

Clinic Testing At Willowbrook Hotly Denied

By GAEL HUMMEL

Willowbrook State School's director, Dr. Jack Hammond, today angrily denied a state legislator's accusation that "in the late 1950s" injections of hepatitis virus for clinical research were "given every child (there) between 3 and 9 years old."

Sen. Seymour Thaler, Queens Democrat, made the charge before the Senate yesterday, adding that more than 500 children were used in the experiments.

"I don't believe that 500 parents gave their consent," Thaler shouted, after saying officials had reported parental approval was given.

"Our records containing the parents signed consent are always available to any state investigator or legislative committee," Dr. Hammond said. "No investigator from the state has yet asked to see them."

Dr. Hammond said that "carefully controlled" research and experiments have been under way at the school since 1954. He added that hundreds of institutions throughout the country are conducting similar work.

"There may well be 500 children who have participated in the experiments over the last 12 years," Hammond said. "But the parents of each child, without exception, have given us

their written consent.

"Sen. Thaler's charges make me ill — they raise my blood pressure. Does he take us for irresponsible idiots? We would never enter into any research without the expressed consent of the parents of these children."

In answer to Thaler's accusation that hospitals are using charity patients "as guinea pigs," Dr. Hammond said:

"We have no idea here which patients are paying for state care—or how much they are paying—or which are here at the expense of the state.

"My department — the New York State Department of Mental Health —

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