

New York Post

New Issue In Albany —Retarded

Gov. Rockefeller and Democratic leaders clashed today over the problem of providing funds to improve conditions for the mentally retarded in state institutions.

Majority leaders in the Legislature called on the Governor to double the number of attendants in the under-staffed institutions. Emergency funds were available, they said, if he would only ask for them.

Angered by the implication that he was dragging his heels in the face of a Democratic call for a "crash program" to cope

with the problem, Rockefeller last night called the proposal "shockingly hypocritical."

He said the Democrats last winter cut \$3,500,000 in operating funds from his budget for the Dept. of Mental Hygiene.

"A million and half of that was for more attendants, nurses and doctors for care of the mentally retarded," the Governor remarked.

Rockefeller also said, in a letter released before his reply to the Democrats, that a master plan he recommended in 1962 for treating the mentally ill had been "so outstanding" that President Kennedy had used it as a blueprint for a federal program presented to Congress.

The letter was to Drs. George L. Wadsworth and Alan D. Miller of the State Planning Committee on Mental Disorder.

The issue of the mentally retarded burst into headlines last week when Sen. Robert F. Kennedy toured institutions for the retarded on Staten Island and in Nassau, N. Y., and charged that conditions were shamefully substandard.

Urges 'Crash Program'

In a telegram sent yesterday to Rockefeller, State Sen. Harry Kraef (D-Bronx), chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Mental Retardation, said: "I am certain that you, like the entire citizenry of New York State, have been shocked by the revelations."

Kraef called on the Governor to start a "crash program" that would include the following proposals:

"Double the number of attendants, particularly for the severely retarded.

"Accede to the specific requests of the various directors of our state schools for additional occupational speech and physical therapists and other professional personnel.

"Institute a crash program for the removal of odors at the schools."

Planning Committee Program

A program outlined over the weekend by the State Planning Committee on Mental Disorders would expand mental health facilities by 40 per cent during the next decade.

The report to Rockefeller recommended a network of 150 mental health centers throughout the state, and 30 mental retardation centers.