

Lawmakers Rap Halloran Eviction

By DON SHEARD

A resolution, jointly introduced in the New York State Senate and Assembly, today condemned as a "heartless and ill-conceived measure" the Veterans Administration order which evicts 87 paralyzed veterans from Halloran Hospital.

The resolution is sponsored by two Brooklyn Democrats, Senator Mario de Optatis and Assemblyman John J. Ryan.

The two legislators appealed to their fellow lawmakers to go on record as demanding that the Veterans Administration, Congress and New York State defer the transfer of the 87 paraplegics until a new Manhattan Veterans Center is completed by the end of next year.

They charged the Veterans Administration had broken its promise to the crippled veterans that they could remain at Halloran Hospital on Staten Island until the new Manhattan Center was ready to receive them.

The dispersal of the paraplegics to three widely-scattered hospitals, two of them out of the State, will "inflict a cruel hardship on the veterans and their families," de Optatis and Ryan told the Legislature.

In introducing the resolution, Senator de Optatis commended the N. Y. Journal-American for enlisting public aid for the paralyzed men, whose morale has been shaken by the order they must leave Halloran by Feb. 15. Some of them have already been ordered to McGuire Hospital, Richmond, Va., and Cushing Hospital, Framingham, Mass. Kingsbridge Hospital, Bronx, is attempting to expand its admittedly crowded facilities to care for 55 of the Halloran paraplegics.

In a preamble to their resolution, the Brooklyn legislators pointed out that the 750 patients at Halloran had "relied on the promises and representations made by New York and the V. A. that they would not be removed until Dec. 31, 1952.

At that time, the Manhattan Veterans Hospital, a unit of the New York University-Bellevue Medical Center, in the East 30's, will be completed.

The greatest blow fell on the paraplegics. Many of them had furnished apartments on Staten Island so they could receive daily treatments. Several upstate families sold their homes and moved to the city to be near their sons.

overcrowded and distant Kingsbridge Hospital.

"My father is unemployed and both he and my mother are sick. I can't go home, I'd be a burden to my family," he said. "I watched four of my buddies get sent to Cushing last week. It broke our hearts to lose their friendship. That's the only thing we have left."

SEE RECOVERY RETARDED.

State officials pointed out that they were forced to ask the return of Halloran as a hospital for mental patients because the Air Force requisitioned their facilities at Sampson, N. Y.

"The progress in the rehabilitation of these ailing veterans will be definitely retarded because of the separation from their loved ones and the lack of adequate and similar facilities in other institutions. Many hospitals are admittedly overcrowded and incapable of administering proper treatment," the preamble stated.

The resolution reads, in part:

"Be it further resolved that the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York do hereby memorialize Congress and the Veterans Administration to refrain from transferring the sick and wounded war veterans from Halloran until Dec. 31, 1952, or until such time as the facilities of NYU-Bellevue Medical Center become available and

"That copies of this resolution be sent to Gov. Dewey, the President, Secretary of Defense, the Veterans Administration and to each member of Congress from N. Y. State."

PARAPLEGICS HAIL ACTION.

The Albany action was hailed by the paraplegics, through their spokesman, Robert Moss, executive secretary of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, 99 Park ave., as evidence that the public is solidly behind their fight to keep them under one roof.

"The Veterans Administrations can no longer ignore protests in the face of this action," said Moss.

"We are deeply grateful to the public, the Congressmen, State Legislators, veterans organizations and the N. Y. Journal-American for their support of our fight," he added.

The bitterness of the men over the contemplated loss of Halloran, recognized as the country's outstanding paraplegic center because of its spacious grounds and unparalleled facilities, was reflected in the decision of one veteran to "take care of myself."

"Halloran is a perfect setup and I won't take any place else," said Adam Bagan, 21, whose spine was fractured while on active Navy duty in the Pacific.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. John Bagan, of 462 Pulaski st., Brooklyn, he is determined to set up his own apartment rather than go to