

# Bias complaint filed by 2 at Willowbrook

By TERENCE J. KIVLAN

Two black employes at the Willowbrook Developmental Center yesterday filed a formal discrimination complaint against the institution's credit union in behalf of the other minority employes who make up most of its membership.

The complaint, which was lodged with the Willowbrook committee of the State Division of Human Rights, charges that earlier this year the minority employes were not adequately informed of the credit union's elections. As a result, the complaint alleges, no blacks are sitting on the union's credit committee which has the final say on loan requests.

The complaint demands that the union's records be audited immediately and that another election be held as soon as possible.

"We feel that since the majority of employes at Willowbrook are black the elections should be run again to give the blacks a chance to have more candidates," said one of the complainants, Ronald Plummer, a building supervisor, in an interview.

The other complainant in the document is Melvin Hicks, a personnel administrator. Both Plummer and Hicks are members of the Willowbrook committee of the Department of Human Rights.

In the complaint, the two men make a number of other charges. They allege that the credit union has discriminated against blacks who have applied for loans and that it does business at Willowbrook without paying either rent for office space or telephone bills.

Hicks and Plummer also charge that the union's current president, Ernest Palsic, is holding office improperly since he is no longer an employe

of Willowbrook.

Palsic, who also served as president of the credit union last year, denied that black employes were excluded from the election. He said that announcements of the election were included in the quarterly reports issued shortly before the voting took place on Feb. 22.

He did comment, however, that very few employes turned out for the meeting at which the election was held.

Palsic further denied that the union had discriminated against black employes who had applied for loans. "About 85 per cent of our members are black," he said. "If we didn't give loans to them we wouldn't have any business."

Finally, Palsic insisted that as a retired employe of Willowbrook he had the right to hold office in the credit union. He said that he was a member of the union "for life."

A spokesman for James A. Forde, the interim director of Willowbrook, said that the credit union is not required to pay rent or any other expenses at the mental institution under an April 1973 agreement between the state and the Civil Service Employes' Association Inc.

Plummer and Hicks tried to file the complaint with the state Department of Human Rights last week. But agency officials advised them to first bring their charges to the Willowbrook committee.

According to Palsic, the credit union at Willowbrook has about 2,400 members.