

DEWEY OK'S CONFERENCE ON PLANS FOR HALLORAN

Will Discuss Transfer with Legislators

Talk Will Be Held
Following Close
Of Albany Session

By JACK REYCRAFT

Governor Thomas E. Dewey will confer with the Island's three legislators later this week on renewal of the Veterans Administration's lease on Halloran Hospital, State Senator John M. Braisted Jr., said today.

The conference will be held, Braisted said, after the close of the legislative session, which may come late today or early tomorrow.

Braisted said that he had received a telegram from the chief medical director of the Veterans Administration, stating that the VA "desires to continue to operate Halloran Hospital" until the new VA facility on 23rd street, Manhattan, is completed in 1952 or 1953.

"Now we can be certain that the objection to continuance of Halloran as a VA center was from Albany," Braisted said. "And we have definite proof that if the state consents, the VA will operate the hospital."

Because the state declined to renew its lease, the VA announced last week that Halloran would be shut down in June, with patients transferred to other veterans facilities in city and state. The state cited the need for the buildings for care of the mentally retarded, the purpose for which the institution originally was built.

Braisted took the floor in the Senate yesterday to propose a resolution asking that the state give the VA a three-year lease on the buildings. His motion for an immediate vote was defeated. Today he will ask the Senate Committee on Finance to report the measure for a vote.

Assemblymen Edward V. Curry and William N. Reidy were marshaling support for a concurrent resolution in the Assembly. Curry said that if the Rules Committee did not report the bill out he and Reidy would take the floor to move it out for consideration.

Braisted, in his speech before the Legislature, declared that veterans in the metropolitan area were "amazed" to learn that the hospital would be closed down June 30, "despite the fact the Veterans Administration is ready and willing to carry on."

"We owe it to the veterans to at least grant an extension of time by renewing the lease for three years," he stated, "so facilities will be available to them when the hospital is eventually closed."

Seeks Support

"I hope the governor will remember these veterans. I hope all the veterans in the Legislature will support this resolution. The disabled veterans are counting on us at this time."

Vocal support for the resolution came from a fellow senator, Mario Deoptatis, Brooklyn Democrat, who also expressed astonishment at the precipitous action.

"It means that when the lease terminates June 30," he said, "1,307 veterans will be tossed out and sent to places throughout the state."

"Many of these veterans have
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relatives... children... Staten... York... what will happen to them? Are they going to follow the patients like nomads?

"I wonder how grateful the people of our state are when they can see these maimed, sick and wounded moved out. The least we and the governor can do is to see that the lease is extended for three years, by which time additional facilities will be available in Manhattan."

More than 300 telegrams to Governor Dewey urging that the lease be renewed were dispatched yesterday afternoon by employes of the hospital, many of whom will lose their jobs as a result of the shutdown.

Tuberculosis and paraplegic patients likewise flooded the governor with protest telegrams. An estimated 400 telegrams were dispatched last night and this morning, with hospital clerks serving as couriers for patients too ill to leave their beds. Tuberculosis patients are to be transferred to Batavia and paraplegics to Kingsbridge VA Hospital in Bronx.

Conference After Session

Senator Braisted said that he spoke to Paul Lockwood, Governor Dewey's executive assistant, late yesterday afternoon, and that Lockwood told him the governor would see the three Island legislators after the session. Dewey's aide, he said, pleaded that the hectic rush of the closing legislative session, and particularly the battle in behalf of the rent control law, made it impossible for an earlier appointment.

Curry expressed regret at this news. He said that he, Braisted and Reidy had rounded up "at least 25" legislators who are veterans, and had intended to take them in with them when they saw Dewey. Because of the homeward rush at the close of the session, he said, the number of the delegation may be whittled down considerably.

Curry's resolution was introduced Monday. Braisted's was submitted by unanimous consent yesterday, because the Senate does not accept new measures on Mondays.