

## A Relapse Found At Willowbrook

There may be fewer patients at Willowbrook but, a Federal judge ruled last week, the Staten Island center for the retarded seems to have almost as many problems as ever.

Judge John R. Bartels said sanitation at the facility "presents a serious health hazard" to residents, who "must eat in dining rooms infested with insects and rodents, sit and lie on floors that are dirty, not uncommonly with human excrement, and sleep in bedrooms reeking of urine." He also decried "numerous examples" of broken furniture and plumbing and said noise levels in many residence areas were "piercing."

Ruling that standards had "materially deteriorated" since the State Legislature cut off funds several years ago for a panel that reviewed conditions at the center, the judge said he would appoint a special master to insure that reforms sought since 1972 and ordered by courts in 1975 were carried out. But he extended until April 1985 the deadline for reducing Willowbrook's population, once 5,343 but now 761, to 250.

Judge Bartels's findings were challenged by Zygmund L. Slezak, Acting State Commissioner of Mental Retardation, who called them "sensationalized rhetoric" and said he would appeal, and Dr. Ella Curry, director of the center, who called them a "dis-service." A lawyer for the plaintiffs termed the decision "an overwhelming victory."