

## Willowbrook 'Deal': A See-Sawing Row

By FRANK McKEOWN

Councilman Frank Biondolillo, chairman of hearings on conditions at Willowbrook State School, has charged "a deal" has been made by the state with two dismissed employes to reinstate them and oust the school's director, Dr. Jack Hammond, "within six weeks."

Biondolillo said the deal was agreed upon at a 4-hour meeting last Monday between State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Alan D. Miller and representatives of Dr. Michael Wilkins and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee.

Dr. Wilkins and Mrs. Lee, who had no tenure in their civil service posts at the state school, were released by Hammond last month assertedly because of personality differences.

The hearings presided over by Biondolillo are being conducted by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

### Expose Called Cause

Members of the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children at Willowbrook contend the dismissals were for exposing to the parents and press the intolerable conditions at the overcrowded and understaffed facility.

Dr. Frederic Grunberg, state deputy commissioner for men-

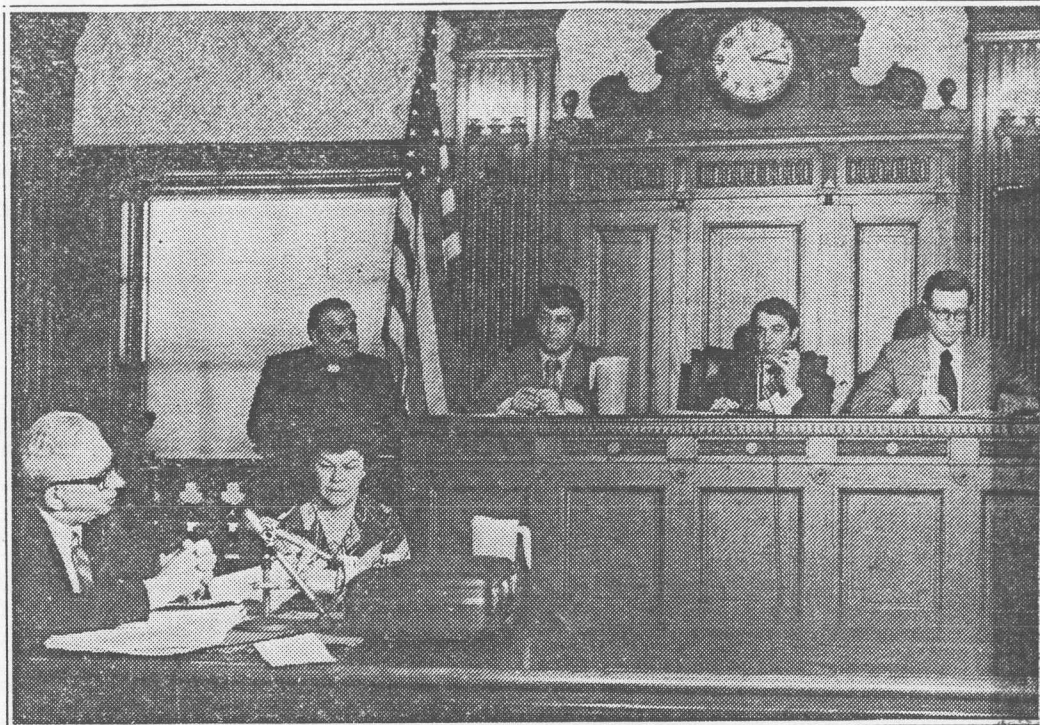
### A Pledge Of Help

Rep. Mario Biaggi (D/C-N.Y.) said Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Elliot Richardson has pledged "the full resources of the Department in efforts to alleviate the problems" at New York State's mental health facilities.

Biaggi, who conducted his own investigation last month of several of the state's mental health institutions, including Letchworth and Willowbrook mental retardation facilities, revealed that the federal inquiry will take place Feb. 28 and 29.

tal retardation, denied "categorically" the Biondolillo allegations of an agreement with Wilkins and Lee.

In fact, he said, letters were sent out Thursday informing the doctor and Mrs. Lee, a social worker at the school, that



NEWS photo by Jim Romano

Dr. Jack Hammond (left) as he testified at Society for Prevention to Cruelty of Children hearings.

they would not be reinstated at the Staten Island facility.

Signed by Commissioner

Dr. Alan D. Miller, state commissioner of mental hygiene, signed the letters, which said that after six days of intensive discussion he felt that "in the best interest of maintaining the two dismissed provisional tent care and employe morale" employes would not be reemployed at the island school.

Informed of Grunberg's categorical denial and Miller's letters, Biondolillo adamantly stood by his charge that the

"deal" to put the ousted pair back in Willowbrook had gone through. He also, insisted that the fate of Dr. Hammond had been sealed.

Miller and several other state officials had met with members of the Benevolent Society Jan. 27 in an effort to effect a reconciliation between them and Hammond.

When it was believed agreement had been reached, the two dismissed employes returned to Willowbrook Jan 28. to be reinstated.

Other employes, however,

vigorously objected to the return of the two ousted pair. This pressure led to a disruption of care and treatment programs for the residents of the school, Grunberg said.

Miller's letter pointed out that the two employes would not be reinstated at Willowbrook because it "would undermine employe morale and cause disruption of patient care."

The state has offered to permit the two to "consider the possibility of employment elsewhere in the department."