

Editorial page _____

Our opinion

Alas, the criticism was necessary

Dr. Lawrence C. Kolb, the state Department of Mental Hygiene's new commissioner, has asked for a respite from criticism for Willowbrook Developmental Center and other institutions of the department. He says the Willowbrook staff has been demoralized by the criticism and that there is a big turnover in personnel each year.

Doctor, the criticism was essential in view of the conditions under which the thousands of retarded persons at Willowbrook were living. And the proof is the big changes that have been made in the type of care provided there.

There's still much to be done, though, but it seems certain that the people who have been demanding changes — even suing to obtain them — will wait and see what the new regime in the department is able to accomplish.

Dr. Kolb is an internationally known psychiatrist, and we hail Gov. Carey's choice of him for the post. It's a job that's going to require both dedication and ability, assets the doctor has already demonstrated in some vital roles during his career.