

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1965

Grand Jury Reports on Willowbrook

A Staten Island grand jury yesterday returned a six-page report on its six-month investigation into conditions at Willowbrook State School.

Supreme Court Justice James C. Crane, however, withheld his decision on whether to accept the report—and to make it public — until he has examined it to see that it complies with the law.

He also said he was withholding his decision until he has read the minutes of the grand jury, on which the report is based.

The report was handed up by Louis Matthes, foreman of the grand jury which has been held over from the June term to hear evidence in connection with the Willowbrook investigation and an investigation of a possible Building Department shakedown racket.

Submission of the report concluded the Willowbrook investigation.

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AT THE REQUEST of District Attorney John M. Braisted Jr., Crane recessed the grand jury until Feb. 2, when it will continue the Building Department investigation. The present term of the grand jury is due to expire next April 15.

Twenty members of the grand jury voted on the report before it was submitted to Crane. The report had been prepared by a steering committee composed of members of the grand jury.

The report was eagerly awaited in view of a wave of criticism directed at Willowbrook and other state schools for the mentally retarded.

Among the critics was U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who last September charged that some patients at Willowbrook and another state school were worse off than animals in a zoo.

The senator's criticism has resulted in a continuing verbal battle between himself and Gov. Rockefeller.

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THE GRAND JURY had investigated conditions at Willowbrook in connection with the death of three residents earlier this year. Two of the residents died as a result of being scalded while showering. The third died as a result of being assaulted by another patient.

The grand jury's investigation, it is known, has led it to look into such questions as overcrowding, understaffing and a run-down plumbing system.

There was no indication when Crane would announce his decision.

MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 1966

Willowbrook Runs Buses For Employes

By JOHN O'CONNOR

Willowbrook State School inaugurated its own private bus service today, shuttling employes to and from the school between the St. George ferry terminal and a pickup station in West Brighton.

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of the school, says the temporary service is primarily for employes, but visitors are being accommodated on a space-available basis.

School-owned buses will continue to operate on a regular schedule during the transit strike, making four round trips between the school and the terminal, and also a pickup point at Forest Ave. and Clove Rd., West Brighton.

Employes are being picked up and discharged at city bus stops along the following routes.

No. 1: Terminal via Bay St. and Victory Blvd. to the school.

No. 2: Terminal via Richmond Terr., South Ave., Forest Ave. and Willowbrook Rd. to the school.

No. 3: Forest Ave.-Clove Rd. pickup point via Forest Ave., Jewett Ave. and Victory Blvd. to the school.

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BUSES WILL depart for the school at the following times from both points: 6:45 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 2:15 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Return trips will be at 7:45 a.m., 3:45 p.m., 7 p.m. and midnight.

To lessen commuting problems, Hammond says, some employes have remained at the school, and have volunteered to work double shifts.