

# 14% Salary Boost Averts Walkout By State Workers

By MICHAEL ORESKES

A strike that could have crippled virtually all state operations today—from handing out tax refunds to caring for patients in mental hospitals—was averted with only 18 hours to spare yesterday by an agreement hammered out in secret negotiations between the Carey administration and leaders of the 141,000-member Civil Service Employees Association.

With a strike deadline set for 6 a.m. today, Gov. Carey threw an extra \$52 million into the pot, and negotiators came up with a deal that will give the average state worker pay boosts of 14% over the next two years.

Theodore Wenzl, union president, and Donald Wollett, Carey's director of employe relations, hammered out the deal in a secret, 14-hour bargaining session in Albany that was under way even as officials on both sides were saying that a strike seemed virtually certain.

Wollett said he expected the agreement to be ratified in a mail ballot of members that will take about three weeks.

#### Carey: It's "Fair and Equitable"

Gov. Carey, appearing at a news conference with union and administration representatives, said the agreement would provide "fair and equitable" raises for state workers who, in most cases, have not had a pay boost in two years.

Carey said the agreement would cost the state about \$220 million which is "well within the financial plan." He said some of the money would come from funds saved through the favorable interest rates the state had won for its annual spring borrowing.

#### Three-Step Pay Increases

Under the contract, workers will get a raise retroactive to April 1 of 5% or \$500 whichever is greater. They will get a second raise — of 4% or \$400 — on Oct. 1 and another 5% or \$500 on April 1, 1978. Lower-paid workers will wind up with larger percentage increases because of the cash provisions.

There also will be a number of improved fringe benefits, including in-