

# Willowbrook:

## Lack of \$\$ not problem, poor management cited

ADVANCE ALBANY BUREAU

ALBANY — The problem at Willowbrook State School is inefficient administration, not a lack of funds, according to the testimony of Dr. Alan Miller, commissioner of mental hygiene, before a joint Assembly-Senate budget hearing yesterday.

"The problems at Willowbrook are not now soluble by a vast infusion of money," Dr. Miller said. "The next

phase is to change the whole massive, layered administrative situation at Willowbrook."

The commissioner said the rate of change at Willowbrook "will be a function of our abilities as administrators," and added that the top priorities at the state school are to "change the climate, improve the staff morale."

Referring to the appointment of a new director of the institution, Dr. Miller claimed that the previous administration

was "so overwhelmed by problems that they had forgotten how to get things done."

"There are real problems when you try to make changes in a situation where the problems were so deep. And added to the administrative issues is the difficult human problem of profound mental retardation," he said.

In response to a question from a legislator, Dr. Miller said that "\$100 million is not the answer to the Willowbrook crisis, although we could use some money for training and retraining staff."

Dr. Miller reiterated previous Mental Hygiene Department statements that the ultimate goal of the state is to reduce the patient population at Willowbrook to 3,000. It is presently around 4,800.

He also referred to efforts to decentralize the administration of the school into "units" of more manageable size.

The hearings were conducted by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, which is chaired by State Sen. John J. Marchi of Staten Island.