

March 20, 1950

## Hope Is Seen For Retention Of Halloran

**Dr. Upshur Expresses  
Optimism in Talk at  
Committee Dinner**

With the Halloran VA Hospital Voluntary Services Advisory Committee last night celebrating its third-and possibly its last- anniversary, Dr. Alfred P. Upshur, manager of the institution said that he was "very optimistic" about Halloran's chances for remaining open now that Governor Dewey has the proposal under consideration.

According to the doctor, care for patients is going on as usual and there are no immediate plans to transfer patients. He advised the committee to maintain "the high standards" of care it has in the past.

Dr. Upshur also expressed appreciation for himself and for the hospital staff for the volunteers' work in assisting patients at the institution.

The dinner was in the Riviera Chateau, Oakwood Heights.

In a brief talk, Dr. Morris K. Smith, chief of surgery at the hospital, said that in all of his experience he never has seen "such an efficient and effective staff as that at Halloran." He also expressed his appreciation in being associated with the committee.

Dr. Smith, one of two VA doctors who are members of the American Surgeons Association, also spoke of his experiences at the hospital.

The benediction was given by the Rev. Patrick B. Fay, Catholic chaplain at Halloran, and the invocation was given by the Rev. Leroy E. Wright, Protestant chaplain at the hospital.

Several Irish songs and old time favorites were sung by Marty McKenna, tenor. He was accompanied at the piano by George Smith.

Co-chairmen of the events were Mrs. L. W. Widdecombe and Mrs. Anne Simmons. Victor Lederhandler was treasurer. James R. Crugnale is chairman of the committee and chief of special services at Halloran.

Approximately 75 persons attended.

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## The Greater Need

The veterans rally in Brooklyn, for the retention of Halloran VA Hospital for another two or three years, brought up two interesting contentions.

One of these, by a leader in the Disabled American Veterans organization, was that the state's need for the entire Willowbrook institution can't be so great if 300 beds at the Willowbrook State School are still empty.

The second contention, by a prominent American Legionnaire, was that admission of ailing veterans to VA facilities will be slowed by the shutdown of Halloran.

These statements, these questionings, again emphasize a need for a better determination of the relative needs for the institution by the state and the VA.

The Veterans Administration will have to go "hat in hand" in an appeal, however. The state owns the property and the VA's lease runs out June 30. Several years ago the state clearly noted that the VA would have to buy the property or get out. The state, it said, needed the buildings. If it couldn't have those at Willowbrook, it wanted the money so it could build another institution. And the VA turned thumbs down on any purchase proposals.

On the face of it, the VA has had its chance and must now move on.

But there is urgency involved, the adequate handling of veterans who need and must have proper medical care. Are they to be delayed in receiving this care because of quibbling over jurisdiction?

**No one is seeking permanent retention of the VA facility in Willowbrook. Veterans groups are only urging a delay . . . until other facilities can be constructed.**

It seems like a fair proposal. Can the state do it?

Governor Dewey should ask his state Department of Mental Hygiene if it is at all possible, under the circumstances, to extend the lease to the VA for another year or two. The full report should be publicized.

Care of the veterans in the metropolitan area and care of the state's mental defectives are "musts."

But perhaps the needs of both can be adjusted so that no one is left wanting.