

# Willowbrook staff down 300

Willowbrook State School has lost nearly 300 employes since the overall freeze in state hiring practices went into effect nine months ago, according to Dr. Jack Hammond, director of the school.

Losing employes through attrition at the rate of 10 every week, the school has been unable to hire replacements for the 292 positions vacated since the freeze began Dec. 7. The losses include physicians, nurses, attendants and teachers.

As the budget permits, ac-

ording to Dr. Hammond, efforts will be made to get the freeze lifted in certain areas. "The Department of Mental Hygiene is trying to get the freeze lifted for teachers," he said. "In the meantime, our ability to render service to patients is becoming more and more impaired."

Federal aid has been granted to other state schools such as the Suffolk State School in Melville, for the hiring of personnel. But, "aid is granted on the basis of unemployment

rates in the individual counties," said Dr. Hammond. "Richmond's rate of unemployment is apparently not enough to warrant aid."

"The reality of the situation, however," Hammond said, "is that the school's dilemma is really not so critical as it was in 1964, when I first became director. In 1964 we had 1,900 employes and 6,400 patients. Now, even with losses, we have 1,000 more employes than we had and 1,200 fewer patients."

"With these facts to consider,

I don't think I can scream about the fact that there is less money available," Dr. Hammond said. "State schools such as Willowbrook have never had the kind of staffing needed and are always short-staffed in some way, but the situation is still better than it was."

In April, as a result of the budget cutbacks, the school's neuro-endocrine research unit was forced to close.