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Robert Kennedy Criticizes Two Mental Homes in N. Y.

By Joseph R. Hixson

From the Herald Tribune Bureau

NEW YORK, Sept. 10.—Sen. Robert F. Kennedy charged that conditions in two New York state schools for the mentally retarded were "intolerable." He made his detailed and blistering attack before a joint state legislative committee holding hearings on the subject.

Reactions to the senator's charges ranged from indignation over conditions in state institutions by the committee chairman to angry charges of the "usual garbage" by a state mental hygiene department official.

Sen. Kennedy said he had recently visited the two institutions, Willowbrook on Staten Island, and the Rome State School in Rome, and had been "shocked and saddened" by what he saw.

Five Unnatural Deaths

The senator said there had been "five unnatural deaths" among Willowbrook inmates in the last year. One patient, he said, was scalded to death in a shower by another retarded patient.

Another victim was killed by an older, more capable boy who had been put in with slower youths as

punishment, according to Sen. Kennedy.

Escorting reporters through crowded facilities later in the afternoon, Willowbrook's director Dr. Jack Hammond angrily accused Sen. Kennedy of making a "sensational exposé (that) was unfair to patients, their families, the department (of mental hygiene), the governor, and myself."

Dr. Hammond denied the senator's charges that there is no staff pediatrician at Willowbrook. He said there is one, plus five other full-time doctors with pediatric experience.

New York World Telegram and Sun, Sept. 13 '65

A Breath of Fresh Air For Gouverneur Children

Do the retarded children kept in the dingy Gouverneur Hospital ever get outside in the fresh air?

Yes, said Dr. Jack Hammond, director of the parent Willowbrook Hospital on Staten Island.

They have their beds wheeled out on a narrow iron porch which surrounds the rooms at the back of the hospital. There they can watch the traffic whizzing along the East River Drive.

There are no playgrounds. "None of the children can walk," he said. "We don't need playgrounds."