



CA

March April 4, 1975

—Staff Photo

Sen. Brock And Mayor Chandler Lead Overton Stroll

P. 27

Brock Maintains Neutrality On Park

By JOHN TRIPLETT

Sen. Bill Brock (R-Tenn.) hiked down the bus lane in Overton Park yesterday, trailed by about 50 persons arguing over the proposed Interstate 40 route through the park.

The mostly antiexpressway crowd pursued Brock for about 30 minutes, often shooting questions at the junior senator up for re-election next year.

But Brock scrambled to stay neutral on the best method of filling the 3.7-mile gap in I-40 in Memphis.

"I'm not qualified to say one route is better than another," said Brock, adding he thinks Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman will make a decision on the expressway route in "several weeks."

He said, "I will support the secretary's decision, period" for connecting the interstate.

Brock was accompanied on the walk by Mayor Wyeth Chandler and other city officials and at several points encountered rather vocal opposition to the expressway from some persons.

"I find it kind of ironic a bunch of rich senators are putting a road through a park which is the only place the poor people have to go," said John Brogden, 25, a University of Tennessee student.

Brogden shouted the statement at Brock as the senator entered the park, crossing over a 450-foot yellow streamer stretched by Mrs. Sunshine K. Snyder, one of the original plaintiffs in the Overton Park expressway case. Mrs. Snyder said the streamer was the same length as the width of the expressway through the park.

"I'm not going to say you gotta do this or you gotta do that," Brock repeated, but "we have to have a decision, we can't let this community continue to choke."

Chandler attempted to answer some of the questions by citing examples of how the city has spent money to acquire other park land. But Rhys Scholes, 21, a Southwestern student, said to Brock, "There are places in this park you can go where you can't even

hear a car — that's a rare opportunity in any city."

A few in the crowd were in favor of the expressway through the park.

Chris Ellis of the Frayser Community Council was collecting signatures on a petition to send to Coleman voicing support for the route.

"Let people see the beautiful side of a city—through the park" when they are traveling on an expressway "and not the back end of a factory," Ellis said.

The crowd ranged from students in blue jeans to distinguished-looking older women in fur coats.

"We have yet to sit down face to face in a legitimate discussion of our problems," Mrs. Snyder said. "We have never been solicited on how we feel."

Brock said the purpose of the visit to the park was "to get the feeling of everybody's attitude — I think it helps me understand how people feel. I have an obligation to listen to all points."

Mrs. Sara Hines of 1398 Carr said, "We're closing off Audubon Park because of overcrowding here — we can't afford to lose 28 acres" in this park.

Brock praised Coleman as a man

that "won't allow this decision to be dragged out." He said "there is no solution that will satisfy everybody, but no decision satisfies nobody."

The incomplete interstate costs \$10 million a year in unneeded fuel costs, delays and accidents, Brock said, and those costs escalate each year it remains unfinished.

He said he plans to meet next Thursday with Coleman in Washington to discuss the expressway problem.

Later yesterday, Brock talked to a group of about 50 students at the Memphis State University student center and discussed his upcoming race and the future of the Republican Party nationally.

Brock said he may draw as many as 20 opponents next year "if the times are bad and Republicans continue to be an endangered species." The Republican Party nationally must decide what it is trying to accomplish because "people in this country are scared to death — events seem to be out of control — and they don't see any leadership from the Republican or Democratic parties."

0PE 23 - 20