

Willowbrook employes prepare Albany protest

About 40 provisional employes of Willowbrook State School decided yesterday to fight demotions and dismissals ordered by the state Mental Hygiene Department because employes failed a civil service examination given last June.

At a lunchtime meeting at the Idle Hour, a Willowbrook restaurant, the workers scheduled a trip to Albany to protest the action.

The departments hardest hit by the state's decision are occupational therapy, where some workers have unofficially held trainee positions for as many as 13 years.

A spokesman for the group claimed that the 60 who failed the examination were not given proper preparation for the test and are being laid off to make room for better educated, but not better qualified personnel.

STAGED SIT-IN

According to members of the delegation who will travel to Albany, four provisional employes were dismissed (after only two days notice) but reinstated on a day-to-day basis when a number of their co-workers staged sit-in demonstrations on their behalf in various offices of the school.

By placing provisionals who have experience back on the wards as aides, some workers feel the institution is jeopardizing the welfare of the children with whom the provisional employes have become familiar over the years.

Workers claim that "when one would come to work at Willowbrook because of the low pay and the poor conditions, the provisionals were good enough," but that "when the pay goes up and the conditions are a little better people who've been there all along get bounced to make room for newcomers who passed a test."