

Union challenged at Willowbrook

Two AFL-CIO unions report they have gathered enough signatures to challenge the massive Civil Service Employees Association for the right to represent 43,000 state workers in mental hospitals, including Willowbrook State School, and prisons.

The three-way fight will apparently be settled in four to six weeks when the workers vote to decide which union should represent them at the bargaining table. The challenging groups, the Services Employees International Union and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said yesterday they feel the state workers will leave the Civil Service group since the independent union could only get them a 4 per cent pay hike this year.

Union disputes have not been uncommon at the Willowbrook mental facility in recent years. While the Civil Service group represents a large number of its employes, several splinter groups have sprung up and claimed representation during disputes over operations at the state school.