

2 Willowbrook Matrons Held in Beatings

By WILLIAM REEL

Two female attendants at the Willowbrook State School in Staten Island who allegedly beat three young patients with a broomstick Sunday were arrested yesterday by the director of the Richmond County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, William Katz.

The defendants, Barbara Slayton, 21, of 163 York Ave., and Rita Garner, 17, of 177 Continental Place, both Staten Island, were booked at the St. George station house on assault charges.

Several attendants who witnessed the asserted beating at the school for the retarded and who have agreed to testify against the pair, have been moved from their homes to undisclosed locations and are under 24-hour guard to protect them from possible reprisals. Ira Raab, counsel to the society, said.

Cites Previous Cases

The guard is necessary because potential witnesses in previous incidents at Willowbrook refused to testify out of fear of fellow employes, Raab said.

Raab cited the firebombing of an attendant's car on the Willowbrook grounds several months ago—the attendant had been critical of fellow workers, he said—and added that there had been cases in which "potential wit-

nesses have been assaulted and intimidated—in several cases their car windows were shot out with pellet guns."

"Things like this beating have happened before, but no one had the guts to come forward," Raab said. "Today's arrests and the security arrangements for the witnesses represent a real breakthrough. We are hopeful that witnesses to other such crimes will now feel free to come forward."

Raab said he had turned over to police the bloodied, broken broomstick used in the alleged beating. The three victims were said to be about 10 years old. All are severely retarded.

Accompanying Katz when he made the arrests at Willowbrook were Patrolmen Robert Javruski and Jack Leavy of the New Dorp station house.

As head of the Richmond County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Katz



NEWS photo by Frank Hurley

Barbara Slayton (left) and Rita Garner at police station.

is a peace officer, authorized by the state to make arrests in child abuse cases.

The defendants were arraigned in Richmond Criminal Court be-

fore Judge Royal S. Radin. He paroled them pending hearings Tuesday.

Willowbrook has 4,900 patients and 3,000 employes.