

Editorial

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, Friday, December 31, 1971

The thaw must be much greater

The state Department of Mental Hygiene hasn't really "eased" the job freeze at Willowbrook State School. All it has done is to announce that it won't let the number of employes go below the present staff — 912 persons short of what would be required to provide proper and adequate care for the institution's retarded residents.

The fact that in a little over a year since the freeze was instituted late in 1970, 633 employes have left their posts indicates how sub-standard both working conditions and patient care have become.

It isn't just enough to say that from now on everyone will be replaced when he leaves. After all, it takes months to train an inexperienced replacement, so the care will continue to go downhill unless the staff is increased and employe morale is rebuilt.

The answer still lies in the lap of the Legislature. It must loosen the purse strings, the department can't.