

Willowbrook's Firing of Two Aides Stirs Stein

By **BARBARA YUNCKER**

A doctor and a social worker have been fired at Willowbrook State School for working with patients' parents and for talking to reporters, Assemblyman Andrew Stein (D-Man.) charged today.

He demanded their reinstatement pending an inquiry and called for state and federal investigations of the Staten Island institution for the mentally retarded.

However, State Mental Hygiene Commissioner Alan D. Miller, who is in town today parents, told The Post the two employes would be offered comparable positions in other institutions of the department, if they were willing to accept them.

Dr. Michael Wilkins and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, both provisional employes, were notified last Wednesday afternoon by hospital director Dr. services were terminated at the end of that work day.

"Dr. Hammond has found them personally incompatible, and civil service law gives the director the right to refuse tenure" said Assistant Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Harold Wolfe.

"There is no question about their competence or professional performance," Wolfe said, adding: "But Dr. Hammond cannot work with them and the controversy is using up professional time, which is a waste of resources we cannot afford."

Wilkins and Mrs. Lee told Stein they were ousted because of Willowbrook problems with a Staten Island newspaper, and because they had been meeting with the Parents Benevolent Assn., which has been fighting for better staffing at the school.

It is this group which will meet with Miller today. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee said they were ordered in writing by Hammond not to meet with parents' groups, either during duty hours or on their own time.

However, Wolfe said such directives are meant only to require that the director approve of group meetings on the premises "because we make the director responsible for everything that goes on in this institution."

Cites Job Freeze

Stein has written to Assembly Health Committee chairman Martin Ginsberg (R-Nassau) asking for an investigation. He also is seeking a probe by the Children's Bureau of the federal Dept. of Health Education and Welfare.

Stein said his office had protested the dismissals to Hammond, citing the state's job freeze which could leave the two jobs vacant although short of personnel.

He said Hammond had replied; "They are troublemakers. I would rather have nobody than someone who puts out propaganda to the press."

Wolfe said the job freeze had been lifted for nurses and attendants at Willowbrook, and added that the department expected to be able to fill the two posts involved in this controversy, as well.

Stein also has an affidavit from a patient handicapped with cerebri palsy, alleging that when he inquired about Wilkins, who had taken a special interest in him, he was quizzed as to the doctor's personal and sex habits.

The patient's affidavit also charges that when he objected to the questions, he was told he could be "locked up where no one would see him, and he would see no one."

Threat Denied

This alleged threat is flatly denied by the physician involved, Miller told The Post. He said the school's Human Rights Committee, made up of patients and staff representatives, had investigated and found no substance to this allegation.

Legal Aid Society attorney Robert Feldt, who is reprobated officials of interrogating social workers at the school about "their loyalty to the school and about their contacts with patients' parents and the press."

He charged that hospital officials had required them to answer questions under oath. Departmental policy officially assures Mental Hygiene employes and patients free access to the press, except as spokesmen for official policy.