



STRIKE AFFECTS MENTAL INSTITUTION: Picket lines formed outside Willowbrook State School, Staten Island. There was no violence. Inside, a reduced number of staff workers and volunteers took care of the patients.

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Strike Beginning to Disrupt State Services

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

The union representing three-quarters of the state's 185,000 employes mounted the first major public-employee strike against the state yesterday, disrupting services at a dozen mental hospitals, schools for the retarded, prisons and other facilities.

In defiance of a court injunction and the state's Taylor Law, which bans public-employee strikes, picket lines of the Civil Service Employees Association were thrown up at some 40 facilities across the state.

Because most agencies were closed for the weekend, the strike had limited impact and there were no reports of serious hardships. Union officials warned of widespread disruption

tions with the reopening of state offices tomorrow. They said workers would be called out at the Motor Vehicles Department, the Department of Social Services, the Law and Tax Departments and other agencies.

"We are building up to a crescendo," said William Farrell, the union's regional field supervisor here. "By Monday or Tuesday, the state will be tied up as tight as a whistle."

Manpower shortages delayed meals for more than 5,000 retarded children at the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, generated appeals for volunteers at various mental institutions and forced some parents to take their retarded children home. Picket-line disputes led to at least four arrests.

Negotiators for the union and the state resumed talks that had been broken off in Albany, but there were no signs of a break-through in the dispute over wages and other benefits for 145,000 employes representing 75 percent of the state's fiscal year yesterday.

The employees are the labor force for virtually every agency and institution operated by the state, with the exception of the state police, prison guards, and workers in a number of New York City branch offices of state agencies. The prison guards had threatened to strike Friday night with the expiration of their contract, but delayed the deadline for one week.

With most workaday state agencies closed for the Easter weekend, the Civil Service Employees Association concentrated

its strike efforts on state facilities that never close, throwing up picket lines at about 40 institutions across the state.

The effects of the strike, which began at 12:01 A.M., appeared to be scattered and limited, though spokesmen for the state and the union gave conflicting reports on this.

The strike appeared to be most effective at a half-dozen of the state's 51 mental hospitals and schools for the retarded and at two training schools for delinquents.

Guards at three of the 20 institutions maintained by the State Department of Correctional Services refused to cross the union picket lines. They were at Attica, Auburn and Elmira. At all three, the guards who were on duty remained on duty.

A departmental spokesman said that the guards still on duty, who began their third

at 3 P.M. yesterday, were sleeping in shifts inside the three institutions. The spokesman said, "I don't know how long they can go on."

Ernest L. Montayne, superintendent at Attica, said, "I have great praise for the conduct of the inmates and the working staff on duty."

Lieut. Gov. Malcolm Wilson, acting in the absence of Governor Rockefeller, who is on vacation in the Virgin Islands, said in Albany that the strike had caused "staffing problems" in five mental institutions and three penal facilities. But he added: "At this time it is not a critical situation."

Mr. Wilson said the strike affected three schools for the mentally retarded — Willowbrook on Staten Island, Craig Colony at Sonyea, near Rochester, and Suffolk, at Melville, L.I.—and two mental hospitals — St. Lawrence at Ogdensburg and Pilgrim State at West Brentwood, L.I.

Views of Strike Differ

The Lieutenant Governor said, "Many employes disregarded the strike call of their leaders and worked extra shifts, and parents and relatives of some patients took them home." He added that workers who ignored the strike were to be praised for "commendable humanitarianism."

Spokesmen for the union, however, disputed the state's version of the effectiveness of the strike. Marvin Nailor, a public relations spokesman for the union, said that more than half of the 14,000 employes scheduled to work yesterday had walked off their jobs.

He said the entire staffs of 350 employes each had walked out at the Warwick State School in Orange County and the Highland Training School in Ulster County, both centers for juvenile delinquents run by the state's Division for Youth.

At St. Lawrence State Hospital in Ogdensburg, he said, 80 per cent of the staff of clerical, professional, technical and maintenance workers had gone on strike. The state said that about a third of the day shift had failed to appear for work.

Mr. Nailor described conditions at Willowbrook, where less than half of the day shift went to work, as "chaotic." A tour of several wards at Willowbrook by a reporter did not confirm this judgment, but showed that numerous difficulties were being encountered despite the help of hundreds of volunteers.

Mayor Lindsay, who was campaigning in Wisconsin, said through a spokesman that the city's Health and Hospital's Corporation would make 100,000 sheets, 50,000 diapers and 20,000 towels available to Willowbrook if it became necessary.

Four persons, including Thomas Delaney, president of the Willowbrook unit of the union, were arrested on the picket line there on charges of disorderly conduct and obstruction of government administration.

At Creedmore State Hospital in Queens Village, 95 per cent of the staff reported for work and services were unimpaired, according to a hospital spokesman.

An administrator at the Central Islip State Hospital said that half of the employes had come to work on the day shift. He added that there had been no substantial reduction of services.

In Poughkeepsie, the Hudson River State Hospital experienced no staff shortages, according to an administrator. But a union spokesman said milk and oil truck drivers had refused to cross picket lines at the facility.

A spokesman for the Letchworth Village State School in Rockland County said enough employes were passing a picket line to assure that there would be no disruption of service. But a union spokesman said absenteeism at the Rockland State Hospital, a separate institution, was running at more than 50 per cent.

At Pilgrim State Hospital in West Brentwood, one of the largest mental institutions in the world, the hospital director, Dr. Henry Brill, said that 80 per cent of the employes scheduled for duty appeared for work.

"We have 8,000 patients here, with 2,000 elderly requiring constant attention," he said. "If the service to these patients was discontinued for any length of time, we would begin to have deaths."

Spokesmen for the union said that picket lines had been set up at the state universities at New Paltz, Stony Brook and Geneseo, and outside the Alfred B. Smith and South Hall state office buildings in Albany, where motor vehicle and other computer operations continue on an around-the-clock basis.

The strike, according to the union spokesman, also has "virtually shut down" the State Intelligence and Identification System, which provides fingerprints and other records to police agencies.

A spokesman for the Craig State School at Sonyea, in Livingston County, said 75 per cent of the normal work force had remained off the job at the 1,650-resident facility. The school issued an appeal for relatives of patients to take them home for the duration of the strike.