

Donovan Sure Castro'll Free Captives Soon

By ARTHUR MULLIGAN

James R. Donovan, the lawyer who has been trying to gain the release of 1,113 prisoners captured by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro's forces in the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion, said yesterday he was still optimistic that they will be set free soon.

Donovan said final approval of the swap of prisoners for an estimated \$62 million worth of medicine, food and drugs, could be carried out within 10 days once official approval was granted by the governments of both countries.

The unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate said in his office, 161 William St., that once the deal was okayed, he would "go to Havana with a very substantial percentage of the total shipments and with certain assurances with respect to completion of the transaction."

He'd Bring Them Back

"And then I would leave Havana with all of the prisoners," he added firmly.

It was indicated that the Cuban Families Committee, of which Donovan is general counsel, intended to airlift the prisoners, if and when.

With Donovan at the conference was committee chairman Alvaro Sanchez Jr., who returned Monday from a visit to Cuba in which he saw 32 prisoners, including his son, Eduardo, 19.

Sanchez had arranged to meet with 16 of 900 prisoners in a Havana jail and 16 of the other 213 held on the Isle of Pines. He said their morale was high but added: "Whatever the Free World is going to do to free these poor boys has to be done in a hurry."

In Weak Condition

He said the men on the Isle of Pines were in very poor physical condition and that some had received injections to revive them after they fainted.

He said the Havana prisoners were in better shape.

Sanchez said his meetings with the prisoners were formal at first, under the eyes of guards, but that when he was leaving many of the men embraced him and handed him notes for their relatives in the U.S.