

Willowbrook takeover continues; sickout ends

Workers at Willowbrook Developmental Center returned to work yesterday in normal numbers, bringing to an end a four-day sickout protesting the takeover of seven center buildings by the private United Cerebral Palsy Associations.

Few of the 31 residential buildings on the institution's grounds reported greater than usual absences, and Felton King, president of Willowbrook's unionized state employes, confirmed an unsanctioned slowdown seemed to have ended.

King, leader of Willowbrook's chapter of the Civil Service Employees Association, said the absent workers "had recovered from a case of the flu," and were now awaiting word of further possible union pressure intended to thwart the takeover.

A closed-door membership meeting will be conducted tonight, King said, to plot strategy.

Elin M. Howe, who became Willowbrook's acting director Saturday upon the departure of Dr. Levester Cannon, expressed the hope the UCP takeover of the buildings, housing 641, mostly retarded youngsters, can now proceed uninterrupted.

But Miss Howe said she is "con-

cerned" by tonight's meeting. "From my perspective," she said, "union and management have worked fairly well together. I don't know what kind of tactics they will discuss, but a major kind of job action at this point would be the least desirable answer."

On staffing deficits, Miss Howe explained that unlike Friday, when there were "some very definite problems" in a few Willowbrook buildings, yesterday's attendance was in fact "even a little better than usual."

Willowbrook denied all along there was a sickout of state workers, saying scheduling difficulties, instead, had resulted in understaffing of certain buildings.

The business of the takeover, meanwhile, continued yesterday, as the institution began the process of shifting state workers out of UCP-controlled buildings and into state-run buildings, which house an estimated 1,800 retarded people.

Miss Howe, a deputy director at Willowbrook, said yesterday she'll be in charge of Willowbrook and the takeover effort until the state appoints an acting director for the institution, probably sometime before Sept. 24.