

2 Kids Knocked Out By Falling Plaster

A Welfare mother of five living in a filthy, rat-infested two-room hole began preparing a law suit against her landlord after a five-foot long piece of plaster fell from the bedroom ceiling Easter Sunday morning injuring two of her children.

Mrs. Margaret Hardy, 29, of 108 W. 54th St. told the Amsterdam News she will sue her landlord charging neglect over head injuries sustained by her children, Gerald 12 and Jewel 10.

The youngsters were knocked unconscious when plaster poured down from the ceiling burying them on the bed below where they were playing. The mother said her son is now constantly subject to dizziness and blackouts.

Mrs. Hardy and her five children, whose ages range from 8 months to 12 years, live in a two-room apartment on the third floor. When she's not looking her children amuse themselves by watching the couple in the apartment below through gaping holes in the floors.

During the night, she keeps rats from coming through the walls by plugging body-size holes with rags -- for this Mrs. Hardy pays \$28 per week. Deserted by her husband, Gerald R. Hardy, she said their family has been a Welfare family for the past six years.

"I'll go out of my mind if I have to stay here," Mrs. Hardy said. "This is no environment for

my children. I refuse to keep living this way. I'm no tramp just because I'm on welfare and my children are no hoodlums."

She said she has been trying to find better living quarters but her pleas are ignored by the Welfare Department investigator. The squalid condition of her bathroom is next to unbelievable!

Water from the overflowing toilet on the floor above drips on anyone who enters and the bathtub drain is stopped up preventing them from taking baths. She bathes the children across the street.

Mrs. Hardy said she moved into the apartment six weeks ago because her welfare investigator, Mrs. L. Tennyson gave her the address and sent her to look at the apartment. She said she took it rather than have her children live outside in the winter cold.

Alexander Morgan, assistant supervisor at the Harlem Welfare Department, 1951 Park Ave. denied that the Welfare Department had sent her to the apartment. He said she moved in on her own accord and then notified the department where she was living. The Department pays her rent.

Morgan said it is the policy for the Department to check apartments where Welfare families live to see that no violations exist and the families are not overcharged. Mrs. Hardy said after she lived in the apartment two weeks an investigator visited her and told her the quarters were bad.

Edward Cox, supervisor at the Welfare Department headquarters, 250 Church St. said the department is going to relocate Mrs. Hardy and the children no later than Wednesday, April 16.