

Robert Moses Gives Up Five State Jobs in Tiff With Governor

By **FREDERICK H. TREESH**
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New York—To Robert Moses, harnessing the power of Niagara Falls was only a part-time job.

He was simultaneously a park builder, architect and operator of a multiplicity of highways, bridges and tunnels, a slum clearer and building creator and chief planner of a world's fair.

Moses, a one-man bureaucracy, at one time held 14 different titles.

To enter New York across any border is to be surrounded by Moses' works in concrete, steel and greenery.

In an amazing four-decade career of public service, Moses has amassed an infinite group of admirers. His list of enemies is formidable, too, and he has been at sword-point with officialdom at all levels, up to the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In his latest and perhaps most spectacular blow-up, Moses snuffed five state jobs two weeks ago in a tiff with New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Knows No Leisure

Though setting aside more responsibility and authority than most men undertake in a lifetime, Moses, two days away from his 74th birthday, is not considering a life of ease. He knows no leisure in the conventional sense—his jobs are hobbies—and he remains as president of the 1964-65 World's fair and in two important New York jobs.

Last month, Rockefeller asked Moses to step out as chairman of the State Council of Parks, an unsalaried job Moses created in 1924 when Al Smith was governor. Angered, Moses quit the post through which he built a magnificent park system for New York State.

He also resigned as—Chairman of the State Power authority. In this, his only paid (\$10,000) state job, Moses oversaw construction of huge power projects on the St. Lawrence and Niagara rivers. The Niagara project, when fully operative, is the biggest hydroelectric power facility in the western world and it added measurably to the beautification of Niagara Falls. Both it and the St. Lawrence project incorporated vast park and highway improvements.

Chairman of the Long Island Park commission. Here Moses created a system of 15 major parks on the 110-mile island. Most impressive was the transformation of Jones beach from a nearly inaccessible sandbar to an 18-mile long "riviera" enjoyed by 10 million persons a year.

Chairman of the Bethpage park and Jones Beach



ROBERT MOSES
Harnessing Falls Minor Job

way for the \$142 million Lincoln Center for the performing arts, potentially the world's No. 1 cultural center. Moses' good offices were instrumental in the United Nations locating in New York.

Moses' slum clearing made possible public housing projects covering thousands of acres in all of New York's boroughs.

As remarkable as all the hats Moses wears, is the way he can wear them all at once. If he builds a park, it usually results in a highway being built, too. If he cleared slums, it also meant a park and some public housing, if not an expressway or an important building.

Worth \$5 Billion

The various enterprises Moses planned, built and supervised were estimated conservatively to be worth \$5 billion.

How, an aide once asked Moses, was he able to do all these things at once?

"I work at it," he said.

To Moses, working at it means keeping his active mind operating like a well-oiled machine every waking hour. When he reads, drives in his automobile or fishes from his boat on one of the bays off Long Island, he keeps a yellow scratch pad handy, jotting memos to himself and others as the thoughts occur to him.

"He's always functioning," an associate said.

A contractor on one of the Moses-supervised jobs recent-

ly walked out of his office with the report:

"This guy, I never saw anything like him. I was one of 17 contractors in there and he laid down the law on whose work was on time, who was late and how far each of us had progressed."

"It was astonishing. He didn't have a note on his desk."

It was an example of how Moses keeps in touch with minute detail while always thinking of the big picture far in advance. Any public official who thinks only 10 years ahead is a fool, he once said.

Bob Moses is a stubborn, tough-minded man who almost never can be deterred once he makes up his mind about something. He pushes, promotes, stampedes his projects, sometimes running roughshod over those who get in his way.

Prolific Letter Writer

Moses is a prolific letter writer and his letters are among the tools he uses to get the job done.

If an opponent—there are many—seems unsure in his position, Moses may bombard him with biting, multiple-carbon letters until he gives way to Moses' point of view.

However, a close associate observed, "He rarely does that to a little guy."

Moses' biting approach is exemplified in one note he dashed off to a public official, starting:

"Dear . . .

"Thank you very much for

your letter of September 15. As much as I like you personally, I don't know what the hell you are talking about . . ."

Symbol of Controversy

That Moses was successful hardly can be argued, but his way of cutting down opposition like ripe wheat made him a symbol of controversy as well as accomplishment.

He's battled and usually won over opponents ranging from baby carriage-pushing mothers to FDR, several governors, and "old curmudgeon" Harold L. Ickes.

Moses started swinging when an undergraduate editor at Yale, winning an editorial page fight with football great Walter Camp about whether football gate receipts should help pay for less prosperous varsity sports.

Born in New Haven, Conn., Dec. 18, 1888, the son of a millionaire merchant, Moses went from Yale, where he was a Phi Beta Kappa, to Oxford for his master's and to Columbia university for his Ph.D.

His intimates say he was set even in college on a career in public service and since has spent some of his inherited fortune pursuing it.

Brought into Public Life

He was brought into public life in 1942 by then Gov. Al Smith and one of his trademarks—fierce loyalty to those for whom he works and those who work for him—was a well-known Smith trait.

Moses met his wife, the

former Mary Louise Sims, when both were working for an endowed municipal research organization. They have two married daughters and five grandchildren. The Moses' live unpretentiously in Babylon, a Long Island South Shore community.

Moses took a big step out of public life in his tiff with Rockefeller in the same manner he worked in the public realm—swiftly, bluntly and absolutely.

But the evidence of Moses' work is everywhere in New

York and the World's fair to open in 1964 and the \$325 million Verrazano-Narrows bridge (the world's largest suspension bridge) scheduled for 1965 completion make the point loudly: You don't speak of Robert Moses in the past tense, not yet.

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