

GOV. LONG ENTERS LOUISIANA CLINIC

Patient Declares He'll Fill Duties

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Gov. Earl K. Long of Louisiana flew back to his home state from a Texas mental clinic Wednesday night with firm intention of assuming his duties as governor, apparently from his bed in Ochsner Foundation Hospital.

Just before he took off from Galveston, Texas, Long nodded when a reporter asked him if he intended taking over the powers of his office once he returned to Louisiana.

"Yes, I will that," he said.

His statement heightened political tension around the state, where politicians have been treading lightly to avoid offending.

The 63-year-old governor stepped onto Louisiana soil just over two hours after Probate Judge Hugh Gibson freed him from confinement in the psychiatric clinic of John Sealy Hospital at Galveston.

Judge Gibson signed the freedom order at the request of Mrs. Long, who had signed the original commitment request.

The governor, walking as rapidly as he could, ducked into an elevator that immediately shot to the fifth floor of the Ochsner Clinic where he will be quartered. He carried a cane but didn't use it.

The Air National Guard plane that carried Gov. Long from Galveston touched down at New Orleans' Moisant Airport at 7:11 p.m. The Long party quickly jumped into a black sedan and drove down busy U.S. 61 toward Ochsner.

On the plane were Mrs. Long, the governor's secretary, Mrs. Wilma Lockhart, and Mrs. Margaret Dixon, managing editor of the Baton Rouge, La., Morning Advocate.

Mrs. Dixon said the trip from Galveston was uneventful. She said the governor lay down part of the way. For a time he chatted with his wife. During another period he enjoyed Cajun jokes told him by Dr. Martin O. Miller.

Other passengers were Dr. Roy W. Wright, a lifelong friend, and Dr. William H. Cook, both of Baton Rouge.

In Baton Rouge, acting Gov. Le-ther Frazar said Wednesday "as far as I am concerned, as soon as Gov. Earl Long crosses the state line into Louisiana he is governor."

Louisiana Attorney General Jack Gremillion said the lieutenant governor will continue to be Louisiana's acting governor "if Gov. Long is unable to act because of hospitalization."

When Frazar was questioned about this, he said he had no way of knowing that Long would not be able to act as governor.

"I would not presume (to continue as acting governor) while Long is in the state," Frazar said, "until I have been notified that the governor is unable to carry out the duties of his office."

Mrs. Long issued a brief statement in which she said Gov. Long had agreed to stay at Ochsner Foundation two weeks or longer.

"It took me all afternoon to arrange for his release," Mrs. Long's statement read. "He seemed anxious to enter Ochsner. He agreed to stay two weeks or longer, if necessary." The doctors who came to New Orleans with Gov. Long gave this picture of his health:

"His heart muscle needs a rest. He stood the trip very well but had a shortness of breath due to the acute virus he has had. The mental exhaustion from which he was suffering is much improved."

Principal need, they emphasized, is rest.

Added to the rigor of the trip were tensions in Galveston incident to his release.

At one time, as Long's three court-appointed attorneys wrangled with attorneys representing Mrs. Long, the governor made a half-hearted attempt to obtain other lawyers. He said he was afraid things were bogging down and he wanted to get to New Orleans.

Adrian S. Levy Sr., spokesman for Long's attorneys, said the hours of delay came over different versions of the court order to be submitted by signature of Judge Gibson.

"We refused," said Levy, "to sign their version because we considered it included improper provisions."

One such provision, he said, was a complete release for the Long family of all liability in the transport of the governor of Texas.

In search of complete rest the Long family asked Ochsner Foundation not to install a telephone near the governor. Dr. Allan Davis, hospital spokesman, said the wish was followed.



—Associated Press Wirephoto.

Mrs. Long helps governor to plane at Galveston.