

# STATE SPEEDS AID TO MENTAL SCHOOL

## Governor Orders Increase in Staff for Willowbrook, Which Kennedy Assailed

By JOHN SIBLEY

Governor Rockefeller authorized yesterday the immediate recruitment of therapists and teachers for the Willowbrook State School for Mental Defectives.

Willowbrook, on Staten Island, was one of the institutions attacked by Senator Robert F. Kennedy last month in a scathing denunciation of the state's treatment of its retarded children.

The Governor acted in response to a demand by State Senator Harry Kraf, Democratic chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Mental Retardation. Senator Kraf had threatened to "start screaming and fighting" unless the Willowbrook staff was enlarged.

Willowbrook now has a total staff of 2,150 to care for more than 5,900 patients.

At the request of Mr. Kraf, Willowbrook's director, Dr. Jack Hammond, had compiled a "rock bottom" list of 34 new specialists he would need to provide proper patient care at the overcrowded institution.

The Governor's announcement of newly created staff positions conforms exactly to Dr. Hammond's list. It calls for 36 new occupational therapists (Willowbrook now has 11), 23 new recreational therapists (now 7), 13 new teachers (now 33), 12 new physical therapists (now 8).

The Governor's office estimated the annual cost of the new positions at \$430,000.

Senator Kraf voiced delight yesterday that the Governor had met his demand, and declared: "I can tell you now we're going after the others."

He said he and his committee's staff would visit the state's other institutions for mental defectives and prepare a list of their needs for presentation to the Governor.

There are eight branch schools across the state, and a ninth, the Suffolk State School, will begin accepting patients at the end of this week.

Senator Kennedy made his much publicized charges at a hearing held by the Kraf Committee. He said that he had personally inspected Willowbrook and a sister institution at Rome. Describing the young disabled patients, Senator Kennedy said:

"What do they do during the day? Many just rock back and forth. They grunt and gibber and soil themselves. They take off their clothes. They struggle and quarrel, though great doses of tranquilizers usually keep them quiet and passive.

"But for the most part they sit, too often in dimness and gloom and idleness and stench, staring at the wall or an attendant or an occasional strange visitor."

Mr. Rockefeller disclosed yesterday that he has directed the State Department of Mental

# NEW YORK TIMES WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1965 Rocky Sets Dec. 4 Deadline For Willowbrook's Relief

The State Mental Hygiene Dept. has until Dec. 1 to find additional facilities to ease overcrowding at Staten Island's Willowbrook State School for the Mentally Retarded. That deadline was set yesterday by Gov. Rockefeller.

The institution, along with the Rome state school, was named in charges by Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who said patients and lived "like animals in a zoo."

Rockefeller and Mental Hygiene Dept. officials repeated steps to relieve overcrowding and to recruit additional personnel, had been long under way. The Governor said that under terms of a \$430,000 allocation in the current state budget, the state would immediately begin to recruit 84 additional education and therapy specialists. Under a \$40,000 allocation, so students from this city are in training as practical nurses, at Willowbrook, he said.

Nearly \$1,000,000 in improvement projects are under way at Willowbrook. The state has \$1,000,000 to be spent on modernization and improvement.

Hygiene to hand facilities by Dec. 1 a list of the facilities in the metropolitan area that could be adapted to receive overflow patients from Willowbrook. The department began research for new quarters more than a year ago.

Before yesterday's announcement, the Governor had scheduled a meeting in his New York office this afternoon with Willowbrook's board of visitors and with officers of the Benevolent Society, which is composed of the parents of Willowbrook patients.

A Staten Island grand jury is continuing an investigation of conditions at Willowbrook, an inquiry that began three months before Senator Kennedy attacked conditions there.

The grand jury is giving special attention to three unnatural deaths that have occurred at the institution since February. One boy, retarded physically as well as mentally, was ascribed to death when another patient pushed his wheelchair under a hot shower.

District Attorney John M. Braisted Jr. said the grand jury would probably hand up its report of some kind by the end of the year.

Senator Kennedy declined an invitation to appear before the grand jury, saying the conditions he had reported could be seen by anyone who visited Willowbrook. In a letter to Mr. Braisted, the Senator said he had no knowledge of criminal negligence on the part of anyone at the institution.