

Investigation Continues In Retarded Boy's Death

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook State School, denied today that any attempt was made to "hush up" the death of a 10-year-old retarded child who died at the institution as a result of burns suffered in a scalding shower.

Severley - retarded John K. Taylor, one of five children of a Nyack, N.Y., minister and his wife, died early Friday with 80 per cent of his body covered with burns.

Dr. Hammond said an investigation that went on into early yesterday was made to determine the circumstances of the death.

The probe was to determine in whose care the youngster was when he was scalded severely Thursday in a stall shower and why the matter wasn't immediately reported to hospital authorities.

He said that 18-year-old Miss Dorothy Bryson of 89 Tompkins St., Stapleton, was the attendant.

* * *

DISTRICT ATTORNEY John M. Braisted Jr. said no criminal action was contemplated against her, although the facts regarding the accident will be presented to a grand jury.

Braisted said yesterday that he is also investigating the fatal scalding of another patient, Herbert Harber, 42, in a shower at the state institution last Feb. 7.

"We never knew anything about it," the district attorney

said. "It was never reported to our office."

Dr. Hammond said Miss Bryson has already been suspended without pay. He denied that no disciplinary action will be taken, indicating that "formal charges" will be brought against her under Civil Service procedures.

He said the child's burn's were discovered about two hours after the scalding when the child, who he described as a "head thumper," was treated for cuts on his forehead. The child, who was undersized, weight only 40 pounds and could not talk or feed himself.

Taken to the facility's hospital, the child received all the care possible but died at 4 a.m. the next morning. His family was notified at once, Dr. Hammond said, as was the medical examiner's office, which was informed at once of the child's death and the apparent circumstances.

"This," he went on, "is the extent of our legal responsibility. The matter was brought to the attention of police shortly after 1 p.m. Friday.

Dr. Hammond said that "suddenly and unpredictably" scalding hot water would come from the showers in the institution. The problem is complex and a million-dollar contract was let just last week to renovate the water pipes and

valves to rectify the condition.

Dr. Hammond said that the child's father, Rev. John Taylor, had talked with him and "realized it was a tragic accident."

* * *

QUESTIONED later, Miss Bryson said she had begun to feed the Taylor boy about 4:15 Thursday afternoon. "It was the first time I had seen him all day. I came on duty at 3:30 and was with the other children I have to watch. I was taking temperatures.

"While I was feeding him I noticed peeling from his heels, like a sunburn. I called Mrs. Smith, (Mrs. Esther Smith) the attendant in charge. Mrs. Smith looked at the boy and then asked for the treatment card to see what had been prescribed for the peeling. There was no treatment card. Mrs. Smith told me to put oil on his legs. I went to complete other duties.

At this time, according to Miss Bryson, there was no cut on the boy's head. About 20 minutes later, she said, she heard "a commotion in the boy's room and went back to see what was wrong. I found him bleeding from a laceration."

"I called Mrs. Smith again," Miss Bryson continued, "and she called the registered nurse, Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Ford examined the boy and took off his clothes which had blood on them and saw the scald marks."