

April 4, 1950

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## Speed on Halloran

Officials continue to talk over and study the situation while the transferring of patients from Halloran VA Hospital goes on.

Can Halloran be retained? Is there still enough time to keep the VA facility on the Island for another year or two?

The answer is definitely no — unless state and VA officials work much more quickly.

It's clear that, if Governor Dewey's committee investigating the possible extension of the VA's lease on the Willowbrook institution doesn't report until late this month, the case for the retention of Halloran is lost.

VA plans call for the last of the patients to be transferred to other facilities by June 1. By the beginning of May only long-term patients will be left here.

Therefore it's imperative that the governor be urged to speed the work of his committee. The facts and the alternatives to the termination of the VA's lease should have been gathered by the state weeks ago.

How else could the state have decided not to renew the agreement? So it shouldn't take very long to review the facts and decide whether a compromise could be reached.

Circumstances impell haste. The welfare of hundreds of patients and the plans of their families are affected. And there are the hundreds of employes who must be given the utmost consideration.

To send ailing veterans to upstate institutions, at a considerable distance from their homes, would be unfair—if the close-down of Halloran isn't necessary. Veterans who have applied for hospitalization also have a serious problem. The action on Halloran has slowed their admittance to veterans facilities in this area.

Employes in many categories are being hit hard by the delayed decision on the lease. Their chances of being released by Halloran so that they can join the staffs at other VA institutions are dimmed when the decision is in doubt.

If Halloran really is going to be closed and it looks that way at this point, these employes are losing their places at Halloran and employment at other facilities. Other VA facilities cannot wait indefinitely before filling vacancies.

Consider a typical employe. This man served in the last war, was employed by the VA at Halloran after his discharge. Only recently he purchased a home here and is now spending time and money in modernizing it. Should he now stop his repairs and sell? Should he continue in the hope of landing a spot in a nearby VA hospital? Should he sell and make plans to move upstate?

These are just a few of the human elements in the Halloran case—from the standpoint of the patients and staff at the Willowbrook institution.

On the other side of the ledger, not yet told in complete detail, is the story and the tragedy of the mentally defective who need hospitalization. The state says it needs the bed space for them.

It's a situation that needs clarification, but a situation that will not be solved by long-term parleys.

Governor Dewey is being fair in agreeing to review the case, but his special committee cannot take weeks in its study.



REPUBLICANS LISTENING joyfully to our very able and likeable Governor, Thomas E. Dewey, announcing the retention of Halloran Hospital for Veterans' use. From left to right are Leo D'A. Balbach, second district commander of the American Legion; Assemblyman Frank McMullin, of Brooklyn; J. Joyce Klinger, Staten Island law and civic worker; George W. Gatz; Edward A. Ruppell, Republican County chairman, and Frank A. Pavis.

## Thank You Governor!

One of the basic causes behind the problem of the hospital program is because the Veterans' Administration has been guilty of delaying work in its hospital program. We have been told of plans for the last three or four years for a hospital at 23rd Street. If something is done soon we may have this hospital before 1953. Actually it should be finished in 1952.

The Veterans' Administration is also behind in its schedule at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn. It cannot be denied that Children's hospitals in New York State are desperately overcrowded. At Letchworth Village the patients are sleeping two in one bed and mattresses are out in the halls.

It is a desperately crying problem for the State of New York. Many of the children are those of veterans.

Governor Dewey's solution assures fair treatment for veterans and children alike at Halloran. It was very fortunate that Edward A. Ruppell and his associates participated in this public spirited service. It is refreshing to find a political organization interested in civic and charitable affairs.