

Death Probe Jury Hears Ex-Willowbrook Boss

Dr. Harold H. Berman, former director of Willowbrook State School, testified yesterday before the holdover grand jury probing into the deaths this year of three mentally retarded residents of the Staten Island institution.

Dr. Berman was the only witness and remained closeted with the grand jury for more than an hour.

Dr. Berman served as the institution's director from

1949 to 1964, when he was succeeded by Dr. Jack Hammond. Dr. Hammond is scheduled to appear before the grand jury in the near future.

Dr. Berman reportedly shared the widely expressed view that most of the school's problems could be traced to a scarcity of funds.

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THE SCHOOL was unable to hire sufficient personnel to provide proper supervision, and many of the employes were in-

experienced and inadequate, it is claimed. The situation was said to be a result of the lack of funds, in addition to comparatively low wages offered.

Willowbrook and other state institutions for the mentally retarded have been criticized in recent weeks by U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and other persons and organizations.

The grand jury has heard evidence linking conditions at Willowbrook with the deaths of the three patients, including two children.

One child died of burns suffered as a result of being scalded while showering, and another died of strangulation when an improper restraining device became entwined around her neck. The third resident, an adult, also died of burns from being scalded.

The grand jury will meet again Oct. 13.