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PARENTS IN THE DOCK

Idea For New Zealand?

The following account of an unusual mock trial from the "Palestine Post" has been sent to us by a reader, who suggests that it may give an idea to those who are urging the need for more population in New Zealand.

THE modern restricted family of one or two children stood its trial before a crowded hall in the Edison Cinema in Jerusalem when the Vaad Leumi's special commission for the Palestine birth-rate sponsored a mock trial.

Over 1500 people, mainly young women, filled the hall to capacity, while the "Court" took their seats on the platform. They included Z. Harkaby as President, Professor S. Assaf, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities of the Hebrew University, Professor A. Fraenkel, of the Hebrew University, Dr. A. Katzenelson, and A. Emaleh, of the Vaad Leumi Executive.

The prosecution's witnesses included experts from various spheres of life—Professor R. Bacchi, Director of the Central Bureau of Medical Statistics of the Hadassah Medical Organisation, women's and children's doctors, a rabbi, a teacher, an economist, and an expert in housing problems.

The accused couple, who were also on the platform were indicted under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Yahlomi ("Diamond"). They were charged with restricting the number of their children creating a danger to the future of the Jewish people and to the existence of the Jewish people in Palestine, and sabotaging the "only child." They had one seven-year-old child, and were reported not to want any more.

Woman's Plea

Pleading not guilty, the wife said that in her early married life when she had had to work, she had not had the patience to devote all her time to educating a child. Now it was not economically possible for them to have another child, as they were living in one room, and had an agreement with the landlord to limit their family to one. They were prepared for another if the Court would ask the landlord for permission.

Turning prosecutor, the couple accused the Government of not providing more facilities for larger families and arranging housing projects for the increased population. The couple in turn accused the authorities of not paying attention to housing, which was the crux of the family problem, lack of facilities in school fees, hospitals, creches, and so on. They also accused the more well-to-do sections of the population, whose women were keener on five o'clock tea than on five a.m. baby-feeding. The rabbi and the doctor spoke on the tragedy of the "only child."

The judgment, read by the President of the Court, found the couple guilty, but appealed to the authorities for a new demographic policy and to the population to fulfil their national and human duties.