



Congressman Murphy addresses the crowd at the rally.

Willowbrook rally: Discontent in cold

By JANE KURTIN

Yesterday's Willowbrook Rally in Willowbrook Park was marked by red-runny noses, frozen toes and clattering teeth.

Originally scheduled to be held in the auditorium of Willowbrook State School, the rally was moved outdoors at the request of Dr. Jack Hammond, director of the institution, when he said he feared a large gathering would disrupt patient care.

Nearly 400 people stood in the park, huddled together for warmth, and shouted at nearly every politician who spoke from the platform. The crowd was reportedly made up mostly of parents seeking improved conditions for the patients.

Congresswoman Bella Abzug, who called conditions at Willowbrook an "obscenity," was the best received of all guest speakers yesterday.

"The politicians," Mrs. Abzug said, "let things go from disgraceful to unspeakable, then give a little and call it progress."

"Gov. Rockefeller suddenly has come up with \$5 million in funds for the Department of Mental Hygiene and promised \$20 million more in April. He is giving us nothing," said Mrs. Abzug, "he is only restoring what he previously took away."

"We must tell the politicians we don't want more money spent on roads. That we don't want more money spent on the war. That we don't want it spent on military programs. They must know that we want the money spent in areas of human need."

Holt Meyer, borough development director, was booed non-stop from the moment he said he represented Mayor Lindsay.



Rep. Roger Ross



Holt Meyer

Congressman "John" M. Murphy, who told the crowd that New York State was missing out on a lot of federal money because "they won't spend 25 cents to get a dollar," explained Title 4 of the Social Security Act.

Murphy said Title 4 "involves open-ended federal appropriation and is not being utilized by the state because 25 per cent of the funds have not been put up to secure 75 per cent from the federal government.

"The failure of the state to tap this program," Murphy said, "constitutes their biggest failure in mental health."

SEEKS \$84 MILLION

Congressman Jonathan Bingham, D-N.Y., said he would offer an amendment to the House appropriations bill to raise from \$40 million to \$124 million federal funds available for the mentally retarded.

Bingham justified a request for "emergency federal action" because, he said, "of shocking conditions revealed at Willowbrook and other state institutions."

Anthony I. Stella, a parent aroused an emotional response from demonstrators when he



Rep. Bella Abzug

promised to bring the issue of care for the retarded to the White House lawn.

"We are going to put crosses on the White House lawn for every child that dies at Willowbrook," Stella said.

"Keep your arms out," Stella said, "and keep your fists clenched because we're gonna start hitting some people over the head and get things changed."

The rally, which began at 10:30 a.m. and was sponsored by the Willowbrook Rally Committee, ended two hours later with many stiff-legged protestors hobbling back to the warmth of cars.

Meanwhile, district attorney John M. Braisted's office requested transcripts of testimony and exhibits presented at a hearing on conditions at the school.

The hearing was conducted Friday by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

It was disclosed at the hearing that 11 mentally retarded patients died during the past year of asphyxiation.