

Editorial

Our opinion

Training isn't cheap

After the Joint Legislative Committee on Mental and Physical Handicaps finished two days of public hearings at which some 100 speakers told of conditions at state institutions for the retarded and the mentally ill, its chairman, Sen. Dalwin J. Niles, a Republican from upstate Johnstown, made a statement.

New programs instead of more money are the answer to the problems, Mr. Niles said. And he said, "For the first time in memory, a legislative committee was told repeatedly it is not a question of more money to improve the needs of the retarded."

Think back again, Mr. Niles. What the people talking about Willowbrook State School and similar institutions said was that money alone isn't the answer.

"The treatment of retarded children and adults must be more closely allied to educational programs," Mr. Niles declared. "It is evident that the next step in reducing the number of retarded citizens in our institutions is immediate implementation of learning programs which advance the level of productivity in individual patients."

That, sir, is going to cost money. Providing learning and skills is more expensive than just letting the retarded vegetate. And it's the committee's job to seek what's needed.