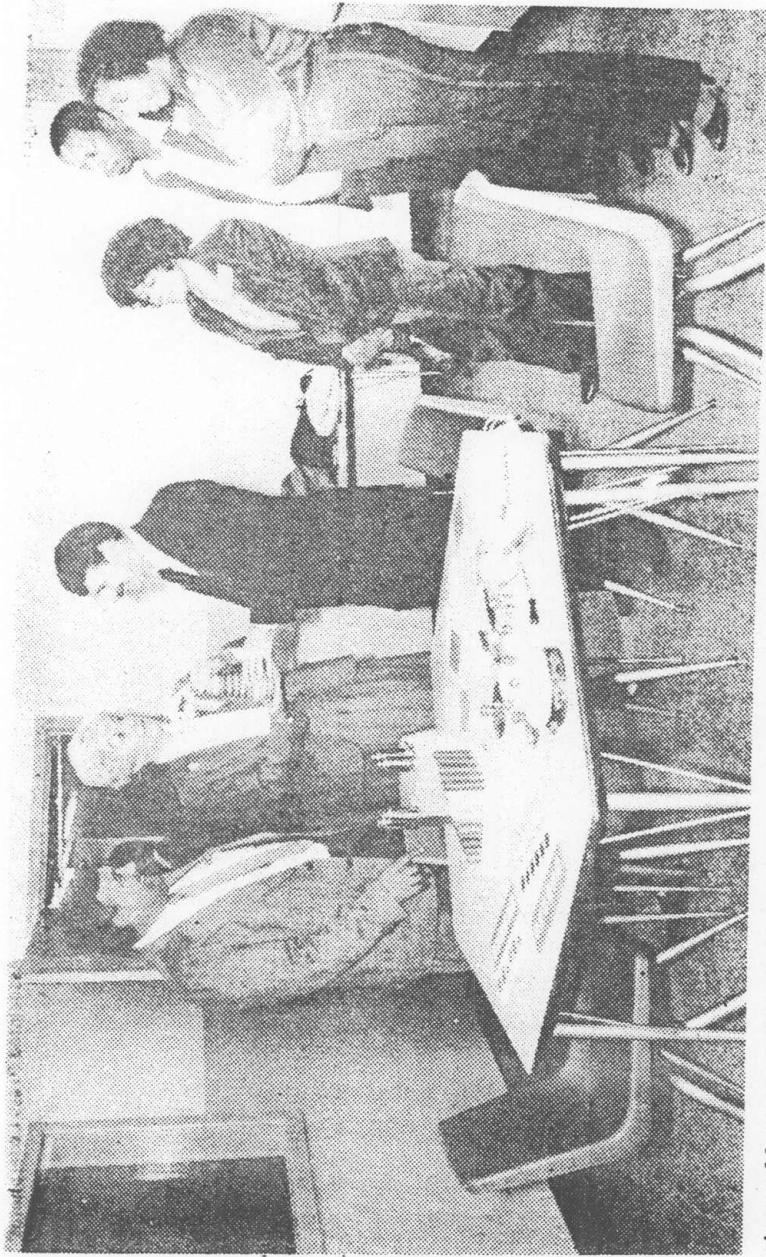


Following the ceremony and tour of the building, Mrs. Connelly, a West Brighton Democrat who has her district offices at the developmental center, expressed support for a tentative out-of-court settlement reached last week to modify the Willowbrook Consent Decree.

The agreement, which still must be ratified by Gov. Carey and plaintiffs who brought the original suit resulting in the signing of the 1975 decree, calls for a federal court to appoint a special monitor to review care of the mentally retarded. In addition, it would allow the state to set up 24-bed group homes in the community, subject to the monitor's consent. Currently, the consent decree imposes a 10-bed maximum on such facilities.

While saying she was not completely happy with the proposal, Mrs. Connelly said it is apparent that the New York Civil Liberties Union, which represented the plaintiffs, had made significant concessions.

She noted that at one point Civil Liberties had sought a master to take over administration of programs for Willowbrook class members — residents of the Island center when the suit to improve conditions there was filed in 1972. A monitor, she said, is far preferable to a master.



Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly examines some of the equipment available at the new program center that bears her name. Looking on, from left to right, are Zygmund L. Sleszak, acting commissioner of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; James M. Walsh, deputy director of institution administration at the Staten Island Developmental Center, and three center employees.