

RFK Scores Rocky's Talk on Mentally Ill

Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller traded verbal punches yesterday over New York State's handling of the mentally retarded.

Kennedy said remarks made by Rockefeller Tuesday were not "helpful in improving the condition of our state's most unfortunate citizens—the mentally ill."

Kennedy added that he has been involved with mental retardation for many years. One of Kennedy's sisters was born mentally retarded.

Rockefeller said on a radio program Tuesday that Kennedy was "trading on human suffering" in the mental health controversy by his recent criticism of the state's care of the mentally ill.

The governor was referring to the senator's attack on conditions in Willowbrook State School and Rome State School, two state-run institutions for the mentally retarded. Kennedy toured the Island institution Sept. 1.

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"SOMETIMES I can't figure him out," Kennedy said of the governor, adding:

"I don't question that he is as interested as I am in making progress in this unhappy field. But I would like to see everybody working together in this

state to deal with this problem."

In his address before the National Association for Retarded Children, Rockefeller decried what he called "partisan sensationalism."

"There is plenty of room for politics in our society," he said, "But this is one area where there should be none and I think most people agree."