

# Willowbrook Authorized 10% Increase in Ward Help

By ERWIN ENDRESS

State authorization for long-term expansion in the Willowbrook State School was announced today by former Municipal Court Judge C. Ernest Smith, chairman of the institution's board of visitors. The boost will add to Willowbrook's status as Staten Island's largest employer.

Already the largest center for the care and treatment of the mentally retarded in the nation, Willowbrook is allowed a 10 per cent increase in its ward employee rolls through an allowance for 128 new attendant positions, effective Thursday.

Smith said the increase comes after "long effort" by the board of visitors and Willowbrook officials for the boost. He termed the change as "a great step forward in the care of children. There are 6,000 patients on Willowbrook's rolls.

The board chairman said the boost came after he and other members of the board prevailed on Commissioner Hoch (Paul H.) Hoch, and Dr. George M. Kessler, of the Department of Mental Hygiene, to bring about this improvement.

THE number of Willowbrook's employees will exceed 2,000—going to 2,008—by the first time as a result of the change. It will increase Willowbrook's

payroll—already \$2 million a year—by nearly a half million dollars at the outset.

The overall increase, according to Dr. Harold Berman, Willowbrook's director, will be \$150,000 the first year, and ultimately will rise to more than \$500,000 as a result of the new job allowances. Attendants will start at \$3,400 a year.

The hike in the number of attendants will increase those employed in that capacity on the payroll by 1,060 to 1,188. Also on the payroll are 63 attendants in supervisory grades, 25 practical nurses and 55 registered nurses.

INDICATIVE of the need for registered nurses at Willowbrook is the fact that those now on the staff comprise only about a third of the 163 registered nurse positions allowed for at the school by the state Mental Hygiene Department.

Dr. Berman said a letter from Commissioner Hoch yesterday indicated also a further increase in the number of dining room employees at the Island institution.

"Final details on the dining room increase have not yet been worked out," Dr. Hoch told Berman.

gram which Willowbrook operates in conjunction with Richmond Memorial Hospital.

DR. BERMAN said practical nurse positions are opened by changing job titles from attendant to a commensurate increase in pay.

He explained that this, in turn, does not in itself increase the need for attendants since some work normally done by attendants is now done by nurses.

"YEAR AFTER YEAR," he said, "these requests have been cut out of the budget."

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of visitors and Dr. Berman brought about the improvement.

The efforts included a trip to Albany to discuss the problem with state authorities.

Other members of the board of visitors, who are appointed by the governor, are Mrs. Edna West-Jones, Mrs. M. Brybrooks, Mrs. Jerome O. Ellis, Samuel A. Murphy, and James J. Murphy.

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