

# Willowbrook 2 lose job fight

By JANE KURTIN

After nearly a month of indecision, the New York State Department of Hygiene announced yesterday that Dr. Michael Wilkins and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee would not be reinstated to their positions at Willowbrook State School.

Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee, a social worker, were fired Jan. 5 by Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook, for their part in organizing parent groups and publicizing conditions at the institution.

The announcement yesterday, from Dr. Alan D. Miller, commissioner of the department, explained that the rehiring of

the employes would create major disruptions in the state facility.

"After six days of intensive discussion," the statement from the commissioner's office said. "Dr. Alan D. Miller announced that in the best interests of maintaining patient care and employe morale, two dismissed provisional employes would not be reemployed at Willowbrook State School."

The release noted that Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee were strongly supported by the Benevolent Society's Willowbrook Chapter and that this support led the department to suggest a reconciliation between Dr. Hammond and the em-

ployes, intended to lead to their reemployment.

"The efforts at reconciliation included day and night meetings with the two dismissed employes or their representatives, with groups of school employes, with officers of the Benevolent Society, with union representatives, with the director and other staff."

"According to the commissioner," the release continued, "as the discussion went on it became evident that the reemployment of Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee at Willowbrook was opposed by a vast majority of the school's 2,800 employes and that their presence at the facility would lead to a serious disruption of care and treatment programs which the department could not permit."

A spokesman for the Department of Mental Hygiene said that Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee have received letters describing the events of the past six days that led to the decision not to rehire them at Willowbrook. The commissioner has offered to discuss with each of them the possibility of employment elsewhere in the department.

The Federation of Parents Organizations for the New York State Mental Institutions said it plans to retaliate for the department's "failure to honor an agreement" concerning the

rehiring of Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee.

"The Department of Mental Hygiene," said Max Schneier, president of the federation, "is not honoring an agreement that it entered into with the Benevolent Society at a meeting of seven hours at which the department was represented by the commissioner himself.

"The feelings of the 'vast majority of employes' at Willowbrook is actually the feeling of a dissident group of 200 workers out of a total of 2,700 at the institution," Schneier continued.

"Because of threats of violence by these workers, which were reported in the press, representatives of the Department of Mental Hygiene have abdicated their responsibilities and powers to these dissidents, who last Friday took illegal action and used state property for their own convenience."

He referred to a delegation of employes at Willowbrook that took three state buses and drove to Albany for a confrontation with Miller.

"We are demanding the dismissal of each of the 200 employes who participated in the demonstration last week," Schneier said, "as well as the dismissal by the governor of Dr. Miller, Dr. Frederic Grunberg, deputy commissioner of the department and Harold Wolfe, assistant to the commissioner."