

The Mystery Train Comes to Town

(Continued from page 2.)

hair o' mystery. Oh, well. The cat'll be out of the fire soon, 'cos we're runnin' into the station now, come on; let's be ready to get off. Put yer 'at on, Grandpa, and don't get yer whiskers caught under the wheels. Wipe yer nose Bill, an' wait till the train stops afore you get off. 'Ave you got the lunch basket, Dad? Oh, dear, I'm all of a dithery tremble. 'Ere, is my 'at on straight?

Dad: 'Course it is.

Mum: Well, it shouldn't be—silly. It's one of the latest. Oh: 'Ere we are, 'Ere we are.

Mum: Can you see that lead kindly light cove anywhere, Dad, that they said would be waitin' to show us the sights?

Guide: Here I am, madam, at your service. One perfectly good guide provided for you by courtesy of our benevolent City Fathers.

Mum: Well, bein' a woman I can't stand the suspenses any longer. Wot's the name of the place we've come to?

Dad: My cripes, Mum, can't you see for yourself. It's WELLINGTON!

Guide: Correct Mr. Higgins, and how did you guess that? Now don't spring that one about noticing the pedestrians put their hands to their hats when they go round the corners.

Mum: And why shouldn't he, indeed?

Guide: It's been said once before, and there's no encores for that gag in Wellington. Come, let's do a hike.

Grandpa: Here, stop him; stop him! He's got our lunch basket.

Mum: Goodness, Grandpa, he only said, "Let's do a hike."

Grandpa: Oh: I thought he said "do a mikè."

Bill: I don't think much of their station, Dad. It's not as good as Auckland—

Dad: Now then, young Bill, don't start a riot as soon as you get 'ere. Hold your brother Etherbert's hand while we cross the road.

Mum: Yes, that's a very controversial point. You'll find it takes more than a handsome station to make a great city.

Dad: Yes, wait till you see the carillon.

Grandpa: Yes, wait till you see the carillon.

Mum: Yes, wait till you see the carillon.

Guide: Yes, that's right, people. Wait till you see our carri-yong.

Dad: Aw. Go on, mate. You win. Carry on.

Guide: Well, will you please hike aboard this lorry, which the City Council has generously placed at my disposal to run you round the sights. We could have had the steam roller, but one of the councillors has borrowed it to run home to lunch in.

Grandpa: Ah. More joyriding at the ratepayers' expense. This joyriding about by people ought to be stopped in these hard times.

Guide: Yes, Grandpa. That would sort of put them on their feet again. Wouldn't it? Come on, let's be going.

Guide: Well, folks, here we are—first stop—the administrative centre of New Zealand. On our right we have the Citizens' War Memorial.

Mum: What's that green stain down it?

Guide: That, madam, is Art.

Bill: Well, I dunno, Dad, but it looks to me more like—

Dad: Shrrup, Bill. You'll start something if you bring that up.

Guide: On my left we have the Government Buildings—the LARG-EST wooden building in the world.

Grandpa: Oh, bigger than that, surely. I 'ad a brother once worked in the Government Buildings, but he got the sack.

Guide: Oh, no you don't, Grandpa. You want me to say why did he get the sack, and then you say he snored so loud that he woke all the others up. Then we all laugh ha! ha! ha! he! he! he. Well, let me tell you one. You see that nice marble building up there?

Grandpa: Yes.

Guide: Well, there's a nice job for four years for clever old chaps like you if you can persuade enough people to strike out the other chaps' names.

Grandpa: And what job would I be doing up there?

Guide: Making talkies.

Grandpa: That's no good to me. I'd rather have a life sentence in the next-door place.

Guide: And what job could you be doing there?

Grandpa: Making sleepies.

Guide: Oh, and you so young, Grandpa. Come on, let's be going.

Guide: Well, here we are—second stop—our bank. This you will find a capital place of interest. In fact, one of the principal institutions of the country on which our prosperity depends. Why, folks, if this bank goes off the gold standard to-morrow the country goes on the water wagon. Do you notice that peculiar breeze? That's the overdrafts tormenting their victims.

Dad: Wot! Do they keep overdrafts here?

Guide: Keep overdrafts? Why, Mr. Higgins, if all the overdrafts in that bank were placed on end they'd reach from here to bankruptcy. Some day you must come down for one of our special farmers' half-price banking days. A free cheque-book given away with every overdraft.

Mum: I'd rather come down on washing day when they're pegging out their exchanges.

Guide: Madam. This is a real bank, not a pakapoo bank in the back-room of a Chinese laundry.

Bill: What's that fishy smell, mister?

Guide: That, my boy, is the directors cooking the accounts for the next meeting of shareholders. Come on, let's be going.

Guide: Here we are. Third lap. The beautiful Mount Victoria. The wind may be a little strong, and you will require to hang on by your teeth. And let me say, Grandpa, for those who have no teeth, teeth will be supplied by courtesy of the Pearly White Dental Construction Co. Ltd.

Grandpa: He! He! He!

Guide: Now then, Grandpa. It's no joke being without teeth, by gum. He! he! he! Listen to them there winds howling. They say it never rains but it pours. In Wellington they say it never blows but it ROARS.

But don't you believe it. Why, some days in Wellington it's so still you couldn't even take a moving picture. Well, here we have the beautiful city laid out before us.

Grandpa: Yes. So it ought to be.

Guide: Ought to be what, Grandpa?

Grandpa: Laid out. It looks quite dead. It's not half as busy as Auckland.

Mum: Oh, Grandpa, stop it. How many times have I told you comparasols are amphibious? W'at's that white ribbon-looking thing over there?

Guide: That, madam, is the famous Hutt Road.

Bill: Gee! What would that road look like, mister, if all the motor-cars and motor buses in Wellington were stretched out on it one after another?

Guide: Sunday afternoon, William, my boy, or race day. See that wonderful mansion over there? That's the magnificent house built by Frank Crowther from his huge earnings in radio. And you see that palatial mansion standing in its own ground with a high fence round it? That's the home erected by the Government for Will Yates as a token of the public appreciation of his performances over the air.

Grandpa: But 'ere, young feller. The lorry driver just told me that was the gaol.

Guide: Yes. It's the same thing, Grandpa, same thing. Come on, let's be going.

Guide: And now here we are at the doors of the institution which for a small sum brings brightness to thousands of homes in New Zealand.

Grandpa: Don't tell me the answer. I can guess. It's a boot-polish factory.

Mum: Oh, Grandpa, where's yer radio instinct? It's 2YA. Can't yer smell the statics and the bad programmes we read all about?

Guide: Correct, madam. Now just one moment and I'll search you for dangerous weapons before we go in.

Mum: Is it necessary to be so particular?

Guide: Oh, yes? only the other day a masked man entered the studio flourishing a revolver. Fortunately, however, the saxophone player from the orchestra had just left the premises. Well, let's see if there's anyone at home. (Knocks, and door opens.)

Station Director: Good afternoon, everybody. And what can I do for you?

Guide: Oh, sorry to interrupt your Sunday afternoon browse among the highbrows, but these listeners from Whangaparaurau would like to look over the premises and meet some of the staff—Uncle Jasper and Auntie Mollie.

Station Director: I'm very sorry to announce that with the exception of myself the whole staff, box and dice, left this morning by the mystery train for Whangaparaurau for the purpose of relaying the first annual grumble of the Boys of the Butter Fat Brigade. Good afternoon. (Slam.)

Mum: Well now, wot do you know about that? We must 'ave passed

them coming down. That's the worst of these mystery trains. One 'alf of the world doesn't know where the other 'alf's goin' on Sunday morning.

Bill: Oh, I dunno, Mum. My Sunday school teacher says she knows where they're goin'.

Mum: Dry up, Bill. Come on, let's leave the lorry and hike for the train. Good-bye, old Guide Fawkes, thanks for the buggy ride. Come on, Dad. Goodness, Grandpa, whatever's the matter with you?

Grandpa: I'm disappointed. I wanted Auntie Mollie to see my peggy squares.

Mum: Oh, don't be so petulant, Grandpa. I'll tell her not to call your birthday next time if you don't behave. Here we are at the station—just in time. Jump in here—sit down there, Grandpa—and you there, Bill. Dad and me'll sit here. Phew. That's quite enough misery trip for one day.

Guard: All aboard!

This Week's Problems

(See Inside Front Cover.)

Things One Ought to Know.

1. The jar is not empty in the first case; it is full of air, and, moreover, the air is trapped by the water. By forcing the jar down you may push more water in than entered at first because you can compress air, it being elastic.

2. If a piece of wood is examined under a microscope, it will be found to contain millions of holes. These, of course, contain imprisoned air, which expand when heated. The expanding force tears open the tiny holes in its desire to escape, and the tearing of the wood is the crackling noise which we hear.

3. Mice are very quickly affected by foul gases, and if those in a submarine are found to be affected, the men on board know that the air has begun to be vitiated and they must take suitable precautions. For the same reasons canaries are taken down coal mines.

4. Luther set the fashion for clergymen to wear black clothes. He was undecided what to wear, when the Elector sent him, as a present, a valuable length of black cloth. The cloth was made into a suit, and black has been the regulation colour ever since.

5. The story books tell us that it was a glass slipper, but it was, properly, fur. The legend came from the French, and the translators mistook the word "vair," which means fur, for "verre," meaning glass. Thus we speak of her glass slipper instead of her fur slipper.

6. Besides producing timber and other useful articles, trees provide valuable manure in the form of decayed leaves. More important than this, their leaves absorb carbonic acid gas, which is a waste product of the human beings. Also, their roots prevent the rain water from running away too quickly, and thus the land is more fertile, and even the climate is affected—more moisture retained makes the temperature more equable.

Can You Answer These?

1. An oast house is a building where hops are stored.

2. The Berengaria is owned by the Cunard Company.

3. The tomato is often called a love apple.

4. Osiers are bushes of the willow family, the branches of which are supple and suitable for making into baskets, etc.

5. A hetacomb is a slaughter or other serious form of destruction on an extensive scale.

6. A chanty is a song for sailors, usually sung by several at a time.