

March 31, 1950

Tuesday, April 4, 1950

Known to most people as the "Ruppell" J. Joyce, Klinger and several other leading Republicans have been pouring in a lot of pressure on Governor Dewey and his secretary, Paul E. Lockwood, to extend the lease of Halloran VA Hospital. It is my opinion that pressure from men like that stands more chance of success. Graft wins in Albany tells me they will have a conference shortly.

Staten Island Advance

April 4, 1950

## Lehman Gives DAV His Views On Halloran

Says He Would Back  
Bill for Purchase if  
It Were Introduced

Communications from three Washington legislators regarding the retention of Halloran VA Hospital have been received by Austin H. Evans Chapter, Disabled American Veterans. It was reported last night at a meeting in Village Hall, Stapleton.

The letters were from Senator Herbert H. Lehman, Congressman James J. Murphy and Congressman John E. Rankin, of Mississippi. The letters were replies to requests made by the chapter for information as to the continuance of Halloran.

Congressmen Murphy and Rankin stated that the Congressional Committee on Veterans Affairs is in favor of a bill authorizing the purchase of the hospital. Senator Lehman noted that if such a bill were introduced in the Senate, he would back it.

### VA Not Anxious to Buy

However, Lehman pointed out that since the Veterans Administration does not now desire to purchase the hospital from the State of New York, the only alternative is for a renegotiation for extension of the lease.

The VA, he added, is perfectly willing to negotiate with the state for this extension. However, said Lehman, the state officials involved seem to be strongly interested in having the state recoup this site for its own purposes as soon as possible.

Charles J. Spielman, commander of the chapter, noted that no answers to communications addressed to Governor Dewey or Senator Irving M. Ives have been received.

A delegation of members will attend the meeting in honor of Bill Mle, Sunday, at the regular session of Everyman's Bible Class in St. Paul's Church, West Brighton.

It was reported that a letter of congratulation has been sent to the Jewish War Veterans who held their 55th convention last night in Manhattan.

Three new members of the group are Miss Anna Rowan, Eugene Madison and Edward J. Lesica, it was announced.

Election of officers will take place at the next meeting May 10 in Village Hall.

## HALLORAN DECISION DELAYED BY DEWEY

Governor Names Group  
To Make Further Study;  
VA Puts Blame on State

By S. S. McSHEEHY

Governor Dewey may not reach a decision in the Halloran VA Hospital situation for several weeks, it was indicated yesterday by his office in Albany.

A delegation of Island Republicans, headed by County Chairman Edward A. Ruppell, traveled to Albany yesterday and conferred at some length with James C. Hagerty, the governor's executive secretary, and Buhrdell Bixby, personal secretary to the governor.

They were told that the governor had appointed a special committee to make a resurvey of the entire problem and report back to the governor before the end of April. The committee is composed of State Budget Director John Bigelow and Dr. Newton J. D. Birtlow, new commissioner of the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Meanwhile State Senator John M. Braisted Jr. and Assemblymen William N. Reidy and Edward V. Curry, who conferred with the governor on the problem March 22, hope to confer with him again this week in Manhattan.

### Asked for Report

Senator Braisted said that when he and the two assemblymen conferred with the governor two weeks ago, he called in Burton and asked him to check all the facts in the case and report to him in two weeks. Braisted said the governor advised them that he would be in New York City this Wednesday and that if they would get in touch with him he might have an answer as to whether the state might renew the Veterans Administration's lease on the hospital.

### Decision Put Off

The information provided Ruppell and his colleagues yesterday by the governor's office, however, indicates that it may still be several weeks before any decision is reached.

Despite denials by the VA in Washington that any evacuation of patients from the hospital is contemplated before late this month, Island leaders reported today that more than 100 veterans have been moved to other hospitals in the metropolitan area since the VA first announced a few weeks ago that it would turn the institution back to the state June 30.

In announcing that it was returning the property to the state, the VA said that the state had refused to renew the lease on the property. State officials have indicated that this was not so, that the decision to give up the hospital originated with the VA. Richard Daly, county commander of the American Legion, today had a letter from A. Woolford, director of the VA Information Service, which would bear out the VA's contention that the state refused to renew the lease.

Woolford states in his letter that last Sept. 28 the state notified the VA by letter "that it would not be possible for the state to allow the VA continued use of the Willowbrook (Halloran) facility beyond June 30, 1950."

Woolford advises Daly that on Oct. 31 the administrator wrote to the governor pointing out that maximum use was being made of the hospital to care for sick and disabled veterans and explaining future plans of the VA to provide additional hospital facilities in the New York area. He urged that the VA be permitted to continue to occupy that portion of the hospital it is now using.

According to Woolford, Dr. Fred-ejck MacCurdy, former commis-

Director of the Department of Mental Hygiene, replied to the administrator on Dec. 19 pointing out that state schools are overcrowded, adding: "We, therefore, in spite of our sympathy with your problem, must maintain our position of non-renewal of the lease."

On Dec. 19 the administrator again wrote the governor, asking him for an appointment so he could personally discuss with him ways and means for continuing use of the hospital until 1952.

The governor and the administrator met in the Roosevelt Hotel, Manhattan, Jan. 13 and discussed the problem thoroughly, according to Woolford, but the governor made no commitment, stating he would discuss the problem with his own medical people and that he "would abide by their determination as it was a field in which a layman had

only a limited knowledge and that if the present contract could not be renewed for the space now occupied by the VA, the state would make every effort to see if it could arrange a contract for VA to use a lesser part of the hospital."

Woolford said the administrator assured the governor he wanted and needed every inch of the hospital he could secure and that he wrote the governor two days later confirming the conversation they had had at the Roosevelt Hotel, pointing out that the VA is paying the state \$32,077 a month for the hospital adding: "It is absolutely imperative that we retain occupancy of as much of that hospital as it is possible for you to permit us to have until Dec. 31, 1952." He advised the governor that at the time the hospital had 1,262 patients and a waiting list of 702 more.

### Letter Acknowledged

According to Woolford, the governor acknowledged the letter Jan. 19, stating that the commissioner of the Department of Mental Hygiene and the budget director were prepared to start discussions with the VA on the proposition the following week.

On Feb. 28, Dr. MacCurdy, according to Woolford, wrote the administrator, reviewing the history of the lease and again pointed out that all state schools were overcrowded. He added: "Will you therefore kindly consider this official notice as to the termination of our contract on June 30, 1950, in accordance with the terms of the lease?"

Woolford wrote Daly that on March 2, that officials of the VA met with delegates of the state at Halloran Hospital, discussed problems relating to the closing of the hospital and also the possibility of continued use by the VA of a small part of the hospital. On March 10, Woolford said, the administrator acknowledged receipt of the Feb. 28 letter, in a wire to the governor, but asked if further negotiations could be hoped for.

### VA Given Answer

The following day, March 11, the administrator, according to Woolford, telephoned the governor's office and was told by his counselor that the letter of Feb. 28 was final and represented the governor's position.

On March 16, Woolford said, the deputy administrator wired the governor: "Veterans Administration has stopped further admissions of patients to Halloran Hospital as of this date. Every effort will be made to evacuate patients now in hospital prior to June 30."

On March 20, Paul E. Lockwood, then secretary to the governor, acknowledged receipt of the wire.

Woolford advised Daly that "while the Veterans Administration has no alternative except to accept the letter of Feb. 28 as final determination by the state not to renew the contract at Halloran Hospital and is acting to comply with its lease, it is still ready and is attempting to reopen negotiations in the hope of being able to continue to care for veterans in this hospital until the 23rd street (Manhattan) hospital is completed."

### Compromise Suggested

A possibility that the state may still lease a smaller portion of the hospital to the VA was indicated yesterday by George W. Gatz, one of the Island Republicans who accompanied Ruppell to Albany and sat in on the conference.