Park Commission over its land, and these powers seemed innocuous. But in succeeding sections of the bill each power was "defined," and each successive definition broadened the commission's authority. The commission had the right to operate parks, Section 8 said. But Section 9 said that "the term . . . parks as used in this act . . . shall be deemed to include . . . parkways . . . boulevards and also entrances and approaches thereto, docks and piers, and bridges . . . and such other . . . appurtenances as the . . . commission shall utilize." And the term "parkways" was significant. The Legislature had specifically written into the state highway law the provision that the supervisors of each county had veto power over the location of highways within its borders. But because parkways hadn't existed when the provision was written, the highway law didn't mention parkways, so there was no local check over *their* location. The commission had the right to "acquire . . . real estate," Section 8 said. But Section 10 said that "the term real estate as used in this act shall be construed to embrace all uplands, lands under water . . . and all real estate . . . heretofore or hereafter acquired or used for railroad, street railroad, highway, telephone, telegraph or other public purposes." And the words "lands under water" were significant. By legal precedent, the owners of land fronting on the Great South Bay owned the land offshore to the distance of one mile, so if the commission owned land fronting on the bay it would own part of the bay itself, including part of the "sacred" bay bottoms.

By the time the "defining" of the terms used in Section 8 was finished, the Long Island State Park Commission would be empowered, if the bill was passed, to write its own laws and to hire policemen and prosecutors to enforce them. In fact, the commission would have over its land (forty thousand acres of land, if Moses had his way) all the powers granted to the City of New York in the city's charter. Almost every clause in the bill contained a sleeper. Section 15 ostensibly dealt with the procedure to be used in acquiring property owned by other state agencies, but there was another paragraph, apparently tagged on as an afterthought: "The . . . commission shall have power to improve, maintain and use the lands of the municipalities adjoining the parks and parkways of the commission, with the consent of the local authorities having jurisdiction thereof." This paragraph, too, appeared innocuous. Since the commission was operating in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, what legislator would stop to consider that some land on Long Island might be owned by New York City, and that once the bill was passed the Long Island State Park Commission would not need the consent of Long Island officials to use that land, because "the local authorities having jurisdiction thereof" would be not Long Island officials but New York City officials? Once the bill was passed, Moses would be able to use the city's water-supply properties despite the objections of the municipalities in which those properties were situated.

Moses concealed his purposes not only from the legislators but from those who thought they were his allies—the old men who had worked on the New York State Association report, and who, through their individual commissions, had been running the parks in the state for so many years. If these men were to oppose his plans, they could, with their control of their local legislators, pose a formidable obstacle to passage of his bill. So he didn't tell the old men about the true scope of his plans for the State Council of Parks. In fact, knowing that they were concerned about the fate of the pieces of land they had guarded so long, he assured them over and over that the establishment of the council would in no way affect their control over those

lands. "It is," he wrote them, "merely a coördinating agency." Parks in each region, he promised them, would remain under the control of the regional commissioners.

Moses must have known that what he was saying was false. He knew that since regional commissioners had to submit their budget requests to the State Council of Parks, the council, not the commissions, would decide how much money went to each region. The council, not the commissions, would decide over-all park policies, which would affect each commission's parks. And since the commissions would be rivals for funds, there was little danger of their banding together against the man who ran the council. That man would be in complete charge of all the state parks. Not knowing what was in the bill, believing in coördination and believing in Moses, the old men supported it and him.

Having drafted the bills to establish a State Council of Parks and a Long Island State Park Commission, Moses looked around for someone to introduce them. His choice was F. Trubee Davison, the son of a Morgan partner—Henry P. Davison, of Glen Cove. F. Trubee Davison had been sent by the barons of the North Shore of Long Island to the State Assembly in 1922, the same year he graduated from Columbia Law School. In 1924, he was only twenty-eight years old and, in his own words, "wide-eyed and eager." Not only was he a Yale man but he was, within the limits approved by the barons, interested in reform, and Moses had found plenty to talk to him about. "He was charming," Davison has recalled, "and I enjoyed talking with him a lot, and I admired his obvious brains." And, Davison recalls, he was frankly flattered that a member of the Governor's inner circle would spend so much time with a freshman assemblyman.

When Moses asked Davison to introduce the bills, he told him nothing about his plans for parks and a parkway on the North Shore. In fact, he told him very little about any of his plans, leaving the impression that the bills were routine measures and that the parks he was talking about were parks in the traditional mold. Davison was a believer in parks in that mold. He was flattered to be asked to introduce the bills. And when Moses told him that the Governor would like to see him and thank him for his support, he was overwhelmed. His visit to the Executive Chamber with Moses at his elbow was the first time he had ever met Al

Smith. He didn't think to ask many questions about the bills, and he certainly didn't think to look up Section 59 of the conservation law or to study definitions of powers. Just to make sure he wouldn't have much time to do such things even if he wanted to, Moses delayed giving him the bills until the last week of the session. "I never realized what the word 'appropriation' meant," Davison has recalled. "I thought it meant what it had always meant, so far as I knew: appropriation of money to be spent. Whenever someone asked me what it meant, I told them that's what it meant." Not that many people asked him, of course. There was little interest in either bill, and when, in the last-minute rush to adjourn, they came to the floor, there was not a word of debate on them. The Assembly and the Senate both passed them by unanimous vote.

Moses was in a fever of impatience. On April 12th, he wrote George Graves, Al Smith's secretary, "My dear George: As soon as you get a chance will you ask the Governor please to sign the bill creating the State Council of Parks so that a meeting of this Council can be held at an early date." On April 18th, Smith scrawled across the bills, "Approved—AES." That same day, Smith appointed to the regional park commissions the men whose names he had previously agreed upon with Moses. He appointed Moses president of the Long Island State Park Commission, a post that automatically made him a member of the State Council of Parks, and as Moses' co-commissioners on the three-member Long Island commission the Governor appointed two men whom Moses knew he could count on to let him run the commission by himself. On April 30th, Moses and the other heads of the regional park commissions met in Albany, and, with paternal smiles in his direction, the older commission heads elected the youngest member of the State Council of Parks its chairman.

At the age of thirty-five, Robert Moses had power. And no sooner did he have it than he showed how he was going to use it. —ROBERT A. CARO

(This is the first of four articles about Robert Moses and the uses of political power in New York.)

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LISBON—Portugal and the Soviet Union have agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations, ending a rapture that had lasted more than half a century.—*Washington Star-News.*

Passion never endures.