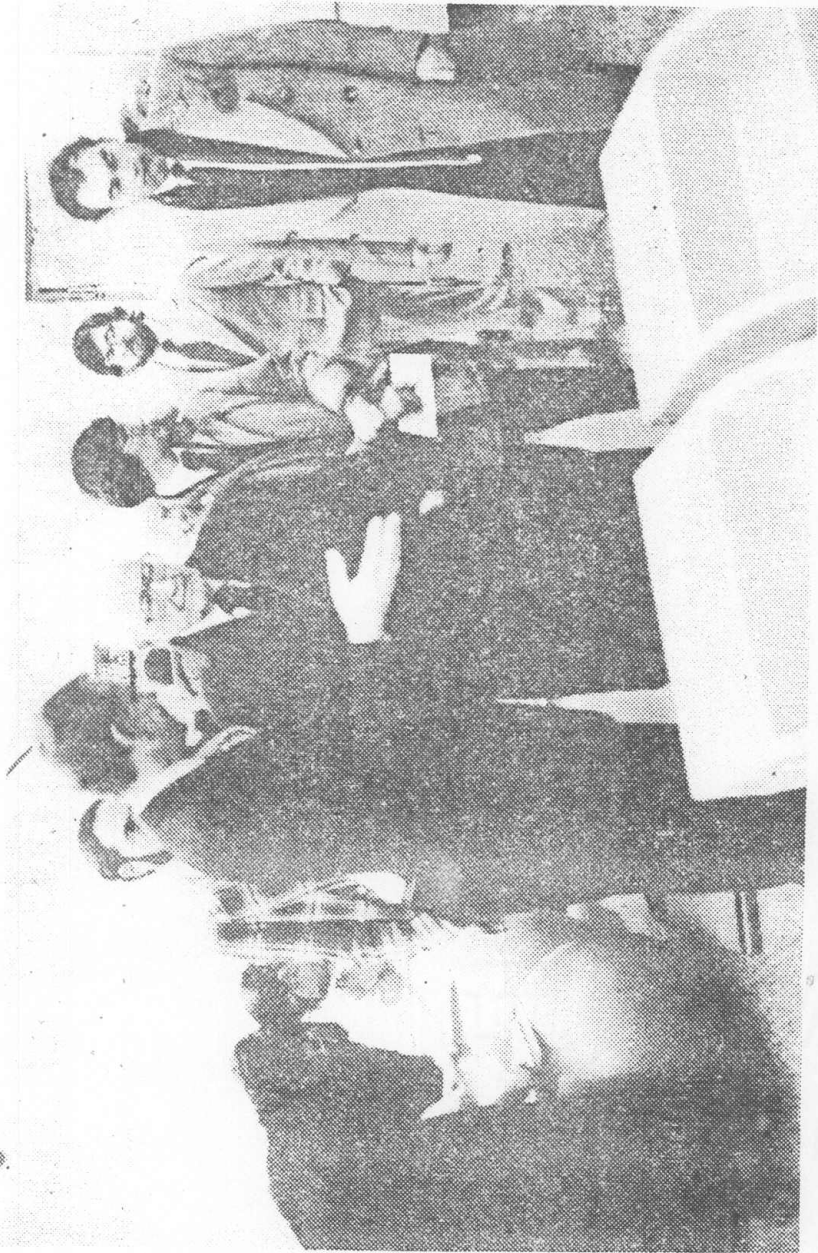


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**U.S. District Judge John R. Bartels, in dark topcoat, leads a group on a surprise visit of the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook.**

S.I. Advance Photo by Frank J. Johns

In the courtroom, the state is defending its care of 4,800 current and former Willowbrook patients. The trial was called after months of fruitless negotiations between the New York Civil Liberties Union and the state. Parents of the retarded rejected a tentative settlement in October.

From the witness stand, Dr. Clements punctuated verbal descriptions of "unsanitary conditions" at Willowbrook and Nina Eaton by flipping through dozens of black and white photographs taken when he toured the facilities in June and September and again on Monday.

One photograph showed a pa-

tient lying naked on a mattress, his body covered with flies, Dr. Clements said. Other pictures, taken Monday, showed feces and toilet tissue littering the floor of a bathroom that, the witness said, had not been cleaned for three days.

In Nina Eaton, a state-funded facility operated by United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State, Dr. Clements said, "The dayroom floor was so filthy and grimy that my shoes actually stuck to the floor and popped as I walked."

As the trial opened, the

benches in the spacious courtroom were packed with spectators, including parents of the retarded, consumer groups and officials from the state Office of Mental Retardation.

Lawyers estimated the trial could take 28 days and involve testimony from at least 24 witnesses for both sides.

The plaintiffs accuse the state of failing to provide staffing, education, clothing and community-based group homes promised to the retarded in a 1975 court consent decree, reached after an earlier trial. A master, the

plaintiffs say, would ensure compliance.

The state, arguing it needs more flexibility, seeks to modify the decree. Mainly, state officials want permission to establish community-based facilities as large as 50 beds. The decree, advocating a "normal" environment for the retarded, imposes a 10-bed limit.

Hansen told the judge yesterday that enlarging the size of group homes would turn them into mini-institutions and "tear the heart out" of the Willowbrook Consent Decree.