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Halpern hits, defenders of state schools

By Gene Goshorn

State officials who defend conditions at state schools for the mentally retarded are "defending the indefensible," County Mental Health Commissioner Abraham L. Halpern said last night.

Dr. Halpern agreed with Sen. to the fact the state is spending ditions at Rome and Willow- care at the schools. brook State Schools for the retarded are "intolerable." The more than 5,000 mentally resenator was very kind," Hal-tarded, director Dr. Charles

retarded people be sent there" longer.

officials for "acting like they old sister, Rosemary, has been are being personally insulted." (Concluded on Page 28 Col 1) These officials instead should be seconding Kennedy's recommendations for improving conditions, Halpern, a psychiatrist,

Kennedy said in testimony Thursday before a joint legislative committee: "There are many - far too many - (retarded) living in filth and dirt, po their clothing in rags, in rooms fr less comfortable and cheerful A than the cages in which we put d: animals in a zoo."

"Christopher F. Terrence, acting state mental hygiene \$ commissioner, commented later to than he has "long been aware as of the difficulties faced by the ly state schools as a result of ta overcrowding and understaffing . . ."

Terrence traced the problem si

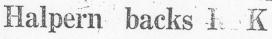
Robert F. Kennedy that con-only \$6.50 a day per child for

At Rome, where there are Greenberg said Kennedy spent Halpern said the state schools only 80 minutes there and are "very overcrowded" and would have been "more underrecommended that "no more standing" if he had stayed

until conditions are corrected.

Halpern, who expects state criticism for backing Kennedy, criticized state mental health noted that Kennedy's 45-year-

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-From Metro Page-

in a home for the retarded 22 ple be drawn into the program. years.

At Willowbrook, where there tions are too large and impercused Kennedy of making a should be made smaller. "sensational expose (that) was unfair to patients, their families the Department (of Mental Hygiene), the governor and myself."

Halpern said Hammond was even more critical than was

Kennedy was trying to make in are needed. his appearance before the Joint "Conditions such as Kennedy cally Handicapped.

at the schools are not due to one man or one administraton," Cohen said he worked in a New

are being personally insulted that was only 250 children." and that's where they're making a mistake.

"Kennedy is bringing to light tation programs in Rome and devastating conditions so things Willowbrook. Greenberg, Hammond and Terrence say they want can come of the problem is that mental about.

Kennedy's recommenda- to direct a school." tions, they (state officials) are

"Kennedy's recommendations tarded. might bring New York State up Halpern said "New York

missing hundreds of thousands and psychiatrists."

of dollars in federal aid to sup

Halpern said conditions at the hospitals.

that other nonprofessional peo-retarded people."

Kennedy said present institu-

are more than 6,000 inmates, sonal and should be broken up director Dr. Jack Hammond ac- into smaller units. Dormitories

The state has plans to build seven 1,000-bed schools throughout the state, including one in Syracuse to replace the Syracuse State School.

Dr. Julius Cohen, a Syracuse Kennedy before he became the University associate professor school boss. Halpern declared that many agreed with Kennedy and Halpeople are missing the points pern that smaller institutions

Legislative Committee on Men-describes can occur in large intal Retardation and the Physi-stitutions," Cohen said. "New York State unfortunately seems "Kennedy said shortcomings committed to large institutions.

Halpern stated, "and he said Jersey institution with 250 sethe remedy lies with all of us. verely retarded children "and "This is the key because it was several years befoe Hammond, Greenberg and Ter- we knew we had each kid pro-rence are all acting like they grammed as he should be. And

Kennedy complained about a lack of recreation and rehabili-

Cohen and Halpern said "part retardation is regarded as med-"Instead of commenting on ical. One has to be a physician

Cohen said he has special edsaying how well they're doing; ucation to deal with retardation how we're only 50 years behind and has been working in this the times now instead of 100 field since the 1940s. Yet he said he couldn't be the director

to date. So instead of sitting on State will continue to be behind their laurels, these officials times until it opens up (school) should be agreeing with Ken- administrative posts to the mos nedy." edy." highly qualified people instead Kennedy said the state is of restricting it to physicians

port training and educational Syracuse State School for Menprograms in state schools and tal Retarded are not as bad as they are at Rome because, in He said students should be his words, the Syracuse school hired to augment professional "ignores" a state law which rerecreation staff. He urged quires that it accept severely



Amen!

