

Editorials

# Peculiar priorities

The building of the Rockefeller Memorial Mall, which is costing the taxpayers \$1.2 billion, is proceeding apace. Like the pyramids, its construction goes on inevitably and regardless of the critics.

Yet it has been proven that the care of the state's charges at Willowbrook State School and other institutions has been dismal because the proper amount of money and the proper amount of planning hasn't been provided.

And just last week the state announced that it isn't going to provide the funds it had earmarked for new facilities at the Oakwood sewage treatment plant, which services one of the fastest-growing sections of the entire city.

Delays in providing money for such upgrading in the New York City area have almost quadrupled the costs as originally estimated, from \$494 million to \$1.951 billion.

And what else is not so new? The state Department of Transportation has indicated that the actual construction of the first section of the Richmond Parkway is still years away while the agency and the federal government carry on their discussions, including whether Alternate 6 meets new federal regulations passed in 1969. Then, of course, comes the question of how long it will take to get the money.

The Richmond Parkway was first mentioned back in July, 1948. That was almost 23 years ago, and thus far one-third of it is in use. Some people are already beginning to doubt it will be finished in the 20th century.

Imagine that! Yet gold was discovered in California in 1848, and it only took 21 years for the coast-to-coast railroad to be completed, with all the digging and grading done by hand and horsepower.

As so many of our public figures say so often, it is time for a reassessment of priorities.

Gov. Rockefeller didn't put the Albany mall up to a voter referendum, as he did the highway construction issue. Otherwise, his personal pyramid might still be a dream, just as the Richmond Parkway has become.