

Editorials

Unenviable Task

"All their food must be ground so they won't choke."

"They" are 76 patients in a building at Willowbrook State School, "patients . . . among the most retarded, most disturbed, strongest and as dangerous as any patients in any institution."

One of the patients in this building was killed recently, presumably by the act of another patient.

Heart-rending as the story of the death is, the day-by-day life at Willowbrook is just as depressing, just as frustrating and just as soul-searching.

These persons are almost beyond help but civilization does what it can.



AT WILLOWBROOK there are 76 in this ward, in space designed for 38.

This is not the fault of the school authorities. It is a fact of life that society always lags in helping its more unfortunate members.

And even if the physical plant is adequate, there is always the job of staffing. The state recently made provision for 200 more employes but the jobs are not filled.

Here again there is little the officials can do. The work is hard, it is nerve-wracking and depressing and the rewards are little. The applicants for such jobs are few and far between.



THIS IS NOT meant as an apology for Willowbrook. It needs no apology. Its work in taking care of the mental patient has won much praise.

But Staten Island should give pause once in a while to consider just how hard the task of Willowbrook can be and the problems that must be met in caring for some of the world's most unfortunates.