

New Halloran Study Pledged by Dewey

(Advance Albany Bureau)

ALBANY—Staten Island today had the promise of Governor Thomas E. Dewey that he will make a thorough investigation within the next two weeks into the question of renewing the Veterans Administration lease on Halloran Hospital.

Dewey conferred yesterday with State Senator John M. Braisted Jr. and Assemblymen William N. Reidy and Edward V. Curry. The three Staten Islanders were accompanied by a delegation of fellow legislators from the other four New York boroughs, who are backing the move to retain the hospital.

The VA has announced that Halloran will be closed down by June 1, and has stopped admitting patients. Yesterday officials interviewed hundreds of civil service employees at the institution, to determine their preference for transfer. The state has declined to renew the federal lease because it claims the Willowbrook buildings are needed to house mentally deficient

state charges—the purpose for which they were built.

The governor, according to Assemblyman Curry, explained that pressure of the legislative session's closing hours made it impossible for him to give the matter his complete attention for the next few days.

Yesterday's meeting had been set for after the close of the session, but Dewey himself decided to see the Islanders early. Still showing signs of his recent illness, which has kept him away from his office for the past two weeks, Dewey met Braisted, Curry and Reidy in his suite at the state Capitol.

He promised, Curry said, that he would confer within the next two weeks with Gen. Carl Gray veterans administrator and state Mental Hygiene Commissioner Frederick MacCurdy on the Halloran situation, and that before arriving at any decision he would arrange another meeting with the three Islanders.

Braisted, Reidy and Curry termed the conference "a definite step toward the settlement of the stalemate existing at Halloran," and

added that they are prepared to meet with Dewey at any time and place he selects.

The governor, Curry said, expressed concern over the plight of veterans in the area and employes of the hospital, but also pointed out that he has a "grave responsibility" to the state's mental patients, and that the backlog of such patients for whom the state is seeking accommodations is constantly growing.

Two New VA Hospitals Seek Halloran Workers

Representatives of the new 1,800-bed Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Hospital at Peekskill, for treatment of neuro-psychiatric veterans, and of the still-to-be-completed VA hospital at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, were recruiting workers today at Halloran. Since both are filling out their staffs, most of those to be transferred should the Island facility close will go to those two institutions.

However, these two hospitals will not be able to absorb all of the

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It is unofficially estimated that the state spends about \$6,000,000 annually for food — approximately half of it on Staten Island, and more than \$1,000,000 for other supplies.

William L. Gaylor, county commander of the United Spanish War Veterans, said today that he has asked Congressman John Rankin, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, to aid in passage of Congressman James J. Murphy's bill requiring the VA to purchase the Halloran property. The VA declined an offer to buy the property for \$24,000,000 months ago.

Buildings Well Adapted

Gaylor pointed out that while the VA may have found fault with the setup of the buildings for general hospital purposes, because they are scattered, they would for that very reason be admirably adapted for a "domiciliary" VA hospital.

There is a great need for another domiciliary hospital, Gaylor said, because the only one in the state, at Bath, is so crowded that a patient who remains out on furlough for more than three days can't get a bed when he returns. Such an institution, he declared, would take the burden off general hospitals in this area.

The American Legion has contended that Halloran is suited to both domiciliary and surgical care, and, if purchased, would provide 5,350 beds at far less cost than any newly-planned institution.

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Halloran workers, many are being offered jobs at other VA institutions throughout the country.

Dr. Alfred P. Upshur, manager of Halloran, said that he is hopeful something can be done to retain the hospital until the new VA hospital on 23rd street, Manhattan, is opened sometime in 1952 or 1953. He said he doubts whether the two existing VA facilities in the city can keep up with the needs of the area meanwhile.

Organization Broken Up

Dr. Upshur also said that it is unfortunate that Halloran's medical organization, which has treated more than 18,500 patients in its 39 months of existence, will have to be broken up.

Yesterday N. Howard Hyman, state hospitalization officer for the Jewish War Veterans, declared that the 1,300 patients presently at Halloran will not have adequate care after the shutdown.

Eighty-four paraplegics from Halloran are slated to enter Kingsbridge VA Hospital, Bronx, he said, despite the fact that recently some paraplegics had to leave the Bronx facility because there wasn't any room for them.

"By what miracle will the space become available for the 84 scheduled there after June 1?" he asked, and charged that the Peekskill Hospital, Kings Park Hospital and some other installations "will have to perform some medical legerdemain" to care adequately for patients transferred from Halloran.

Islanders Under Treatment

A reliable source said today that the average number of Islanders under treatment at Halloran has ranged from 125 to 150. Of the total personnel, approximately two-third are Island residents (although 400 of them live on the hospital grounds).