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HALLORAN BUILDINGS ALL IN USE BY SCHOOL

Willowbrook Census Rises to 2,840; Jobs Available, Says Chief

The last of the former Halloran VA Hospital buildings returned to the State of New York last April was in use by the Willowbrook State School today as the patient census of the institution rose to 2,840.

Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of Willowbrook, said it is "highly probable" that the school operated by the state Department of Mental Hygiene for the mentally retarded, will reach capacity operation—which permits a total patient load of 3,194—this fall.

Dr. Berman said that Willowbrook's huge Building 2, focal building of the once-huge Halloran Hospital, is now in full operation as a hospital for the school. There are 287 patients in the building which handle up to 300, he said.

Main Halloran Building

This building was the main medical treatment plant of Halloran, and served through World War II and in the years afterward as a medical and surgical treatment plant for thousands of soldiers and veterans.

The current patient census at Willowbrook reflects an increase in the patient load of 540 since the official closedown of Halloran last April under an agreement reached between New York State and the federal government which had leased the facility from the state.

Dr. Berman said a total of 750 persons, many of them Islanders, are currently employed in various capacities at the institution, and that hiring will go on until 909 persons, which is Willowbrook's allowance, are working there.

Capacity Operation

State School is evidence that state mental hygiene officials weren't kidding when they said they simply had to have all the Halloran VA Hospital facilities.

There are now 2,840 patients at the institution, only 300 short of capacity. By fall, it is expected that the capacity will have been reached and every part of the former Halloran facility will be in use.

Well over a hundred patients a month have been accepted by the state since the VA was forced to leave with the expiration of its lease.

There are other evidences of the scope of the new Willowbrook activity. Jobs are open in certain categories. Many Islanders are volunteering their services, much in the same way they did when the soldiers and later the veterans were in the area. The school program is being developed to what is termed "a high degree," with such projects as a marching band.

The state school may not have the public popularity Halloran enjoyed during its Army and VA years, but it is apparently out to do a fine job.

Jobs Open

The school director said jobs for male attendants, nurses, physiotherapists and women recreation instructors are presently open at Willowbrook.

"Every building," he said, "which is part of the Willowbrook school is now in use, with the exception of one which is being redecorated."

Dr. Berman said the school program at Willowbrook has been "developed to a high degree." Among the most recent accomplishment, he said, is the organizing of a marching band at the school.

This band, which features all types of brass instruments, will be used in the future to provide music at "special events."