

Employees Of School Hit Critics

Many of the employes at Willowbrook State School feel that they have been the victims of the recent uproar over conditions at the institution for the mentally retarded.

After years of doing the best jobs they thought possible for the thousands of children and adults at the Staten Island Center, many employes say, they now get nothing but a mass of criticism from both the public and patients' relatives and parents.

The aides and nurses who care for the children are particularly bitter about pressure from parents.

"If these parents are really concerned, why don't they spend their time here?", asked one aide.

"They leave their children here for us to care for them, and often never show any interest until the child dies", said another.

The employes are also upset over the television and

newspaper coverage recently focused on Willowbrook, which they believed showed a few sordid scenes without paying any attention to what they see as the institution's many positive programs.

Two Dismissed

Much of the anger felt by a number of the employes has focused on two doctors, Michael Wilkins and William Bronston, and a social worker, Mrs. Elizabeth Lee.

It was primarily the efforts of these three that gained the attention from the press and brought the pressure from parents to bear on Willowbrook.

On Jan. 4, Dr. Jack Hammond, Director of Willowbrook, fired Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee as "troublemakers." They have appealed their dismissal to the state Dept. of Mental Hygiene.

Yesterday, over 1000 Willowbrook employes gathered in the institution's main auditorium, most of them loudly applauding speakers who demanded that Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee not be rehired and that Dr. Bronston be fired as well.

However, when Dr. Hammond addressed the gathering, he would only say that negotiations on their status were continuing and urged all employes to continue to perform their own jobs.