

# DOCUMENTS

OF THE

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OF THE

# CENTRAL PARK,

FOR THE

*Year Ending April 30th, 1859.*



NEW YORK:

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1859.

# Document No. 1.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**MAY 4th, 1858.**

The Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances presented a Report recommending amendments to the By-Laws of the Board.

*Ordered,* That the same be laid over and printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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The Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances, in compliance with the direction of the Board, by a resolution passed on the 9th day of February last, (page 148 of Journal) have considered the By-Laws and Ordinances of the Board with the view of proposing such alterations as they may find necessary, and respectfully report the following amendments thereto.

1. Article I, § 2, line two, strike out "Tuesday" and instead thereof insert "Thursday," and in line eight of same section, out the word "eight" and insert the word "seven."

2. Article II, § 1, strike out "Secretary."

3. Strike out all of § 2, Article II, and insert instead thereof § 2. There shall also be a Superintendent of the Park, a Clerk to the Commission, a Disbursing Clerk, a Property Clerk and such other persons, professional or otherwise, as the Board may deem proper from time to time to employ, who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board.

4. Article III, § 1, fourth line, strike out the word "shall" and insert instead thereof the word "may."

5. Article III, § 3, strike out the words "The Chief Engineer, Chief Clerk and Superintendent of the Park" and insert the word "and" before "all" in first line of this section.

6. § 4, first line of this Article, strike out "other."

7. Modify Article IV, so that it shall read as follows :

The following standing Committees, each to consist of three Commissioners, except the Executive Committee, which shall consist of five Commissioners, shall be appointed by the President, unless otherwise ordered by the Board, annually, at the meeting on the first Thursday of May, or at the next succeeding meeting.

- I. A Finance Committee.
- II. An Executive Committee.
- III. An Auditing Committee.
- IV. A Committee on Roads and Walks, and Draining.
- V. A Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances.
- VI. A Committee on Printing.
- VII. A Committee on Trees and Plants.

Respectfully submitted,

JNO. A. C. GRAY,

AND. H. GREEN,

Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances.

Dated New York, May 4th, 1858.

## Document No. 2.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**MONDAY, MAY 10, 1858.**

The Special Committee to confer with the Superintendent, &c., presented the following report:—

*Ordered,* That the same be laid on the table and printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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The Special Committee to whom was referred the resolution of the 6th instant, to confer with the Superintendent, and report on the work to be prosecuted forthwith,

#### REPORT:

That they have confined their attention to the important structural features of the Park, upon which an immediate determination is necessary to be had if the work is not to be altogether interrupted.

That, as respects the features of the promenade avenue, the exterior wall and the general distribution of lawn, woodland and water, the first premium plan seems to be satisfactory.

That the principal drives, so far as your Committee have had an opportunity of examining the subject, are judiciously laid down.

Two variations from them only have been proposed that would not interfere materially with the general conception of the plan.

As there is no railroad on the Seventh avenue, and as it affords the most direct and convenient approach to the Park for carriages coming up Broadway, west of Fifth avenue, it is suggested that a fine carriage entrance should be provided on Fifty-ninth street, opposite Seventh avenue. If this is approved, there should, for the sake of symmetry, be a similar entrance-gate opposite the Sixth avenue. But as the ground at that point does not admit of the entrance of a carriage-road, unless at a great expense, and the loss of some striking natural features, it is proposed that at present a foot-way only should be provided for, leaving it practicable to construct a carriage-road whenever in the future it shall be demanded and be so decided on, by the Commission. The corner of Fifty-ninth street and Eighth avenue is not well adapted to a carriage entrance, the turn from Broadway being an awkward one, the angles very unsymmetrical, and the ground within the Park low. At about Sixty-third street, where the ground is more elevated and an easy and direct connection can be had with the main drive, appears to be a favorable point for the main carriage entrance of the Eighth avenue; and the Committee would suggest, in case an entrance from Seventh avenue is approved, that the entrance at Sixtieth street, on plan 33 be removed to Sixty-third street.

Between Sixty-fifth and Seventy-first streets, the drive on plan 33 approaches closely to Eighth avenue. The drive would be more agreeable if between these two points it were carried with a single sweep through the interior of the Park; this would contract the parade ground, and carry the drive east of the ravine of Sixty-ninth street. Although the portecullis gate for a military entrance, through this ravine, is a striking and desirable feature, the Committee are not disposed to advise the sacrifice of what they deem to be more essential characteristics of a park, for the sake of advantages for large military displays within it; they would therefore recommend such an alteration in the course

of the drive between Sixty-fifth street and Seventy-first street as is indicated in the accompanying diagram.

The Committee consider that the width of the drives, as proposed in plan 33, is greater than is necessary. They are of the opinion that the carriage-way of Fifth avenue is wide enough for a park drive, and that a single foot-path, fifteen feet wide, will be sufficient to be carried side by side with the principal drive. They are also of the opinion that a single bridle-path may, with advantage, be carried side by side with the drive for a considerable distance. As the method of constructing the carriage-road proposed in the description of plan No. 33 adapts it for riding upon at moderate speed, and as an equestrian course, forty-five feet wide, around the new Reservoir, especially prepared for fast riding, upon which no vehicles can intrude, is a part of this plan, the Committee do not deem it necessary that the bridle-road should run continuously through all parts of the Park with the drive, or that it should be wider than is necessary to accommodate four horsemen riding abreast, they recommend that the plan be made to include at least three miles of bridle-road, twenty feet in width, running generally close adjoining the principal drive, but with occasional variations as the surface may best indicate.

The method of constructing the carriage-way, proposed by the designers of plan No. 33, meets the approval of the Committee, and they are of the opinion that the breaking of stone, except to finish the breaking of that already partially prepared, should be discontinued, not only on account of the heavy expenditure necessary for a road to be constructed entirely of McAdam metal, but because it is deemed probable that a cheaper method of obtaining the necessary broken stone will be ascertained.

Anticipating that considerations of public convenience and of taste will require an extension of the area of the Park to One Hundred and Tenth street, the Committee think it necessary, that before any drives are laid out in the north part of the Park, that it should be known that they are well adapted to such extension.

They recommend, therefore, that the Superintendent be re-

quested to prepare the sketch of a plan for an extension of the Park to One Hundred and Tenth street, connecting such plan with that already presented to the Commission. The preliminary work upon the Park, so far as it can be carried on independently of a plan for laying out the ground, is believed to be completed, and it is questionable if any work is now being done which had not better be left undone.

Before any work upon the plan to be adopted by the Commission can be engaged in, some additional special surveys and working plans will need to be made; before the general drainage of the ground can be undertaken, the necessary grading and the lines of the roads and ponds must be fixed, and the tile will have to be manufactured and brought to the ground; hence it is important, as soon as possible, to definitely fix upon some part of the plan.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that plan 33 be taken as a basis of improvement, and that the Superintendent be instructed to immediately proceed in the construction of the Park, upon the supposition that its main features, with such modifications as the Committee have suggested, are to be carried out, leaving for further consideration whatever it is not necessary to an economical method of construction, should be immediately determined on.

In accordance with these views, the Committee offer the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That the Superintendent be requested to proceed forthwith to form working plans for the construction of the Park, and to stake out the principal features upon the ground.
2. *Resolved*, That the Superintendent be authorized to call in the service of his associate, (in design No. 33,) and such other assistants, not exceeding six in number, as may be necessary to expedite the purpose of the first resolution.
3. *Resolved*, That the Superintendent be authorized to order tools necessary for drainage, to be made (in value not to exceed \$500), and to proceed immediately with the further necessary preliminary surveys for the drainage of the Park, and that at the present time he employ the force now at his disposal in any work which may with advantage be undertaken preliminary to commencing the work of drainage.

4. *Resolved*, That the Executive Committee be requested to consult with the Superintendent, and to advertise as soon as possible for proposals for furnishing and laying tile necessary for drainage of the Park.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHARLES H. RUSSELL, } Special Committee  
ANDREW H. GREEN, } on the Plan.



## Document No. 3.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**MONDAY, MAY 17, 1858.**

A report from the Superintendent in answer to a resolution of the 13th instant, as to the modification of Plan No. 33 was received.

*Ordered,* That the same be laid over and printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, CENTRAL PARK.  
14th May, 1858.

**To THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE CENTRAL PARK :**

A resolution of your body of the 13th instant requests me to report what modifications of plan 33, suggested by the other plans exhibited, or my own reflections, I should recommend to be adopted.

A careful examination of the plans referred to, has not at present suggested any changes which it would be desirable to

make in plan 33, other than such as were recommended in the report of a Committee made to the Board May 10th after a conference between the Committee and myself. In the recommendations of that report, I concur.

Many very interesting and artistic conceptions that are not introduced in plan 33, are, without doubt, to be found in the other plans exhibited, but they do not, it is believed, contain any desirable feature of prominent importance that is not already provided for in plan 33.

The above remarks are intended to apply only to the skeleton or general idea of the plan for the Park. In detail, it is to be presumed that a more accurate study of the ground, as the construction of the Park proceeds, together with a careful consideration of the criticisms and suggestions of individual Commissioners, founded upon a personal examination of the plans, would lead to various modifications and improvements in the working out of the ideas presented in the plan and report. At present, the reasons given for the introduction of the various features still appear to hold good in all important particulars.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OLMTED,  
Superintendent.

**Document No. 4.**

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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,  
CENTRAL PARK.**

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**MAY 13, 1858.**

On motion of Mr. GRAY—

*Ordered,* That the Clerk be authorized to have the By-Laws, as amended, printed, under direction of the Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances.

DAVID H. HART,  
*Clerk.*

# BY - L A W S

OF THE BOARD OF

## Commissioners of the Central Park,

AS REVISED AND AMENDED.

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ADOPTED MAY 17th, 1858.

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### I.—MEETINGS.

§ 1. All meetings of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park, shall be held at their office, unless otherwise ordered by the Board.

§ 2. Stated meetings shall be held on the first and third Thursday of each month; other meetings may be held by adjournment, on the call of the President, or at the written request of three members; the notices for meetings called by the President or by any three members, shall state the matter to be presented at such proposed meeting, and no other matter shall be acted on at such meeting, except by consent of six Commissioners.

§ 3. The time of meeting shall be 1 o'clock in the afternoon; if a majority of the Commissioners shall not be present at 15 minutes past 1 o'clock, the meeting shall stand adjourned until the day of the next stated meeting.

§ 4. No meeting shall be held unless six Commissioners are present.

§ 5. Notices of meetings shall be served on each Commissioner by the Clerk, at least two days before the day of the meeting for which notice is given.

## II.—OFFICERS.

§ 1. The officers of the Board shall be as follows :

- I. A President.
- II. A Vice-President.
- III. A Treasurer.
- IV. A Secretary.

Who shall hold office till the first Thursday of May next succeeding their election.

§ 2. There shall also be a Chief Executive Officer, who shall be styled the Architect-in-Chief of the Central Park, a Clerk to the Commission, a Disbursing Clerk, a Property Clerk, who shall give such security for the faithful performance of their duties as the Board may require, and such other persons, professional or otherwise, as the Board may deem proper from time to time to employ, all of whom shall perform such services as from time to time shall be required by this Board, and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board.

The Architect in Chief shall nominate to this Board, from time to time, such officers for such duties as the execution of the work shall require.

### PRESIDENT.

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board, except when absent ; then the Vice-President shall preside ; the Presiding officer shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Board.

### TREASURER.

The Treasurer shall keep an account in the name of the "Board of Commissioners of the Central Park," at the in-

stitution selected by the Board as a depository of its moneys, and all moneys from whatever source derived shall be deposited by the Treasurer in said institution, immediately on his receiving the same. The Treasurer shall report the condition of the finances at each stated meeting.

### III.—VACANCIES.

§ 1. Vacancies occurring in the Board may be filled at the stated meeting, next subsequent to that at which a notice of such vacancy shall have been announced to the Board, and shall be filled from the names of persons nominated at a meeting, previous to such election, to fill the vacancy.

§ 2. Resignations shall be by a written communication to the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park.

§ 3. Elections to fill vacancies in the Board, and all officers of the Board, shall be by ballot.

### IV.—COMMITTEES.

§ 1. The following standing committees, each to consist of three Commissioners, except the Executive Committee, which shall consist of five Commissioners, shall be appointed by the President annually, unless otherwise ordered by the Board, at the meeting on the first Thursday of May, or at the next succeeding meeting :

- I. A Finance Committee.
- II. An Executive Committee.
- III. An Auditing Committee.
- IV. A Committee on By-Laws and Ordinances.

. The President shall be *ex officio* a member of all standing committees.

§ 2. It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to report in writing to the Board, at least as often as once in

each month, the condition of the funds, expenditures and receipts, the probable amount of funds required within the succeeding three months, and the necessary steps to procure the issue and disposition of funds or stock to be issued under the Act creating the said Board.

§ 3. The Executive Committee shall be charged with such duties as may be, from time to time, referred to it by the Board.

§ 4. The Auditing Committee shall, at least once in three months, audit all the accounts of the Board, its officers and employees, and report in writing thereon to the Board.

§ 5. A special Committee shall be appointed to prepare the report required by Section 6 of the Act creating the Board, which shall be properly attested by the President and Secretary, and transmitted to the Common Council.

§ 6. No Committee, Officer or Member of this Commission, or person employed by this Board, shall make any purchase, give any order, incur any liability, or exercise any authority over or in relation to the Park, its officers or employees, unless in pursuance of power delegated by the Act, or by the order of this Board.

#### V.—RULES OF ORDER.

The order of business at meetings of the Board, except otherwise ordered, shall be—

- 1st. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 2d. Communications.
- 3d. Reports of Standing Committees.
- 4th. Reports of Select Committees.
- 5th. Motions and Resolutions.
- 6th. Miscellaneous business.

The Ayes and Nays shall be called and recorded on all appropriations of money ; and on all other questions at the request of one Commissioner.

All resolutions shall be in writing, with the name of the mover thereon, and shall not be considered until seconded.

All reports shall be in writing, and signed by a majority of the Committee to whom the matter was referred, and shall state the facts upon which the same is based, and their conclusions thereon.

No By-Law shall be altered, repealed, or adopted without the report of a Standing Committee thereon, nor without the assent of a majority of the whole Board, nor at the same meeting at which it is proposed.



# Document No. 5.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CENTRAL PARK.

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MAY 31, 1858.

A report from the Architect-in-chief in reference to modification of the plan proposed by Mr. Dillon, and referred to him at last meeting to consider and report thereon to the Board, was received and read.

Ordered that the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
*Clerk.*

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ARCHITECT-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE, CENTRAL PARK,  
May 31st, 1858.

*To the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park:*

Gentlemen—The amendments which have been referred to the Architect embrace two propositions, one to modify Plan 33, and one to supersede that plan by another of an opposite character in its general conception and detailed effect.

It seems desirable to separate these two suggestions, and to speak of them as distinct from each other, although it will prevent the exact order of the amendments, as printed, from being followed in this report. The proposed modifications to Plan 33 appear to be, in the first place, Nos. 3 and 4, 11, 12,

and 17, "strike out the sidewalks for pedestrians on either side of the drive," "all paths for pedestrians," "the ride round the reservoir," "the flower garden," "the music hall, arcade and casino."

To these propositions there is no objection, as they are omissions that will not interfere with the general construction of the park, and may, perhaps, when the work is further advanced, be considered and determined on to better advantage by the commissioners.

5. Truncate the angles formed by Fifty-ninth street with Fifth and Eighth avenues. The reasons for avoiding in Plan 33 the truncated angles in these positions, were first, that it is difficult if not impossible to make a dignified architectural entrance on a short truncated angle. In planning a suburban country place of limited extent, occupying an angle of two cross roads, the idea has been developed by the writer, on a small scale, with a good result; but it is not recommended as a desirable arrangement for the principal entrance to a large park, because it is thought that these gateways should be designed with reference to the general architectural lines of the other buildings on the streets in which they occur. In the case of the Fifth avenue entrance, the ground suggests the course of drive proposed in Plan 33, and the entrance is arranged accordingly, and is also so planned as to leave an ante-park or square outside the boundary, in which carriages for hire may wait without obstruction to the thoroughfare. It is thought that many persons who do not keep carriages will be glad of an opportunity to drive in the park at a moderate expense, and for this reason it has been proposed to introduce the vestibule or ante-park shown on plan.

A liberally arranged Fifth avenue entrance at Fifty-ninth street, on the line proposed by Amendment 5, would involve the necessity of a rapid descent into the low ground shown as a lake on Plan 33, or this low ground would have to be filled up for a considerable distance at a very great expense, and with disadvantage to the general lines of the scenery in this part of the park.

On the corner of Eighth avenue, the intersection of Broad-

way, as shown on the city map, cuts up the streets and avenues into so many irregular three-cornered odds and ends that it was thought advisable in Plan 33 to avoid the angle altogether and to enter the park opposite Sixtieth street. In point of economical construction, it would be nearly as feasible to make the truncated angular Eighth avenue entrance as any other short of the entrance near Sixty-third street, proposed to the special committee, and recommended in their report.

6. "Strike out the Cross-drive, running north, to the commencement of the Promenade."

This would present a circuit-drive through the park, an advantage which it seems desirable to retain.

14. "Strike out the sunken transverse roads."

Experience on the park is already constantly showing the necessity for some contrivance by which direct transit may be secured across the park for the inhabitants of the adjoining parts of the island, and much dissatisfaction is expressed with the present arrangements, the nature of which the Architect can better explain verbally.

With regard to the necessity for cross-roads that shall not interfere with the park drives at the point of intersection, and that shall be always open, lighted at night, and under the control of the city, all that can be said is included in the report on Plan 33, and the designers of that plan are aware of no argument for disregarding the necessities of the case as then presented, or they would endeavor to reply to it.

With regard to the detail of construction of these roads, whether they shall at all points, where it is practicable, be carried somewhat below the surface, or whether they shall, except at the intersections, be made surface roads, as far as possible, being separated from the park only by iron railings, is a question to be decided by a specific examination of the various circumstances of each situation. A further survey, made since the recent action of the commission adopting Plan 33, shows the feasibility, and perhaps desirability, of carrying a considerable proportion of the cross-roads above the Arsenal,

on a level with the general surface, by a slight deviation from the course represented on the map.

It is difficult to understand what advantages are proposed to be gained by amendment 14, which proposes that "passage across the park may be made, but not with such facility of grade and level as to invite passage for purposes of trade or traffic," because such a cross-road is only called for by the necessities of trade or traffic, there being no possible objection to the introduction of pedestrians or private vehicles into any part of the park.

With regard to the elevated wall proposed, it does not seem to offer any advantages over the plan of more easily concealed walls pertaining to the roads indicated on Plan 33.

Amendment number 16 proposes to strike out the designation for places for parade-ground and play-grounds. There are obvious advantages to be secured by the adoption of the proposition with regard to the parade-ground ; it is questionable, however, if the point of concentration for play suggested in the lower part of the park should not be reserved and put in order as soon as possible ; all the other situations for play-grounds may conveniently be left open for further consideration.

It is difficult to form a judgment on a design for laying out a large park without any illustrative plan, and a careful examination of the site, with special reference to the leading features proposed to be introduced. The new design roughly indicated in the Amendments Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, necessarily assumes, so far as the portion of the Park above the new reservoir is concerned, an extension of the boundaries to 110th street, and as this has not yet been surveyed or mapped, it is impossible to say what would be the best plan for its improvement. The addition of the extra length would lead to some alteration in any plan restricted to the present boundary lines.

It is not necessary, however, to consider specifically the upper part of the park, as proposed to be amended, as it seems to be a repetition, as far as practicable, of the conception of the lower part. The leading idea of the plan for the lower part of the park is a straight promenade avenue, from near Fifty-ninth street to the reservoir, with entrances at Sixth and Seventh avenues.

Two rows of trees of this length would unquestionably be a beautiful feature in itself, and the reason why the avenue on Plan 33 is commenced and terminated at the points indicated, is because in that situation, and with the limitations there assigned to it, it will interfere but little with the present lines of the landscape, while, if extended in either direction, it will destroy scenery at great cost, which a few months labor may render far more refreshing and agreeable than the constructed avenue would be after a growth of fifty years. The introduction of the suspension bridge at the point indicated, merely for the sake of getting across the comparatively slight depression occupied by the lake, would, it is considered, have a forcibly artificial look, that would be out of harmony with the present character of the scenery, which would consequently have to be demolished and made artificial, so as to correspond with the new leading feature that is proposed by the first plan to bisect it. The wire-bridge, with its towers, although doubtless intended to be of elegant design, would destroy the appearance of expanse and the breadth of effect which at present makes this part of the park so agreeable.

If a more rapid and direct communication with Vista Rock is desired than is shown on Plan 33, a light bridge can be at any time thrown across, at as low a level as possible, between two points a little west of the line indicated by the amendment, but it was designedly omitted on the plan, so that the hill to the south of the reservoir might always remain more retired and rural than the ornamental and highly-dressed grounds on the other portions of the site.

A simple and unartificial treatment, with variety and some degree of intricacy, seems to be preferable in a city park to straight lines of trees and stately architecture; these belong not to parks for the people, but to palatial gardens. A tolerably direct continuous walk from the lower end of the park round the two reservoirs to the upper part of Bogardus hill, if thought necessary to be introduced, can be at any time arranged without a sacrifice of the present scenery of the park or a division of the landscape into two parts by a prominent architectural structure crossing the ravine at Seventy-third street. This could be done in such a way as to avoid bringing the pedes-

trians in contact with the drives or rides. The walk round the reservoirs is unobjectionable, but it seems undesirable to accept them as important objects for the walk, because they must always be disappointing. They are tanks or cisterns on a large scale, it is true, but perfectly comprehensible and uninteresting after one or two visits of examination. It is considered that they are unfortunately situated, because it is one great purpose of the park to supply to the hundreds of thousands of tired workers who have no opportunity to spend their summers in the country, a specimen of God's handiwork, that shall be to them inexpensively what a month or two in the White Mountains or the Adirondacks, is, at great cost, to those in easier circumstances.

The time will come when New York will be built up, when all the grading and filling will be done, and when the picturesquely varied rocky formation of the island will have been converted into foundations for rows of monotonous straight streets and piles of rectangular buildings.

There will be no suggestion left of its present varied surface, with the single exception of the few acres contained in the park. Then, the priceless value of the present picturesque outlines of the ground will be more distinctly perceived, and its adaptability for its purpose more fully recognised.

It therefore seems desirable to interfere with its easy undulating outlines and picturesque rocky scenery as little as possible, and, on the other hand, to endeavor rapidly and by every legitimate means to increase and judiciously develop these particular individual and characteristic sources of landscape effect.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,

*Architect-in-Chief.*

# Document No. 6.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**JUNE 17, 1858.**

A report was received from the Architect-in-Chief in answer to resolutions of the last meeting.

*Ordered,* That the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE CENTRAL PARK :

Gentlemen,—The following is a list of persons employed under the resolutions of 10th May and 9th June, with their proper compensations :

C. Vaux,	at \$5 00 per diem,
W. H. Grant,	5 00 “
G. E. Waring,	5 00 “
Henry Fielder,	3 50 “
J. H. Pieper,	2 25 “
G. P. McLachlan,	2 25 “
John Crumley,	2 00 “
H. Boehringer,	2 00 “
Ed. C. Miller,	2 00 “
John Bogart,	2 00 “

One foreman and one laborer are also temporarily employed in clerk's duties, and one assistant foreman with the surveyors ; laborers are also taken as occasion requires, to assist in staking.

A few short of one thousand men, on an average, have been at

work during the week past. It is not possible to give an exact return of their employment, the excessive duty imposed upon the clerks having prevented the usual record during the last three weeks. Between four and five hundred men are engaged in excavation and filling for the entrance-drive and the promenade, about four hundred in draining and pond excavation, and seventy in grubbing and tillage of the nursery. The work is organized in divisions; Mr. Fielder, with two general foreman, directing the first; and Mr. Waring, also with two general foremen, the draining and pond excavation; Mr. Pilat, general foreman, has charge of the grubbing and nurserywork; Mr. Grant is employed as my principal assistant over all.

The following is an estimate of expenditures which may probably be made with advantage upon the Park during the remainder of the year (dating from first of June.)

Manure .....	\$25,000
Trees .....	10,000
Tools, steel and iron.....	10,000
Lumber.....	4,000
Gunpowder and fuse.....	10,000
Tile (500,000, average \$30.).....	15,000
Gravel.....	10,000
Brick (350,000, at \$5.).....	1,750
Sand.....	100
Cement, 450 barrels.....	540
Mason work and building by contract.....	10,000
Labor, average 1,350 men, 100 days, at \$1.....	135,000
Labor, team work, average 450 horses, with drivers, 100 days, at \$2.....	90,000
Foremen, \$400 a week, 29 weeks; assistant do., \$300, 29 weeks.....	20,300
Mechanics, 20, at \$10 50, \$210 per week.....	6,090
Engineers, \$300 per month.....	2,100
Police, \$310 per week, 29 weeks.....	8,990
Officers and clerks.....	12,000
Contingencies.....	10,000
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$380,870</b>



At the last meeting of the Board a resolution was passed directing that the lakes, roads and paths of the proposed constructions upon the Park should be staked out, and the Board notified whenever the staking of any feature of the work should be complete. By a resolution of the Board of May 12th, I had been previously requested to stake out the principal features, and at its meeting, May 27th, I verbally reported progress, and was informally requested, if practicable, to complete the staking as far as Seventy-ninth street before the 31st. The staking was accordingly completed as far as Seventy-fourth street, and plans and profiles prepared from actual surveys to show the relative cutting and embankments required by the drives as originally proposed by Plan 33, and as amended from that Plan by the Board, which were examined by members of the Board visiting the Park on the day named.

With the exception of a footpath indicated by a single line of stakes crossing the hill side south of the Reservoir, no additional features have since been staked out, and no alterations of consequence have been made in the lines previously staked.

As it is impossible to prevent stakes from being knocked down, stolen and displaced, it is not thought best to very closely stake out the ground much in advance of the work of construction. As construction proceeds, it often becomes necessary to re-stake several times, and finally to stake much more closely and accurately than it is at all useful or practicable to do for preliminary operations.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OL MSTED,  
Architect-in-Chief.

June 17th, 1858.

## Document No. 7.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**MONDAY, MAY 17, 1858.**

A report was received from the Superintendent, in answer to a resolution of the 10th instant, on the subject of the construction of certain portions of the Park, by contract.

July 15th, *Ordered* that the reports on the subject of contracts be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, CENTRAL PARK,  
May 14, 1858.

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE CENTRAL PARK:

Gentlemen,—A resolution of your body requests a report upon the question whether it is best to contract for certain portions of the construction of the Park.

It is obvious that there is much to be done on the Park, which it would be impracticable to have properly executed under contract; tree planting, for instance. The objections which will at once be perceived to having trees planted by contract, apply, in a greater or less degree to nearly all the work to be done on the Park; very little work is to be done, that is to say, in which the constant exercise of taste and judgment as well as of skill and industry will not be required; and this taste and judgment can not well be contracted for.

It is considered desirable, even with regard to the construction of the roads, that the designer should be left free to improve the plan as the work progresses, from suggestions afforded by the partial construction of the roads; such suggestions are so likely to occur, that it is the custom of many landscape gardeners to make no special preliminary surveys, but having determined the general direction of a pleasure drive, to fix its curves and grades definitely only from day to day, as point after point is reached. It was in this way that the drives at Greenwood were laid out, and although a moderately exact pre-conception of the final result should be formed before commencing the work, it is undesirable to undertake to fix the lines, curves, grades, or even the method of construction with that degree of precision which would be necessary before contracts for the roads could be made.

It is apparent, also, that if made in connection with other parts of the work to be done, the roads can be constructed with less labor than if undertaken as a distinct enterprise. Thus the trenching of the ground is expected to supply material for the roads; the number of men and carts which will be required to remove this material within a limited time, will be much greater for one acre than for another, because one acre will supply double as much as another.

It will therefore be desirable that the power should be had to draft men and teams from one branch of the work to another, as from day to day may be found best. Changes of weather will produce similar necessities. Sixty carts are now engaged for work on the Park. It has not been practicable to work any of them this week, the ground being too wet to admit of their carrying full loads on the low ground, where they would otherwise have been engaged. If roads had been under construction there would have been, yesterday, nothing to prevent the whole number working upon them, the high ground being firm and the earth to be shovelled from the road-bed being in a condition to work more cheaply than usual.

If the same interest governs the progress of road construction and all other work to be done, it will be usual to carry on grading for all other purposes as closely as possible to the work of construction upon the roads in order that an interchange of

material may be cheaply made. But no agreement in terms could be made for such a purpose, and no contractor could be forced to accommodate his progress to the progress of the Park towards completion, in other respects than the subject of his contract.

In order to secure the performance of contract work in a satisfactory manner, the expense for superintendence would need to be about as great as if the work should be done by day's laborers.

Another objection occurs to contracts generally, from the introduction which they would effect, of bodies of laborers, under a different government, with different wages, hours of work, privileges, requirements and customs from those which will belong to the regularly hired laborers of the Commission. It is supposed to be for a reason of this character that walls have been built to separate the work upon the new Reservoir from that upon the Park.

On these grounds it is not advised that any considerable division of the work to be done on the Park should be accomplished by contract. It will however probably be best to obtain most of the materials to be procured for use upon the Park by contract, as also for the work of masons and other mechanics.

With regard to draining, a judgment was expressed in a report made to the Board, and ordered printed, last October.

No sufficient reasons for changing the views then offered averse to drainage by contract has occurred.

For procuring tile for draining, a form of advertisement, looking to a contract, is herewith offered. It is hoped that no time will be lost in issuing an advertisement for this purpose, as little other work can be done until tile can be obtained, and a month or more must elapse after contracts are made before the tile can be manufactured and brought to the ground.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,  
Superintendent.

## Document No. 8.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1858.**

MR. GRAY presented the report of the majority of the Special Committee, appointed at the last meeting "to enquire and report to this Board whether any work, and if so, what work can be advantageously conducted by contract instead of days work".

July 15th.—*Ordered*, that the reports on the subject of Contracts be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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The Special Committee to whom was referred a resolution of this Board "to enquire and report whether any work, and if so, what work can be advantageously conducted by contract instead of day's work."

Respectfully report: That they have given the subject careful attention, with a view to arrive at the mode best calculated for an economical and speedy completion of the improvements of the Park, and have been led to the conclusion, that it is not expedient to have any portion thereof performed by contract.

The reasons for this conclusion are,

*First.*—The variety and peculiarity of the work to be performed are such, that there would of necessity be much difficulty in so preparing the contracts that they would not interfere with each other, or so that economy could be practiced in the actual operations of the force employed.

Thus the removal of earth for the formation of the lakes may at the same expense be carted for the making of a road bed. The soil removed by making an avenue, may at the same expense be deposited where it is needed for a lawn, and so a constant economy of labor result from a judicious management under one general head, which a dozen contractors would not, and could not practice or contemplate in their estimates, while any variation of the line of a road or form of a lake would lead to claims for extra work, and perhaps to tedious litigation and delay.

*Second.*—In order to contract the work, the entire ground would have to be again surveyed and a corps of engineers employed to prepare specifications, working plans, and other details preparatory to the issuing of proposals for bids. The present surveys are admitted to be inaccurate and unreliable. The people are now restive and are unwilling to have longer delay. They have had theoretical working long enough, they want now a practical laying out of the Park.

*Third.*—There can be no justifiable economy in having the work performed by contract. This Commission is quite as competent to engage laborers and to see that they work faithfully, as any contractor can be; and in the employment of laborers upon the improvements of the City, it is not a wise policy to have intermediate parties profit by any exactions upon them. The wages paid to the working man is an item in our City expenditures never objected to by the tax-payers, particularly when the work is well performed. The improvements on the Central Park are of such a character that nearly the whole expenditure is for labor, and if contracted for, the contractors could only make money by in some way oppressing the working man, perhaps by causing him to take less than fair wages, which should not be sanctioned by this Commission, whose aim it should be to have faithful laborers at fair wages.

It may be replied, as it has been stated by a member of this Commission that we are limited by law in our expenditures, and that we can only know if we are undertaking to carry out a plan which will be within our limit, by having it contracted. To this it is answered, that the estimates of the plan adopted

are within the limit by a large amount, and if the Commission, in the exercise of their best judgment and in the practice of a judicious economy, find that these estimates are too low, and that their funds fall short of the amount required to complete the improvements, it will be a satisfaction to know that, in what has been done, the money has been spent, not in fanciful structures, or in marble embellishments, but in providing for the poor man as for the rich, a space where, in green lawns, and rural walks and drives, may be found recreation and enjoyment.

In conclusion, the undersigned would remark, that if this great work is prosecuted energetically yet prudently, thus giving evidence and hope that the benefits of the Park are soon to be realized, the Commissioners will have the approbation of their fellow-citizens; if, on the contrary, the prosecution of the improvements is delayed, or retarded by useless discussion about preliminaries, or in contemplated changes of their adopted plan, thus showing themselves fickle and undecided, "the people, whose servants we are, may possibly find some means of averting the prosecution of a plan" *of procedure* "which they disapprove." "They own the Park and are most interested in its success."

The undersigned recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That it is not expedient that the work on the Central Park be done by contract.

JNO. A. C. GRAY,

CHARLES W. ELLIOTT,

Majority of the Committee.

# Document No. 9.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CENTRAL PARK.

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THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1858.

Mr. DILLON presented the minority report of the Special Committee appointed at the last meeting "to enquire and report to the Board whether any work, and if so, what work, can be advantageously conducted by contract, instead of day's work."

July 15—Ordered that the reports on contracts be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
*Clerk.*



*To the Commissioners of the Central Park :*

The undersigned, a minority of a committee appointed to inquire and report to the Board "whether any work, and if so, what work, can be advantageously conducted by contract instead of day's work," respectfully report :

This Board having devoted the last year to the preparation of the area of the Park for permanent construction, and having adopted a plan for laying out the Park, is now prepared to enter upon its third and final duty, the execution of the plan in the most faithful and economical manner ; although the undersigned regrets that the plan adopted by the Board does not adequately provide for the three great constituent elements of a park—to wit, a Ride a Drive, and a Walk—separately and distinctly, yet the very large amount of work to be done upon an area of nearly 700 acres demands the most careful consideration and the most minute and reliable estimates of its probable expense.

If the history of public expenditure establishes one truth more clearly than any other, it is this : that no work should be undertaken by the government which can be done by individuals, and that all public work should be executed by contract to the lowest bidder with adequate security, and subject to the constant inspection, supervision and control of vigilant and accomplished officers appointed by the government. This truth has become so firmly established, and is now so univer-

sally conceded, that all the works projected by the national, state and city governments are executed by contract, and, indeed, the city corporation is prohibited by express law from executing them in any other manner.

The question then arises whether the work upon the Central Park should form an exception to the general rule? And it becomes important to inquire and consider whether these works are in any degree peculiar in themselves, or different from other works constructed by the government, which renders it impossible or inexpedient to have them constructed by contract.

The works upon the Park will be those of

1. Drainage,
2. Trenching,
3. Irrigation,
4. Ponds and Lakes,
5. Roads,
6. Entrances, Lodges and other buildings,
7. Planting of Trees.

In regard to drainage, the Board is well aware that the manufacturers of tile contract not only for the materials, but also for laying the pipe, and warrant the satisfactory operation of their work; and numerous cases have been cited to the Board where private individuals have adopted this contract system of drainage upon their private estates there is no difficulty whatever in finding manufacturers of the most abundant responsibility ready to undertake the work.

Trenching consists in digging the ground with a spade for several feet below the surface, removing the loose stone and

exposing the subsoil. This is only another method or form of what is usually called the clearing and breaking up of land, which is almost universally done throughout the country by contract, at a fixed price per acre.

Irrigation is nothing more than the laying of pipes from the aqueduct to furnish water in designated places where it may be wanted to moisten the roads and refresh the vegetation. It is not easy to see in what respect this differs from the laying of Croton pipes in the city, which is always done by contract.

The construction of Ponds and Lakes involves two descriptions of work :

1st. An excavation and putting the excavated earth where it may be wanted, and

2d. In lining the bottom and sides with concrete or puddle to prevent the absorption of the water—the largest example of this description of work upon record is that of the new reservoir, 106 acres in extent, now under actual construction by contract within the area of the Park.

Roads, whether they be rail, McAdam, turnpike or ordinary country roads, are now so universally built by contract that it is difficult to understand why the roads of the Central Park should form any exception.

Entrances, lodges and other buildings are too similar to erections constantly made by private individuals as well as by the Government, and are constantly made by contract, to justify such works upon the Central Park to be made in any other manner.

The planting of trees and shrubbery is the next and the last general description of work to be done upon the Park.

In the judgment of the undersigned, it would be impossible to convey by any specification the necessities of the Park in this particular.

The selection of trees in all their varieties and combination must be left to the taste and judgment of the Landscape Gardener, who must also select the general and special localities suitable to each description of planting. Even in this description of work, however, the undersigned believes that there is one portion of it which may well be done by contract. He refers to the transplantation of the largest description of trees by machinery. The kind of tree and its height, as well as the particular spot on which it is to be placed, can easily be designated by the specifications, and can therefore be readily obtained by contract.

The undersigned has given mature consideration to the report of the Architect-in-Chief, in which he comes to the conclusion that very little or no work upon the Park should be done by contract, and will briefly state his argument with the reply which appears to the undersigned to be sufficient.

He said that he should be left to improve upon the plan—that is, to alter it as the work progresses—which could not be done if put under contract. It must be remembered that the Architect-in-Chief has been in actual observation of these grounds for nearly a year; that he has had also the advantage of the most accurate topographical surveys covering every fifty feet square of the surface of the Park, and from this observation, and these surveys he has made the plan which has been adopted by the Board. Although slight improvements might be suggested

in the actual working of any plan whatever, yet the undersigned cannot preceive that any such very substantial improvements upon the plan can be suggested if it has been well studied, which would warrant the Board for the sake of them to lose the great advantages of a contract.

The undersigned is aware that allegations have been made unfavorable to the accuracy of the surveys, but having been one of the committee heretofore appointed to examine the subject, he is enabled to state that no inaccuracy whatever was proved to exist, except one, being an omission to survey a small strip of land fifty feet in width, which was the boundary line between two sections of land allotted to different corps of engineers, and omitted in the survey under the mistaken belief of each that the strip was embraced in the division of the other. This omission, is, of course, in the present aspect of the case, wholly unimportant. These surveys have cost nearly \$20,000, and have been made by the late Chief-Engineer and his accomplished assistants, of established repute in their profession. They were made for the express purpose of being the basis upon which the working plans and minute and close specifications could be drawn of the works to be done, and the undersigned has entire confidence that they are fully sufficient.

Nor is it a good argument against the contract system, that it may include different contracts in actual prosecution by different contractors at the same time, that progress in one would be dependent on progress in another, and that the laborers would be in the employ and under the government of different contractors.

It is supposed that in every work of any magnitude, from the building of a capitol to the erection of a stable, this consequence always exists. The excavator, the mason, the carpen-

ter, the plumber, the gas-fitter, the painter, all employ different laborers, all have separate contracts. All work following and dependent upon the work of others and the several contracts are executed well and harmoniously.

The undersigned begs further to impress upon the Board the particular consideration which, besides the other advantages ordinarily arising from the adoption of the contract system, most emphatically calls for its adoption by the Board.

The first consideration arises from the composition of the Board itself, consisting of eleven members. It is too large to ensure either individual responsibility or vigilant supervision; and being accidental in its foundation, it is too heterogeneous to justify the expectation that multifarious duties can be either well and easily discharged.

It should therefore be the aim of the Board to make its movements those of a "simple machine," having as few men in its direct employ and confined to as few subjects of expenditure as shall be consistent with the due execution of the work, and the preparation of the Park, for its great object of health and pleasure.

This consideration can be obtained only by the adoption of the contract system, under which it would be necessary to employ a very small number of officers to supervise the execution of the work. The experience of the past year must be fresh in the recollection of the Board, and the undersigned believes it is admitted to be most unsatisfactory, the nature of the work being the removal of obstruction, &c., not admitting of contract.

This Board has had in its employ nearly 1,200 men. Every fortnight requisitions have come from the Park for large amounts of material, which was purchased at retail. The em-

ployment, inspection, and discharge of these men, has absorbed the time of the officers, the registration of their time and their absence has been left to foremen unknown to the Board, whilst the payment of a force so large has been both complicated and difficult.

The Board has now authorized the employment of 3,000 men.

Is this Board competent to exercise over this little army the vigilant supervision which springs alone from private and individual interest.

It is true that this Board has delegated to the Architect-in-Chief the entire power of appointment and discharge, as well as the appointment of all the officers now acting under him at the park, and that this delegation of authority, together with the reference to him of all amendments to the plan heretofore or that may hereafter be ordered, has made the operation of the Board simple enough.

We are henceforth simply the accountants and cashiers of the Park.

But this simplicity is attained at the sacrifice of the rights of a minority as well as the duties of every individual member, which no majority can possibly resign or take away.

The time of the Architect-in Chief is absorbed in marshalling the large body of men, whereas his skill and industry should be devoted exclusively to the work itself.

If the Board, however, would adopt the contract system, the large machinery now in operation, with its unsatisfactory result, could be abandoned; the men now in the employ would be taken by the contractor; the Architect-in-Chief and his

officers would apply themselves solely to the supervision of the work, and the operation of the Board be rendered extremely simple, with the best guarantees of responsibility and success.

The undersigned considers it important that the works of construction should be simplified and reduced to the essential requisites of the Park, embraced in the seven divisions of labor before enumerated.

Build the Drive, the Ride and the Walk, each separate and distinct, each grand in itself, but the walk the grandest of all.

These can be accomplished under one contract, and if the Board could be induced to adopt the Grand Walk suggested by the second amendment of himself and their respected associate, Mr. Belmont, three miles and a-half in length, proceeding from the point where walks from the entrances of the Sixth and Seventh avenues would unite, thence running to the lakes at Seventy-third street; thence to the reservoirs; thence upon their top and along the margins of those unequalled artificial lakes, fifteen times the size of Washington square, and thence, in a diagonal line to the northwest angle of the Park, to Observatory Hill, the general rendezvous, upon its tableland, of all who ride, drive and walk.

The Board would not only meet the just demands of pedestrians, but also save a large expenditure.

Of the three miles and one-half, two miles would be on the margin of the artificial lakes, and will be constructed by the Croton Board without cost to funds of this Commission.

The Drive being seven and a-half miles in length, if a ride be constructed of like extent, as suggested by the amend-



ment, the walk unbuilt of one and a-half miles, there would only be sixteen and a-half miles of roadway to be constructed.

In the opinion of the undersigned, this can easily be accomplished by contract within two years, the period fixed for the completion of the new reservoir.

The final consideration why the contract system should, in the opinion of the undersigned, be adopted remains to be stated. The Legislature has assigned the limit of the expenditure at about \$1,600,000, and the history of this limitation should not be forgotten.

The early advocates of the Park met with serious obstacles in the general apprehension of the community that its establishment would prove a reservoir of unlimited expenditure, and it was freely admitted that, great as would be the blessings of the Park, they might be purchased at too dear a cost. It was the pleasure and the duty of the undersigned at that time, in his private and official capacity, to allay these apprehensions, and to demonstrate that the cost of the land to the city would not exceed \$3,500,000, and of its improvement \$1,500,000, making the entire cost of the Park in its completion \$5,000,000, the interest of which would be \$300,000 a year. The taxation of the city, then, being \$6,000,000 per annum, the annual interest would be an additional charge of only five per cent., so that a citizen then paying \$100 a year in taxes would be compelled to pay only \$105, for which he would have for himself, his wife and his children a park of 750 acres, of unequalled extent and beauty.

It was generally conceded that if these promises were adhered to and fulfilled, the Park would prove an unmixed benefit, and a general feeling arose in its favor. The land was purchased within the estimate, and, in the bill drawn by the undersigned for the Legislature for the improvement, he in-

served a provision, in language the most stringent he could use, enforcing this covenant with the people.

The act says "no plan whatever for the improvement of the Park shall be adopted by this Board, the full execution of which shall require the payment of an annual interest upon its cost exceeding the sum of \$100,000 per annum."

This covenant with the people, thus enforced by positive law, should be most religiously observed, and there is no security against its violation except by the adoption of the contract system in the execution of the plan. We have, it is true, the estimates of the Architect-in-Chief that his plan can be executed within the limit—but there is no reason to suppose that this estimate will follow any exception to the general experience that estimates for such works are not to be relied upon. The only course of safety and of prudence for the Board is to rely solely upon facts to be ascertained by the actual bids of contractors fully responsible to do the work. It is only in this way that the Board can surely prevent the lamentable mistake and disgrace of abusing the confidence of the people, violating the law, and offering to the public an unfinished Park after the appropriation is exhausted and the limit of the Legislature has been passed.

The undersigned therefore recommends the Board to adopt the resolution annexed and herewith submitted :

*Resolved*, That the works for drainage, trenching and irrigation, the excavation and construction of ponds and lakes, and the construction of the Drive, Ride and Walk, and all other works upon the Park, unless otherwise specially ordered by the Board, be done by contract; and that the Architect-in-Chief report to this Board working plans, with specifications, for each of such works.

Dated June 17th, 1858.

R. J. DILLON.

## Document No. 10.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1858.**

The PRESIDENT presented his review of the reports on the subject of contracts, referred to him at the last meeting.

*Ordered,* that the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

While the construction of the Park is rapidly and satisfactorily progressing, with a force of about fifteen hundred effective laborers, under a faithful and vigorous supervision, the manner in which the work shall be done has again become the subject of enquiry, and a proposition offered by a Commissioner, on the eighth of June last, requiring all work to be done by contract, gave rise to the following resolution of the Board :

*Resolved,* That it be referred to a committee, to consist of

to enquire and report to this Board whether any work, and, if so, what work can be advantageously conducted by contract instead of days' work."

A majority of the committee appointed to carry out this resolution, Messrs. GRAY and ELLIOTT, have reported that it is not expedient to have any portion of the improvement of the Park performed by contract; the minority of the committee, Mr. DILLON, has reported in favor of contracting the work to the lowest bidder.

More than two months since the Superintendent of the Park (now Architect-in-Chief) presented his views on this subject, at the request of the Board, in a written communication, in which he expresses the opinion that it is unadvisable to accomplish any considerable portion of the work by contract, though he suggests that materials and such work as that of masons and mechanics may be so performed.

As far back even as October last, before the plan was adopted—before the question had become complicated by each class of the work being partly finished, many members of the Board gave this subject their attention, and a report of the Superintendent was handed in on the subject of contracting the draining of the Park; yet now, when preparations for such work as is to be done during the current season are far advanced and much of the work in actual progress, the subject is again brought before the Board.

The reports of the majority and minority of the committee have been referred to the undersigned to report thereon, and, while he feels that the subject has received from the committee very careful consideration, and that it has already been presented to the Board in their reports, as well as in those of the Architect, in most of its aspects, the undersigned, in compliance with the wish of the Board, proceeds to present some general suggestions, the thorough discussion of the various bearings of which would give to this communication an extent that would require more of the time of the Board than he is willing to engross, even if other business of great variety and importance were not constantly calling for immediate attention.

The plan for the Park, adopted with such singular unanimity, comprehends the most ample provision: *primarily*, for the great numbers of the people who will seek its attractions on foot; *secondly*, for those who drive: *thirdly*, for those who ride, and,

*fourthly*, for the necessities of the business travel and traffic across the Park, felt even at the present moment to be constant and pressing.

By a rare combination of forecast, taste and judgment, facilities for all these movements are so arranged as to leave the visitor, on his arrival at the Park, free to choose his way; if on horseback, over a road made solely for those who ride; if on foot, along quiet and sequestered paths, beneath the shade of the more prominent and stately avenues, the exclusive resort of pedestrians, over the sward that enamels the smooth and pathless lawn, or near to the side of winding and dustless roads, animated with all varieties of vehicles of pleasure.

By a felicitous arrangement peculiar to this plan, the walking, riding and driving are all enjoyed undisturbed and uninterrupted by the current of traffic that, crossing the Park for business purposes, seeks only expedition and convenience.

The language of the original resolution required the committee "to enquire and report to the Board whether any, and if so, what work can be advantageously done by contract instead of days' work."

The conclusions arrived at by the majority and minority of the committee are, in the main, directly opposed to each other.

In order to proceed intelligibly with the discussion of this subject, it will be desirable to understand what is meant by the terms that are used.

By *days' work* we assume it is intended to indicate the method of accomplishing a work by the proprietor dealing directly with the operatives, and compensating them as well as the material men in detail, or by employing a chief man to do the work without a stipulated compensation in gross, leaving him the hiring and direct dealing with the operatives employed.

The hiring of a mechanic or a single laboring man for a day is a contract, and, in one sense, all work is done by contract; but the distinction supposed to be intended is between what is above described as days' work and that done by the job—that is, by the contractor agreeing to complete a work for a gross sum stipulated beforehand between him and the proprietor.

The advantages supposed to accrue to a private proprietor by doing his work by contract are, that he is relieved from the

necessity of a constant personal supervision of details, is free to attend to other business, and is enabled to substitute, for a compensation, included in the gross price, experience in the class of work to be performed greater than that possessed by himself. While, however, he escapes the details of its progress, he is not relieved from a final supervision and judgment upon the work.

The controlling interest of the contractor is to bring the cost of the job as far below the price he gets for doing it as possible, and when a contract is made, the proprietor has enlisted against himself the pecuniary interest of the contractor, which is paramount and engrossing, except so far as it may be modified by the desire to preserve a good reputation in his business, and by considerations of morality and honesty.

As a pecuniary matter, the contractor looks constantly at saving expense—at finishing the job as unexpensively as he can, without creating for himself difficulties in getting the stipulated price.

It is needless to do more than state this proposition to have its truth recognised.

The ordinary practice in contracts is for the proprietor to employ a person whose interest is adverse to the contractor, to supervise the details, watch the progress of the work, and protect the interests of the proprietor against those of the contractor. So that the proprietor really pays for two supervisions—one directed against his interests, and the other for them, if faithful.

On the other hand, in carrying out an enterprise by days' work, the interests of all concerned, employed and employer, combine to have the work done in the best manner; the only probable loss to the proprietor being in failing to get all of the time and energies of the employed that he pays for. Whatever he does get is directed in his favor.

The stress and importance that are placed by the seller of a house upon the fact that it was built by days' work, shows a very common recognition of the superiority of the results of this mode of labor over that done by contract.

The reasons adduced by the majority in their report, for their conclusion, "that it is not expedient that the work done on the

Central Park be done by contract," are briefly but well stated. They are—

*First.*—The variety and peculiarity of the work requires for its economical accomplishment, that many kinds of work should be contemporaneously carried on, one depending upon the progress of the other.

*Second.*—The necessity of an entire re-survey of the grounds in order to form specifications, plans, &c., with correctness, which is impracticable without great loss of time.

*Third.*—The fact that nearly the whole of the expenditure at the Park is to be for actual labor, and that it is neither a sound policy nor an economical discharge of the duties of this Board, to introduce an intermediate party, to make his profits out of the work, either by oppressing the laborer by taxing his wages, or by paying the intermediate contracting party an increased price that will yield him his profit without his taking it from the earnings of labor.

It would seem that where the nature of the work to be done is complex and untried, depending upon contingencies, it would be wiser to keep its control within the power of the proprietor to modify, change and substitute at pleasure as difficulties arise, rather than by a fixed contract, give to the contractor a claim for increased compensation or damages, or an occasion for litigation and delay, at each discovery of an unexpected obstacle in a comparatively new undertaking, in the completing of each of the details of which so much depends upon the efficient prosecution of the other.

Each of the different classes of work to be done at the Park are made the subject of comment in the minority report, with a view of demonstrating the practicability of accomplishing all of them by contract, with, perhaps, a single exception—that of planting trees. A different conclusion is arrived at from that expressed by the majority of the committee, and by the architect-in-chief, the chosen officer of this Board, more familiar than any living man with the ground, with the work to be done, and with that actually doing on the Park.

The fact of such difference is of itself a sufficient caution to this Board to weigh the matter thoroughly before its decision.

It is remarkable in the enumeration in the minority report of work to be done at the Park which may be done by contract, that which is clearly of the character to be done by contract has been lost sight of, that is, the preparation of stone or procurement of material for the roads. This is a simple operation, and it is readily ascertainable, whether the results produced are in accordance with the stipulations of a contract, and if the Board intend to use prepared stone or gravel for the roads, it clearly may be procured by contract.

The other classes of work enumerated in the minority report are—

1. Draining.
2. Trenching.
3. Irrigating.
4. Ponds and Lakes.
5. Roads.
6. Entrance Lodges and other buildings.
7. Planting of trees.

Each of these classes of work is made the subject of comment and explanation in the minority report, with the view of showing the practicability of performing them by contract; these comments and explanations will here be the subject of brief observation.

1. The *thorough drainage* of land requires peculiar care in the levels of the drains, and in the laying the tile; it is quite possible that in smooth land, where the character of the subsoil can be reliably ascertained, it might be done by contract, but on the Park, the rocky ledges and boulders which are fallen upon where least expected, would require constant slight modifications of the plan and departures from specifications, and would complicate questions of compensation to the contractor, which must be adjusted by subsequent agreement or by litigation; and wherever, and in whatever class of work, the probabilities are that unforeseen circumstances will require construction of the very considerable portion of the work outside the terms of the contract, or by reference to an arbitrator provided



by the contract, the utility of the contract system is lessened; for while nominally operating under those of its provisions that liquidate the compensation, you are really often working upon others that leave the compensation an open question afterwards, to be settled, upon a *quantum meruit*, either by the courts, or by an arbitrator provided by the contract itself.

The science of *through drainage* is very little understood or practised in this country; the manufacturers of tile are very few, and the number of persons competent to drain land by this method are also limited. If it were thought best to do the work by contract, the range of bidders would be exceedingly confined, perhaps not over eight or ten in the whole country. One advertisement for proposals for tile, which elicited six proposals, cost the Board about \$150, an expense that might have been avoided by addressing a note to each manufacturer at an expense of the postage.

It is possible that cases may have been mentioned in the Board, where individuals have adopted the contract system of drainage on their private estates, but these cases are by no means numerous, or upon an extensive scale, and afford no aid in determining the question in hand, without a knowledge of the soils drained.

As the work of thorough drainage is now conducted at the Park, not a tile is laid without the personal supervision and test of the Superintendent of this class of work; and, as in this case, wherever the superintendence must be careful and minute, it may without much, if any, increased cost include the responsibility of the management of the labor, and it is very doubtful whether the additional expense of a contractor's superintendence should be assumed or permitted. In respect to the work of draining, the late engineer-in-chief, in a report to the Board of last year, gives his views on the subject in the following language: "Whether the work should be done by contract or day's labor, could be very well decided by letting a small portion of the ground as an experiment, while a similar portion is undertaken by day's work; the result will soon determine the relative cost of each. Any attempt to arrive at a calculation in any other way, would be absurd."—(*See Doc., No. 16, 1857.*)

The same difficulty of inability to ascertain the nature of the

soil, though in less degree, applies to *trenching*. *Clearing* land is the removal from it of trees, stumps, shrubs, roots and stones; the term is generally employed to express the operation of removing the surface incumbrances. The *breaking up* of land is the process of turning over the turf by the plough as universally understood, and so far as generally done by contract in this country, is, upon the western prairies, where miles in extent of the land is of the same even, equal character.

To say that *trenching* of land is the same as clearing and grubbing is an error. It is a totally different operation from either of these. The questions, *where* it is to be done, and *how* it is to be done, are to be in a great degree determined by the character of the soil. To plough a clayey soil, in wet weather, would, among practical men, be deemed highly improper and injurious, and to carry on diversified operations depending upon weather and upon numerous other contingencies, within the narrow rigid rules of a system of contracting, is to run great hazard of injury and useless expense.

All rules have their exceptions; because some sort of work can be well done by contract, it does not follow that all can, and it requires only the application of that most valuable quality, common sense and common experience, to explode the glittering bubbles of attractive but impracticable and damaging theories.

In the judgment of the undersigned, when it is tolerably certain that the soil is uniform and comparatively free from rocks, it is quite practicable to do trenching by contract; but even this must depend upon the complications and connections existing at the time, of this sort of work with others.

*Irrigation* can scarcely be properly said to be the laying of pipes. To effect irrigation over the Park, it will be necessary to lay conducting pipes; but the irrigation of the Park consists in the use of the water for the refreshing of vegetation, and the suppression of dust, and whatever may be the practice, in respect to contracting for the laying of the Croton pipes through designated streets, at depths indicated upon existing careful surveys of all the streets of the city, it is a very different thing to lay the pipes through the Park for the purposes

of irrigation; they must be often laid circuitously, at greater or less depths, and often eccentric in their courses.

When the courses and distinct lines have been ascertained, it will be time for the Board to determine the question of contracting the work of laying the pipes for irrigation, which is by the undersigned believed to be inconsistent with economy, and with the best interests of the Park.

The excavation of the *Lakes and Ponds*, and the construction of the *Roads and Walks*, should proceed together; and the considerations presented by the majority report, are peculiarly apt to this branch of the work; the Board should not allow itself to be placed in the position of having a long connected series of its work delayed by reason of the infidelity or inability of a designing contractor on one of the chain of contracts; and, although the minority report points as an argument to the largest example of this description of work on record "that of the new Reservoir within the area of the Park," it will be recollected that the preparations for this contract have been not less than one year in making, and that it was only given out after a severe litigation, productive of delay and expense to the city. With respect to these legal proceedings, the Croton Board, in its last annual report in January last, holds the following language:

"Had it not been for the restraint placed upon the Board, the construction of the new Reservoir would, at this time, have been in an advanced stage of progress, promising the early completion of a work much required by the city, and giving daily employment to upwards of a thousand men."

Slight deviations of roads and paths, modifications of draining, trenching and planting, that may be found necessary by the discovery in the progress of the work, of unlooked for obstacles, should be within the power of the Board to accomplish; this is understood to be one of the reasons urged by the architect-in-chief for his conclusion, that the work cannot be so advantageously done by contract as by days' work.

It is undoubtedly an argument to be well considered against the contract system, that where contractors are dependent upon

the progress of each other, the work may be delayed by the neglect or evil disposition of any one. If the contractor taking the rock-work should take a fancy to let off a few blasts every hour or two, the hands employed by another contractor or by the Board at other sorts of work in the vicinity would be constantly interrupted and scattered, at a great loss of time. In the erection of a public or private building inconveniencies occasioned by the neglect or delay of one contractor are often felt, but can be more readily obviated by a private owner than by a public body; in fact, the reasons why a public body should adopt the contract system are in many respects different from those that would control a private proprietor.

More particularly in the construction of the Park is the possibility of delay to be avoided. It is but about seven months in the year that work can be favorably conducted on the Park, and but about three months in which the planting can be done. If the other work is not forwarded, the three months for planting are lost; and this is the loss of the whole season, as in this matter the operations of nature must be consulted.

The *Entrance Lodges* and *other buildings* may, doubtless, be constructed by contract, upon plans to be furnished by the architect-in-chief; and it is recommended by the undersigned that the Architect be instructed to proceed at once to have plans drawn and specifications prepared for an entrance lodge at the entrance near the junction of the Fifth avenue with Fifty-ninth street, and that proposals for the erection of the same, according to plans and specifications, be advertised for as soon as approved by this Board. The undersigned also suggests that designs be submitted by the architect-in-chief to the Board for massive piers and appropriate gates for the entrances at Sixty-second street and the Eighth avenue, at Sixth avenue and Seventh avenue on Fifty-ninth street, and on Fifth avenue at Seventy-second street, and also for the fence or enclosing wall to be ultimately adopted for the Park.

As to the *planting of trees*.—This great, important and expensive part of the ornamentation of the Park, it seems on all hands conceded, must be under the constant control of the architect-in-chief. That gentleman has, sometime since, taken measures that will enable him to procure the large trees by

contract, at so much per tree, carefully taken up and placed in the ground in a location to be designated; and he has suggested that payment be made for those only which flourish after being transplanted—one-half at the end of one year, the other moiety at the end of two years, thus compelling the contractor to guarantee his own work.

The foregoing observations are in some respects applicable to the views expressed in the report of the majority as well as to those of the minority of the committee.

The undersigned, however, feels that his whole duty to his associates in this matter would not be discharged were he to leave the subject without some notice of the positions taken by the minority of the committee, Mr. Dillon, with much ability, added to a zeal that has led to conclusions not to be adopted without essential qualification; for, if adopted at this time when the work is advancing with satisfactory expedition, an entire re-organization of the work at the Park will be required, involving the loss of the best part of the season.

The proposition of the minority is, "that all public works should be executed by contract to the lowest bidder, with adequate security," (see page 2 of minority report,) and precedents, analogies and arguments drawn from the constitution of the Board, and from the law under which it acts, are skilfully arranged in its support.

If the undersigned is correct in his recollection, the great desideratum, the highest and proper position of the Board has been often stated and urged by the author of the minority report to be, after the adoption of the plan and the appointment of a chief constructor, that of a recording Board—simply to record the acts of its chief executive officer—to be what the author of the minority report mistakingly asserts that we have been "simply the accountants and cashiers of the Park."

Such as the constitution of the Board is, whether the opinion be that it is too large or too small, it is very clear that under it the great work we have to do must, for the present at least, be carried forward, or the just expectations of the people must be disappointed.

If the Board, as the minority report asserts, "is accidental in its formation, and too heterogeneous to justify the expectation

that its multifarious duties can be either well or easily performed ;" if the lack of assimilation or identity of views amongst its members gives rise, within the body itself, to obstacles to the progress of the work in addition to the care of its various branches, it certainly imposes upon those members who are anxious to press forward the work, more onerous duties, to the discharge of which they will address themselves with the more efficiency.

It is, at least, not one of the omissions of the law constituting the Board that the rights of a minority are not protected. No act of the Board is final or binding except it receive six votes out of its eleven members, whose names are to be recorded in the minutes. At a very large portion of the meetings not over seven or eight members are present ; at many meetings one vote may defeat, and often has defeated, action of the Board, and in a large majority of cases two votes are sufficient to prevent action.

The ordinary rule of a quorum in other bodies is a majority of the body, and this majority being present, a majority of a majority is sufficient to adopt a measure. In this Board that would be four ; but the Legislature has provided that six, or a majority of the whole number elected, must be obtained to pass a measure. The rights of a minority are not only protected, but the rights of a majority are weakened by this rule, and necessary action, as we have not rarely seen, is prevented by a single member or two. The rule that prevails in some bodies, requiring a vote of two-thirds to adopt a measure, has been contended by writers on the subject to be wrong, because affirmative action of the body for good as well as evil may be checked by the minority.

It might not be necessary to make these observations were this arraignment of the Board, its members, and its action confined to a minority report to the Board itself, whose members know the facts and give to the allegations of the arraiguing party such weight as they may deem them entitled to receive. The language of the report of the minority is, that the present position of this Board towards its duties "is attained at the sacrifice of the rights of a minority as well as the duties of every individual member," and the author of this lan-

guage has carried the same views beyond the usual theatre of the discussions of this Board in a protest to the public which has been made the subject of discussion in an official document, and the influence of which was counted on adversely to the appropriation lately asked for at the hands of the Common Council. In the report of the Board of Aldermen, one of the branches of the city government to which this Board looks by law for the means to conduct the great enterprise committed to its keeping, may be found the following allusion to this subject :

“Moreover, the published protest of Messrs. Belmont and Dillon, two members of the Commission, exhibits, on the part of the majority, a disposition to prevent that discussion of the whole subject of the improvements, which is absolutely essential to the public interests.” Judging by the great unanimity and promptness with which the sum asked by this Board from the city government was voted, it is supposed that a reference to the law on this subject speedily removed any erroneous and adverse impressions derived from that protest.

The author of the minority report believes that the experience of the past year relative to the conduct of the work of the Park, “is admitted to be most unsatisfactory.” Without deeming it necessary to express any opinion here as to the mode of conduct of the work of the Park under the chief executive officer of the year that is past, it is very gratifying to know, that, although the duties of the Architect-in-Chief are, as expressed by the minority report, exceedingly arduous, yet the supervision this year is thorough and conscientious, and productive of satisfactory results.

If any doubt the fact—if it is by any one believed that the laborer at the Park is not yielding for his wages a fair day’s work, such an impression will be at once dissipated by a visit to the Park, and observation of the superintendence, as well as the diligence of the laborer.

If heterogeneousness is deemed a valuable characteristic of a legislative or representative body, it has its advantages also in a body partly executive and partly legislative. The diversity of vocations, pursuits and experiences, is often the foundation of valuable suggestions. The member of any body deeming this quality objectionable has the resort of a fair, candid, frank pre-

sentation of his views to assimilate his associates—failing in which, it would not be deemed an excess of modesty to assume that he might possibly sometimes hold opinions as to the practicability or correctness of certain measures, in which there might be a mixture of error, in which he might be wrong, and his eight associates right. The power of assimilation in a heterogeneous body of harmonizing dissonant views, so that the primary object of association may be advanced, is a rare and very desirable one.

In the opinion of the undersigned, no argument in favor of or adverse to the contract system of especial weight can be drawn from the organization or number of this commission.

The Act organizing this Commission provides, "No plan for the laying out, regulation and government of said Park shall be adopted or undertaken by the Commissioners, of which the entire expense, when funded, shall require for the payment of the annual interest thereon a greater sum than one hundred thousand dollars per annum."

The report of the minority regards that this "covenant with the people, thus expressed by positive law, should be most religiously observed," and avers, in most positive terms, that "there is no security against its violation, except by the adoption of the contract system in the execution of the plan."

The author of the minority report informs the Board, that, "in the bill drawn *by him* for the Legislature, he inserted a provision, in language the most stringent he could use, enforcing this covenant with the people."

Why, then, did not the author of the law, holding the opinion so decidedly "*that there is no security against its violation except in the contract system,*" acting "in his official capacity," allaying "general apprehensions of the community" that the cost of its improvement would exceed \$1,500,000, fail to insert in his law the simple provision that "all the work should be executed by contract to the lowest bidder, with adequate security?"

Acting in an "official capacity," he surely must have been aware of what he tells us in the report of the minority, that "all works prosecuted by the national, state and city governments are executed by contract," and that "the city corpora-



tion is prohibited by express law from executing them in any other manner."

The contract system was no new thing when this law was drawn: it was one about which the author of the law, in his official capacity, as corporation counsel, was continually called upon to act.

Perhaps the draft of the law prepared by him contained some such provision, and the Legislature may have stricken it out. If so, is this Board to adopt a system which the Legislature has refused to impose upon us?

The argument of the minority seems to be, that as the Legislature have fixed the sum to be expended, this Board can only keep within that sum by contracting the work. This argument is rather late. The language of the act, "that no plan whatever for the improvement of the Park *shall be adopted, &c.,*" requires the consideration of this subject before the *adoption of the plan*. The time to put a check upon expense was in the selection of a plan, which could be constructed within the limit. It *was* then considered by the Board. This was the time to count the cost. It was no part of prudence to delay calculations of expense till the work was well under way. Of thirty-three plans offered, but very few were estimated to cost over the allotted sum; most of them, and among them the plan adopted, were far under it.

Of the unreliability of estimates generally, where the character of the work is uncertain, the Board need no evidence; but it would be interesting to examine those estimates maintained by the minority by which "the general apprehension of the community" was allayed, and by which "it was demonstrated that the cost of the land to the city would not exceed \$3,500,000, and of its improvement \$1,500,000." It is asserted in the report of a committee of the Board of Aldermen, before alluded to, and in which the protest of two of the members of the commission is mentioned,

"That the cost of the ground for the Central Park, which "was originally estimated at \$1,172,325, amounted to upwards "of \$5,000,000—making the actual cost exceed the estimate by "nearly \$4,000,000—and this, too, with all the facilities which

“presented themselves for determining the value of real estate.”

There is certainly misapprehension somewhere on this subject, and the obstacles met with by the “early advocates of the Park,” alluded to in the report of the minority, must have been more seriously felt by the still earlier advocates of the Park, its fathers and originators, long before this law was enacted, drawn or thought of.

It is due to the author of the minority report to say, that estimates of the cost of the land were made several years before his official connection with the Park commenced, and for which he is in no respect responsible; indeed, they were made, and the Park proposed, and its boundaries staked out, long before the connection of the author of the minority report with the Park occurred, and as early, it is believed, as 1851.

It is to be hoped that if the cost of the land taken under proceedings by the city government has exceeded the estimate by four million dollars, that we are not to meet with a similar extraordinary excess over the estimated cost of its improvement, it is the plain and obvious duty of this Board to see to it that no such excess is committed under its management. It can scarcely be that the sum of one and a half million was put in the law merely to round up the figures to five million, and that “the covenant with the people” was based on that sort of intelligence; if it was based on careful estimates of the cost of the Park, made on such examination as should be required when the great law-making power is called upon to act, where are these estimates?

The truth is, that it was left purely discretionary with this Board to contract its work or not, as it might deem wise and expedient, apparent as it must be to any practical man that much of the undertaking cannot, with regard to economy of expenditure, be accomplished by contract.

The next and only remaining argument of the minority report for adopting the contract system, that the undersigned deems it necessary to treat, is that drawn from precedent and analogy of other bodies; and upon which the minority report holds the following language:

“If the history of public expenditure establishes one truth more clearly than any other it is this, that no work should be undertaken by the government which can be done by individuals, and that all public work should be executed by contract to the lowest bidder, with adequate security, and subject to the constant inspection, supervision and control of vigilant and accomplished officers appointed by the government. This truth has been so firmly established, and is now so universally conceded, that all the works projected by the national, state and city governments are executed by contract, and indeed the city corporation is prohibited by express law from executing them in any other manner.”

It will be seen that there is most essential distinction in the system urged by the minority ; it is what is called the “lowest bidder” system, the method of which is supposed to be a public advertisement for proposals, and a public award of the work to the lowest bidder giving adequate security.

The undersigned trusts this Board will examine well the consequences of its adoption before deciding in its favor. It involves the surrender of that discretion as to the manner of doing its work, which has been wisely left to this Board by the Legislature, the tying of its own hands, the placing itself in the power of a lowest bidder, however incompetent, litigious or dishonest, and might prove ruinously detrimental to the work.

Where is the instance that the taste, skill and judgment of laying out a park with its ornamentation has been provided by contract? It may have been done: it might be practicable to lay out a park on a flat prairie with even surface and reliable subsoil by contract ; but the unusual irregularity of the land is here a main difficulty.

Take the case of an individual—would he be apt to stipulate to give his work to the lowest bidder? would he not retain the right to exercise his judgment as to the character and ability of the bidder, at the same time that he was willing to invite public competition?

It is erroneous to say that “all works projected by the national government are executed by contract.” Many of the works of the national government are executed by days’ work ;

it is only necessary to cite an example near home. At this moment there are nearly two thousand men employed by days' work at the Navy Yard in Brooklyn, and generally wherever work is done by contract the lowest bidder system is repudiated, except in those instances where the law is express.

The undersigned is informed by an accomplished engineer, that it is the practice of the United States Service to make careful estimates of the cost of a work, and offer it at a public letting. Such bids as are largely under the estimate are at once rejected on the ground that the price offered being insufficient, the party offering does not intend to carry out his contract, that the government may not be involved in difficulties, claims for damage and delays.

An extract from the "regulations of the office of the construction of buildings under the Treasury Department" of the United States Government, exhibits the esteem in which experience has led that department to place upon the "lowest bidder" system. This is the extract :

"It is not to be understood that every agent of the Treasury Department is bound to accept the lowest bid ; the object of the advertisement is to invite competition ; after receiving proposals, every agent will exercise a sound discretion as to accepting or rejecting even the most favorable offer received."

Respecting the State Government, the practice has, it is believed, been on canal works not to bind the letting parties to the lowest bidder. Up to about the year 1854, it is believed to have been the custom in the canal works to leave a discretion in the letting power, to take circumstances into consideration in their awards. With the experience of thirty years, with legislature upon legislature, engineers upon engineers, all bringing their powers to bear to perfect contracts and preparatory specifications, our statute books are filled with acts to indemnify and pay contractors that exhibit the imperfection still existing in the contract system. In the year 1855, the lowest bidder system became, so far as canal work is concerned, a constitutional provision, but still it is said that the officers manage to retain discretion by refusing to award where they have doubts of the good faith of the bidder.

Neither is it true that the works done by the city are, without

qualification, given to the lowest bidder giving adequate security. Though the law is very stringent, and, as it now stands, permits work under the sum of \$250 to be done without a contract, that over \$250 must be done by contract, under such regulations as shall be established by ordinance of the Common Council, unless by a vote of three-fourths of the members elected to each Board, it shall be otherwise ordered; and all contracts are to be given to the lowest bidder, giving security as required by the ordinance.

Here it will be seen are exceptions, even in this city, to a rule which it is admitted approaches very nearly to that proposed by the minority, to wit: "That all public work should be executed by contract to the lowest bidder, with adequate security."

The report of the minority, speaking of irrigation, uses the following language: "It is not easy to see in what respect this differs from the laying of Croton pipes in the city, which is always done by contract."

The practices of the Croton Department having been so often explained to the Board, in a manner that, if erroneous, would mislead, the undersigned took occasion to inquire of the officers of that department. The responses made to his enquiries are such as he feels it necessary to state to the Board, in order to correct impressions that might be created by undesignedly erroneous statements.

Although the Croton Board is one of the departments of the city government, and is bound by the provisions of the charter of the city relative to contracts, yet none of the laying of their pipes is done by contract, but by days' work, under a vigilant superintendence. This is because of the importance of this kind of work, and of the damage that might accrue from its unfaithful performance; the careful and prudent conductors of this department are unwilling to subject the public to the serious consequences of the performance of work of this nature by contract. Shall this Board, unrestricted by legislation, yield its discretion on this same kind of work? Neither the Board of Alm-House Governors nor the Commissioners of Emigration adopt the "lowest bidder" system, nor even the contract system as a rule; universally, they retain, as do all departments not compelled by law to do otherwise, that discre-

tion in the award of bids which is necessary to protect the public interests against fraud and the designs of scheming men ; and for this Board to do otherwise, would be faithlessness to a trust reposed in it, and an admission of its incompetency.

It has never been generally supposed that the contract system, or the lowest bidder system, was adopted by the departments of this city because of any superiority in the character of the results it produced. It did not originate in the idea that the work could be better done, but it was imposed on the city by the Legislature to counteract the disposition to give out jobs by the public departments to favorites at exorbitant prices—to prevent official favoritism. Is there any ground for apprehension of this sort in this Board ? Is there the possibility of it, when a very large proportion of its moneys is to go to payment of laborers directly ? The contract system has its advantages, of which public officers should avail themselves ; yet under that system in vogue in this city, what have we witnessed in the departments but frauds in bidding, combinations in bidding, abandonment of contracts, straw securities, law-suits, injunctions, claims for extra work, delays, and the whole swarm of vexatious arts and artifices in the mystery of contracting that the ingenuity of men bent on gain could devise, in many instances carried to such an extent that reliable, competent mechanics and contractors have left the field of competition, finding it impossible to compete with the arts of dishonesty.

What is the condition of the city works ? Take the avenues and streets technically opened, at a great expense, and put under contract for grading, for years standing in litigation, half finished, impassible, in a dangerous condition, much needed, but useless to the public, and the occasion of constant complaint. The avenue that bounds the Park on the west is a forcible example of this character of work—unfinished and needed—yet the contractors do not proceed, nor has it yet been got from their control so that others may proceed with it. This is not a solitary case ; public buildings, sewers, pavements, grading streets, and other classes of work, will afford far too frequent examples.

While the undersigned has carefully considered the views presented with much force and ability in the reports of both

the majority and minority, it will have become apparent from this discussion, already too much prolonged, that he has not been able to accept, without qualification, the conclusions of either. It would be to him personally a relief most acceptable if the Board were able to avoid, by some mode, the existing necessity of keeping the accounts with, and of paying so large a number of men ; yet the undersigned feels that no considerations of convenience should be allowed to stand in the way of a rapid and economical prosecution of this work.

The results at which the undersigned has arrived are, in brief, that it is not expedient to disarrange or suspend the work as at present organized for a period of time necessary to perfect the specifications and preliminary examinations that must precede and accompany a system of contracts. If the Board should concur with the undersigned that it seems practicable to do by contract those branches of the work before mentioned, it will then be essential, in order that the work may be arranged beforehand, that an additional number of persons should be at once engaged to prepare specifications in the most thorough manner, and also that an additional number of persons be designated to superintend and prepare the work for the force already engaged.

The construction of the Park proper is the first object of this Board, and from this duty it should not be diverted by visions of costly fountains or marble structures. A constant and careful watchfulness over its expenditures will enable the Board to secure its primary object—a Park with walks, rides and drives, without violation of law, and with the approbation of those who are to enjoy its annually augmenting attractions.

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NOTE.—A proposed resolution, printed with the minority report, fails to come up to its argument, and seems to abandon the lowest bidder system.

## Document No. 11.

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,  
OF THE CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1858.**

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The ARCHITECT-IN-CHIEF submitted a communication with regard to details of walks and rides laid out upon the Park.

*Ordered,* That the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK :

Gentlemen,—To obtain walks which shall be for long distances exclusively, and uninterruptedly devoted to pedestrians, and a ride preserved in a similar manner for equestrians, (except around the Reservoir,) it must be necessary to lay out all the principal drives, rides and walks of the Park in lines having a continuous northerly and southerly course, nearly parallel with each other and with the avenues of the city, or, these different lines of passage must at certain points of intersection more or less frequent, cross over or under one another by means of bridges. I have already been obliged to express my opinion to the Board, that the former method could not be reconciled with the structural principles of the plan first adopted as a basis of operations, and that it is as desirable that all the lines of



travel for one purpose should be occasionally connected so as to form circuits and transcommunications within the Park as that each should be uninterfered with by any lines appropriated to a different purpose. In preparing the details of the plan, therefore, the latter plan has been pursued.

A walk will commence at the southeast entrance, which passing up the ravine east of the nursery, will take the visiter through an arch under the drive to the head of the Promenade; passing thence by the grand alley, and under a second archway to the water terrace, a walk fourteen feet wide, next leads him by the head of the lake and through the locust grove to Vista rock. Another branch leading westward from the water terrace, will cross the arm of the lake by a foot bridge, and proceed along the east shore also to Vista-rock. At Vista-rock a connection will readily be made, by action of the Croton Board, with the existing promenade of the old Reservoir, and eventually with that of the new. Although divided for a third of the whole distance, and although so laid out as to be imperceptible in the general landscape, this walk cannot be considered as indirect or circuitous, its average length being about six thousand two hundred feet, while by the most direct course possible, the distance between the same points is five thousand six hundred feet, or an addition of but ten feet in a hundred to a perfectly straight line. Its accommodation will equal that of a single alley on an average eighteen feet in width.

A second path will diverge from this at a point east of the nursery, and passing close to the large rock near Fifth avenue at Sixty-seventh street, will cross the Seventy-second street entrance-drive near the gate, where a crossing can be made without inconvenience, and thence through the valleys and by arches under the Seventy-ninth street entrance-drive and transverse-road to near Eightieth street, where it will divide, one portion continuing northward by the side of the lawn, towards the new Reservoir, the other turning westward and southward by the southeast corner of the old Reservoir, and connecting run on with the central system of walks, first described. This system will thus have an extension northward to the upper park independent of the Reservoir walk, and be conveniently accessible by similar protected walks from the

Seventy-second street, Seventy-ninth street, and Eighty-fifth street entrances. Another walk entering at the southwest angle of the Park is proposed, which would follow the course of the excavation made in opening for a sewer through the rock at Sixty-second street, and thus under the drive and ride to the play ground, and along the border of the lawn designated *parade-ground* in the plan, to the vicinity of the water-terrace. This will also have direct connections of a similar character, with the Seventh avenue and the Sixty-third street entrances. Over four miles of moderately level walk, exclusive of that upon the Reservoir wall, may thus be formed in the lower park alone, in which the walker can have no apprehension of being met or crossed by a vehicle or horseman.

The ride laid out, and now under construction, may be entered either by the Fifth avenue or Seventh avenue gates on Fifty-ninth street, or by the Sixty-third or Seventy-second street gates on Eighth avenue. Starting at the first, it will pass under the drive in the rear of the arsenal; under a bridge of the drive at the head of the pond, then approach and connect with the Seventh avenue entrance, then pass between the large rocks southwest of the play-ground and under the embankment of the drive at Sixty-third street, by the opening left for a sewer; then over the transverse road at Sixty-sixth street by the same bridge with the drive, then over the Seventy-second street entrance in the manner formerly proposed for the drive at the Military entrance, and so along the west part of the park to Summit Rock, the eastern base of which it will skirt to Eighty-sixth street, above which no details of the plan are at present established. The length of the ride thus proposed in the Lower Park, would be nearly two miles, and the rider, though passing at intervals near to and concurrently with portions of the drive, as desired by the Board, will find his way nowhere crossed by any road or walk. The arched passages proposed for both the walks and ride, will be at an average distance of about three quarters of a mile apart, and in every case but two, they occupy positions in which artificial embankments with culverts beneath them will be otherwise required, so that the expense of constructing them will be chiefly that of the mason-work.

The number of men now at work on the Park is about 2300.

An increase of the number of engineers, draughtsmen and clerks is necessary to their best employment, and to enable me to carry out the wishes of the Board, as expressed in resolutions of the two last meetings.

Analyses of the soil of the Park are recommended to be authorized as a measure calculated to cheapen the cost of improving it.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED.

# Document No. 12.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, SEPT. 16, 1858.**

On motion of Mr. STRONG—

*Ordered*, That the communication of the President of this Board to the Common Council, dated August 24th, 1858, be printed as one of the documents of this Board.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

TO THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK:

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully represent, that the construction of the Park has so far progressed as to demonstrate the necessity of early action upon subjects under the control of your honorable body, intimately connected with the Park, with reference to which concurrent action is indispensable to economy in the expenditure of public money, whether by the Common Council or by the Commissioners of the Park, in either case to be derived from a common source—taxation.

In constructing the avenues and streets bounding the Park, it is obvious that it will not be best to follow the usual methods. Where the surface of the Park is below the grade of the avenue, as it is for considerable distances, either a retaining wall should be constructed, or the material of the filling should be something beside rock, in order that the vegetation which is to cover the slopes may take root and find sustenance.

The plan of the Park contemplates a broad, shaded, stately avenue around its entire margin, six miles in length, affording when completed a citizen's walk not surpassed in extent or beauty.

The lower part of the Fifth avenue is at present arranged for a sidewalk of fifteen feet, a court-yard of fifteen feet on either side, and a roadway of forty feet. On the Park side of the avenue it is proposed, at the line of the curb-stone, to place a row of trees, and another row on the west line of the avenue, thus enclosing with shade trees a walk of thirty feet in width, comprehending both the sidewalk and the court-yard.

On the Eighth avenue no provision for a court yard has been made by the city, the roadway being sixty feet in width, and the sidewalks twenty feet on each side, making in all one hundred feet.

On the Park side of the Eighth avenue, there being no occasion for accommodation for the unloading of vehicles, the railroad tracks may be laid near to the curb-stone, thus giving freer space for vehicles.

The liberty to include ten feet of the roadway in the sidewalk will give to the Eighth avenue as spacious a walk as that of the Fifth avenue, and still leave the roadway fifty feet in width, or ten feet wider than that of the Fifth avenue.

It may be objected that this arrangement will occasion a disagreeable offset of ten feet into the roadway of the avenue at One Hundred and Sixth, and at Fifty-ninth street; and that inasmuch as the Sixth and Seventh avenues are interrupted by the Park, the travel that would naturally take those avenues will be forced to the Fifth and Eighth avenues. These objections are entitled to consideration; as to the former the offset at Fifty-ninth street would be rendered less conspicuous by reason of the intersection at this point of Broadway, Fifty-ninth street and Eighth avenue, and the offset at One Hundred and Sixth street may be arranged diagonally instead of at a right angle. The latter objection may be in some degree modified when it is recollected that the Park will relieve the avenue of all pleasure travel, at present far the greater proportion above Fifty-ninth street, and this being the central part of the city the crowd of business cannot be equal to that of the main streets in the lower part of the city, that being the gathering of traffic from a great number of the intersecting streets above.

To take ten feet from the west side of the Park to make the

walk thirty feet instead of narrowing the roadway of the Eighth avenue, would be undesirable as well on account of its already disproportionate width, as of the great expense of filling and rock cutting, that would be occasioned along the whole length of the Park.

The addition of twenty-five feet from the Park to the north side of Fifty-ninth street will give the required width to the exterior circuit walk of the Park, and at the same time widen the carriage-way at this concentrating and important point of access to and egress from the Park, and to and from the Fifth and Eighth avenues.

It is too obvious to require more than a mere statement, that the work to be done by the City on these bounding avenues, should be done with reference to the plan of improvement of the Park; for instance, the contracts for grading these streets should require a considerable mixture of earth with the rock used in filling the avenue, and five or six feet of clear earth upon the surface of the street from the Park line to the centre line of the roadway; also, that the surface of slopes should have at least four feet depth of tolerably clear earth. Without this or some other similar arrangement, it will be impracticable to secure a vigorous growth of trees for the walk, or shrubbery on the slopes that incline from the surface of the avenue down to the surface of the Park. If the earth is properly placed, when the avenue is in the process of making, the expense will be but triflingly, if at all increased, while if once filled with unfit material, and it becomes necessary to excavate and remove it, and again replace it with material proper to promote the growth of trees, it will be at an expense which may now be avoided.

A diligent search has not discovered any ordinance or resolution of the Common Council, providing for court-yards on the Fifth avenue above Twenty-first street, except from One hundred and twenty-fourth to One hundred and twenty-ninth streets, though it is presumed that the same width of court-yard will be enclosed through the entire length of the avenue.

Applications are before your Honorable Body for permission to enclose court-yards on the Fifth avenue, from One hundred and twenty-ninth to One hundred and thirty-fifth streets; a resolution of the Common Council providing for court-yards

throughout the whole length of the avenue would at once settle this matter, and it is believed, be acceptable to the owners of property.

It is of great importance to the city, and will materially aid in the work of the Central Park, if the Fifth and Eighth avenues can be put in course of construction without delay, and the Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully urge such immediate action as will bring these two main thoroughfares to early completion.

The improvement of the Park will require a large amount of fertilizing matter, much of which must be obtained by purchase.

Street manure will be very useful, and if the Common Council see no objection to its appropriation to the uses of the Park, the Commissioners of the Park would respectfully request the passage of a resolution to that effect, as it would accomplish a great saving of expense to the city, and also, that provision be made in the contract about to be given for cleaning the streets for such supply of street manure as may be required at the Park.

There is a deficiency for filling at the southeastern part of the Park, owing to the fact that the grade of the avenue has been here fixed at what appears to be a very immoderate and unnecessary elevation; the expense of haulage of material required for filling will be much less if the surplus earth from Hamilton Square can be procured for the Park.

There is much uncertainty as to the precise location and extent of the Hamilton Square; but few of the maps of the city represent the extent of the interest of the city with accuracy.

The square originally included the block between Sixty-sixth and Sixty-eighth streets, and the Third and Fifth avenues. The city is believed to own the block between Sixty-seventh and Sixty-eighth streets, and the Fourth and Fifth avenues, and most, if not all, of the block between Sixty-eighth and Sixty-ninth streets and the Third and Fourth Avenues; to what portion of this property of the city the title of "Hamilton square" belongs, is undetermined. There are parts of this land that require filling; other portions have a large surplus of earth, and

it is for the Common Council to determine to what extent the earth may be removed for the use of the Park.

It has been suggested, in the Board of Aldermen, that the filling for the Park should be taken from the extreme east of the square, on Third avenue. This would so much increase the expense, by reason of the great distance of the haul, that earth would be elsewhere more favorably procured. Should the Common Council authorize the removal of the earth to the Park, it should be left sufficiently elevated above the grade of the surrounding streets to facilitate its adequate drainage.

The abandonment of the square has been advocated on the ground that the Central Park has rendered it unnecessary. Setting aside the legal difficulties of its abandonment as a square, it has been suggested that it would offer a more advantageous drill-ground for the military than can be provided within the Park, where provision may be made for the occasional military displays, that are more striking and extensive.

The ordinance of the Common Council providing for the impounding of animals at large in the streets is incomplete in so far that it does not include goats among the animals that may be empounded; the trees in the Park have already suffered much from these animals; they are very numerous in the neighborhood of the Park, and unless some measures are immediately taken, their depredations will be great and not easily reparable. An amendment of the ordinance on this subject, making it applicable to goats, will be very serviceable.

The Street Commissioner and the City Inspector have exhibited readiness to co-operate with the Commissioners of the Central Park as far as they have power so to do, in their respective departments where a saving of expense can be secured to the City.

A very essential requisite to the comfort and beauty of the Park is a liberal supply of water. Relying upon the Croton Aqueduct Board in this respect for such quantities of water as the existing and proposed means of supply will allow; the Board will endeavor to render it available for as many purposes as practicable.

The same water may be used repeatedly, according to its level, for fountains and irrigation.



It is proposed to provide in each cross business street conveniences for watering the horses of carmen and others, and at frequent intervals about the Park to provide neat and tasteful fountains of constantly running water, with drinking cups, so that pure water may be readily accessible to all. The surplus water from the fountains will be used for irrigation. With the Croton running all over the city it is singular that so few places are provided where a person can readily procure a draught of water. One may walk a great distance in the heart of the city without being able to get a drink of water, unless at the disagreeable necessity of begging it. Wherever an old pump has been left standing it is the continual resort of numbers for water for themselves and for their animals.

Free facilities for obtaining pure water for man and beast in frequent localities about the city, from clean vessels, would be most acceptable conveniences.

The effectual drainage of the Park and of the surrounding neighborhood, will require a sewer to the East river somewhere in the neighborhood of Seventy-fourth street, the present sewerage system of the city will neither well accommodate the Park nor its vicinity, the surface of the Park at the southeast corner where the drainage concentrates, is several feet below the bottom of the proposed sewer, which is intended to take the drainage of all this neighborhood.

The drainage of the Park will be brought to points of its boundaries most favorable for such sewers as the Corporation may provide to the river, on this subject the public interests will be best subserved by concurrent action of the corporate authorities with this Board.

The examination of the character of the ground at the north end of the Park, One Hundred and Sixth street, will immediately establish the conclusion that the Park was not extended to its natural termination. On the north of One Hundred and Sixth street and between that street and One Hundred and Tenth street and the Fifth and Eighth avenues, is a group of rocks rising from One Hundred and Sixth street toward One Hundred and Tenth street, and at about that street abruptly terminating at the flats of the Harlem Commons. At the foot of these rocks, lofty, picturesque, and admirably adapted for Park scenery, is

the natural boundary of the Park ; from them, the Harlem Commons stretch away to the east and north, indicating the ultimate grade of that portion of the island. As the land rises from One Hundred and Sixth, towards One Hundred and Tenth street, a line of buildings on the north side of One Hundred and Sixth street, will naturally interfere with the view which is here extensive, varied and in all respects worthy of preservation.

In regulating the cross streets, One Hundred and Sixth, One Hundred and Seventh, One Hundred and Eighth, and One Hundred and Ninth streets, an excavation of rock in some places forty feet high, will be required at an expense greater, in many cases than the value of the lots. Should these streets be regulated under existing laws, a large portion of the expense must be borne by the city. At a time when taxation and debt bear so heavily upon the city, the Commissioners of the Central Park, would hesitate to recommend an outlay for this plot of ground were they not impressed with its exceeding desirability. It is picturesque and rugged, it extends the Park to its obvious natural termination, and will bring with it to the Park military reminiscences of the war of 1812, and of the Revolution, that should be perpetuated. Should your Honorable Body conclude upon an observation of the ground, that the interests of the city will be promoted by taking this land comprising about four hundred and eighty lots, an expression of the opinion of the Municipal authorities on a subject so interesting to the city, will be a guide to the Legislature at its coming session should an application be then made for the appointment of Commissioners to take this land for public use. The lots proposed to be added are but of comparatively small value, and it will always be an occasion of regret if they are not secured to the city while it can be done without great outlay. Photographic sketches of the natural surface of the proposed extension are herewith submitted to aid your Honorable Body in the consideration of the subject.

Though not strictly within the scope of their jurisdiction, the Commissioners of the Central Park deem the subject of agreeable and convenient access to the Park, one that naturally claims their attention.

In their studies of the Central Park and the avenues, by which it is to be approached, an agreeable access to the Park and to the upper end of the island by a road not paved with cobbles, nor occupied by a railroad, appears to them to be an universally recognized want of the people of the city. The great distance to be traversed over pavements, before reaching a smooth pleasant ride or drive, is one of the great inconveniences and obstacles to a more general custom of riding and driving. Your Honorable Body will, without doubt, concur that no city of the magnitude and extent of this, should be without the very highest facilities for a spacious, agreeable and easily accessible ride and drive. There is scarcely a city of any pretensions in this country or in Europe, without superior facilities, in this respect, to our own; London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, each have their grand ride and drive. The opportunity to provide such facilities at a reasonable cost should not be suffered to elapse. Railroads have taken possession of the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Eighth and Tenth avenues, and a grant has been made for the Ninth avenue.

Whatever may be said of the conveniences of the city railroads to the people, and they are unquestionably very great, they are a very great inconvenience, as at present constructed, to those driving carts, drays, or pleasure vehicles of any sort.

The Seventh avenue is as yet exempt, it is a central avenue, the back-bone of the city, and now affords a most favorable opportunity to supply this great want. Broadway is already paved with the Russ and Belgian pavement to Union square, from whence diverge many important avenues; by continuing the Belgian pavement in Broadway to its junction with the Seventh avenue at Forty-fourth street, and Macadamizing, or similarly paving this avenue from thence to the Park, an agreeable and direct access may be provided to the Park, without any expense that will not be worth all its cost to the city, irrespective of the Park. The avenue should be planted, from its intersection with Broadway, with shade-trees on either side, up to the grand entrance-gate of the Park on Fifty-ninth street. From the north end of the Park let the Seventh avenue be widened by taking twenty-five feet from the lots on either of its sides,

making the avenue one hundred and fifty feet wide, arranging its width as follows: side walks, twenty-two feet each; two carriage ways of thirty-eight feet each, and a horseback ride of thirty feet, as represented in the accompanying diagram.

Between the side walk and the carriage way, on each side, at the curb stone line, and between the carriage roads and the horseback ride, should be planted rows of trees ultimately to overshadow the whole avenue. The carriage ways to be constructed of gravel mixed with soft slate, placed upon a bed of stone, and the horseback ride of a still softer material, and thoroughly constructed. This material, it is believed will be preferable, in this climate, to the metal used on Macadamized roads, being both less rigid and less dusty.

By this arrangement, those who ride and drive will be provided with a smoothly paved road from the Battery through Broadway and Seventh avenue to the Park, up to which point it is not proposed to divide the Seventh avenue, nor otherwise change it than by rows of trees, and by making it a road of gravel or of Belgian pavement, instead of cobbles. Entering the Park at the southerly gate, they course along its winding roads to the North gate, leaving the Park, and again taking a stately and shaded avenue, with a separate walk on each side, with two drives, one for those going forth, and one for those returning, and a horseback ride between, they proceed nearly two miles to the Harlem River, to the free bridge at McComb's dam, now constructing, over which the varied country roads of Westchester, and the roads to King's Bridge are readily accessible.

It is believed that the owners of property on the Seventh avenue would find it to their interest to yield twenty-five feet of their lots for the widening of an avenue which would become at once the most beautiful and the most frequented of any in the city. Is it not due to the metropolitan character of this growing city, in ten years to number over a million of people, that its guardians and governors should now provide, while it may be done at a moderate expense, an avenue that will add so much to its attractiveness, and induce the freer indulgence in the healthful exercises of driving and riding?

The extent to which the roads and walks of the Park will be frequented has not yet been appreciated; already carriages are seeking admision after the workmen have left for t

The city is already crowding upon its borders. But a year or two ago the beautiful edifice of the Dutch Reformed Church was constructed, far up town, on the corner of Twenty-ninth street and the Fifth avenue. The Broadway Tabernacle is nearly completed, on the corner of Thirty-fourth street. The Brick Church (Dr. Spring's), on the corner of Thirty-seventh street and Fifth avenue, within twenty-two blocks of the Central Park, lifts its spire, conspicuous for miles. Preparations are already making for the erection of St. Patrick's Cathedral, a structure of magnificent proportions, on a most commanding site within seven blocks of the Park. The Orphan Asylum, the Hospital of St. Luke, Columbia College, all in the immediate neighborhood of the Park, indicate how very near it is to the constructed portion of the city, and the necessity of providing for the population that must soon surround them.

The Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully present the above suggestions, with confidence that they will meet the same courteous consideration that has been extended by your Honorable Body to the communications that they have heretofore had the honor to make, concerning the common interests of the people of the city.

New York, August 24th, 1858.

By order of the Board,

ANDREW H. GREEN,  
President of the Board of Commissioners  
of the Central Park.

## Document No. 13.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1858.**

The PRESIDENT submitted a copy of the Ordinance of the Common Council, approved by the Mayor, November 12, 1858, authorizing the further issue of stock of the "Central Park Improvement Fund," to the amount of three hundred thousand dollars.

*Ordered*, that the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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### AN ORDINANCE,

TO PROVIDE *a further sum for the Improvement of the Central Park.*

The Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City of New York, in Common Council convened, do ordain as follows :

SEC. 1. The Comptroller of the city of New York is hereby ordered and directed to issue of the stock or fund known as the "Central Park Improvement Fund," created by an Ordinance

of the Common Council, entitled "An Ordinance to provide money for the Improvement of the Central Park," approved by the Mayor, November 9th, 1857, the further sum of three hundred thousand dollars, in conformity with the provisions of said ordinance.

Adopted by the Board of Aldermen, October 21, 1858.

Adopted by the Board of Councilmen, Nov. 4, 1858.

Approved by the Mayor, November 12, 1858.

D. T. VALENTINE,  
Clerk C. C.

# Document No. 14.

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## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1859.**

The President submitted a copy of a communication to the Common Council on the subject of the sewerage of the Park, prepared in accordance with the order of the Board at the last meeting.

On motion of Mr. RUSSELL,  
*Ordered,* That the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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CITY OF NEW YORK,  
January 10, 1859.

TO THE HONORABLE THE COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK :

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully represent :

That the natural surface of the Central Park, at its southerly end, is so much below the grades adopted by the Common Council, for the regulation of the adjacent streets and avenues, that it becomes an absolute necessity to provide for its drainage by sewers to the East river.

Sewers for the drainage of the surface water of the streets and



avenues have already been constructed to Third avenue and Fifty-sixth street, and by the plans for the regulation of that portion lying between Third avenue and Sixth avenue and Fifty-fourth street and Sixty-fourth street, the system of sewers must be continued from Third avenue and Fifty-sixth street, to Fifth avenue and Fifty-ninth street, in order to get the surface water off the streets and avenues in that district; but the depths which would be sufficient for this purpose, would not be sufficient to drain the surface of Central Park, without an enormous amount of filling in Central Park, at very great expense, and then producing drainage but very unsatisfactory, and entirely inadequate for sanitary purposes.

Under these circumstances, the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park have caused surveys to be made, to ascertain whether the required drainage of Central Park can be attained, in connection with the system of drainage required by the city regulations.

The results of these surveys indicate, that by causing the sewers to be built at more than usual depths, drainage can be obtained that will just about take all the water from the lake to be formed near the corner of Fifty-ninth street and Fifth avenue, that being the lowest part of this section of the park.

Deeper drainage would be very desirable, if it could be obtained without constructing a sewer directly to the East river, which would require rock cutting of twenty to thirty feet deep.

This extra depth of drainage will not only allow the natural diversities of surface of the park to be preserved, but furnish drainage essential to the salubrity of the neighborhood.

The necessities of the surrounding property, and the proper drainage of the streets and avenues, as well as of the Central Park, require the construction of drainage sewers in this drainage field, forthwith.

The natural outlet of the water of this neighborhood is liable, at any day, to be obstructed, so that acres will be overflowed and become stagnant.

This, together with the fact, that the sewer can be much more economically constructed, before the streets are completed, induce the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully to request your Honorable Body to pass the proper ordinances, directing the immediate construction of an adequate sewer, from the one now built in Fifty-sixth street, at the west side of Third avenue, through Fifty-sixth street to Lexington avenue, and through Lexington avenue, from Fifty-sixth street to Fifty-eighth street, and through Fifty-eighth street from Lexington avenue to Fifth avenue; and through Fifth avenue, from Fifty-eighth street to Fifty-ninth street, as shown, and at the depths designated on the accompanying map, dated New York, January 3d, 1859, and signed by John J. Serrell, City Surveyor.

AND. H. GREEN,  
President Board of Commissioners Central Park.

## Document No. 15.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1859.**

The PRESIDENT submitted a copy of a communication to the Common Council, on the subject of procuring the surplus earth from Hamilton Square, prepared in accordance with the order of the Board at the last meeting.

On motion of Mr. RUSSELL—

*Ordered*, That the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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TO THE HONORABLE THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK:

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully represent,

That in the month of August last, after mature consideration, in a communication to your Honorable body relative to various subjects intimately affecting the Central Park, they suggested the desirability of adding to the Park the rocky piece of land between One hundred and sixth and One hundred and tenth streets, and the Fifth and Eighth avenues, and of widen-

ing the Seventh avenue from the north end of the Park to Harlem river, arranging the avenue into two carriage roads and a horseback ride, planting trees between each, so as to give a spacious and beautiful approach to the city and the Park from the north end of the island.

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park, though fully aware that the power to authorize these improvements rested with the Legislature of the State, deemed it eminently proper to submit them to the municipal authorities of the city, for their opinion, before initiating any further action in the premises.

The Common Council, with great unanimity, expressed its approval of these measures, in the form of resolutions, which were returned by his Honor the Mayor, without his signature, to the Board of Councilmen, at its meeting on the 31st ultimo.

In the communication above mentioned, the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park requested action of the Common Council upon other subjects of great importance, both on grounds of saving of expenditure to the city as well as enabling the work at the Park to progress at a season of the year when labor could be readily obtained.

Among these subjects was that of the removal of the surplus earth from Hamilton Square—also favorably acted on by your Honorable Body, with great unanimity—but also failed to meet the approval of his Honor the Mayor, so as to give them effect.

Hamilton Square is situated very nearly to that portion of the Park requiring earth; also to that portion of Fifty-ninth street which it is proposed to widen for public convenience. The earth upon the square belonging to the city, must soon be removed.

The expense of hauling earth is increased with the distance from the point at which it is to be deposited; and if the earth for the Park is to be obtained at a greater distance than Hamilton Square, it, if course, must be at an increased cost.

Proposals have, more than a month since, been invited, by public advertisement, for widening Fifty-ninth street, upon the supposition that the earth from Hamilton Square could be obtained for that purpose. Bids have been received and opened,

and the award only suspended by reason of the inability to procure this earth.

The Board communicated this matter to the Common Council, as before stated, in August last, with the view of affording abundant time for its consideration, and securing the removal of the earth during the fall and winter.

The operations of the Park are much impeded by the want of permission to take the earth. Before resolutions can again be adopted on this subject, the best part of the winter, for this work, will have passed.

In the judgment of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park, considerations of economy, of convenience, and of expedition in the construction of the Park, combine to render it desirable that permission be given to remove so much of the surplus earth of Hamilton Square as may be required at the Park.

The Board of Commissioners respectfully request your Honorable Body to re-adopt resolutions adequate to this purpose.

AND. H. GREEN,  
President Board of Commissioners  
Central Park.

# Document No. 16.

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,  
CENTRAL PARK.

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**FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1859.**

On motion of Mr. RUSSELL—

*Ordered,* That the Memorial to the Legislature, prepared by the President, in accordance with the order of the Board at the last meeting, be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

The Memorial of the Commissioners of the Central Park respectfully represents,

That during nearly two years that have elapsed since their appointment, your Memorialists have steadily devoted their energies to the prosecution of the work with which they have been entrusted.

Its progress has been attended with embarrassments at least equal to those usually surrounding untried enterprises; and,

although, since the adoption of their plans, there has been but about six months time in which out-of-door labor could be done to advantage at the Park, its once sterile surface begins to wear the aspect of cultivation, and already affords daily enjoyment to thousands.

It is not without gratification that your Memorialists feel themselves justified in saying, that the results of their labors, up to this time, are fully appreciated, and that indications are already clear that the projectors of the Central Park formed no extravagant estimate of its future utility and general popularity.

Your Memorialists are by law required to apply to the constituted authorities of the city for means to carry on their work, and it is but just to say, that the Common Council have not only granted the necessary funds, but have evinced a disposition to co-operate with your Memorialists in those measures that seemed necessary to ensure a speedy and thorough construction of the Park.

It was scarcely to be supposed that the legislation by which the construction of a park, in the midst of a large city, was initiated, would at once comprehend all contingencies that were to arise in its progress.

Your Memorialists find, that the Act for the Improvement of the Park, not only omits provision for necessities that must arise as the Park approaches completion, but that some of its subordinate provisions are cumbrous and unnecessary.

Your Memorialists believe that the Act, entitled, "An Act for the Regulation and Government of the Central Park, in the city of New York," passed April 17th, 1857, might be amended with advantage to the public interests, and in such manner as to give increased efficiency to some of its provisions, and to furnish sections that experience has indicated should be supplied.

Without entering into detail, your Memorialists enumerate some of the proposed amendments desired.

- 1st. That the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park have the power of a corporate body, so far as to give to said Board and its successors, the power to take and hold such property as

may be conveyed to it, for the purposes of the Park. It is not improbable, if the management of the Park should continue such as to entitle it to confidence, that donations will be made, for the formation and maintenance of Zoological Gardens, of cabinets of natural history, botanic gardens, observatories, monuments and other ornamental structures. These donations should remain in the Commissioners of the Central Park, and their successors, as a corporate body.

2d. None of the Commissioners now receive any compensation ; it is clearly apparent, from the experience of the past two years, that your Memorialists should have the power to provide a reasonable compensation for its President and Treasurer, somewhat corresponding with the labor performed in these offices.

3d. The public necessity of widening at least one of the streets adjacent to the Park, at a considerable expense ; the requirement of transverse roads across the Park for the accommodation of business traffic ; the improvement of the tract of land probably to be added to the north end of the Park ; all works not contemplated when the limit of expenditure for laying out the Park was fixed by the law, will require some increase of the fund now provided by law for the improvement of the Park.

4th. A police force sufficient, competent and under the exclusive control of your memorialists is required ; as the Act now stands your Memorialists have no power to appoint the police so essential to the preservation of order in the Park.

Your Memorialists have caused to be prepared the draft of an Act to amend the Act above mentioned, in these and other respects of minor importance.

Your Memorialists also represent to your Honorable Body, that the Central Park, as now limited, forms a parallelogram, bounded southerly by Fifty-ninth street, northerly by One Hundred and Sixth street, easterly by the Fifth avenue, and westerly by the Eighth avenue ; its surface is rocky and diversified, and, though not capable of easy or cheap transmutation into, yet well adapted for, a Park. Its present boundary on the north



follows the line of the southerly side of One Hundred and Sixth street, crosswise the island, without respect to the natural topography of the land, and without reference to those features of the immediate neighborhood that so clearly indicate a natural boundary for the Park at One Hundred and Tenth street.

The piece of land between One Hundred and Sixth and One Hundred and Tenth streets is mainly a ledge of rocks, the surface of which rising from the former towards the latter street, there abruptly terminates by a descent of about forty feet to the plain that extends over a mile and a half to the Harlem river. If it is permitted to owners of property to build houses on the north side of One Hundred and Sixth street at the present level, it must be at the exclusion of the most extended view commanded from the Park, including the High Bridge, the lower part of Westchester county, the Highlands of the Hudson, the East River and its islands, the Bay, Staten and Long Islands, and the shores of New Jersey.

To lay and grade streets through this piece of land would be at very great cost, requiring a cutting of forty feet through solid rock. The cost of this to the city would form a very large portion of the value of the property.

Your Memorialists believe that this piece of land should be added to the Park, and in this they are sustained by an almost unanimous public opinion.

From One Hundred and Tenth street, the proposed northern boundary of the Park, the Seventh avenue runs about midway the Hudson and the East river, across the Harlem plains, reaching the Harlem river at McComb's Dam, where a bridge is now in course of reconstruction to Westchester county.

Below the Park, nearly all the avenues of the city are occupied by railroads, undoubtedly a great public accommodation, but inconvenient, as at present constructed, to those traveling in any vehicle other than the cars. Railroads occupy the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh avenues. A fine Drive and Ride are much needed in this city, and the Seventh avenue seems well adapted for the purpose. Your Memorialists propose the widening of the Seventh avenue from One hundred and Tenth street to the

Harlem river, by adding fifty feet to its width, making it one hundred and fifty feet wide, instead of one hundred feet, as at present, and by arranging the avenues into a walk on either side, of twenty-two feet, and two drives of thirty-eight feet each, one for those going forth and the other for those returning, with a horseback ride between them, of thirty feet wide. These roads to be macadamized, or constructed of some material that will form a pleasant road, and to be shaded by four rows of trees planted along its whole extent. The same arrangement would be very servieable on the same avenue from its intersection with Broadway to the Park.

This avenue thus arranged would form an approach to the city, from the north, of unsurpassed beauty. The improvement is one that may be made at but trifling cost, as the land is very level, and there is scarcely a house erected upon it from the Park to the Harlem river.

In their examinations of the Park, and the methods of access to it, these improvements have occurred to them as highly desirable, and though not strictly within their jurisdiction, they are naturally connected with the work in their charge. The rise in the price of the land in the neighborhood of the Park has been very great since it was commenced, and to delay these improvements is to render them impracticable by reason of the expense that will be consequent upon the increased value of the land.

With the view of obtaining the judgment of the city authorities on this subject, your Memorialists laid the subject of these improvements fully before the Common Council of the city of New York, before presenting the same to the Legislature.

Both branches of the Common Council, by an almost unanimous vote, passed a resolution recommending an application to your Honorable body, for the necessary legislation on these two subjects: that of adding the piece of land between One hundred and Sixth street and One hundred and Tenth street, to the Park, and the widening of the Seventh avenue from the Park to Harlem river.

Your Memorialists respectfully pray that your Honorable body will enact such laws as will provide for these improve-

ments being made under the proper authorities, and allow as well for the proposed amendments to the law above mentioned.

And your Memorialists will ever pray, &c.

ANDW. H. GREEN,  
*President of the Board of  
Commissioners of the Central Park.*

## Document No. 17.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CENTRAL PARK.

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**SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1859.**

The PRESIDENT presented a draft of the Annual Report to the Common Council, prepared in accordance with the resolution of the Board, December 23, 1858, and also the Annual Statement of the Treasurer.

*Ordered,* That the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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TO THE HONORABLE THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK :

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park, in compliance with the provisions of the sixth section of the Act entitled, "An Act for the Regulation and Government of the Central Park, in the city of New York," passed April 17, 1857—

RESPECTFULLY REPORT :

That in January, 1858, the date of the first Annual Report of this Board to your Honorable Body, the preliminary surveys of

the Park, were scarcely completed. The breaking of stone was continued through the earlier months of the year 1858, with a view of preparing the necessary material for the construction of the roads.

It having been ascertained that many of those intending to offer designs for the Park for competition for the prizes offered would be unable to complete them as early as the 1st of March, the Board deemed it expedient in order to secure the highest abilities in this department, to extend the time within which designs would be received to the 1st day of April.

The competing plans were for several weeks publicly exhibited.

The first prize of two thousand dollars was awarded to the design subsequently adopted, as the plan of the Park, and in general accordance with which the Park is now in course of construction. Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the authors of this design, subsequently received the appointment of Architect-in-Chief of the Park. It was not till about the first day of June last, that a force could be organized and operations commenced at the Park, with proper regard to efficiency and economy of labor; the work at the Park accomplished up to this time has been mainly done in the five months from July to December 1st, from which latter date winter weather prevents regularity of labor.

It would be difficult to communicate the exact progress made in a work of this character still in course of construction, so as to convey an intelligible idea of the proportion of various classes of work actually done.

The thorough drainage of the part of the Park below the old Reservoir is nearly completed; the Drive is for the most part graded not only within the same area, but also extending to the north above the New Reservoir. Portions of the Drive intended as examples have been constructed in different methods, with their superstructure, in order to test the relative cost and efficiency of each. The Ride for equestrians is in progress. Several miles of the walks are graded, drained and gravelled, and in a condition for use.

Three bridges or viaducts over which the carriage road is carried and under which the horseback ride is to pass, are in a state

of forwardness and promise to be structures of beauty as well as of utility; the Promenade, a prominent feature of the Park, is nearly complete with its broad walk and rows of transplanted trees of twenty years' growth. The planting of the Park with a great variety of shrubs and trees was rapidly progressing when the cold weather suspended operations. A Lake of about twenty acres above Seventy-sixth street is so far completed as to admit of filling it with water during the winter, and has afforded healthful amusement and recreation for thousands in skating; the lower lake at Fifty-ninth street near the Fifth avenue is also well advanced.

The Play-ground and the Parade-ground are nearly complete. Numerous applications of clubs of skaters, of Base-ball and Cricket players for accommodations in the Park indicate that expectations of its influence as a promoter of manly, vigorous, out-of-door exercise will be fully realized; and, with the facilities that the Board of Commissioners hope to furnish for skating, curling, sleighing and sliding, it is believed that the Park will, notwithstanding the rigor of the climate, afford amusement and attraction for the months of winter as well as of summer for all ages, of both sexes.

The buildings of all descriptions that were found on the Park have, with here and there an exception, reserved for use on the Park, been sold and removed and the proceeds of sales deposited in the Treasury. Among the buildings spared, though a very inferior structure, is the Arsenal constructed by the State and purchased by the city. With the desire to save expense to the State the Board has, much to the inconvenience of its business, permitted the authorities of the State to occupy a large portion of the Arsenal upon the assurance that the munitions would before this time, have been removed to the new Arsenal, but that seems now a remote expectation; it is but ordinary justice that the State should pay a rent for the use of this building. The city was required to pay to the State for this building and the adjoining grounds two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and it is still mainly occupied by the State authorities. The Board expect to remodel this building and apply it to some appropriate purpose connected with the Park. The establishment of a Pound has been to a large extent ef-

factual in preventing the incursions of straying animals, from which the young trees have suffered injury.

With the desire to carry on the construction of the Park in the most economical manner, and relying upon the Common Council for its co-operation in whatever would tend to this result, the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park in a communication to your Honorable Bodies, represented :

1st. That it would be a great saving of expense to the city if permission were given to them to take the surplus earth from Hamilton Square, a plot of land lying contiguous to that part of the Central Park which requires earth-filling, upon which there is a surplus of earth that must shortly be removed.

2d. That liberty to take street manure for fertilizing the Park would be very desirable, inasmuch as otherwise other fertilizing matters must be purchased.

3d. That the contracts for grading the streets surrounding the Park should require the use of earth instead of rocks within certain specified lines, so that the trees planted along the line of the curb might find root.

4th. That the sidewalk of the Fifth avenue along the Park should be arranged of the same width as at its lower end, for the purpose of giving a broad shaded walk along the Park.

5th. The desirability of adding the piece of land on the north end of the Park, between One Hundred and Sixth and One Hundred and Tenth streets, and the widening of the Seventh avenue from the Park to the Harlem river.

These matters were communicated to your Honorable Body early in the month of September, in order that ample time might be had for the requisite action of the Common Council before the meeting of the Legislature and before the approach of winter.

These measures were approved by the Common Council with great unanimity; by the Board of Councilmen on the 24th

of October, and by the Board of Aldermen on the 21st of December.

The Commissioners of the Central Park fully expected to employ a large number of men during the winter, when labor was readily obtainable, in the removal of the surplus earth from Hamilton Square, but His Honor the Mayor, on the last day of the year, returned the resolutions to the Common Council without his approval.

The plans of the Board of Commissioners for work during the winter are thus frustrated; the delay by not getting this earth in the work at the Park is serious, and the additional cost to the city of procuring earth will be no inconsiderable item.

Proposals for widening Fifty-ninth street have been invited by advertisement, based upon the probability of procuring this surplus earth; the bids are received but cannot be awarded, owing to the inability to get the earth, and in this important part of the work of the Park the Board of Commissioners are also stayed.

The work of constructing transverse roads across the lower Park, for the accommodation of traffic and business travel, is going forward.

The question of conducting the various works at the Park, by contract or by days work, was the subject of interesting enquiry; and, after a full discussion, the Board determined in the main to give a preference to days work, leaving specific cases to be decided upon as they arise.

During the past year Messrs. James E. Cooley and Robert J. Dillon have resigned office as Commissioners of the Central Park, and the place of Mr. Cooley has been supplied by the appointment of August Belmont, Esq.

The Board of Commissioners of the Central Park have endeavored to establish and enforce the most stringent rules as to the accountability of all persons in its employ.

It is well understood that competency, integrity and industry are the qualifications required of every person charged with any responsible duty at the Park.

A report of the expenditures during the past year, in detail, accompanies this communication, in the form of an account of the Treasurer of the Board. Vouchers for these expenditures



will be found, as required by law, in the Comptroller's office, regularly numbered and filed for convenient reference.

By the summary of account of the Treasurer, it appears that—

The balance on hand Dec. 31, 1857, was.....	\$226,168 98
Receipts from January 1st to Dec. 31st, 1858....	304,661 85
	<hr/>
	\$530,830 83
Expenditures during the year ending December 31st, 1858.....	507,487 86
	<hr/>
Leaving balance in bank January 1st, 1859.....	<u>\$23,342 97</u>

The total receipts since the organization of the Commission May 1st, 1857, are as follows :

From May 1st, 1857, to December, 31st 1857.....	\$304,050 39
From January 1st, 1858, to Decem- ber 31st, 1858.....	304,661 85
	<hr/>
	\$608,712 24

The total expenditures since the organization of the Commission, are as follows :

From May 1st, 1857, to December 31st, 1857.....	\$77,881 41
From January 1st, 1858, to Decem- ber 31st, 1858.....	507,487 86
	<hr/>
	585,369 27
	<hr/>
Balance in bank January 1st, 1859.....	<u>\$23,342 97</u>

By an arrangement with the Bank of Commerce the deposits of the Board draw interest, the amount of which for the year was \$2,909 97.

Curiosity and pleasure already crowd vast numbers of visitors fast upon the rugged operations of construction.

The desire for healthful recreation and exercise, and the taste

for the natural beauties of the Park, whether in its similitude to the garden, the forest, or the field, develop and increase with the opportunity for their gratification. The Board at this early period, amid the bustle and business of forming the structure, clearly perceive that the high expectations of its beauty, as well as of its beneficent influence, must be disappointed unless *order and propriety* are maintained *supreme* over every foot of its surface, and within all of its departments.

Dated New York, January 1st, 1859,

By order of the Board,

ANDW. H. GREEN,  
President of the Board of Commissioners  
Of the Central Park.

## Document No. 18.

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### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, CENTRAL PARK.

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**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1859.**

The Executive Committee presented a report in answer to a resolution of the Board of January 6th, 1859, showing the liabilities of the Board up to January 1st, 1859.

*Ordered* that the same be printed.

DAVID H. HART,  
Clerk.

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TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CENTRAL PARK:

The Executive Committee, in accordance with a resolution of this Board passed January 6, 1859, calling for an account of the liabilities of the Board up to January 1st, 1859,

*Respectfully report:*

That they have carefully investigated the matter and received reports from the employees of the Board in different departments, and that they find the liabilities of the Board on January 1, 1859, to be as follows:

Amount due laborers and others as per report of Disbursing clerk hereto appended.....	\$27,263 60	
Bills rendered and due, as per report of Acting Property Clerk hereto appended.....	11,330 15	
Amount estimated by Architect-in-Chief in report hereto appended as due for breaking stone, and sundry police expenses, &c.....	1,354 00	
	<u>          </u>	\$39,947 75

The Committee submit also the following list of contingent liabilities for which contracts have been executed but are not entirely fulfilled:

Due on contract J. B. & W. W. Cornell, iron for bridges.....	\$1,176 41	
“ contract Jesse Ryder for trees for \$4,800, of which \$800 is paid,	4,000 00	
“ contract Third Avenue R. R. Co. manure.....	500 00	
“ lease Bank Commerce, rent of offices.....	500 00	
	<u>          </u>	6,176 41
		<u>          </u>
		\$46,124 16

Dated New York, January 24th, 1859.

JNO. A. C. GRAY,	} Executive Committee.
J. F. BUTTERWORTH,	
JAMES HOGG,	
AUGUST BELMONT.	