

# Rock Refutes RFK On State's Mental Health Programs

By CHARLES DUMAS

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Gov. Rockefeller continues to be angry at the criticism voiced by U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy five months ago about conditions in state schools for the mentally retarded.

The Republican governor showed his pique again this week at a news conference he called to introduce the new State Mental Hygiene commissioner he had appointed.

Inevitably, reporters asked for the views of the commissioner, Dr. Alan D. Miller, on the charges leveled by the Democratic senator.

Kennedy had protested at a public hearing that at least two schools were so overcrowded that the children were no better off than "animals in a zoo."

WHEN THE subject came up at the news conference, Rockefeller set his jaw grimly and stared straight ahead while Miller fielded the question.

Miller said Kennedy's complaints "were no revelation"—that the Mental Hygiene Department was aware of problems at the schools and had been trying to correct them, and so was the governor.

Rockefeller nodded in agreement.

A few minutes later, the Democratic chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Mental Health told the news conference that "the subject should be 'above partisan politics.'"

"Hear! Hear!" the governor interjected, half rising from his seat. He smiled broadly in approval.

ROCKEFELLER'S reaction reflected the continuing, broadening series of ripples that Kennedy's charges created in the governor's office.

At the outset, Rockefeller attacked Kennedy as a "political broker" and accused him of "trying to trade off human suffering." Lt. Gov. Malcolm Wilson took up the same theme, on cue.

Then, Rockefeller cranked up his public relations machinery, which began spilling out a flow of statements pointing up programs and expenditures to help the retarded.

Rockefeller gave the effort a personal touch by visiting two of the schools himself and by officiating at the opening of a new facility.

HIS INTRODUCTION of Miller to the press was still another chapter in the counter-offensive.

It was elaborately staged. Rockefeller and Miller appeared before a battery of radio and television microphones, flanked by the chairmen of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Mental Health and the heads of the State Association for Mental Health, the State Association for Retarded Children and the State Association of Community Mental Health Boards.

After Rockefeller declared his administration's "full and complete support" of the mental health program, he invited each of the others to "say a few words." Praise of Rockefeller and his appointment of Miller was abundant.

The governor would not permit reporters to ask questions on other subjects.

All of this prompted veteran observers at the Capitol to wonder whether Rockefeller's answer to Kennedy ever would end.