

Robert F. Wagner Documents Collection

Speeches Series

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**TEXT OF SPEECH--EXCERPTS FROM
ADDRESS OF ROBERT F WAGNER JR,
PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN,
OCTOBER 31, 1950**

October 31, 1950

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EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESS OF ROBERT F. WAGNER, JR., PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN, AT SENECA FALLS, N. Y., ON
OCTOBER 31, 1950

It is now clear to all of us that a State administration which is dedicated to the political advancement of one person does not adequately serve the needs of the people.

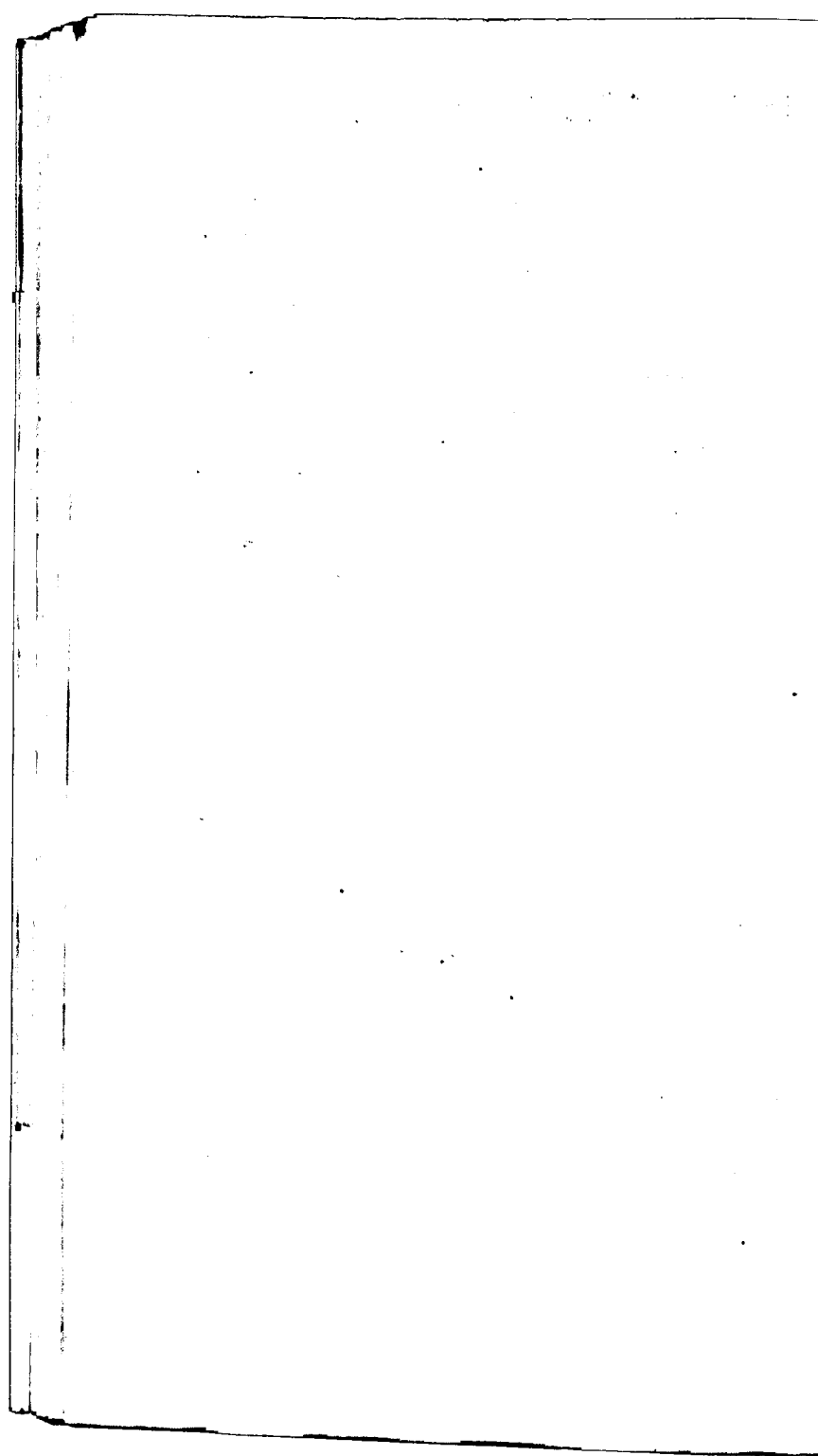
For almost eight years Governor Dewey's high-powered publicity experts have built out of the whole cloth a picture of Governor as a great administrator. Fortunately for the people of our State, this picture can no longer obscure the facts.

In 1946, Governor Dewey allocated more than \$200,000,000 for the construction of the through-way. The Democratic Party then pointed out that the through-way could never be constructed at the projected cost. For four years, Governor Dewey piddled around with this project so that at the present time not more than four miles of this roadway has been constructed. Now that Election Day is rapidly approaching, Governor Dewey is playing the through-way song once again. This time, however, it is a project to cost more than \$500,000,000 and what was at one time to be a free highway is now to become a toll-paying road. A highway which was to be built out of the post-war construction fund is now to be built on State credits. And in four years only 13 miles of that highway have been built. The story of delay and postponements of the project is hardly the picture of an aggressive and competent administrator.

The shameful neglect of essential services by the Dewey Administration is apparent to all of us. Our schools have been permitted to deteriorate rapidly. Where local communities have been unable through their own efforts to build new schools and expand a system of free public education, the Governor has steadfastly refused to permit the State with its vast financial resources to come to their aid.

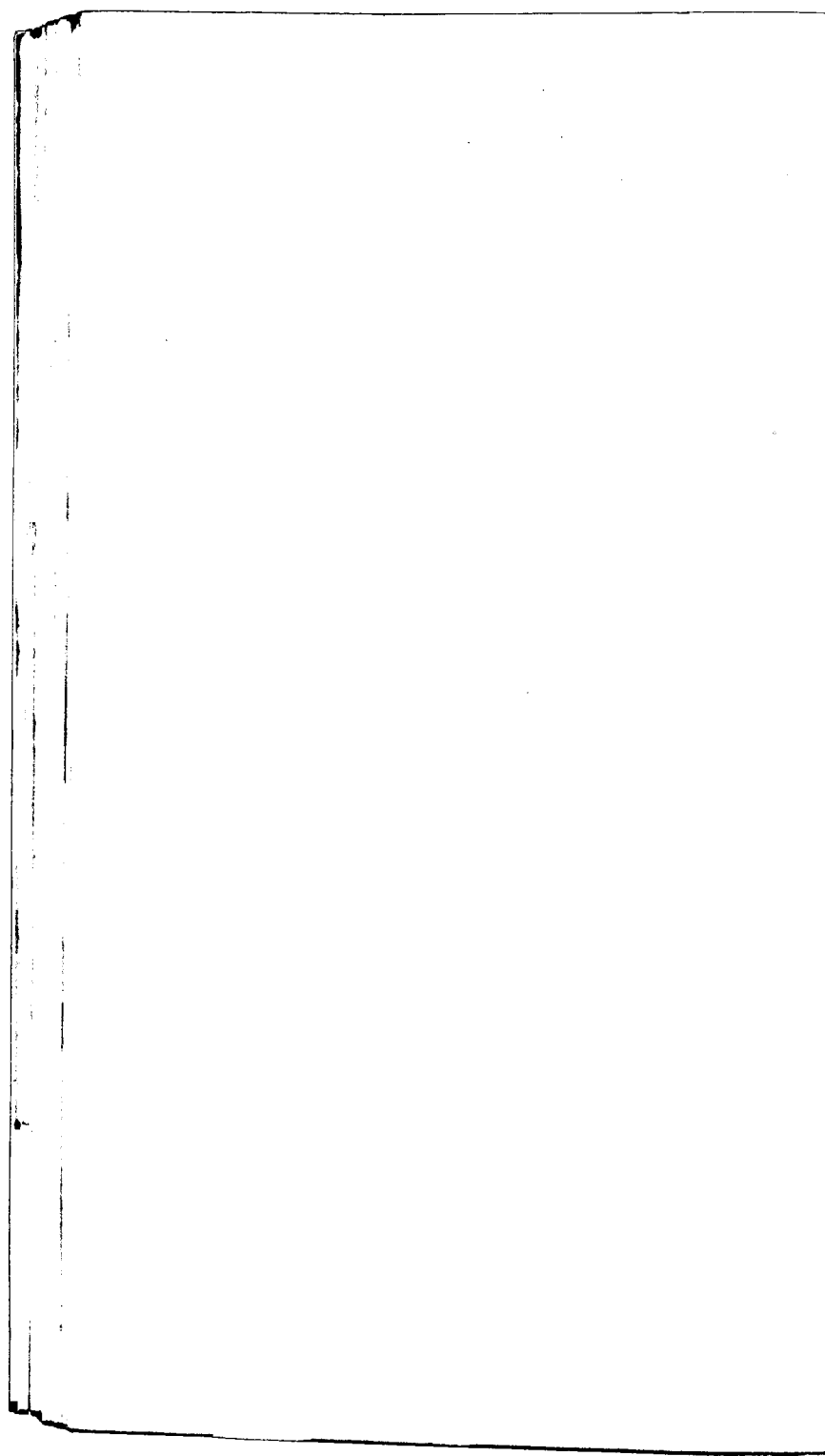
At the last session of the Legislature, Governor Dewey again refused to authorize State funds for badly needed school construction.

(MORE)



It is significant that in 1948, when Governor Dewey was a candidate for President, that the people of this State, who knew him best, gave him a vote of no confidence. It is equally significant that in the last election the humanitarian program and outlook of Senator Herbert H. Lehman scored a victory over the Dewey hand-picked candidate for the Senate. A trend is definitely in motion and I believe that trend will rise further to the surface next week.

Under Democratic administrations, this State set a shining example of enlightened government and took the leadership among the states in advancing social progress. Walter A. Lynch has proved himself to be a man of the people, who will fight vigorously to protect your interests. Next January, we will again move forward with the finest principles and traditions of the Democratic Party.





THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

From: Stanley H. Lowell
Asst. to Boro. Pres. Manhattan
2053 Municipal Bldg., NY 7, NY
Worth 2-5600 - Ext. 77

August 11, 1950

FOR RELEASE
MONDAY - AUGUST 14, 1950

PROPOSED SOUTH STREET VIADUCT WILL IMPROVE WATERFRONT
CONDITIONS FROM COENTIES SLIP TO CORLEARS HOOK PARK

Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr. of Manhattan announced today that the proposed South Street elevated highway, which is expected to be authorized by the Board of Estimate this coming Thursday, August 17, 1950, will greatly improve commercial facilities on the waterfront.

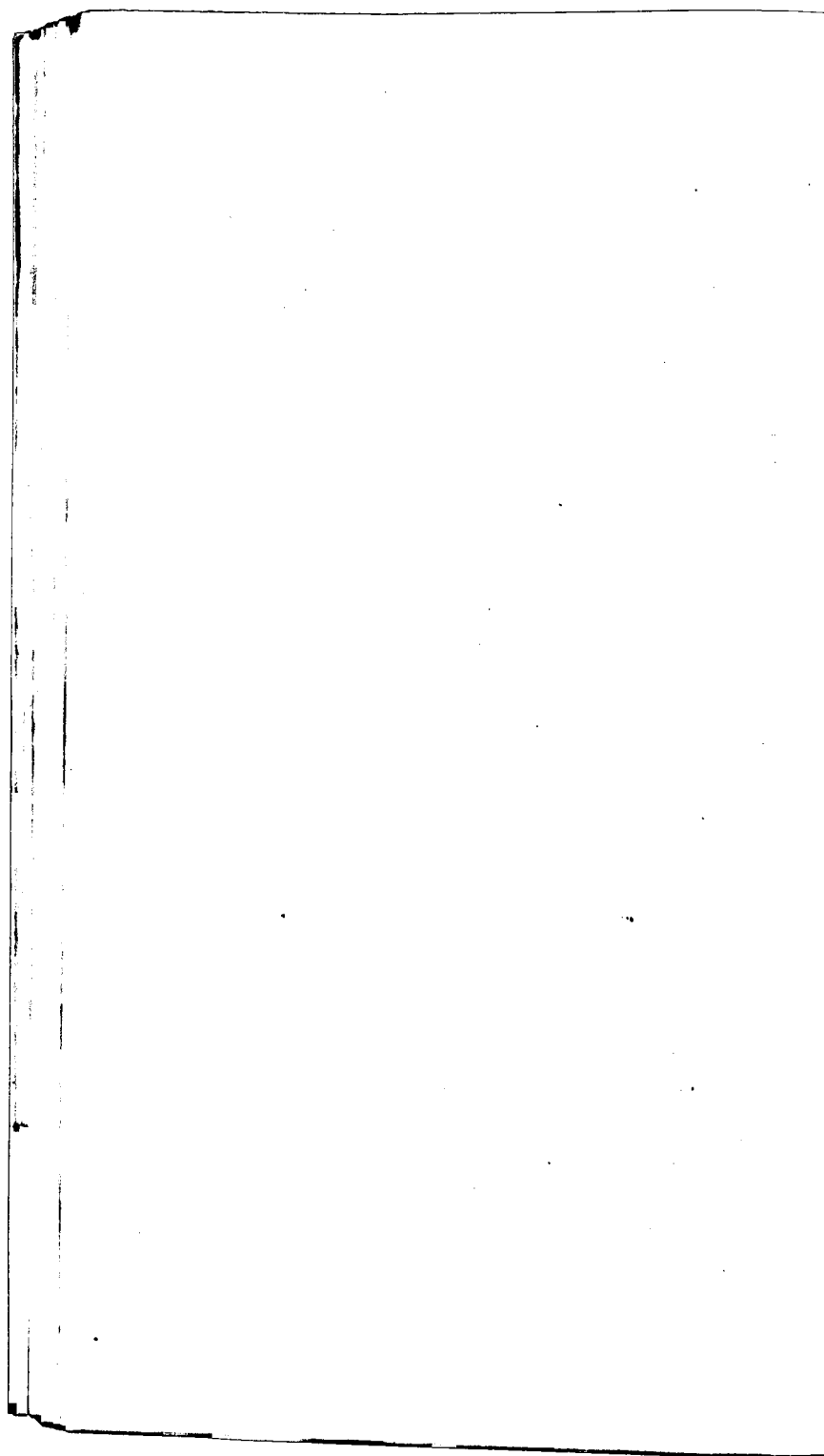
The proposed elevated highway will extend from Coenties Slip just east of the east portal of the Battery Park underpass to the existing Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive at East River and Jackson Street, just south of Corlears Hook Park. The plan and perspective, attached hereto, show the proposed elevated structure with supporting columns and the relationship between these columns and the waterfront activity along South Street. The proposed columns will be so located as not to interfere with the use of the piers and pier sheds.

Borough President Wagner pointed out that at the present time through-traffic on South Street and the Marginal Street between Broad Street and Jackson Street continually runs through and interferes with the commercial activities along the waterfront, in some instances, using as much as 60 per cent of the Marginal Street for through-traffic. An examination of the plan shows that the 55-foot Marginal Street is restored fully to the use for which it was originally acquired and constructed; that is, for the benefit of the commerce of the Port of New York.

Through-traffic, Mr. Wagner continued, will thereafter be confined to the 70 feet of South Street itself, which is parallel and contiguous to the west side of the Marginal Street.

Borough President Wagner's plan contemplates at least two lanes of through-traffic in both directions on South Street. It is expected that parking along the west side of South Street will be

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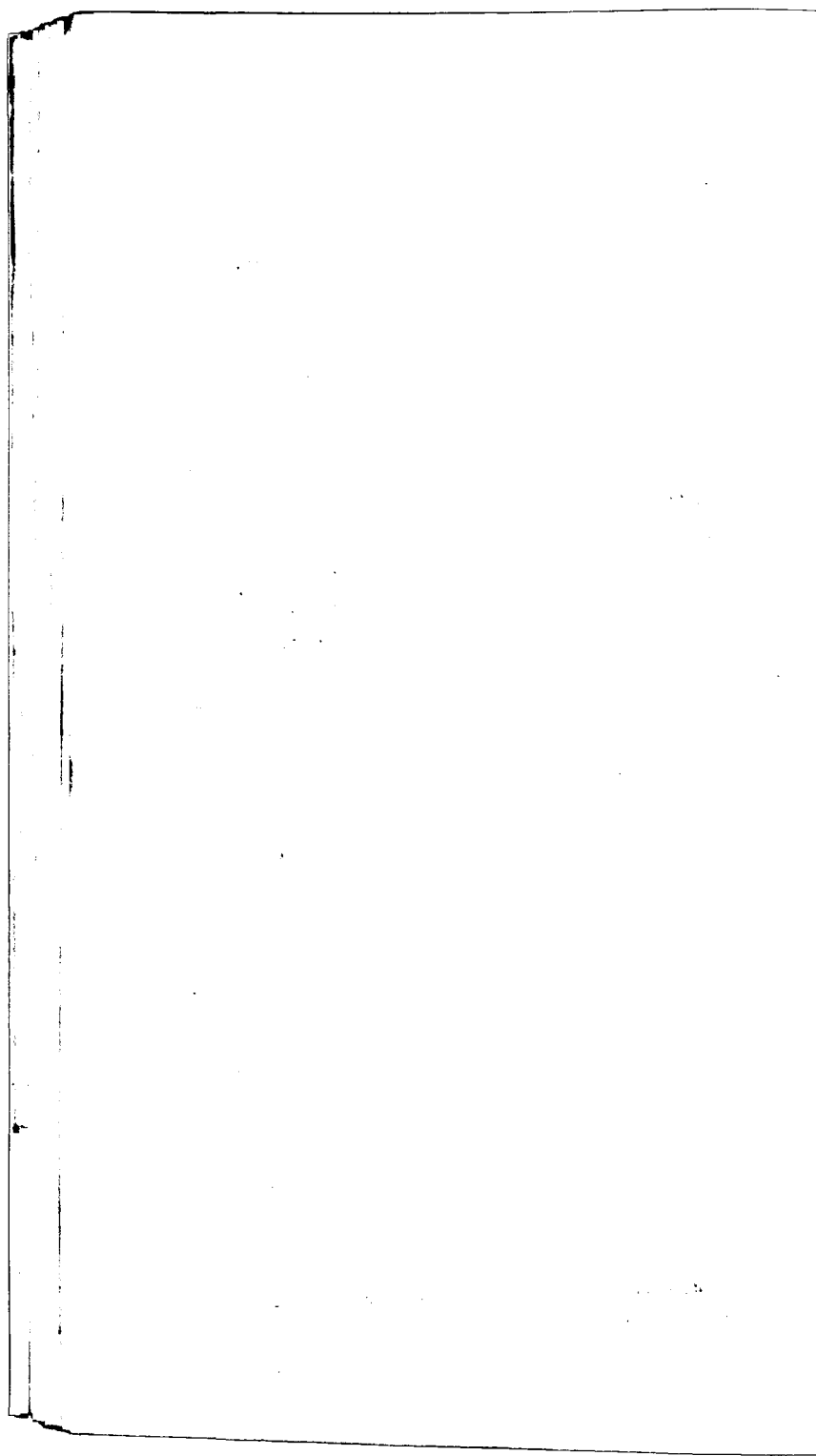
necessarily prohibited. In order to confine the through-traffic to definite channels, a mall 4 feet 6 inches in width will be constructed on the line of the westerly columns of the viaduct. There will be openings in this mall at pier entrances which will be controlled by traffic lights.

After the completion of the elevated highway, the Department of Marine and Aviation will be able to completely restore the entire Marginal Street to commercial use.

Where the Marginal Street adjacent to the waterfront is not required in its entirety by the lessees of the pier and bulkhead sheds, it will be possible to fence off the areas within the proposed highway columns and lease them for such uses as may be desirable. It will be feasible to provide outdoor parking facilities, with or without parking meters, similar to those recently proposed under the West Side Elevated Highway.

Since the Brooklyn-Battery Underpass, connecting the West Side Elevated Highway and West Street with South Street and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, is scheduled for completion in the latter part of 1950, it is most essential to complete the South Street Viaduct at the earliest possible time. This will create the final link in the express road system around the periphery of Lower Manhattan.

The proposed South Street elevated highway will consist of a steel viaduct structure with a minimum clearance of 14 feet. It will have an asphalt wearing surface on the roadways. The structure will have a total width of about 75 feet with a 32-foot roadway in each direction. The approximate cost of the foundations is slightly more than \$2,000,000 and the superstructure will cost an additional \$9,500,000.





THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

A-56-10M-30446 114

From: Nelson Seitel
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2053 Municipal Bldg., NY 7, NY
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June 16, 1950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Robert F. Wagner, Jr., President of the Borough of Manhattan announced today that his office will experiment with the use of rubber compounds in street pavement. This will be the first experiment of such kind and the first use of rubber compounds in city streets in the City of New York.

Under the plans for this experiment, four types of asphaltic pavements will be laid over the granite block on the south-bound roadway of the West Side Highway at the Gansevoort Street curve near West 12th Street this Saturday morning (June 17, 1950).

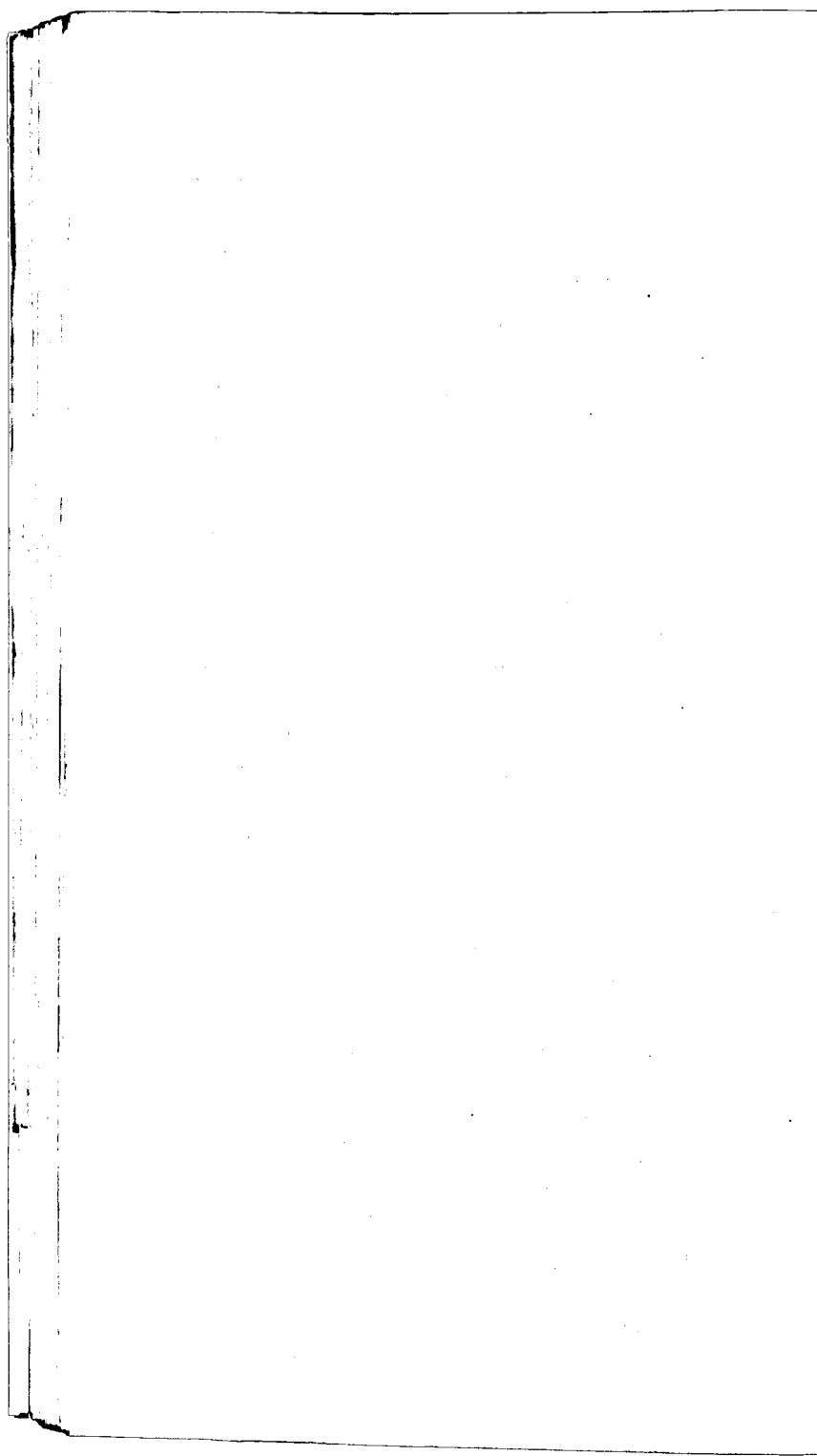
One strip of 100 feet will consist of a natural rubber compound provided by the National Rubber Bureau; another strip of 100 feet using a synthetic rubber compound furnished by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company; a third strip of 100 feet will use a compound of processed rubber provided by the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company; the fourth strip of 100 feet which will serve as a check on the effectiveness of the rubber compounds will be the usual asphalt used by this office in street pavements.

Borough President Wagner stated that the Gansevoort curve on the West Side Highway was selected as the site for the experiment because of the curved alignment, the heavy concentration of vehicles and the number of accidents at that point which have been attributed to skidding on the granite block.

Mr. Wagner also stated that in order to permit the laying of pavement as expeditiously as possible the south-bound lane of the West Side Highway will be closed Saturday morning from 23d Street to Canal Street, from 7:30 o'clock to 1:00 p. m.

Mr. Wagner said: "The purpose of trying out these various rubber asphaltic admixtures in comparison with our standard asphalt top mixture is a continuation of the policy which this office has carried on for many years in endeavoring to more nearly perfect

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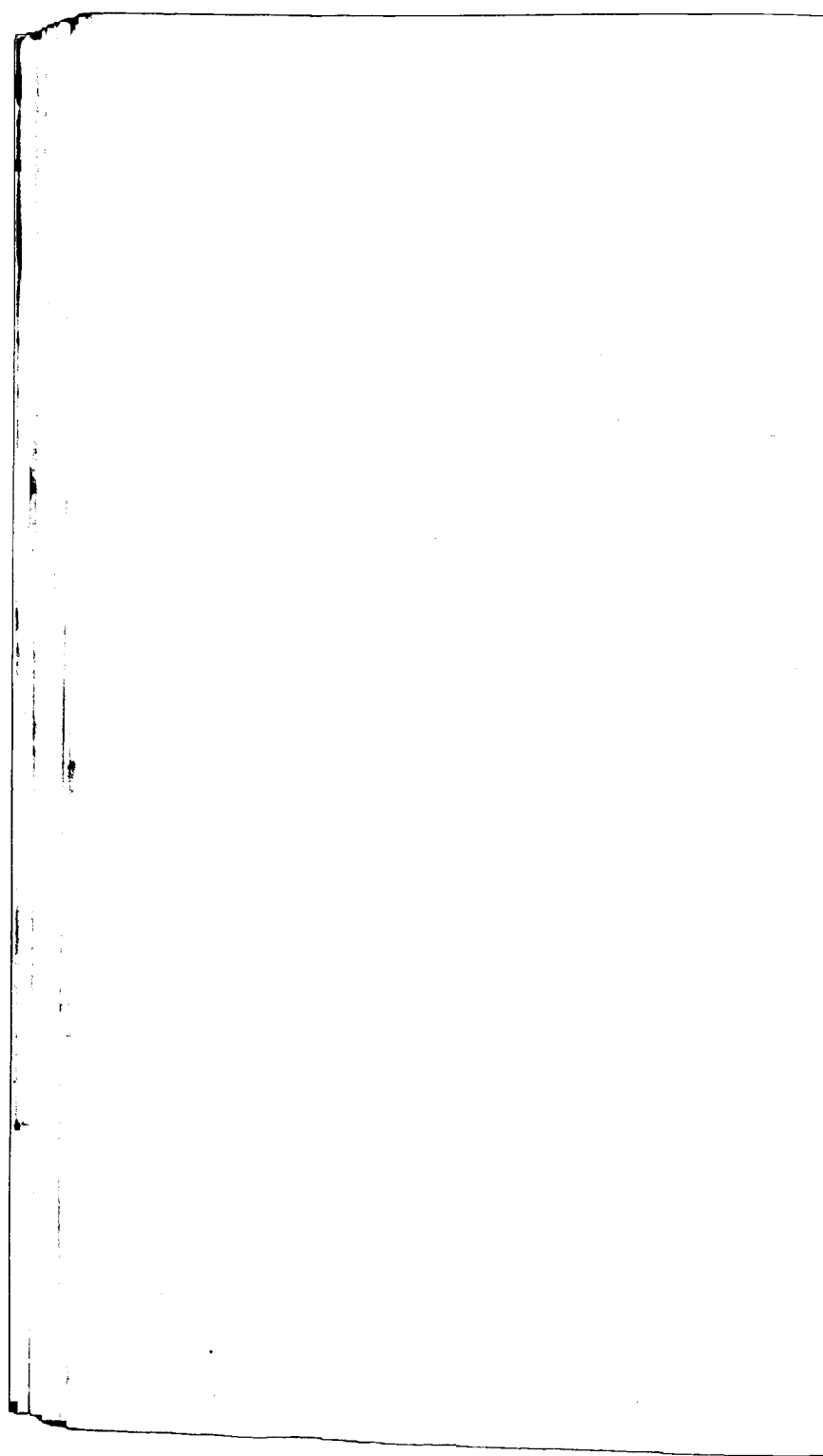


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our pavements. The understanding with the representatives of the various companies is that they are not to use this for the purpose of advertising that Manhattan is recommending these products in any form, shape or manner. A number of highway authorities throughout the country are interested in determining the value of the use of rubber asphaltic admixtures as advocated by the various manufacturers of this material, and we trust that this experiment will establish the value of rubber compounds for street pavement purposes."

NOTE: REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE INVITED TO VIEW THE LAYING OF THE PAVEMENTS. COMMISSIONER CHARLES S. HAND OF THIS OFFICE WILL SUPERVISE ACTIVITIES, STARTING AT 9:30 A. M.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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From: Nelson Seitel
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January 3, 1940

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

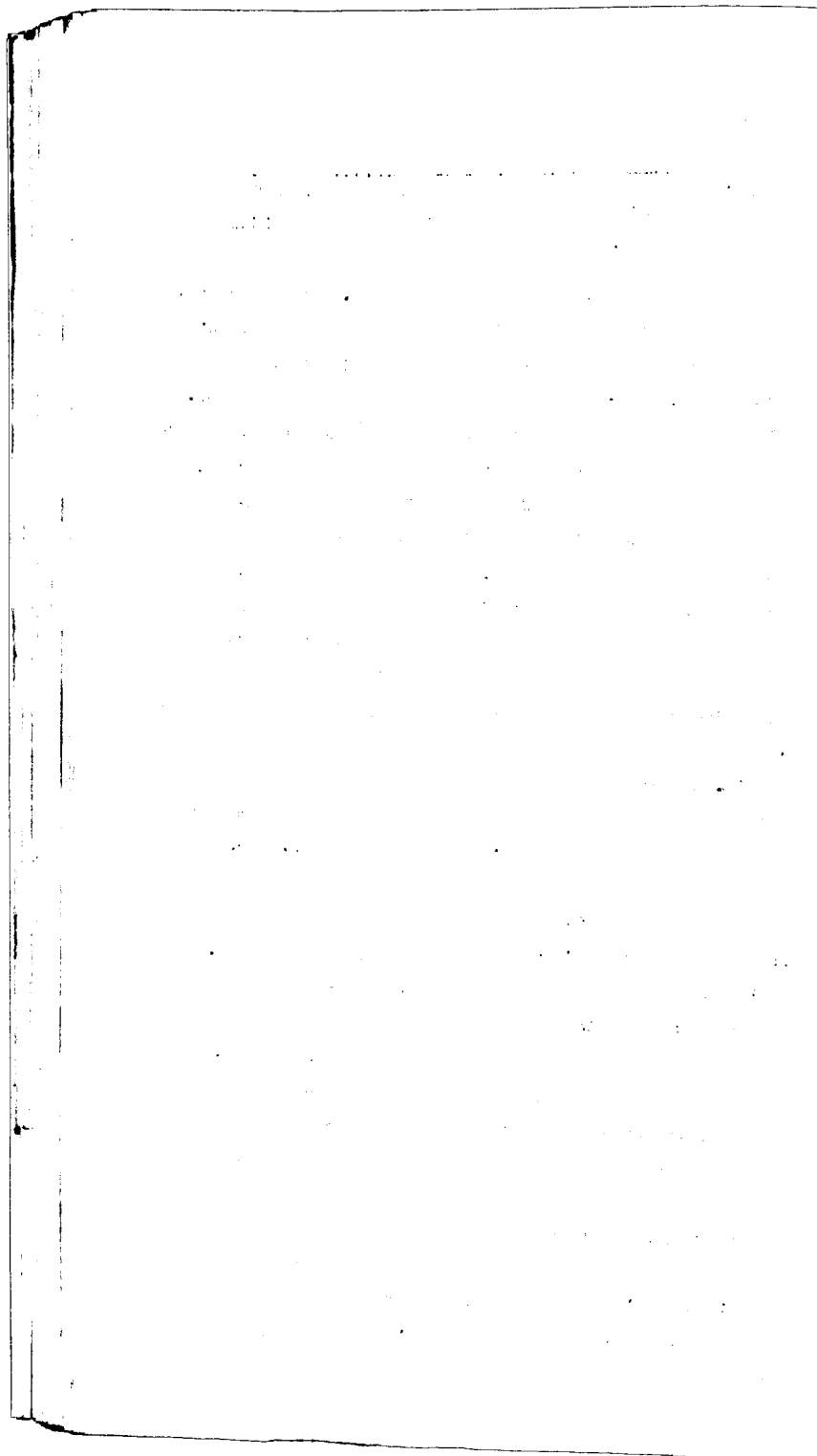
Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr., announced today the following appointments in the office of the Borough President of Manhattan: Chief Engineer, Anthony J. Donargo; Consulting Engineer, Arthur C. Ford; Executive Manager of the Borough of Manhattan, Nelson Seitel; Secretary to the President, Angelo Simonetti; Secretary of the Borough, Mrs. Florence Ferguson; Chief Examiner, Arthur Greeninger; Confidential Inspector, Stanley Lowell; Stenographer to the President, Mrs. Thelma Berlack Boozer.

In announcing these appointments, Borough President Wagner stated: "A number of key positions in the Borough President's office are not being announced at this time because the persons involved will be unable to assume responsibilities of office immediately. However, these additional positions will be made public shortly."

Mr. Anthony J. Donargo, the Chief Engineer, is a career man who has served the City since 1923, when he was employed as a structural draftsman by the New York Transit Commission. Mr. Donargo has remained in Municipal Civil Service since then and worked as Chief Engineer and Acting Borough Superintendent in the Borough of Richmond, as well as Chief Engineer of the Borough of Brooklyn. Since 1946, Mr. Donargo has been Executive Engineer of the Department of Housing and Buildings.

Mr. Arthur C. Ford, Consulting Engineer, earned his engineering degree in Montana State College in 1916 and served in the engineering bureau of the office of Chief of Ordnance from 1917 through 1924 as a draftsman and designer. Mr. Ford is a career man in city service which he entered in 1924 as a structural steel draftsman and designer with the Board of Transportation where he served until 1937. In 1937, he was appointed as a civil engineer in the Department of Public Works and has had extensive experience in the planning and construction of sewage treatment plants, piers and roadways.

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Mr. Nelson Seitel, Executive Manager of the Borough of Manhattan, was associated with Borough President Wagner in the Department of Housing and Buildings as Secretary of the Department and in the City Planning Commission as the Director of the Division of Research and Planning. Prior to that, Mr. Seitel was an attorney with the Office of Price Administration and instructor in government and political science at Brooklyn College and at City College and in 1945 served as Assistant Director of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Mr. Angelo Simonetti, Secretary to the President, has served in that position for the three preceding years and his duties involve retirements, pensions, and changes in personnel, as well as supervision of field work. Prior to this appointment as Secretary to the President, Mr. Simonetti was employed by private construction companies. He also served in the office of Borough President during the administration of Stanley Isaacs.

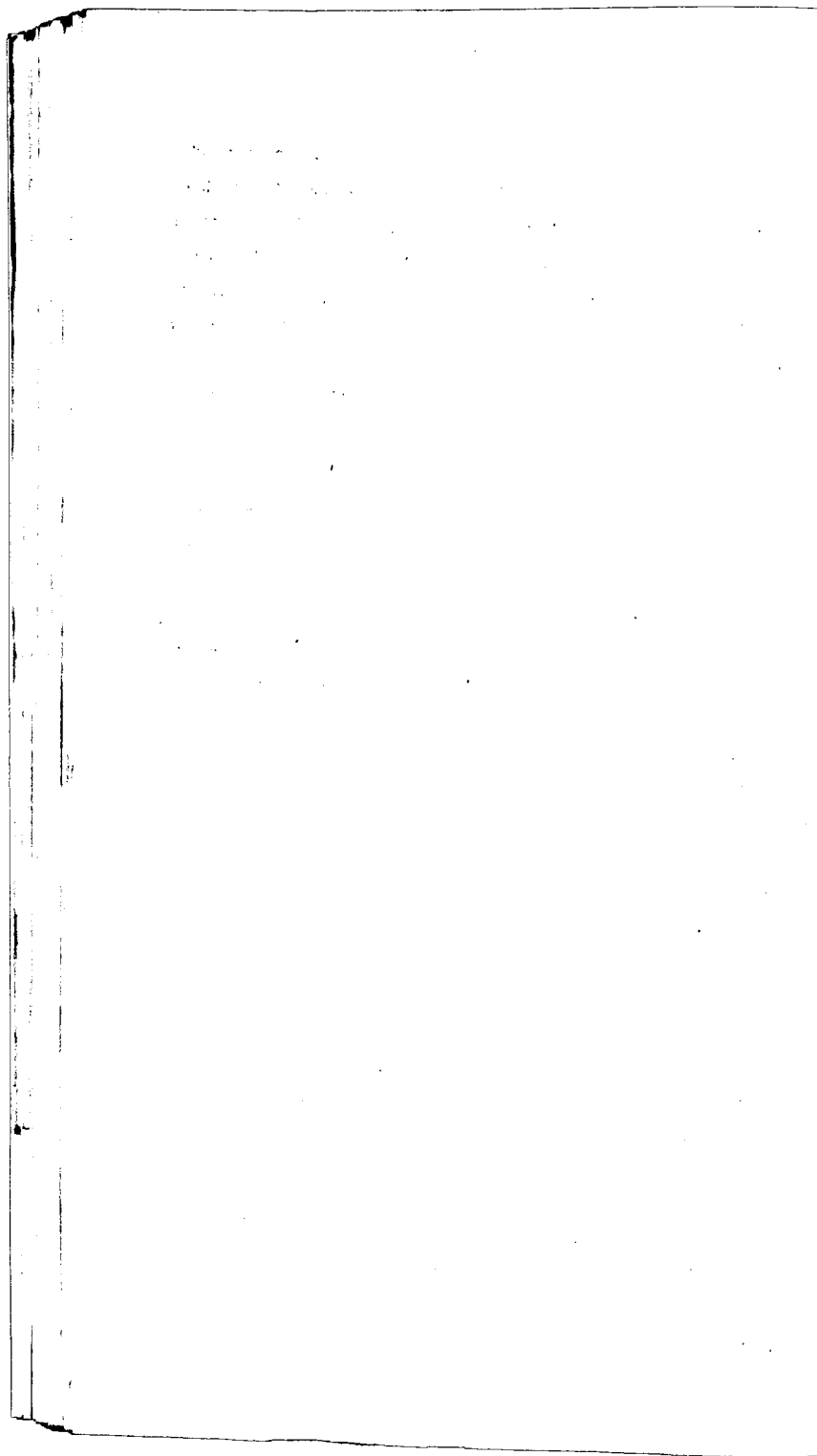
Mrs. Florence Ferguson, Secretary of the Borough, has been employed in that capacity since 1948. She has been active in the affairs of the Local School Boards, as well as serving as Secretary to the Borough Advisory Planning Committee. Mrs. Ferguson is married to Dr. E. J. Ferguson and was associated with the Lawyers Trust Company before her appointment to her present position.

Mr. Arthur Greeninger, Chief Examiner, was formerly employed as Assistant to the President of the Borough of Manhattan. Prior to that he was a City Marshal for nineteen years and was active in the Treasury Department Bond Drives.

Mr. Stanley Lowell, Confidential Inspector, is an attorney, graduated from City College and Harvard Law School and served as Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1943 to 1947 and has been in private practice since then as a partner in the firm of Lowenbraun & Lowell. He was formerly an instructor in Government and Economics at City College.

Mrs. Thelma Berlack Boozer, Stenographer to the President, will also serve as director of community activities and services. Mrs. Boozer was an honor graduate of New York University and served as Assistant Managing Editor of the New York Age and

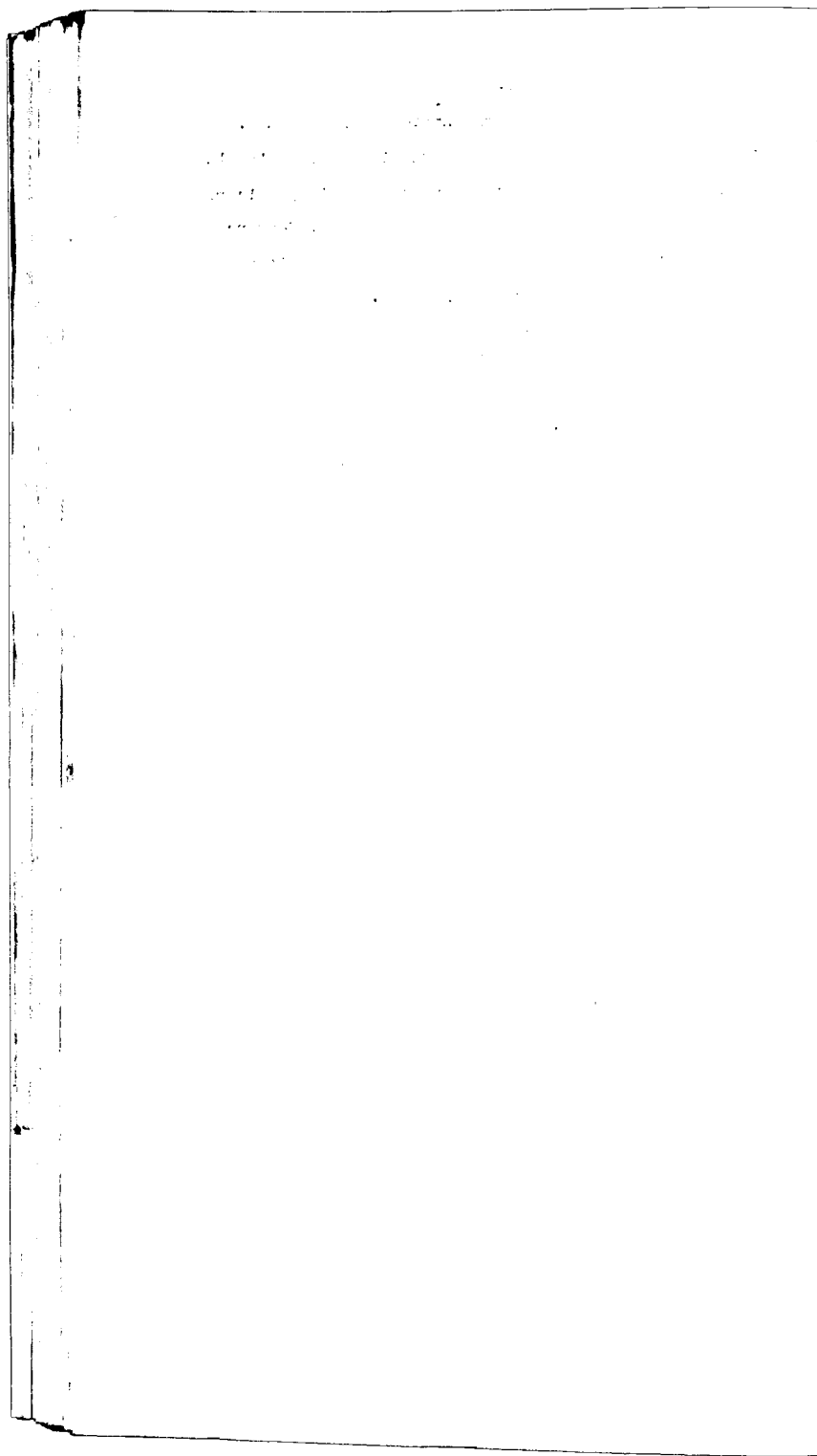
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also an Assistant Managing Editor of the Amsterdam News. Mrs. Boozer was the first director of the School of Journalism of the Lincoln University of Missouri and for some time was engaged in public relations work. She is a member Beta Gamma Sigma Honorary Commerce Fraternity as well as a national officer of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She is married and has two children.

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From: Nelson Seitel
Executive Manager- Boro. Manhattan
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July 19, 1950

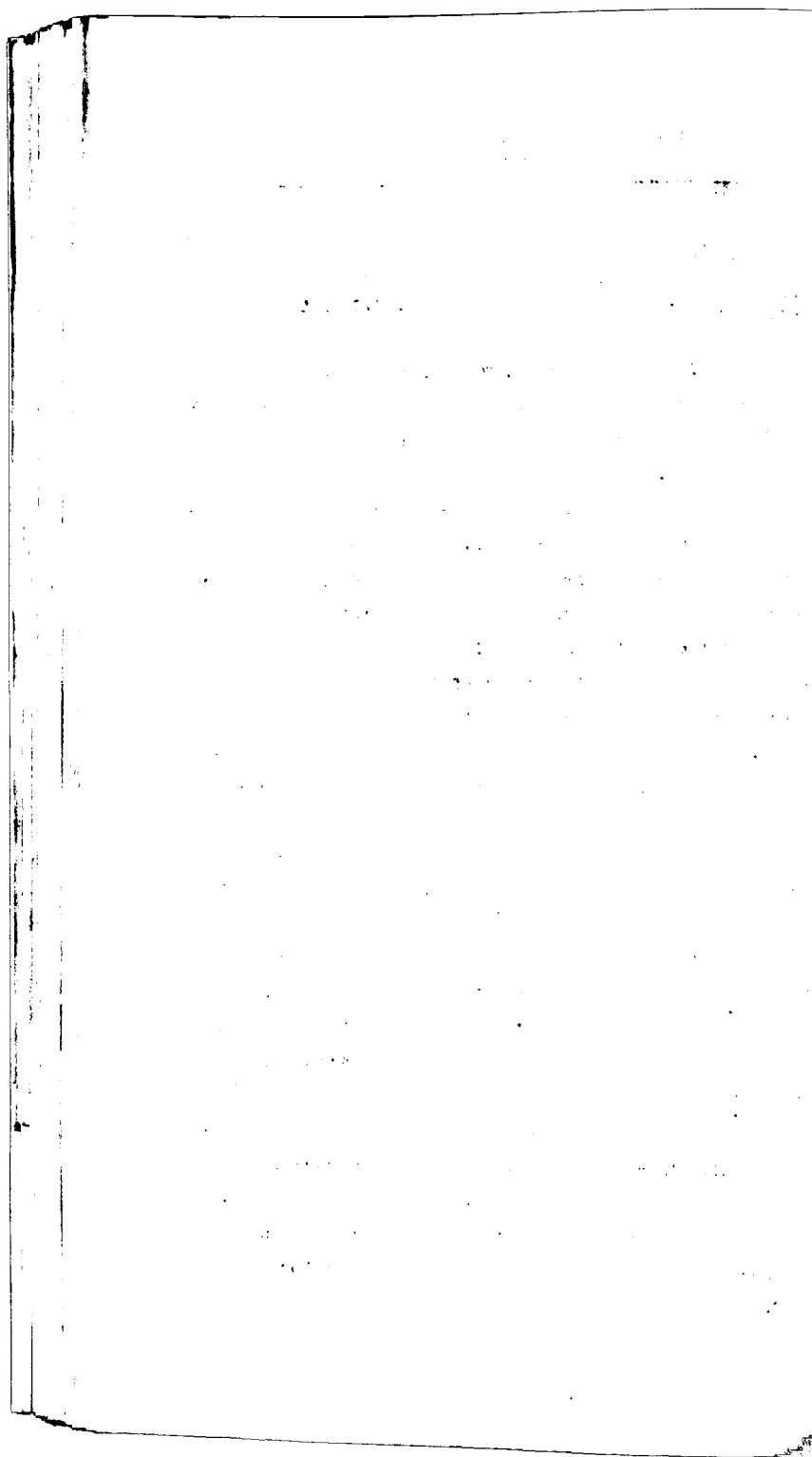
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr. reported today that 3,885 emergency repairs were completed on the streets of Manhattan during the first six months of this year in a stepped-up program of street maintenance.

This compares with 2,780 emergency repairs made during the comparable period for the preceding year. In making public the increase in repairs, Borough President Wagner stated "I deeply appreciate the wholehearted cooperation we have had in this effort from Commissioner William P. O'Brien of the Police Department and Commissioner Andrew Mulrain of the Department of Sanitation, as well as from the public who have called to our attention many holes in the City streets. We have made every effort to make emergency repairs within 24 hours after receipt of complaint and have succeeded in that objective in the vast majority of instances".

The Borough President further reported that his office laid 44,644 square feet of sidewalk as against 15,477 square feet during the comparable period last year.

Borough President Wagner stated further "my observations in driving through the streets of Manhattan convinced me we have made a great deal of progress in keeping the streets of this Borough in good repair. I know that in many instances necessary repairs to underground utility lines have resulted in the tearing up of many streets in Manhattan. However, the Utility Companies have been extremely cooperative in re-setting pavement and making repairs as rapidly as possible after completing their work on utility lines. With the continued cooperation of various City Departments and the public, I know that we can maintain the streets of this Borough in good shape".





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WOrth 2-5600 - Ext. 77

AUGUST 25, 1950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr. announced today that he will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, August 30, 1950, at 10:30 A. M. in his office, Room 2050, Municipal Building, on the proposal to discontinue the operation and the demolition of a portion of the Third Avenue Elevated Line, between Chatham Square and South Ferry.

Request to discontinue the spur between Chatham Square and South Ferry was made by the Board of Transportation and appeared on the Calendar of the Board of Estimate on August 17, 1950, when it was laid over to September 14, 1950. The Board of Estimate, at its August 17th meeting, directed Borough President Wagner to explore into the matter more fully and to file a report with the Board covering the situation.

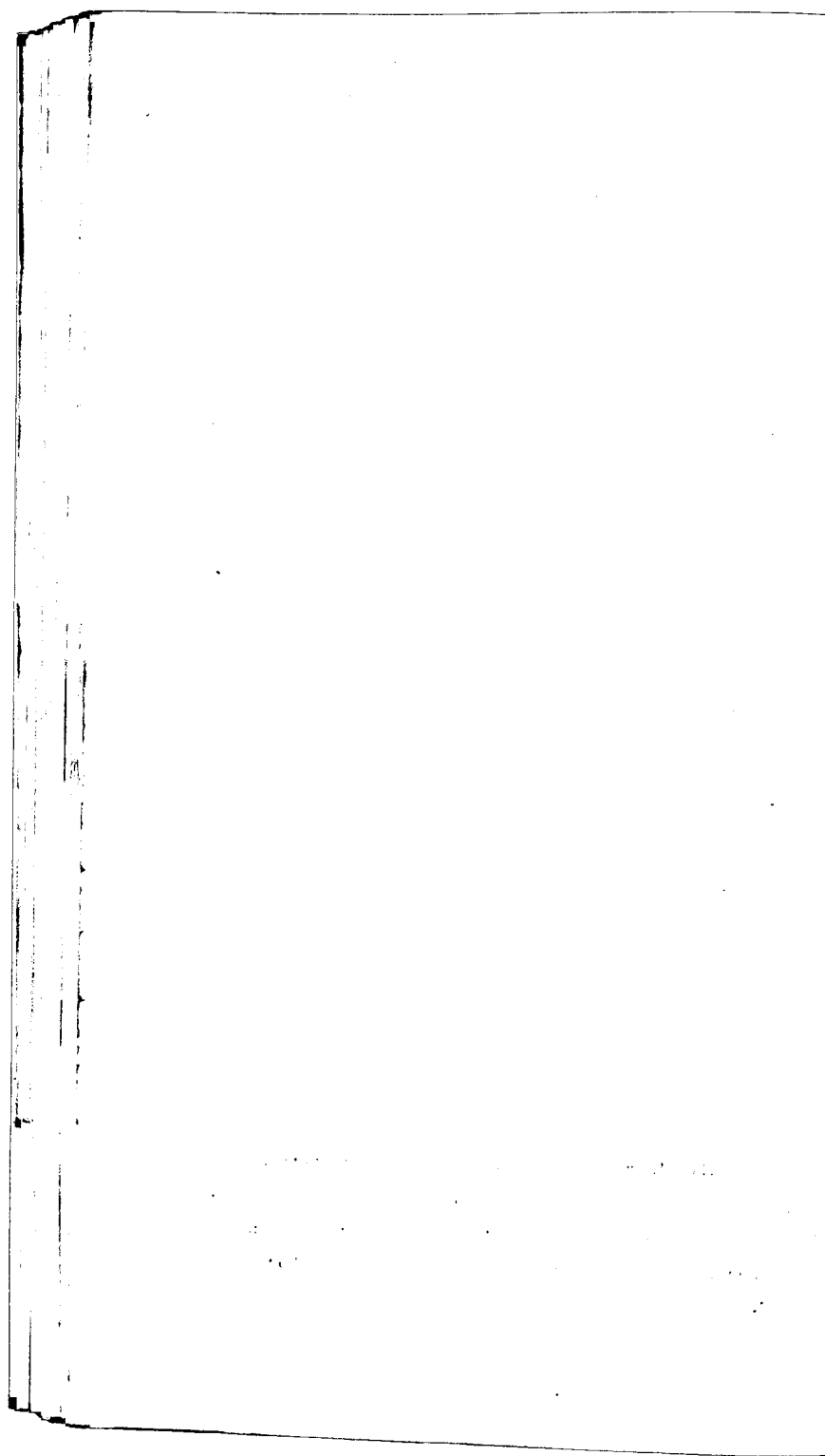
Under plans of the Board of Transportation, free transfers to buses would be given to passengers requiring transportation between South Ferry and Chatham Square, in place of the Elevated Line.

Mr. Wagner stated that all interested parties are invited to appear at the public hearing and to present their views.

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From: Nelson Seitel
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Worth 2-5600 - Ext. 77

June 29, 1950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT OF ROBERT F. WAGNER, JR. ON THIRD AVENUE TRANSIT SYSTEM

It is not without misgivings that I vote in favor of this resolution. The Third Avenue Transit System is one of the major arteries through which the life blood of the city runs and I think it unfortunate that municipal policies affecting transit must be determined under threatening clouds of layoffs and curtailment of services.

I know that Mayor O'Dwyer has explored every possible avenue for avoiding a threatened bus strike and I feel constrained to vote for this resolution on his assurance that this is the only way in which thousands of city residents may be spared the inconvenience and disruptive impact of a bus strike.

I vote with reluctance because the history of the management of transit system does not inspire confidence in its desire to serve the public. In past years, the State Public Service Commission has without avail repeatedly criticized the accounting practices and procedures of management. The financial straits in which the company now finds itself may not be fairly attributed to an inadequate fare, but rather to waste, extravagance, mismanagement, improper accounting methods and constant internal struggles among competing interests for control.

I vote with misgivings because I am not entirely certain as to whether consents for the proposed purchase of part of the physical assets the company can be obtained after the fare is increased, nor am I entirely satisfied that another crisis will not be precipitated at the end of the three month period.

I am firmly convinced that steps should be taken immediately for evolving a comprehensive program for dealing with transit problems in the City of New York. It is certainly clear in my mind that the transit worker should not be obliged to subsidize the rider through inadequate wages or unfavorable working conditions. On the other hand, we know that there is a point beyond

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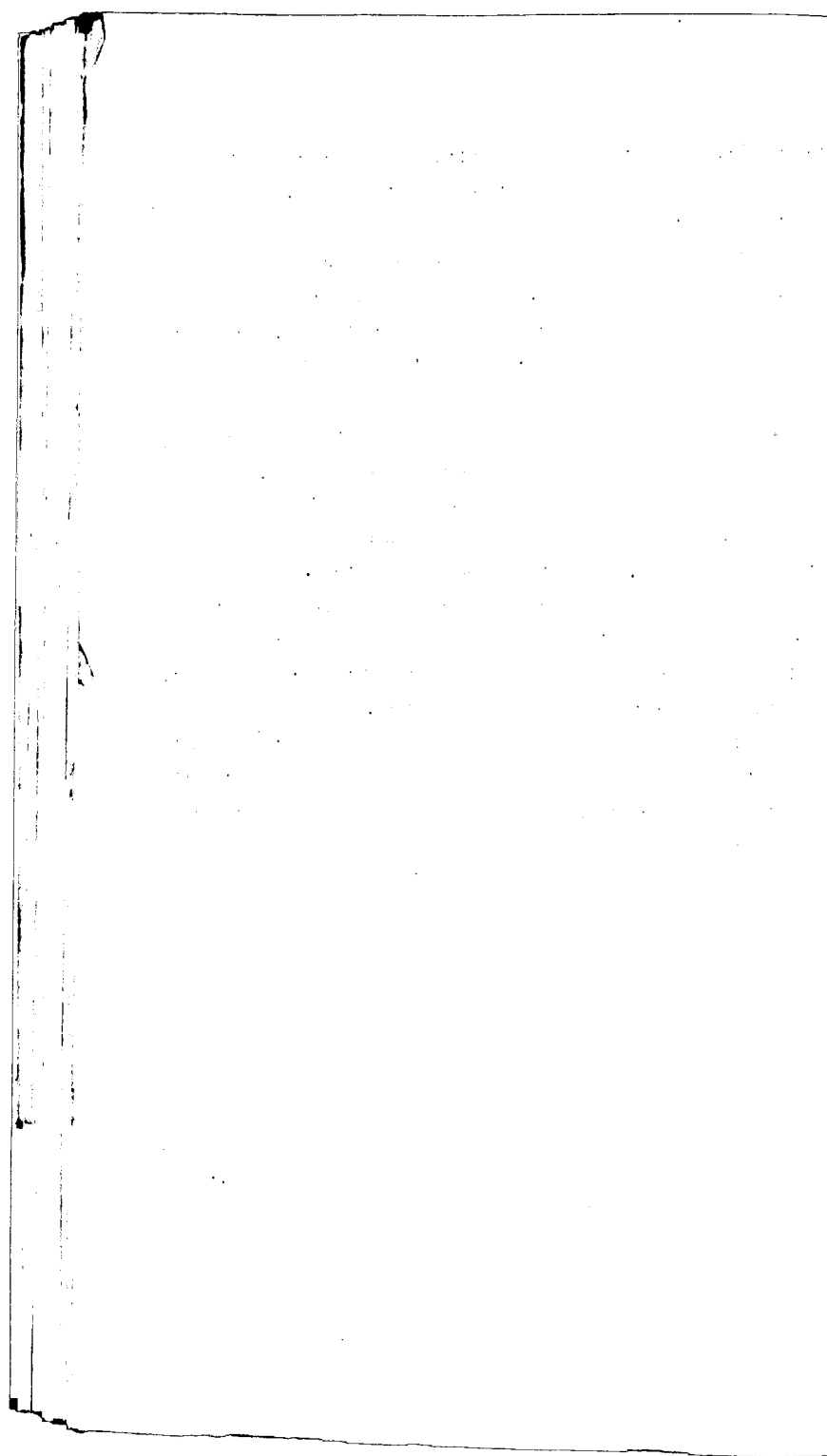
which the fares cannot be increased without imposing undue financial hardship on the riders and without impairing business conditions in this city.

Experience has shown that every fare increase produces a decline in passenger traffic. In some cities, such declines have been so serious as to result in a decrease in total passenger revenues resulting from fare increases. We cannot afford such a situation in this city.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that average earnings in manufacturing industries in New York City last April amounted to less than \$60 a week. There is a definite limit to the amount of fare that such wage earners can pay without depriving their families of other essential goods and services.

I suggest that the present committee working under the Mayor and the Board of Estimate explore thoroughly all facets of transit in New York, including the interests of the transit worker, the business community, the rider and the City.

Only through a comprehensive survey of the entire transit picture will we be able to deal with transit problems realistically and avoid the danger of shaping policy by coping with transit on a purely crisis and emergency basis.





THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
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From: Nelson Seitel
Executive Manager - Boro. Manhattan
2052 Municipal Bldg., NY 7
Worth 2-5600 - Ext. 77

MARCH 14, 1950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

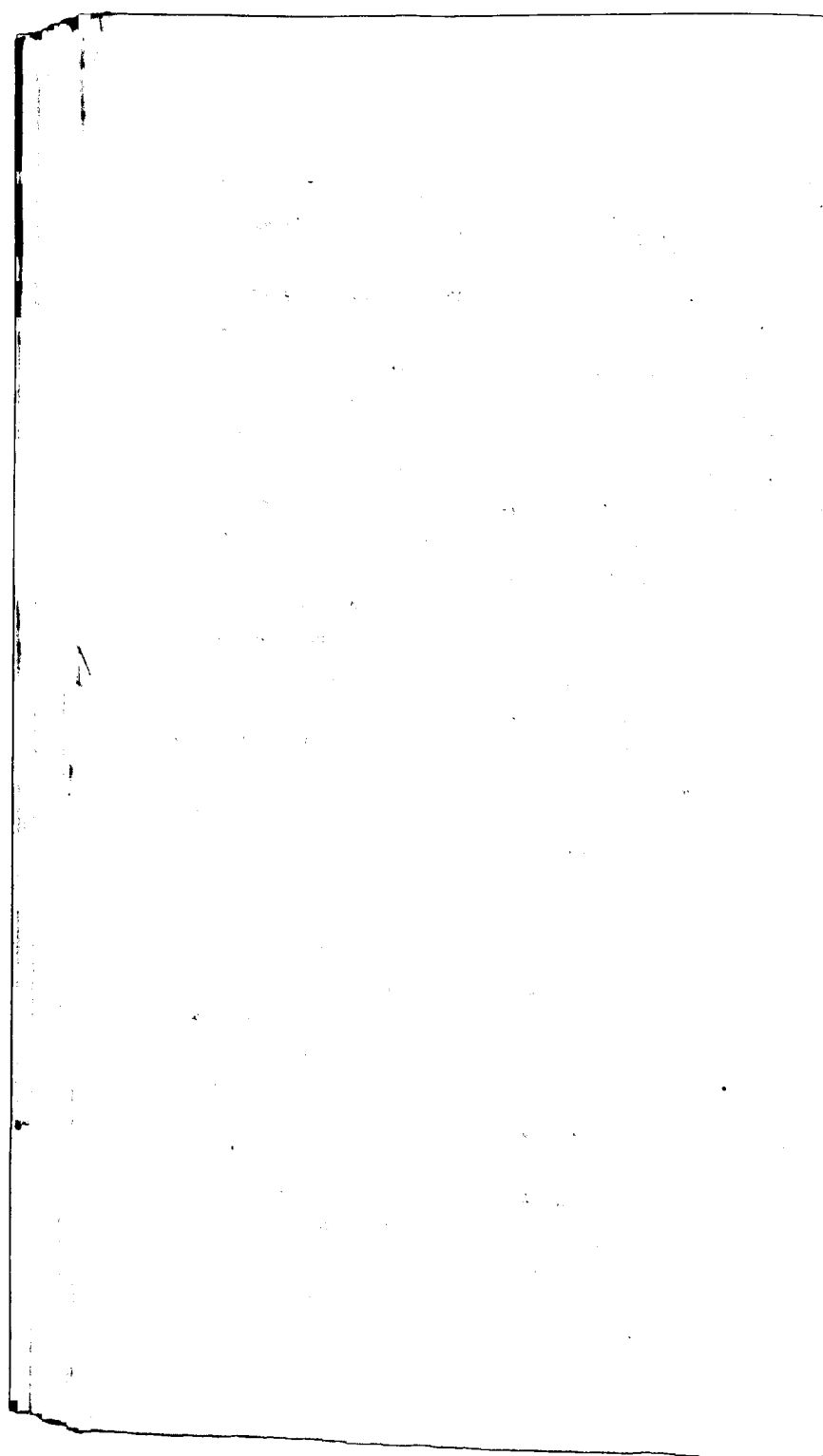
Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr. of Manhattan announced today plans for a concerted drive to bring street pavements of Manhattan into first-class condition.

As the first step in his campaign to improve pavements, Borough President Wagner conferred with Sanitation Commissioner Andrew P. Mulrain, who agreed to cooperate with the Borough President's office in this matter. An arrangement has been worked out between Commissioner Mulrain and Borough President Wagner under which drivers of sanitation trucks will report to their superior officers locations where street repairs are necessary. Special cards for this purpose have been prepared by the Borough President's office and as soon as complaints are received from the Department of Sanitation, the repair and emergency workers of the Borough President's office will proceed to make immediate repairs.

Mr. Wagner has also conferred with representatives of various public utility companies such as Consolidated Edison, the New York Steam Company, and others who excavate the streets to install repairs. The representatives of these utilities have all agreed to refill holes promptly and to lay down pavements as soon as possible to eliminate holes and depressions in the streets.

Borough President Wagner said: "We must make every effort to keep every street in this Borough in good repair. We call on owners of taxi fleets, large trucking companies and other owners of vehicles which use the streets daily to report to the office any broken streets. We shall make every effort to have the repairs made within 24 hours of receipt of complaints."

Borough President Wagner pointed out that some years ago the office had a patrol system of 21 inspectors who would regularly patrol areas and report on the condition of the streets. The Borough President has requested funds to restore this patrol system in next year's budget.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

From: Nelson Seitel
Executive Manager- Boro. Manhattan
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June 20, 1950
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Manhattan Borough President Robert F. Wagner, Jr. announced today that fifty children will join as guests of 1,800 employees of the Borough President's office in the annual boat ride sponsored by the Manhattan Employees Welfare Committee, Inc., on Friday, June 23d.

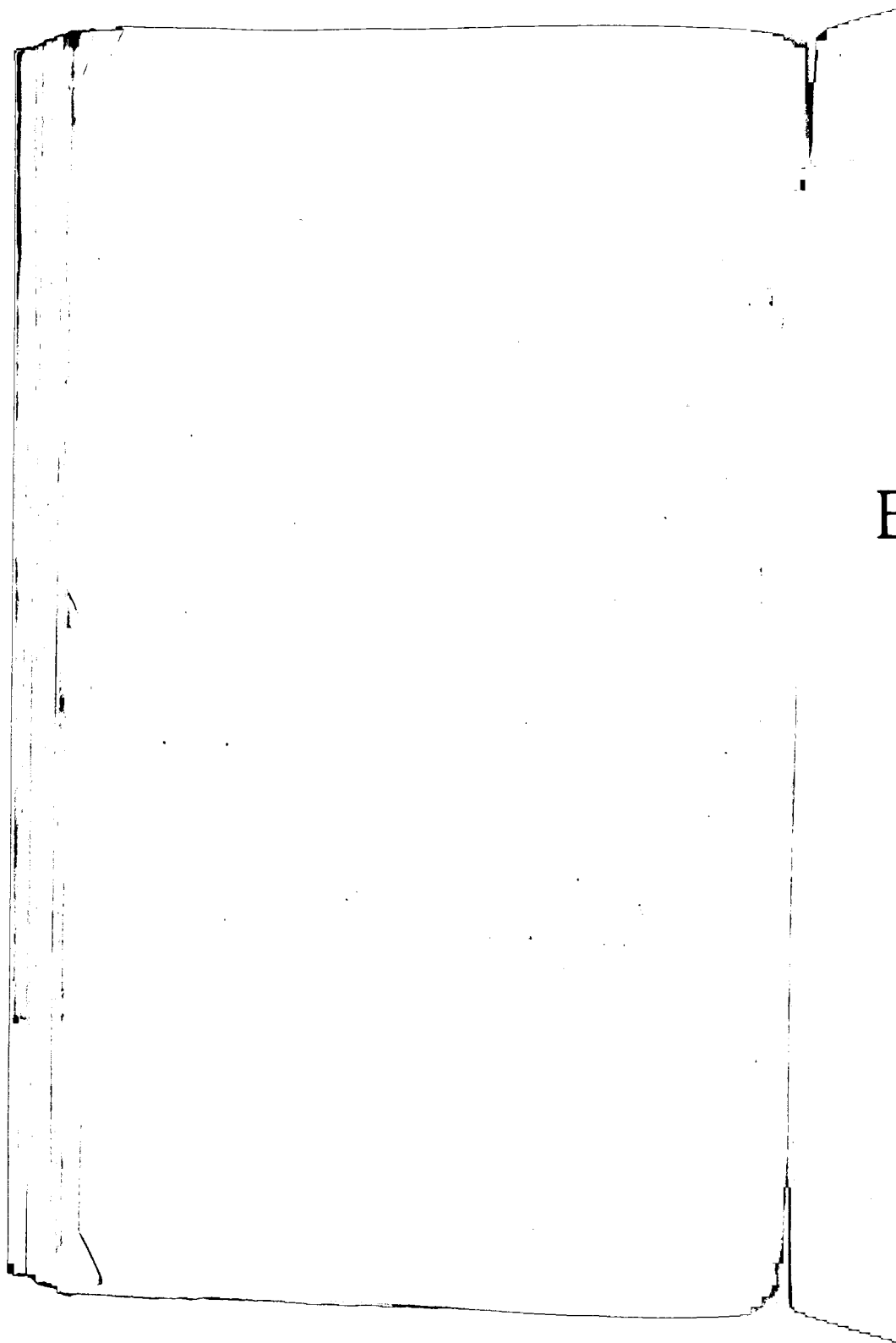
The Welfare Committee has chartered the steamer "PETER STUYVESANT" for the day for its outing to Bear Mountain where games and races are scheduled for both adults and children, with many prizes available to the winners.

The fifty children who will join the Borough President's office as guests of the Committee are sponsored by the DeWitt Memorial Church, the Grand Street Settlement, and the Cardinal Hayes Memorial High School. The children will be welcomed aboard the Steamer "PETER STUYVESANT" at Pier 1, North River, at 8:45 a.m., by Borough President Wagner and Henry N. Kindler, Co-Chairmen of the Outing.

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NOTE TO PICTURE DESK:

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS WISHING TO TAKE PICTURES MAY BOARD THE BOAT AT PIER 1 AND DISEMBARK AT 125TH STREET WHERE THE STEAMER WILL MAKE ANOTHER STOP EN ROUTE.



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END OF SPEECH