



# “Anyone Knowing Anything of—”

## A Little-Known Work of the Broadcasting Board

**H**OW many listeners realise the valuable work the broadcasting services are doing apart altogether from entertaining (or not, as the case may be) radio fans and their friends? It is, doubtless, often very annoying to have an interesting programme interrupted merely to ask that a look-out be kept for little Johnnie Jones, who has decided to see the world for himself, and has quietly run away from home that morning—wearing “a grey shirt, open at the neck, dark blue trousers, and no shoes or stockings.” But to Johnnie’s unfortunate mother the radio message is her one gleam of hope as she sits at home, imagining (after the habit of mothers), that her son has been run over and killed, or, at least, is lying injured in hospital.

Before the advent of radio broadcasting the fact that Johnnie was missing could not have been blazoned abroad until the evening paper came out, and then to a limited audience only; now, however, she knows that every home that has a radio has heard of her loss, and though they may not have taken much notice of it, they are sure to remember it if they meet a little boy wandering forlornly about the streets.

To Johnnie, too, the radio is a blessing. At the start of the Great Adventure home is gaily forgotten, and he walks cheerfully about the streets until at length he begins to feel hungry . . . then he finds that he has forgotten the way home; he won’t believe it at first, and runs busily from street to street, but all the time a horrid feeling beginning at his empty “tummy” is creeping over him that he will never find his way home—he will spend the rest of his life wandering from street to street, with nowhere to sleep, nothing to eat, and, what is now looming as most important of all, no mother . . . so he begins to cry. After a time someone—there are always these helpful souls to be found—will ask, “What’s the matter, little boy? Are you lost?” Whereupon he cries louder than ever, imagining himself to be in a world where everyone goes past pointing their fingers at him and saying “You’re lost” at regular intervals. However he is taken by kindly persons

to their home and then the questions begin. Where do you live? Poor Johnny has no idea. What is your Daddy’s name? If Johnny has a Daddy he is evidently nameless. Where does your Daddy work? Daddy, it seems, is like some hundreds of others, and works in a “great big town”—unlike the others, however, he seems to have no definite address—perhaps he is a crossing-sweeper. At last someone has a splendid idea, why not ring the broadcasting station and ask them to broadcast a request for Johnnie’s parents? The station, however, shows an unexpected reluctance to do anything of the sort, unless the inquiry is vouched for by the police. So the police are next told of Johnnie’s plight, and perhaps they have already heard from Johnnie’s mother; but she may not have noticed his absence yet, for a small boy can lose himself very thoroughly in a very short time. Anyway, they decide to broadcast a message.

The station will be pleased to help you find your car in the same way, with the single proviso that your inquiry must come through the police. Inquiries for missing and stolen cars are broadcast to the number of some hundreds yearly, and in 90 per cent. of these cases are they successful in tracing the faithful family friend, or the aristocratic, chauffeur-trained eight-cylinder—both are equally easy to steal. A brief broadcast message will have every garage and service-station on the look-out for your missing vehicle, and woe betide any light-hearted thief who goes to one of those places for a gallon or so of petrol. The number of cars stolen in New Zealand is very large in comparison with the number of cars per head of population, but radio is helping every day to reduce that percentage.

Sometimes your quest over the air is not so successful; the car may be burnt, or perhaps Johnnie has met the fate which may come to any too-adventurous explorer, and the news your announcement brings is scarcely welcomed, but generally the radio can bring a great deal of help to those who go about it in the right way—ask a policeman first!