

would have been to first suspend the workers so they then could be legally arrested for trespassing.

Bill Knowlton, an agency spokesman in Albany, said during the morning that a restraining order could have been sought on safety grounds. He reasoned that since the building's switchboard was rendered almost useless because of the noise, reaching medical help in case of an emergency could have been hindered.

Although the protest was called to an end, the dispute appears far from over. The center's director, Elin Howe, said officials remain undecided about possible disciplinary action against workers who she alleged were demonstrating while they should have been working at assigned duties.

Union officials said the workers involved, who are assigned to wash, dress and care for the center's 1,100

remaining residents, were off duty when protesting.

King, who is black, yesterday repeated charges — emphatically denied by center officials — that racism caused the controversy.

His union is continuing to demand that all 371 of the workers, mostly get their docked funds, ranging from \$90 to \$140 per worker, returned immediately. Some 36 of those who called in sick during the four-day action have been reimbursed after showing doctor's notes or other documentation that they were legitimately absent.

Miss Howe said the center still is working to process other checks for docked pay that may have been unjustified.

King's order to end the sit-in demonstration followed a meeting in Manhattan between him and Dora Rodriguez, a civil rights officer for the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, who he said told him

that racism charges could make a strong case.

Miss Howe, while saying afterward that she was "not thrilled" about another in an apparent series of various investigations into the institution, maintained that most of the docked workers are black and Hispanic because they constitute a majority of the institutional, or "direct-care," workers.

She responded to charges by the union by saying those workers were selected out of an overall 800 who called in sick over the four-day period because it was in that department that her staff had heard the threat of a sick-out before July 24.

Roy Hargrove, second vice president of the local, and Tyrone Daniels, its executive director, maintained that from their activities at the center they know that only whites in other departments of the center get promoted.

Union and management also have tangled over the ratio of

direct-care employees to patients. While labor says they need more staff and that the phase-out has gone too fast in their department, Willowbrook officials point to a high absentee rate among the workers much of the time.

King said the U.S. Office of Equal Opportunity and the U.S. Human Rights Commission also would be investigating his charges of racism and a civil suit will be filed.

Workers have claimed that their contract with the state protects them from being docked for the alleged sickout. It states: "A doctor's certificate will not be routinely required for absences of four days or less due to illness."

It is the word "routinely," though, that the agency is using to justify the legality of docking pay at Willowbrook. Hargrove explained yesterday that the union previously had fought without success to get that word deleted from the agreement.