

NEWS CONFERENCE

January 9, 1968

[The Governor made no opening statement.]

Questions and Answers

(Spring Grove Overcrowding)

Q. Governor, last night at Spring Grove State Hospital eight patients slept on mattresses on the floors due to overcrowded conditions. Dr. Tuerk is very distressed about it. All this comes on top of budget cuts which were necessary. Do you care to comment on this?

A. I think mental health probably got cut less than any other department in State government and the fact that people are not properly housed in the institutions is a matter that gives us a lot of concern and a matter which I directed a considerable amount of attention to during the campaign. This thing didn't spring about overnight, obviously, and we are attempting through our overall programming of the needs in this area to reduce the number of people who must be institutionalized. We have taken such steps as to provide increased ambulance service, for one thing. We are working in all areas where incarcerations either for crime or incarcerations because of some physical or mental disability are required to cut these things down. We will continue to work in this way. I don't feel that mental health has been singled out for any drastic cuts and the budget will show when it is released, as a matter of fact, that we have made every effort to meet the deficiencies that have so long been allowed to exist in this particular area.

(Proposed Alcoholic Beverage Taxes)

Q. Governor, have you made any attempt to call a conference with members of the alcoholic beverage industry?

A. Yes, we are working on that conference right now. I have had some discussions with Mr. Hoffberger — not as a representative of the brewing industry, but as an individual who is probably the best known person representing that industry in the area. I expect to make myself available to people from the wine and whiskey interests so that I can get their judgment too. The appointments are in the process of being arranged. They haven't been set.

Q. Have you taken any kind of a sounding at all as far as the people are concerned toward the tax?