

Rocky Invokes Law To Punish Strikers

By THOMAS POSTER

Angrily calling the first statewide strike by civil service workers "intolerable," Gov. Rockefeller ordered State Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz and the Public Employe Relations Board yesterday to initiate legal action under the Taylor Law, which could send the union leaders to jail and dock the pay of strikers.

The governor—fresh from a vacation in the Virgin Islands—called a news conference at his midtown office to insist that the two-day strike could have been averted.

He said the "basic issue" of postponement of the last biweekly salary payment until the next fiscal year could have been solved if the Civil Service Employees Association had stuck to the bargaining table instead of striking Easter weekend.

In Albany, a spokesman for Theodore Wenzl, president of the 140,000-member union, said the Rockefeller administration was

"guilty of extreme provocation and, in fact, responsible for the strike."

Wenzl and the seven other state officers of the union are scheduled to appear in Albany Supreme Court on Friday to show why they should not be held in contempt of the Taylor Law forbidding strikes by public employees.

Disturbed over the effects of the strike — the first since the union was formed 62 years ago — Rockefeller declared:

"The weekend strike of state employes was intolerable.

"Instead of illegally striking at midnight Friday when the contract expired, the union should have continued the negotiations, which had been reopened at their request, to modify the economic aspects of Thursday's agreement relating to the final payment date of the increased salary for '72-'73. This final payment had been postponed until the first two weeks of '73-'74 because of the state's current fiscal situation."

Sees "Hardship"

Rockefeller said the walkout, which involved about 14,000 workers who would have been on duty Saturday and Sunday, was responsible for "causing hardship and human suffering at state mental institutions, and threatening security at state prisons."

The state and union negotiators agreed on a 4% pay raise, effective with the next paycheck, and a 1% to 1.5% one-shot bonus for increased productivity to be paid in April 1973.

While the negotiators were still working on the final language of that contract, talks were resumed in Albany between the state and



Associated Press Wirephoto
Gov. Rockefeller as he called strike "intolerable."

Council 82 of the State County and Municipal Employees, representing 4,500 guards at state prisons. A strike by the guards, set for March 31, was postponed a week by the union leaders, who termed the civil service association's agreement "totally unacceptable" to their members.

Albany Leaders See More Service Cuts

Albany, April 3 (NEWS Bureau) — Legislative leaders warned today that the cost of settling the Civil Service Employees Association strike, estimated at \$60 million, "may mean further curtailment of state operations and local assistance."

Senate Majority Leader Earl Brydges and Assembly Speaker Perry Duryea said it would be up to the Legislature to decide whether to ratify the agreement and where to find the money to implement it.