

Page 1 of 3 pages



Willowbrook laundry employees separate types and colors of clothing before they are laundered.

Willowbrook staff keeps things clean

By SUSAN FRY
The laundry facility at Willowbrook Developmental Center is well on its way to completion and, according to a state representative who is implementing the modernization project, its successful phase-in has been largely due to the efforts of a staff of 106.
"It's my people, not machinery, that makes it work," Stephan Zoltan, director of laundry and housekeeping services for 61 state institutions, said, noting that since his

arrival from Albany two and a half months ago, the daily absenteeism rate has dropped from 23 per cent to between two and three per cent.
"We have successfully broken a barrier of defeatism," Zoltan claimed, referring to the attitude of employees since the Willowbrook expose two years ago.
Zoltan added that the staff works in teams, which encourage competition, and that on many occasions, some workers volunteer to work

overtime without pay.
Responding to allegations that a clothing shortage exists at Willowbrook, particularly in Building 8 as reported in the Advance two weeks ago, Zoltan assured that every building is now receiving its full quota of clothing.
"In an inventory study, I found that, in fact, Building 8 was in need of more clothing. It was eight per cent worse than the next worst.
"As with the other buildings, it is now receiving its quota, except we are unfortunately short of towels."
He explained that in the past year and a half, the cost of cotton has gone up 400 per cent. "Because of a cotton shortage, I now have to pay \$14.54 for a dozen towels, compared to \$4.60 in 1972," he said, adding that for an order of 900,000 towels, he hasn't been able to find a bidder.
Although Zoltan claims man-made fibers in towels are good, they can't hold up in Willowbrook dryers because they are too hot. The towels would melt, he said.
But even with those problems, he was able to purchase and have delivered last week 4,500 dozen towels, and he claims he will be able to acquire more.
Willowbrook's clothing and linen budget for last year was \$126,000, but because that wasn't adequate, they had to spend \$458,000 between April of 1973 and last March.
Most of the equipment in the laundry is expected to be in full operation by next March.