

at the bookstalls, crowds outside the barriers talking, almost shouting at their friends inside the bars. Eleven minutes to go.

Above it all is the loud-speaker. Nothing can drown those instructions. "All seats, all aboard for the Auckland express. All seats, please. Show your ticket and reservation at No. 6 platform gate . . . all seats, please . . . six minutes . . . all seats . . . hurry on . . . telegram for Mr.—" A train whistles, a bell clangs, interrupting. But it's not for you. The talking and bustling and noise grow greater. It takes you all your time to move.

And it's "All seats, please. All aboard for the Auckland express." The last call. You hurry. So does everyone else.

What a bedlam there is on that station. Half an hour later all is quiet. The building is deserted. There is the calm and the dignity of a cathedral. Just a little dirtier though, a little more untidy.

Fourteen carriages—ten second class, four first. No sleepers these wartime nights. A big train. It means approximately four hundred passengers are travelling. They're mostly servicemen. It's almost a troop train. The minute bell clangs. Some one rushes wildly through the barrier. He couldn't have cut it any finer.

And you're off. Slowly, smoothly you leave the station. Until Paekakariki, the other side of the first line of hills and the several tunnels, the first stop, the long heavy train of carriages and vans is drawn by an electric engine. Such a load is hard work. The speed is slow. It would take a long time to Auckland at this rate; it takes a long time even to Paekakariki, to the first cup of tea. It's pleasant, though; the afternoon sun streams through the window, warm on your face. Comfortably you lie back in your seat, head on pillow, not reading yet, looking at the last blue windy-wet glimpses of Wellington Harbour. Smack into a tunnel. As fast from darkness to sunshine. The journey has begun.

The carriage is cheerfully noisy with laughter and talk; someone strums a banjo, there is singing, a mouth-organ. It is also tidy, the floors clean, luggage

orderly in the racks, the passengers straight in their seats. Reserves for the journey are marshalled and reviewed; cakes in a tin, oranges for thirst, the smoke of cigarettes and pipes is blue in the sunshine. A forbidden bottle of beer—"careful, digger, here's the guard"—and if you're playing cards, seats turned inwards; pillows for a table, be careful not to show any money because that's not allowed either. You're moving, pulling powerfully, through hills, the sun is setting. Almost evening, soon night.

Professor Joad was surprised recently when he walked through a troop train on a long journey in England to find so few of the passengers with books to read. To him it seemed such a waste of time; he counted, he said, more than a hundred servicemen before he found one reading a novel. You have a look for yourself. You share the professor's surprise: here is a journey of sixteen hours and in the five carriages you walk through there is hardly a bound book to be seen. Digests are everywhere, picture magazines almost as common. There's a *Korero*—but no books.

Maybe it doesn't mean a thing; maybe it's just that people with luggage to pack, a hundred things to do, a train to catch, just haven't the time to think of hours that will be free, of books to read. Also, if you're leaving one city for another, you don't take away library books; and if you're on soldier's pay you don't spend 12s. 6d. on a novel for sleepy train times. You leave Professor Joad to be surprised by himself.

Through the long hours, the miles of the night, there are changes from the gay talk and the orderly carriages. Early morning, hardly light, shows a different picture. The first impression now is of overcoats and scarfs and hats and luggage; the sprawling figures you see second. Pillows are soiled with soot and smoke. The floor is untidy with the litter of a journey. The air is heavy and stale. An occasional grunt, a curse as someone stumbles in the half-light over an outstretched leg, the annoying rattle of a window, a blind, the striking of a brightly-yellow match—they are the only noises now. There is no talking.