

DEDICATION OF THE VETERANS' MEMORIAL HOSPITAL DIVISION OF THE KINGS PARK STATE HOSPITAL

The dedication of the new Veterans' Memorial Hospital which took place at Kings Park, September 24, 1927, constitutes one of the most important events in the history of the State hospital system. Governor Smith had planned to make the dedicatory address but illness prevented his attendance. He, however, sent a letter which was read by the chairman and appears as a part of the ceremonies given below. He also sent Major General William N. Haskell, commander of the New York National Guard, as his representative.

The ceremonies were held in the plaza in front of the large medical and surgical building, the heart of the new hospital, and were attended by about 2,000 persons including representatives of many organizations and distinguished guests.

Hon. Matthew J. Tobin, chairman of the Board of Visitors of the Kings Park State Hospital, presided.

PRAYER BY RABBI LOUIS D. GROSS

Lord God of all mankind Thy blessing we invoke, for Thine are the power and the glory and the love; the truth and the beauty, the might and the majesty. For Thine untold bounties we praise Thee with hearts overflowing with gratitude even as we thank Thee for the precious gift of this day dedicated unto Thee in behalf of the weak as well as the strong; in behalf of the noble souls, who struggled and strove and suffered that we might live and find happiness. Preside Thou Oh Father over this assembly that here the spirit of love and harmony and good will may prevail. May Thy blessing abide with us.

With all who are here from far and near to participate in this feast of dedication and by their presence to testify to their faith in the spiritual values of life, expressed through works of mercy and justice and fellowship, cause the lesson of this day to sink deeply into our hearts, make us to learn that our prayers and our pieties, our religions and our theologies are futile and of no avail in Thy sight if they be not translated into an exalted, helpful, healing blessedness.

Oh God bless the noble Governor of our great State through whose wise and benevolent efforts, through legislation, untold good has been achieved in behalf of humanity. Continue him in the gifts and powers with which Thou has endowed him as the great leader that he may yet go forward in strength and glory to newer and higher conquests.

Bless the words spoken here today. May the message brought to us fall

like seed on fertile soil whence shall spring the full blown flower of love and duty of service and devotion for the sake of Thy children, in behalf of a finer and a nobler, a stronger, a more vigorous, a more rejoicing humanity. Amen.

GUESTS WELCOMED BY CHAIRMAN TOBIN

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honored Guests and Members of the American Legion: The Kings Park Board of Visitors, the Superintendent and the Staff extend to you all a very cordial welcome and hope before the day is over that you will avail yourselves of the opportunity of visiting and inspecting our new buildings about to be dedicated. All of the points in connection with these beautiful buildings will be covered by the speakers who are about to follow.

I will confine myself strictly to the formal program, but before proceeding to the next speaker I have a letter of importance which I desire to read.

LETTER FROM GOVERNOR SMITH

Mr. M. J. Tobin, *Chairman*,
Dedication, Veterans' Memorial Hospital,
Kings Park, L. I.
Dear Mr. Chairman:

May I express my extreme regret that a slight bronchial attack prevents my coming to Long Island today.

I know of nothing that I would rather have done than dedicate the Veterans' Memorial Hospital. I was present, as you remember at the groundbreaking ceremony and turned the first spadeful of earth and it has all along been a project very dear to me.

The significance of this occasion is not only that we have built a splendid memorial to those veterans to whom we can never pay our debt of gratitude, but also that it is the final completion of the first of the great institutions that are being built out of the hospital bond issue voted by the people of the State of New York.

It further illustrates one of the arguments which I made for the passage of this bond issue, because this project was twice abandoned when it was to have been built from current revenue and could not possibly have been created without the hospital bond issue.

This building stands, therefore, as a monument both to the patriotism and devotion of our veterans and to the patriotism and good sense of the electorate of the State of New York.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) ALFRED E. SMITH.

ADDRESS BY GEORGE F. CANFIELD

President of State Charities Aid Association

It is a great satisfaction to me, as president of the State Charities Aid Association and as a member of the Citizens Committee, for the Protection of the State's Unfortunates, to take part in this ceremony of dedication of the Veterans' Memorial Hospital. It is an interesting and important occasion both on account of the accomplishment, which we have come together today to celebrate, and also on account of the way in which that accomplishment has been effected.

It is now nearly 40 years ago, to be exact 37 years ago, since the State of New York assumed the care of its dependent insane. It was a great responsibility and it was assumed not without some doubts and misgivings and some strenuous opposition and not without having to overcome opposition. A spirited campaign of advocacy and appeal was conducted by the State Charities Aid Association under the able leadership of a great woman, Miss Louisa Lee Schuyler. But whatever doubts may have existed as to the soundness of the policy of State care of the insane there has never been any doubt and there can be no doubt that it is the duty of the State, except of course as far as the Federal government assumes the responsibility, to care for the mentally afflicted among our ex-service men. Those who have offered their all, who have been willing to lay down their lives for their country and have suffered a mental breakdown from the strain and horrors of war deserve and must receive the loving care and attention of those who have benefited by their sacrifices.

In recognition of this duty the State in 1923 appropriated \$1,500,000 toward the cost of accommodations for the insane among our ex-service men. This sum was of course entirely inadequate and we should not be here today but we should have to confess that we had miserably failed in our duty towards these disabled veterans, if the State had not authorized the \$50,000,000 bond issue, to which the Governor refers in his letter, a part of which has been used for this institution.

Governor Smith, a sincere philanthropist, upon whom the social workers of the City of New York bestowed this year a medal for social service, a rare and unusual honor, long ago perceived that it would be impossible to care for the State's dependents, the State's unfortunates, out of current annual revenues. He perceived that the State care of the insane would be entirely inadequate care if only the current revenues were available for that purpose. For, in spite of a very excellent administration of our State hospital system and no administrative work of the State of New York has been better performed than that of the State Hospital Commission and the super-

intendents of our State hospitals. In spite of approved methods of treatment, in spite of the system of parole and after-care, the overcrowding of our hospitals has gone on from year to year and within recent years at an accelerated pace and to an alarming extent.

The Governor therefore proposed that the State should be authorized to issue \$50,000,000 of bonds, twelve and one-half million (\$12,500,000) to be sold in each of four successive years, to provide the necessary funds and, at his suggestion, the State Charities Aid Association appointed a committee of citizens, to which I refer and from which I have a memorandum to him asking him to bring the matter to the attention of the people and advocate its adoption. This work was so well done that in the year of 1923 the proposal was adopted by an unprecedented majority. And after the approval of the bond issue this same committee, at the suggestion of Governor Smith, cooperated with the public officials in formulating a program for expending the proceeds of these bonds and this work was so well done that all these proceeds were expended solely for the objects for which they were intended. There was no log rolling, no diversion of funds for partisan political purposes, no diversion of funds as I say, but the whole of the \$50,000,000 was expended or appropriated economically, a very notable and commendable achievement.

Out of the \$50,000,000 of the bond issue there has been allotted or appropriated, in two separate allotments for the Veterans' Hospital an aggregate amount of \$2,400,000, and Governor Smith, whose absence we all regret—I can't help thinking if he had been here he would be benefited by the glorious sunshine and air, by the presence of these people gathered here and by the completed buildings, evidence as to the soundness of the policy for the State care of the insane and of the bond issue making that policy effective. And these splendid buildings we may hope will stand long beyond the life of the bonds as excellent testimonies that republics are not always ungrateful, that they are not always unmindful of their duties and responsibilities and that with sympathetic, trustful cooperation between officials and private citizens large sums of money may be expended for legitimate public purposes honorably, conscientiously, economically and wisely.

Finally, if I may be permitted one more word, these buildings, this Memorial Hospital, should serve another useful purpose with its accumulation of human wreckage. It should be a constant reminder of the grim horrors of war and should stimulate us all, each according to his abilities and opportunities, to promote understanding and goodwill among the nations of the earth, the most essential foundation of world peace.

ADDRESS BY ALMON G. RASQUIN,

Department Judge Advocate of the American Legion

We regret exceedingly that the message of the American Legion today cannot be delivered to you by our State Commander but, as many of you know, he is now in France engaged upon another solemn duty, that of leading a number of our members upon their sacred pilgrimage to the graves of our departed comrades who made the supreme sacrifice and now lie buried over there. In his absence I shall endeavor to deliver the message as we have it.

Today is one of gratitude, pride and renewed pledge. We are exceedingly grateful for the invitation to participate in this ceremony. Whenever we are invited to attend a public function, which in itself proves conclusively that the glorious sacrifices of our former comrades in arms are fully recognized by our fellow citizens, we are indeed happy and anxious to respond and we are always glad of the opportunity to publicly express our praise in testimony of a worthy deed well done. By reason of our organization and the principles of its existence, by reason of our past association with those valient heroes to whose welfare this wonderful edifice is to be dedicated and because one of the foremost purposes of our organization obligates us to the care and rehabilitation of our disabled comrades, we are happy to be here today and consider that we are privileged to represent and speak for them on an occasion such as this.

The great war produced no problem more serious and difficult than the hospitalization and rehabilitation of its disabled veterans. Natural economic conditions and progress and private enterprises can eventually reconstruct the affairs of industries, commerce, government and all other similar elements of a national existence but the reconstruction of the human bodies and minds of such a vast number of beings as that war necessitated can be accomplished only by the government through efficient administration at the direction of its people. And while no less attention can be paid to other disabilities the greatest problem and obligation is the restoration of the mental faculties. Were all the unfortunates to be merely classed insane, without distinction as to degree, and were shelter from the elements and necessary food and sustenance its only problem the task would be simple but where science has established that mental ailments exist in a number of different ways and in a number of cases can be relieved and in a number of cases cured, a Christian nation, by its wealth and knowledge, is charged with the rehabilitation of its mentally disabled veterans, who fought its battles, to the extent of its resources.

Our Federal government has made wonderful progress in this work. Congress has faced the problem each year with a full realization of its respon-

sibilities. It has been our privilege to cooperate in this undertaking and our suggestions and even demands have been received with an attentive ear. But the problem is too large for Federal control alone. The requirements are too far-reaching. The mentally afflicted need the care and personal attention of relatives and friends as well as frequent governmental supervision. Their intimate personal welfare must be considered, their properties must be preserved, their estates must be administered and safeguarded from waste and this can be accomplished satisfactorily only in the vicinity of their homes, where the men have their relatives and friends, which will permit of that personal attention.

Our great State of New York was among the first to grasp this important feature. Under the wise and efficient administration of our present Chief Executive and his able departmental heads, our State has taken the lead in this wonderful service to humanity and today stands out as a shining example to the world in the cause of human welfare.

The American Legion has been permitted to cooperate in the progress of this undertaking. We have proudly watched the fulfillment of these obligations by our fellow citizens. We have with pride and deep appreciation observed the untiring efforts of our able Governor, than whom the disabled veteran has no better friend, and we exceedingly regret today the illness which prevents his dedicating in person this wonderful memorial in which he is so deeply interested.

I recall very vividly the great volume of applause which greeted Governor Smith at our convention a year ago when informing us of this project. He said, "Over a thousand young men, who returned from France, are scattered about in 12 or 13 hospitals. It is the desire of the State to bring them all under one roof where special care and special treatment can be accorded them and, if it is possible, to effect a cure so that the State may be able to be in a position to say at least that she did every human and possible thing she could to cure them." That trust was thus accepted by the people of this State and the American Legion is here today to testify on behalf of these disabled comrades, that this Empire State through its administrative agencies has kept solemn faith with them. Therefore my friends, representing 63,000 of your fellow citizens, legionnaires and veterans, comrades of those to whose service and welfare this glorious tribute is to be dedicated, it is a distinguished privilege and pleasure for us to publicly acknowledge and proclaim that as we are proud of our service, which gave us our organization, as we are proud of our comradeship with those heroes so are we proud of our fellow citizenship with you in this great sovereign State that has so nobly, ably and generously entered upon the fulfillment of its trust and obligation. As you have thus kept faith with them we reiterate to you a portion of our pledge, set forth in the preamble of our Legion constitution,

“To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, State and nation, to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy and to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

ADDRESS BY DR. FREDERICK W. PARSONS,
Commissioner of Mental Hygiene

On the record of fine deeds done by the State of New York will be written large the fact that a grateful Commonwealth built and equipped one of the finest and most complete hospitals of its kind. The State today dedicates it to its high purpose, that of caring for such of its citizens who responded to the Nation's call and now suffer. That the establishment of this hospital was a gratuitous act is to the State's greater credit for it might have said that its citizens, by entering the United States Army, were and are the wards of the Nation. This State of ours did not take that stand but gave liberally and this Veterans' Unit is the result. She built a hospital the like of which cannot be found and we stand at the portico of one of the buildings of that group today unveiling a tablet of commemoration.

As the spokesman of the Department of Mental Hygiene a solemn obligation is placed in my keeping. I am to make good the expressed wish of the State—to translate into service the will of the people and to give to the future patients of this unit, care of a standard never before attempted by the citizens of this State.

An unhappy situation prevents Governor Smith from voicing his sentiments in respect to what he conceives to be the duty of the State but those of us who know of his sympathies for the unfortunate realize his intentions concerning this structure and it remains for the department of Mental Hygiene to meet those views. That is the wish of a grateful people which intends that the resources of the State shall be devoted to the needs of the men and women who heard a call, answered and now pay a price. What I consider to be the wishes of the people is that the men and women who find refuge in these buildings receive all that a rich and powerful and likewise grateful State can bestow. The patients of this hospital deserve no less and that they shall have.

ADDRESS BY MONSIGNOR YORK,
Member of Board of Visitors, Kings Park State Hospital

Before uttering a dedicatory prayer I may be permitted to make a few remarks on the history of the hospital. I remember its establishment as an overflow from the old Kings County Insane Asylum on Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, in 1886. It was a county hospital, as all others throughout the State were at that time. Not until the early nineties did it become a State

hospital. And the one responsible for the State's taking over the county asylum was a noble woman, Miss Louise Lee Schuyler. She, single-handed and alone, aroused the interest of a small group of influential people to agitate for State control, and she won her cause. The old county system with its graft, cruelty and gross mismanagement passed forever. * * * *

Governor Smith has done the miraculous for the welfare of the insane. It was his inspiration and courage which put over the great bond issue of fifty millions of dollars a few years ago. He aroused the people from their lethargy and made them overlook the slight raise in State taxation which the issue would entail. We regret that sickness keeps him away today. We pray for him, "The Lord bless him and give him life and make him blessed on earth and deliver him not into the hands of his enemies."

Like the brilliant sun shining over us attracting our gaze, so the brilliant deeds of Governor Smith, attract friend and foe alike throughout the Nation. And people who once misunderstood him and misjudged him and were bigoted towards him now see that he is a real human whose big heart goes out in sympathy to every case of distress.

And now we offer these buildings to Almighty God and ask Him to bless them and all who are housed here and all who labor here. They were His from the beginning, the elements which enter into them, the stone, wood, cement, iron, all are the Lord's, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." All men had to do was to assemble these elements into dwellings under the guidance of our State Architect, Mr. Sullivan W. Jones.

May Christ send the spirit of healing, of mercy and of patience on all who will minister here to the afflicted. May no one entering here leave hope behind, but entering in one door may leave through the other, sane and sound.

The tablet was then unveiled by General William N. Haskell, Commander of the New York National Guard, acting as the representative of Governor Smith.

ADDRESS BY GENERAL HASKELL

I feel very proud and highly honored in speaking to you today at such a glorious ceremony. I am happy to be here and only regret that Governor Smith is unable to be present and join with you on the auspicious occasion of dedicating this Veterans' Memorial Hospital and see the fruit of his labors.

Naturally you are all disappointed that the Governor is not here in person today, but you may be sure that he is here in spirit. This public work is very near to his heart as are all those which look to the care of the unfortunate charges of this State.

I wish that you could know and see as I have seen from one end of the

State to the other, the accomplishments of this man that I represent here today. Everywhere in this State that we love so much, is evidence of his battle for better and adequate care for the poor, the sick, the weak, the defectives and the feeble-minded. How proud the citizens of New York should be of themselves for coming at last to the realization of their responsibilities in this respect. How proud they should be of the leadership that brought about and is bringing about in this State a proper regard for their own unfortunates.

I have recently been privileged to see many State institutions rising from the ground as mute but living testimonials of a consciousness awakened to a sense of responsibility.

Yes, money has been spent for these institutions, but we are richer in self-respect—and what more appropriate expenditure can be cited by any government than the decent care of its own people. That is a primary obligation of government.

We are a rich State—the richest State—should we not fulfill our moral obligations? Expenditures for adequate public institutions will never be seriously or successfully attacked. Where there is no wasted money, reasonable citizens will always approve intelligent vision and action, whether it be for new roads, prisons, hospitals, bridges, tunnels or for safety conditions for the public.

It takes vision to see and plan for the future, but courage of the highest order to carry such works to success. The people of this State need no longer hang their heads in shame when contemplating their own public institutions.

And here today is still another evidence of meeting our obligations.

I am especially interested in this particular institution because I have had the opportunity and the great honor to know intimately those courageous men from whom the inmates of this hospital will be drawn. Ladies and gentlemen, nothing could be too good for them. I saw them answer the call of their State and Nation, I saw the sadness of the disintegration of families, I received over 40,000 into Camp Upton not many miles from here; I saw them overseas, I saw them killed, wounded and mentally broken. No finer example of courage and sacrifice was ever given—no greater contribution of citizenship.

In a measure we are today trying to express the appreciation of a debt to those men that never could be paid.

As I look around, I wonder how long the people of this State would have waited if this most complete institution of its kind ever built should have depended and waited on current revenues. Probably beyond the lifetime of the generation which it was primarily designed to serve.

First proposed to the Legislature in 1920 by Governor Smith and then

authorized, the next administration dropped it only to have it revived and sponsored again by the Governor on his return to office.

Lack of appropriations then blocked action and finally the bond issue, authorized by an intelligent electorate conscious of their civic responsibilities, made possible the conclusion of this magnificent institution at a cost of nearly four million dollars—every dollar of which was honestly and wisely spent.

Here we can point with pride to a noble work, nobly and efficiently concluded.

This then marks the completion of the first great work from the hospital bond issue. It was started in 1923 and it is dedicated in 1927. That is the best answer yet given to the question "Bond issue or current revenues."

No intelligent person is misled into dreaming for a moment, that anything but the bond issue is responsible for this wonderful accomplishment. To divert a moment, I might add that the same lesson is being taught daily through the rapid progress of other most urgent public works now going forward under the one hundred million dollar bond issue.

I know that others besides Governor Smith have shared with him the glory of this accomplishment and if the Governor were here he would not fail to pay high tribute to the late Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, who unfortunately, was not permitted to live to see this work completed.

He, who was responsible to so great an extent in planning and carrying out the plan, must look down upon us here today with a great sense of satisfaction. We, who were in France, knew him well for his great service there and now all honor to his continued service to his beloved veterans here.

May I also express the appreciation of the Governor (representing all the people of this great State) to the "Citizens Committee for the Protection of the State's Unfortunates," as represented here today by Mr. George F. Canfield and which so ably assisted in passing the bond issue amendment.

Much credit is also due to the hospital authorities at Kings Park, the State Architect and other State officials concerned in the construction of these buildings as well as the eminent psychiatrists who so generously gave their time, advice and encouragement.

In conclusion, permit me on behalf of Governor Smith to dedicate this great institution to the service of the people of the State of New York in grateful acknowledgment of the heroic sacrifices made by our citizens in the great war.

BENEDICTION BY REV. HARTLEY J. HARTMAN,
Chaplain of the Nassau County American Legion

Almighty God, our loving heavenly Father and the Father of all mankind, we pray the benediction of Thy holy presence upon this institution here dedicated to this service for our suffering soldiers. May Thy presence,

abiding here in this institution, govern all the ministry of healing that Thou dost now commit into our care and especially into the hands of Thy servants, the physicians and nurses who here for us shall serve them. May that presence of the One who is known as the healing Master bring its grace of service to bear on the healing of the minds and the hearts of those who are here to be cared for and as long as time shall last, may this place be a perpetual memorial to the loving care which we have for one another in time of disaster and sorrow, particularly when they result from such noble service as those gave who pledged their last full measure of devotion that we might have life and liberty and happiness. Amen.

Following the benediction the flag was raised on the new flag pole. The new buildings were then inspected and a buffet lunch was served in the administration building.