

Willowbrook director fears state budget cuts

The State Assembly Ways and Means Committee has proposed a \$49.6 million cut in next year's budget of the State Department of Mental Hygiene.

Institutions for the mentally retarded which are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Mental Hygiene would have their funding reduced by \$15 million, according to Dr. Jack Hammond, Willowbrook State School director.

"If that should come to pass, all mental retardation programs in the future, both the institutions and community programs, will suffer very severely," the director stated.

HOLDING THE LINE

The \$26 million budget slated for the fiscal year 1971-72 at Willowbrook has increased in amount but due to inflation is "merely holding the line" maintained when a state job hiring freeze was set by Gov. Rockefeller last Dec. 7, Dr. Hammond said.

News of the proposed cut, with itemized budgetary breakdown, was received from Mental Hygiene Commissioner Dr. Alan D. Miller. He released the information to all state assemblymen with an appeal to stop the appropriation reduction.

TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES

Dr. Miller in his letter to the legislators, charged that tragic consequences would result from the reduction. Of the 6,000 employees Dr. Miller said would have to be laid off, Dr. Hammond said 1,300 would be from institutions for the

mentally retarded. The work at Willowbrook, the world's largest mental retardation center, would be seriously hampered, he said.

The Willowbrook School of Practical Nursing, now in its 10th year, and 17 other schools of nursing throughout the state would be eliminated by the budget cut.

Among other items to be reduced are food, overtime, and various programs for the education and advancement of employes, including the elimination of the high school equivalency program

a chance of achieving a level of education they could not have had without the state supported program.

AWARDS FOR CADETS

The staff of the Fourth Battalion, Sea Cadets, meeting last night in the home of Mrs. William Humphries, 16 Hamlin Pl., Westerleigh, completed plans for an open house and awards night tomorrow at 7 in PS 19, West Brighton. The 11th Battalion will conduct a drill at the event under the direction of Patrick Rowan.