

# Drawing Boards Delay State School Buildings

Willowbrook State School's new \$800,000 infirmary-dormitory building, first to be built under a long-stalled \$7,000,000 expansion program, is only 35 per cent complete and will not be ready for occupancy until July, next year, it was learned today.

And the question of when the remaining five buildings will be constructed remains as unanswered as it was more than three years ago when the state Department of Mental Hygiene, which operates Willowbrook, first announced the big expansion program.

Still holding up a go-ahead signal from state public works authorities was the shuffling of papers between Albany officials and the school's authorities. Other studies and reviews being made by the department in the state capitol.

Specifications now being drawn are to be geared to the needs of mentally retarded children raised at the school. The needs cited by psychiatrists at Willowbrook and in Albany, and then are interpreted by state housing officials and worked into blueprints.

**THE RESULT**, according to Dr. Harold Berman, director of Willowbrook, eventually will be erection of the most modern infirmary-dormitory type structures of their kind.

But the building now in construction does not come under

this advanced planning. It is being erected—with minor modifications — along the same lines as buildings of this type already in existence at the school.

The building was put into construction when it became apparent a year ago that there would be a much longer delay of the drawing boards than at first had been anticipated. And it was intended to relieve immediate pressures facing the facility.

Not the least of these pressures is the current Willowbrook enrollment of more than 4,300, highest in the history of the school. Added to this are the number of children now on lists awaiting placement in schools for the mentally retarded.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

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## Director Calls Willowbrook Hospital as Well as School

A "renewed and vigorous expression of confidence and support" for New York State's schools for the mentally retarded was called for Saturday by Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of Willowbrook State School, in an address before the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children in Manhattan's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

The event opened the society's new fund drive for the benefit of Willowbrook's children and to finance research in the field of mental retardation.

Principal speaker at the annual luncheon session, Dr. Berman lashed out at those who, following a probe of charges directed against the Island school last May, "disregarded" the favorable report given the institution, he said.

"They disregarded," said Dr. Berman, "the fact that there was a complete and thorough investigation of Willowbrook, that responsible people were given free access to all parts of the institution, that these people came to investigate

serious charges and went away singing the praises of the institution."

Even so, he declared, Willowbrook is "not averse to examination and criticism."

**DR. BERMAN**, who is considered one of the nation's leading authorities on the care and treatment of the retarded, described expanding research at Willowbrook into the causes and treatment of mental retardation and mental disturbances.

These projects, he said, extend into the field of nutrition, disease, drugs, and electro-stimulation, with several such projects having their beginnings at Willowbrook.

Among these, he said, is the use of metrazol, previously as-

sociated with the treatment of brain conditions in old age, in the treatment of mentally deficient children. The project is being pursued under a grant from the Research Foundation of Mental Hygiene, a corporation within the state Department of Mental Hygiene.

Because of such projects, it should be clear, Berman said, that Willowbrook is "more than a state school."

"I should like to see the name changed to Willowbrook State Hospital and School, thus giving a clearer definition as to its function and operation," he said.

Entertaining at the event was the 60-piece Willowbrook State School band, made up of children at the institution, under direction of Vincent Lombardi, music director.