

Center again directed to reinstate 5 officers

By A. STANLEY ALLISON

Willowbrook Developmental Center has been directed for the second time by the state's Division of Human Rights to reinstate one black safety officer who was fired and four white officers who were forced to resign nine months ago.

Having lost their appeal to the division's Appeal Board, the institution can be expected to go before the Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court. Willowbrook and the supervisors charged with discrimination, were found in a decision reached by state agency to have "committed unlawful practices against Elijah Beaufort on account of his color and race and against complainants Joseph A. O'Brien, William T. Seery, Robert Lentz and Norman E. Johansen on account of retaliation for their opposition to discriminatory acts."

In his complaint, Beaufort charged that less than a week after he was hired as a safety officer in January, he was "constantly harassed, unduly criticized and falsely accused of committing infractions on the job."

As the story was told to the state, Beaufort's immediate supervisor, Anthony Ragucci,

the chief safety supervisor, attempted to get Seery and O'Brien to make a false report that Beaufort had raped a Willowbrook resident.

Ragucci then ordered Beaufort to make security rounds in a patrol car alone on April 17. Beaufort, who was aware of the alleged frameup, refused to obey Ragucci's order realizing that he would have no witnesses to back a denial if he were alone.

As a result of his disobeying a violation of security rules, Ragucci immediately relieved him of duty, placed him on leave without pay and advised him that his services were terminated immediately.

In the text of the complaint, O'Brien, Seery, Lentz and Johansen charge that for having gone against Ragucci, in a "unlawful discriminating practice," they were forced to resign.

The four white officers claim that Ragucci made it clear to them that if they hadn't supported Beaufort, their jobs would have been secure.

In their original appeal, the respondents, Ragucci, Matthew Quintavalli, shift supervisor, and John Adiatroy, desk officer, claimed that they were on vacation at the time of the hearing and that the decision went against them by default. A hearing adjournment

requested by the institution was docked a day's pay.

Later in March the complaint was filed with the calendar and a decision was reached.

One source remarked that it was unlikely that the state, according to the division of Human Rights, to pay the five court costs, would bring the officers approximately \$10,000 issue to the Supreme Court.

The institution is given 30 days as of last Monday to appeal the decision. "What they might do," said Beaufort, "is wait until the 29th unemployment.

All of these decisions by the administration are subject to review in court," Lloyd Hurst, appeal board chairman, told the Advance.

"So I can't say that they (Willowbrook) will have to reinstate them (safety officers) even if the decision is appealed."

In other words, the institution may succeed in securing a stay or injunction from the Appellate Division allowing them to keep the employees from returning to their jobs. The five officers would then

have to wait until a court date was fixed to the calendar and a decision was reached.

One source remarked that it was unlikely that the state, according to the division of Human Rights, to pay the five court costs, would bring the officers approximately \$10,000 issue to the Supreme Court.

The institution is given 30 days as of last Monday to appeal the decision. "What they might do," said Beaufort, "is wait until the 29th unemployment.

All of these decisions by the administration are subject to review in court," Lloyd Hurst, appeal board chairman, told the Advance.

"So I can't say that they (Willowbrook) will have to reinstate them (safety officers) even if the decision is appealed."

In other words, the institution may succeed in securing a stay or injunction from the Appellate Division allowing them to keep the employees from returning to their jobs. The five officers would then

The five officers would then