

# RFK Won't Face Willowbrook Jury

U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy criticized conditions at two state-operated institutions for the mentally retarded—Willowbrook and Rome State Schools—before the Joint Committee on Mental Retardation.

## IN HIS LETTER, Kennedy said:

"I have no evidence or knowledge of any activities which are, so far as I know, criminal. My statement before the Joint Committee on Mental Retardation was based on an inspection of the school such as can be conducted by any individual."

The grand jury has been held over from the June term to hear evidence in connection with conditions at the Staten Island institution that have resulted in the deaths of three residents this year. At least one witness is expected to testify tomorrow when the grand jury meets again.

STATEMENTS from Kennedy and from Gov. Rockefeller, in the meantime, indicated that both were moving to take the controversy that has arisen over the problems of care for the retarded out of the political arena.

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"We cannot look to the past," he said. "We must look to the future."

Rockefeller, whose itinerary today includes a visit to Craig Colony, an upstate institution for epileptics and the mentally retarded, admitted "we still have a long way to go" in care for the retarded.

Though we have come a long way in meeting our responsibilities to those whom fate made different, we still have a long way to go," he went on.

Rockefeller is the first governor since Franklin D. Roosevelt that error since Franklin D. Roosevelt in institutions has felt to visit Craig Colony.

Kennedy, yesterday in an address to the New York State Associated Press Broadcasters Association in Lake George, said all New Yorkers must work with Rockefeller to improve the state's mental health program.

The senator asked that all cooperate with Rockefeller "in dealing with a difficult problem," but at the same time called for more effort on all fronts.