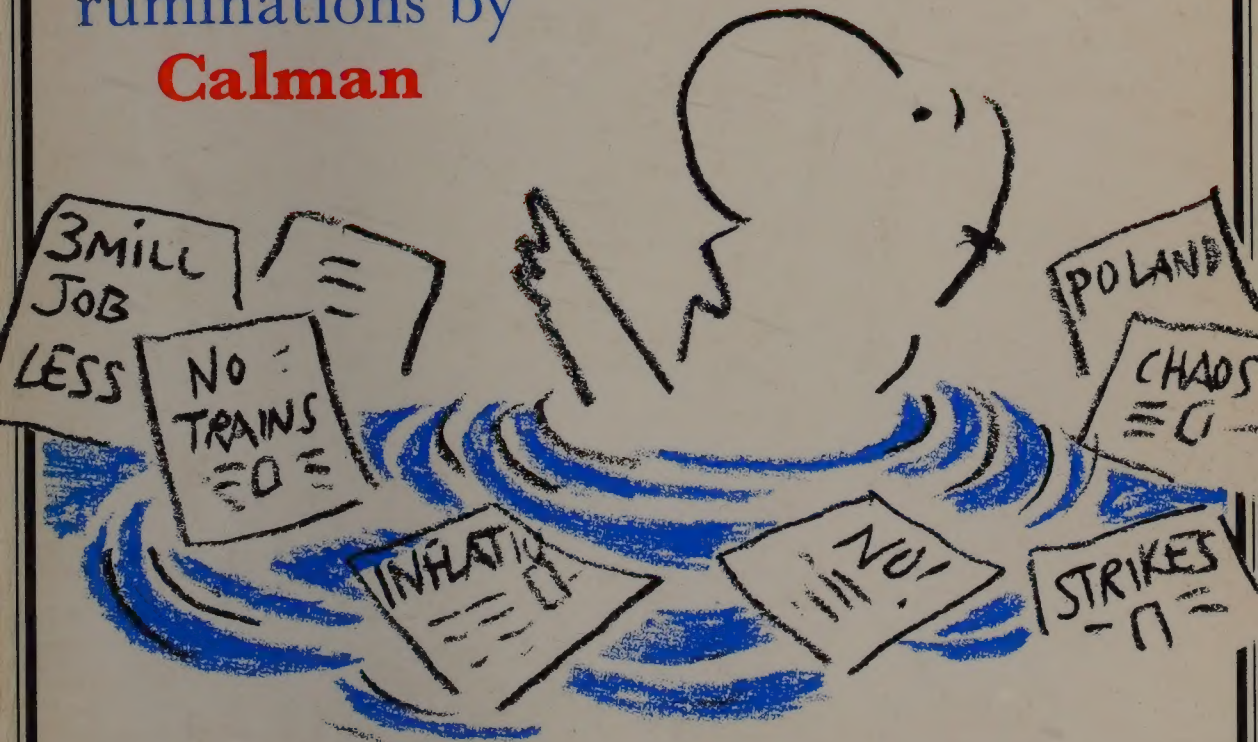


Help!

and other
ruminations by
Calman



from Lynne.

258

Help!

By the same author

Bed-Sit (*Jonathan Cape*)

Boxes (*Jonathan Cape*)

Calman & Women (*Jonathan Cape*)

My God (*Souvenir Press*)

The Penguin Calman

The New Penguin Calman

This Pestered Isle (*Times Newspapers Ltd*)

Couples (*The Workshop*)

Dr Calman's Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (*W. H. Allen*)

But it's my turn to leave you . . . (*Methuen*)

How about a little quarrel before bed? (*Methuen*)

Mel Calman

HELP!

and other ruminations

Methuen

First published in 1982 by
Methuen London Ltd
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

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Designed by Philip Thompson

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These cartoons first appeared in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*

To the Government – for making a middle-aged masochist happy . . .

I once had a brief and curious encounter with a customer. As well as my cartoon activities, I run a small gallery devoted to selling cartoon originals and graphics, and occasionally (in spite of the recession) we have customers. This particular customer, a charming, intelligent lady with a fine figure of a cheque book behind her, bought one of my cartoons. After expressing delight that I was the creator of this work of art, she asked: 'Did you do the caption as well?'

I was then torn between a desire to escort her to the door and a need to keep the cash flow flowing. 'Why do you ask?' 'Oh,' she said, 'I thought you might have stolen the idea from someone.'

I cite this bizarre exchange as a reason for writing this introduction. I feel I should stand up and try to explain what I do for a living.

I do not, for example, simply stay in bed all morning, merely to rise at three in the afternoon, bath, eat and steal a few jokes. *The Times* likes to see my gloomy face at some point in the day and my other clients need to have their faces washed and brightened by my presence in their lives. Here is how I work.

I get up about 8.30 am – reluctantly. I eat a small breakfast and shave a small portion of my face. I dress and drive to my studio. I look at the clutter of years of old drawings and magazines, and shudder. Must tidy all this tomorrow, I say to myself. I sharpen pencils, read my mail, put on some music, then go out for a second breakfast.

During the day I grapple with bits of advertising work, illustrate articles and think of jokes. At the end of the afternoon on four days of the week, I go to *The Times*. I consult the oracles about the choice of subject. There is nothing funny happening in the world. I try to find a fresh approach to same old problems. I read the papers, I listen to the radio, I even talk to journalists. I hope to find a joke lurking somewhere among the clutter of my desk and mind.

Jokes are about making unexpected connexions. They join up the invisible dots between two subjects. If they work, people

laugh and if they don't, people seem to get annoyed. A dull article might still be informative, but an unfunny joke is irritating.

I never planned to be a cartoonist. It happened to me over the years, in the same way that one acquires a mortgage and grey hairs.

A professional cartoonist has to perform to order. You can have flu, the plague and dandruff in your soul, but the newspaper must go to press and editors are very reluctant to print a blank space on their front page.

And not only must you produce, you must produce something that makes other people laugh. After all these years, I still don't understand this strange mechanism. It is a bit like doing a crossword, where you know there must be a solution and all it needs is sweat and tearing up pieces of paper. And every once in a while, a good joke will pop into one's head like a golden bonus, and you can recognize it immediately as funny and, even better, true. I tend to prefer jokes which tell you something about people.

My jokes reflect my attitudes to life, which is why I cannot steal them from anyone else. I do not put on a cynical, pessimistic hat when considering the day's news and then go home to become a normal jolly person. I am a cynical pessimist who happens to be able to make and draw jokes. The gloom feeds my work, and I imagine that it is simply my good luck that this slant on life matches the mood of Britain today. In fact, events nowadays outstrip my wildest glooms. Who could have ever imagined Great Britain having over three million unemployed? What pessimist could invent such wholesale despair?

The problem for a cartoonist today is that he must read the news and still be able to laugh.

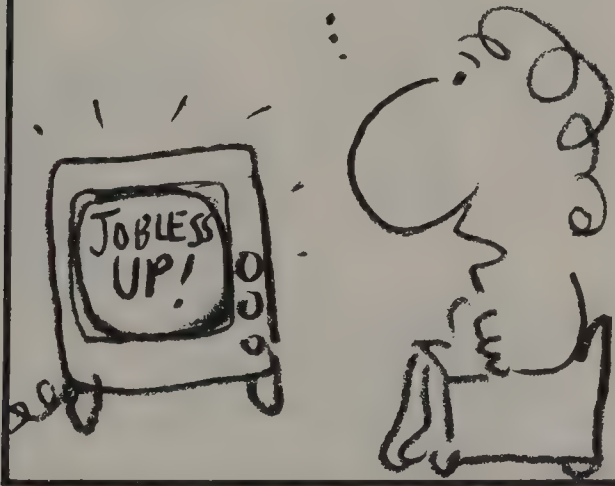
Meanwhile I will go and have another cup of tea so as to delay for another ten minutes the agony of trying to be funny. If you know of a good joke that I can steal, please send it to me in a plain brown envelope, c/o Methuen. Thank you.

Mel Calman

I'm glad to have
the work...



Can't they get
work posing for
TORY election
posters?



And what job
would you like
to be priced out
of?

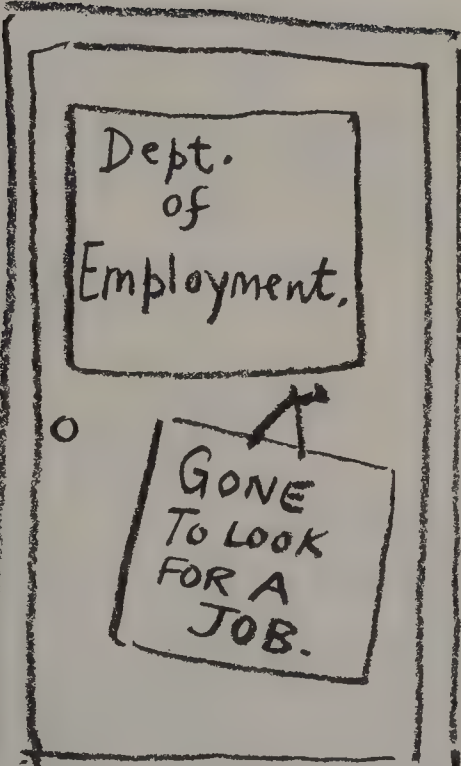


Please Sir-
Can I take
Unemployment
for 'O' Levels?
⋮



I've been unemployed
for so long - I've
forgotten what
I'm unemployed
at ...

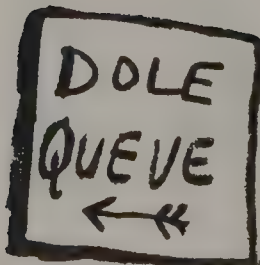
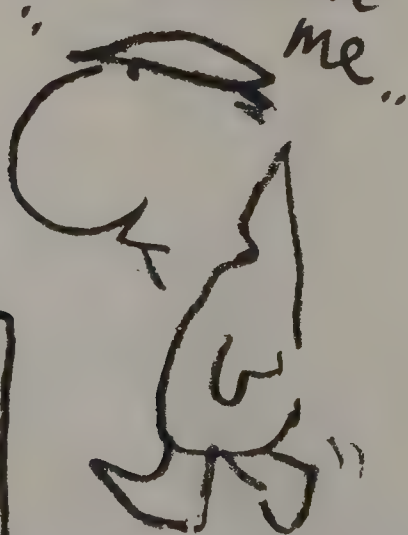




Dept.
of
Employment.

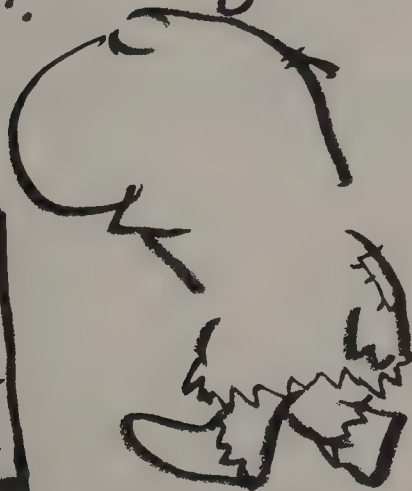
GONE
TO LOOK
FOR A
JOB.

If only I was a
MISSILE SYSTEM-
the GOVT. would want

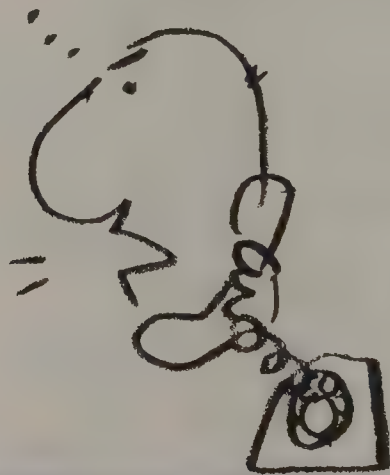


Of course we've come
a long way since
those days of economies
and shortages..

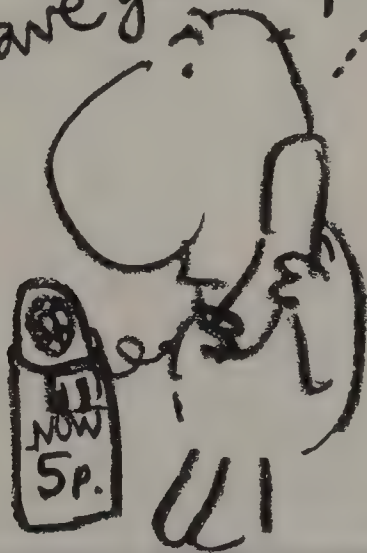
Festival
of
Britain-
25 yrs ...



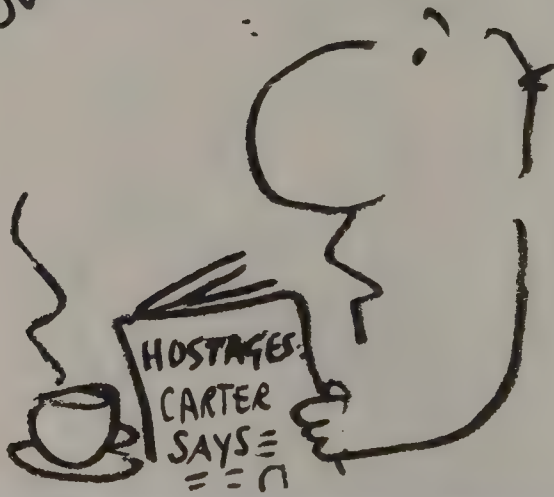
If we could only
export wrong numbers-
we'd all be rich...



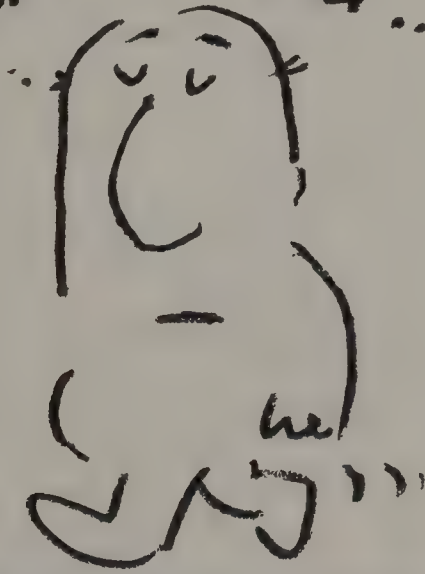
At the third stroke -
the price of GAS will
have gone up:...



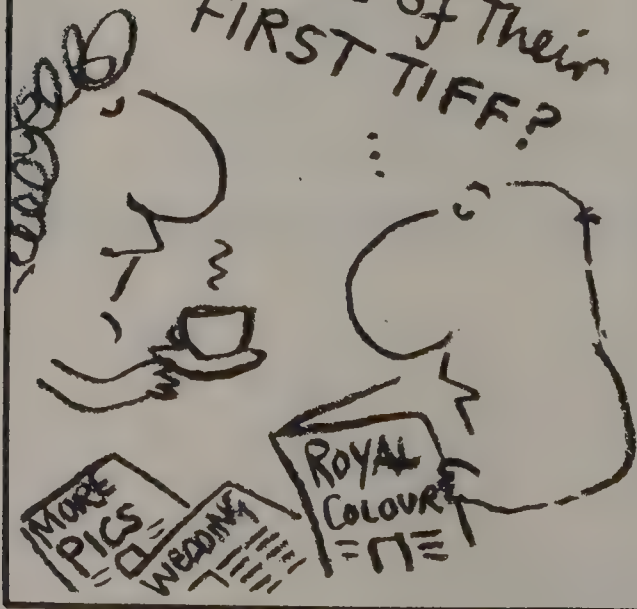
I remember the HOSTAGES
but who's CARTER?



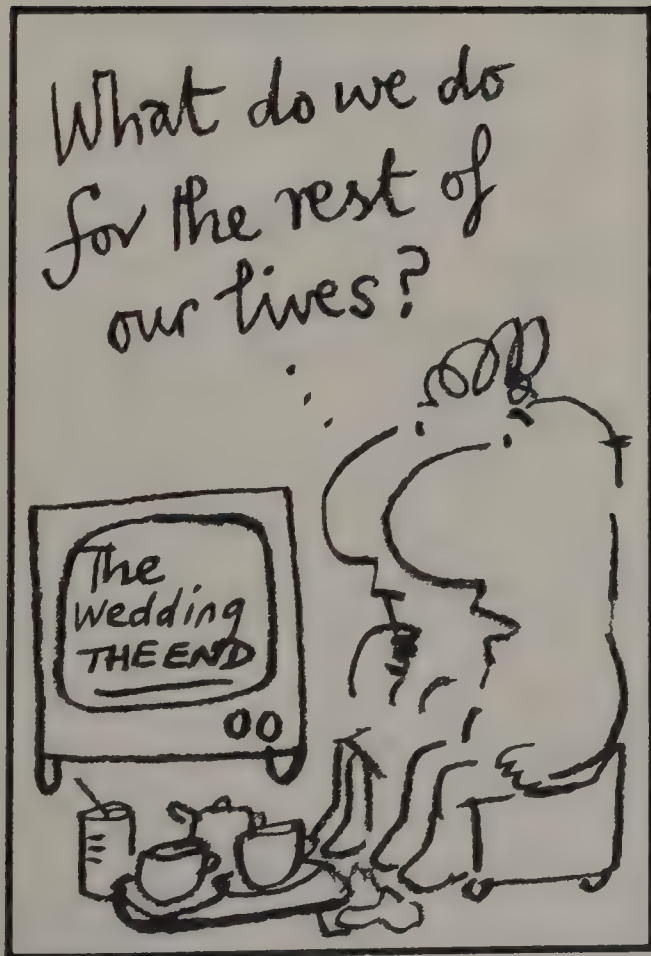
I'm so old I can
remember buying
a BRITISH car..



Is there going
to be a Souvenir
BROCHURE of their
FIRST TIFF?

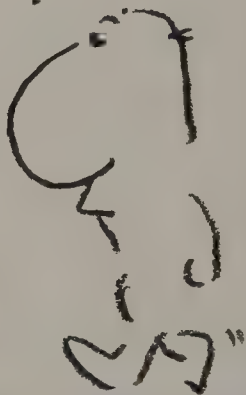


What do we do
for the rest of
our lives?



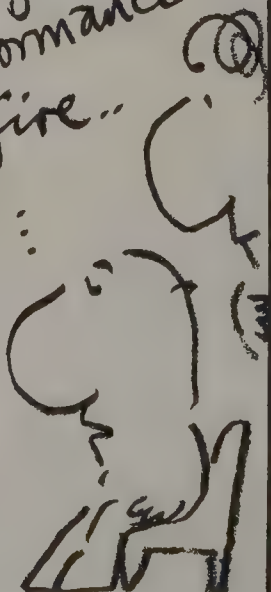
Nobody's
perfect..

REAGAN
SPEAKS

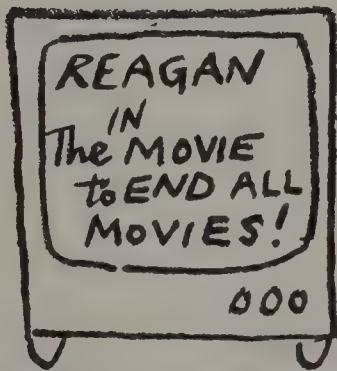


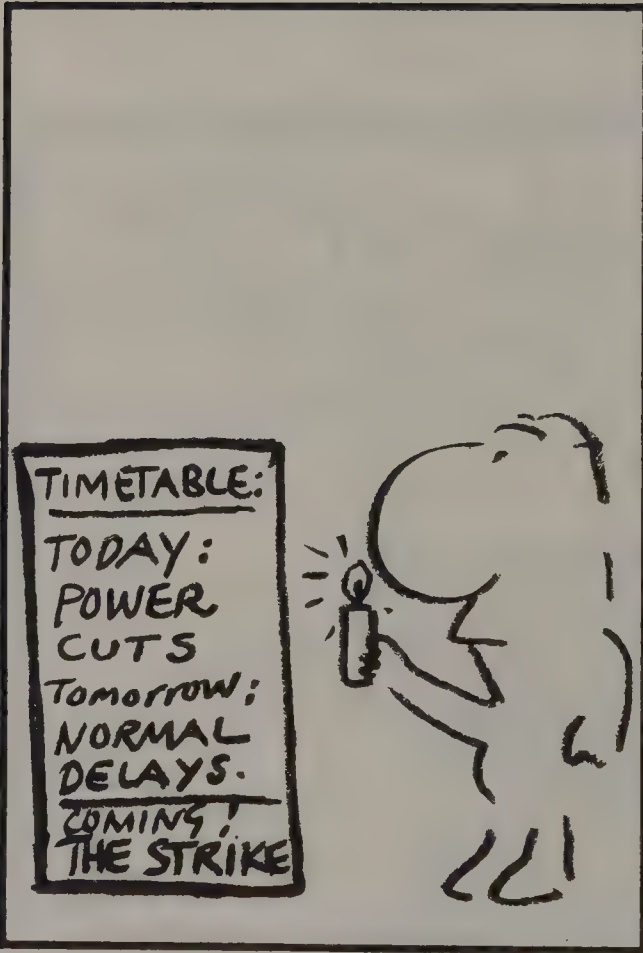
Reagan deserves
an award for
BEST performance
under fire..

OSCAR
AWARDS
000



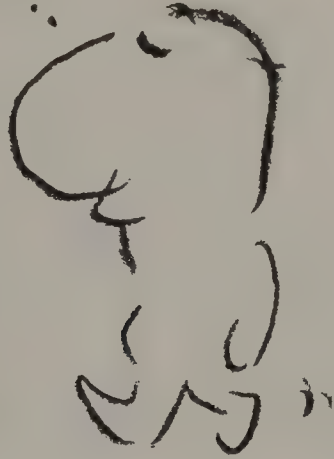
If only Henry FONDA
had got the
part ...



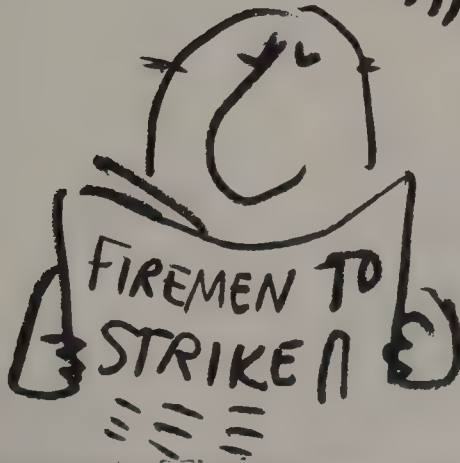


British Disputes
are built to last!

NEW
FORD
DISPUTE

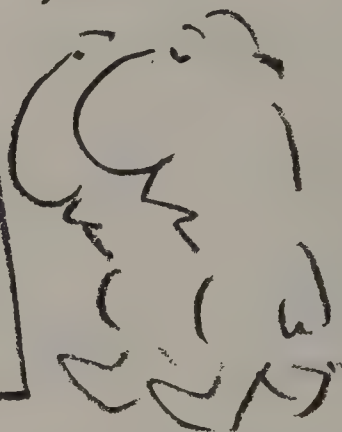


Good thing we're
SINKING and not
burning..



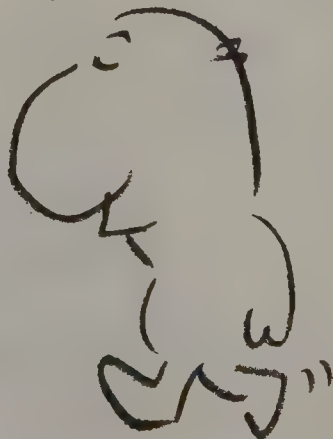
Things must be
really desperate..

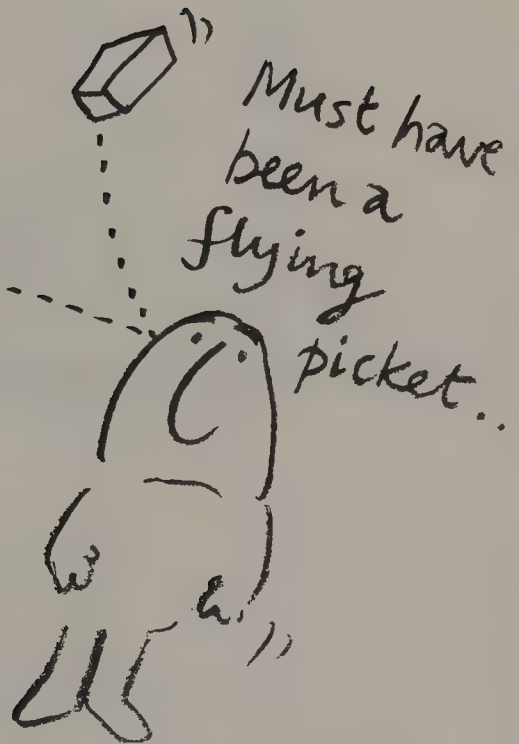
BL
VOTE
TO
WORK



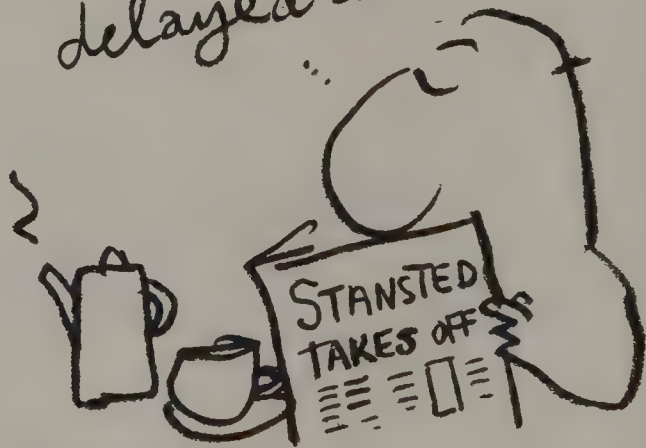
How Un-British!

"WE,
WONT
STRIKE"
SAY OILMEN.





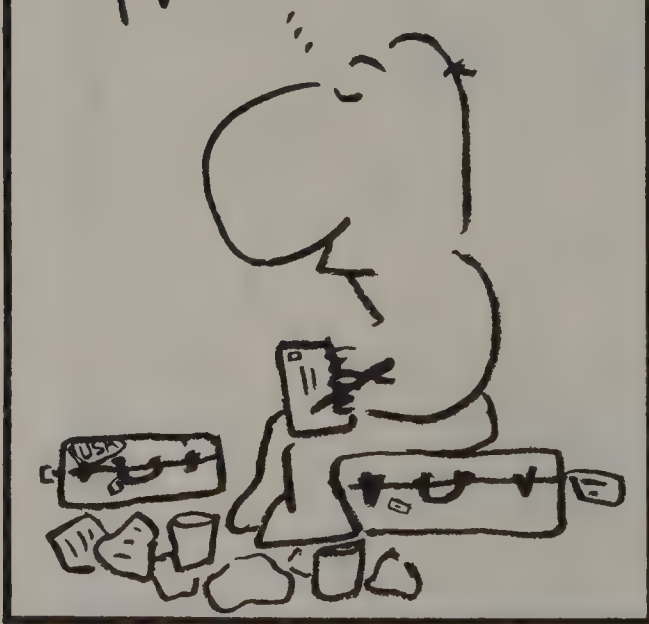
Wonderful -
a new place to be
delayed at ...



Here's a villa
with its own
oil slick.



Having wonderful
time - wish
I was there..



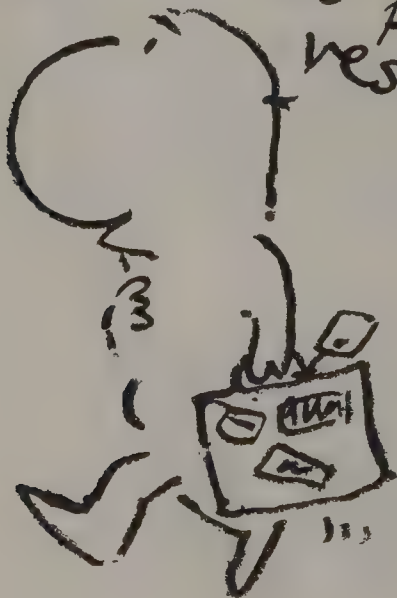
Do you want to be
delayed by
road, rail or
sea?



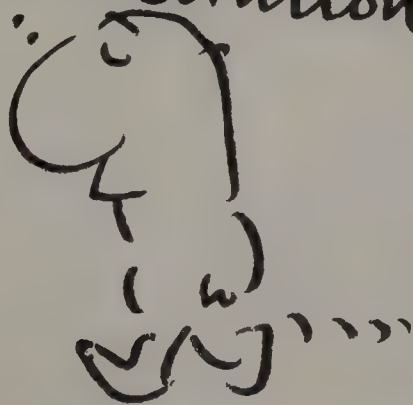
No dear - last year
we were delayed
at LUTON - 1978
was when we
were hijacked..



Passport? Tickets?
Pills? Bullet-proof
vest?



A summit is the
longest way
round a solution..



A is for ARSON
B is for BOMBS
C is for CS GAS..
...



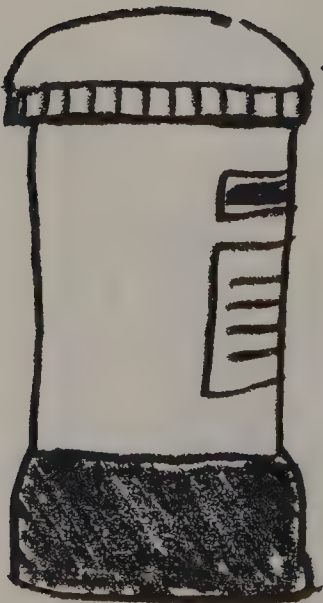
Dear Santa-
I want a new
bike, a stereo and
NO BOMBS..



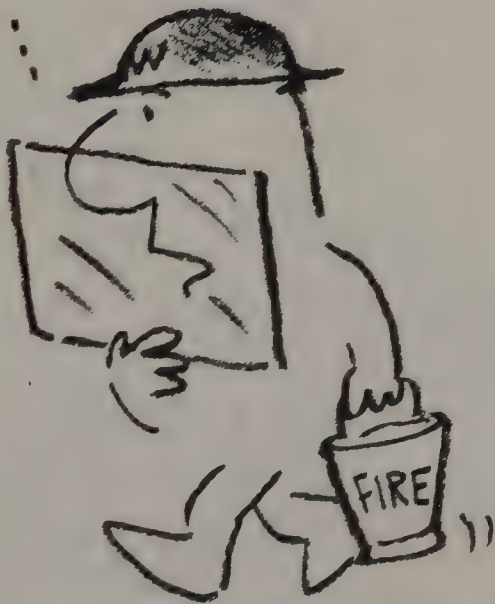
May I search
your bag, sir?

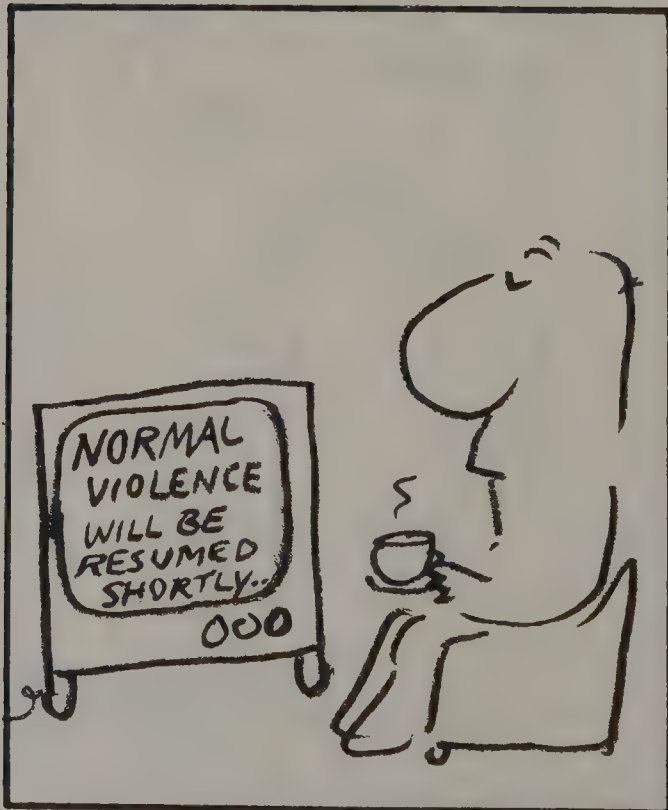
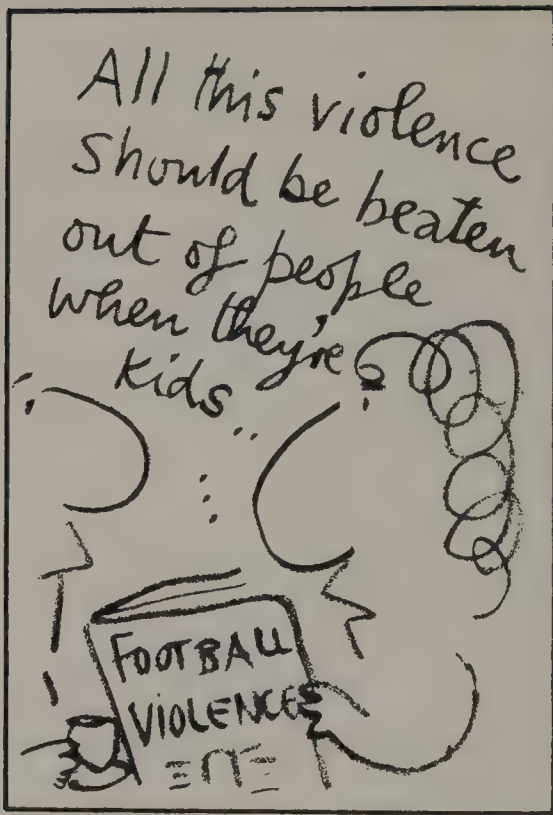


Why pick
on me?

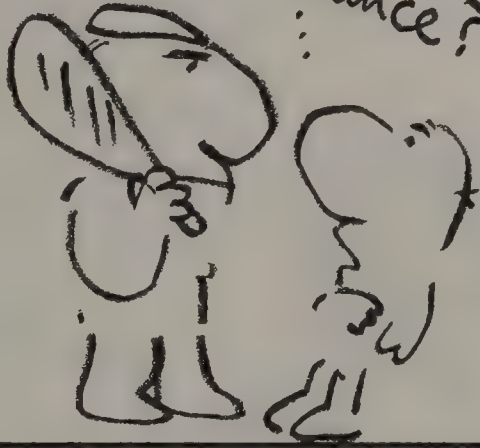


Just going to see
if there are any
letters..





Couldn't you mug
me when I can
get an
ambulance?



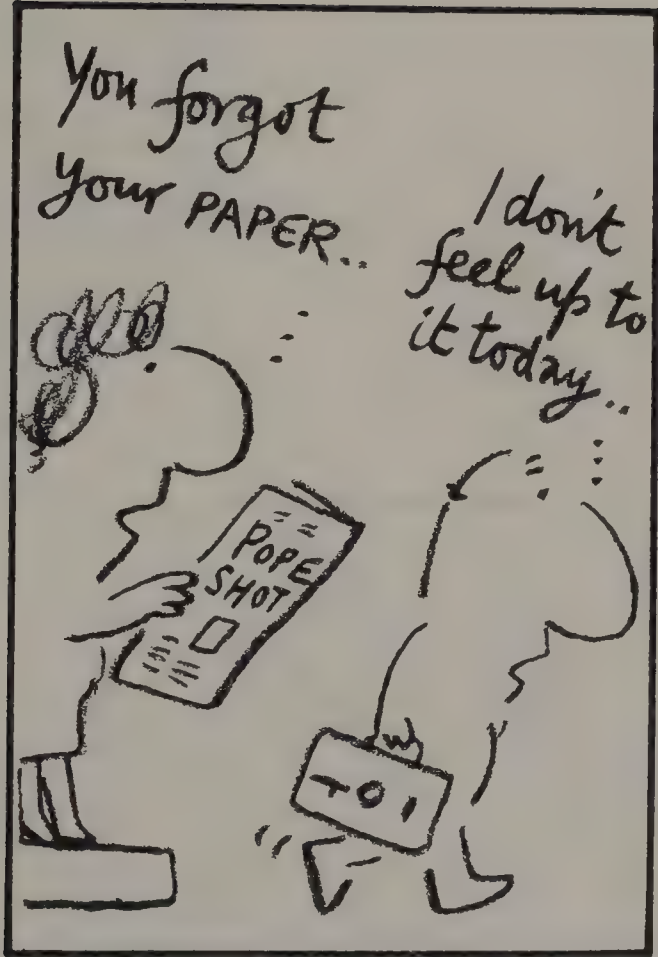
We need a bomb
that only KILLS
the people who
drop it ..



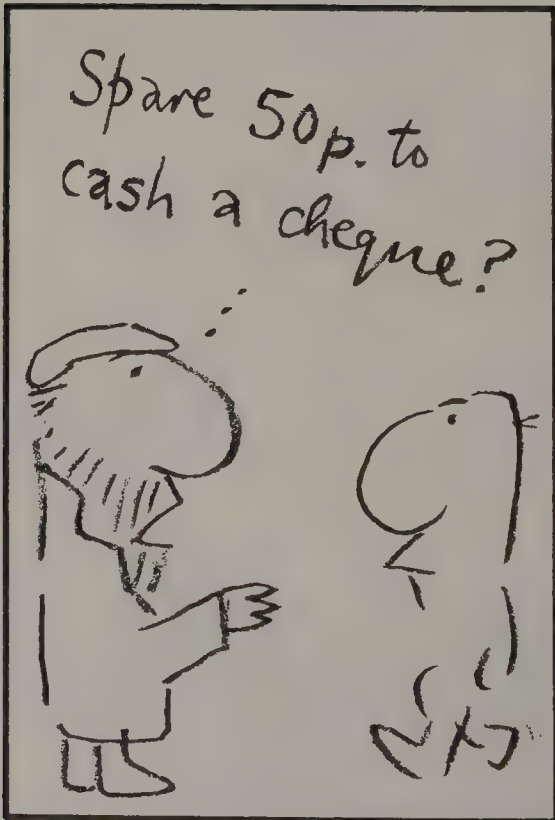
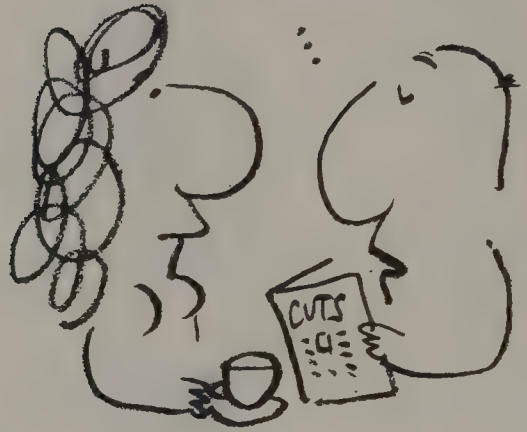


You forgot
your PAPER..

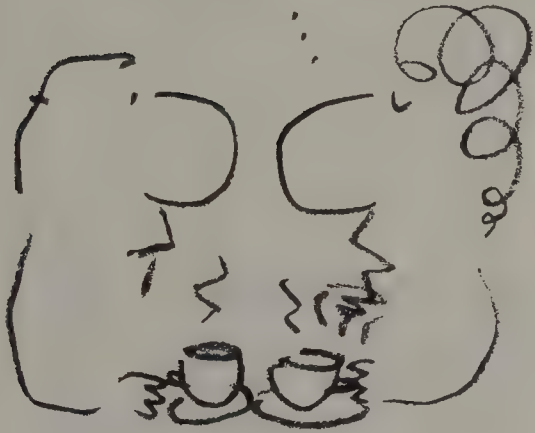
I don't
feel up to
it today..



My economic
strategy will be
to emigrate..



This per cent
can't manage
on 4 per cent...



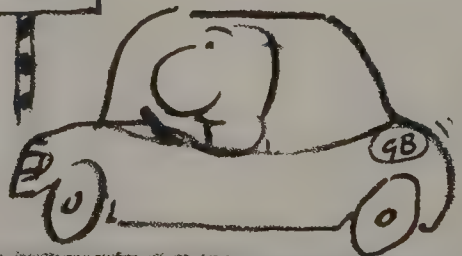
Just as well you
didn't win any
yesterday, isn't it?



Why does
OIL have to come
from such unstable
parts of the
world?



There's nothing
like motoring
for making a
masochist
happy..

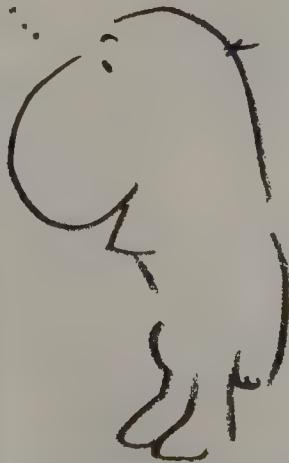


This car does
ten price increases
to the gallon..



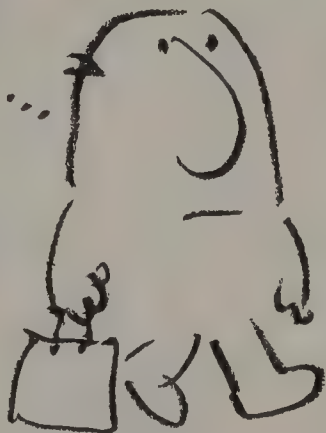
And what do
I use for money?

BUY
GOLD
NOW!



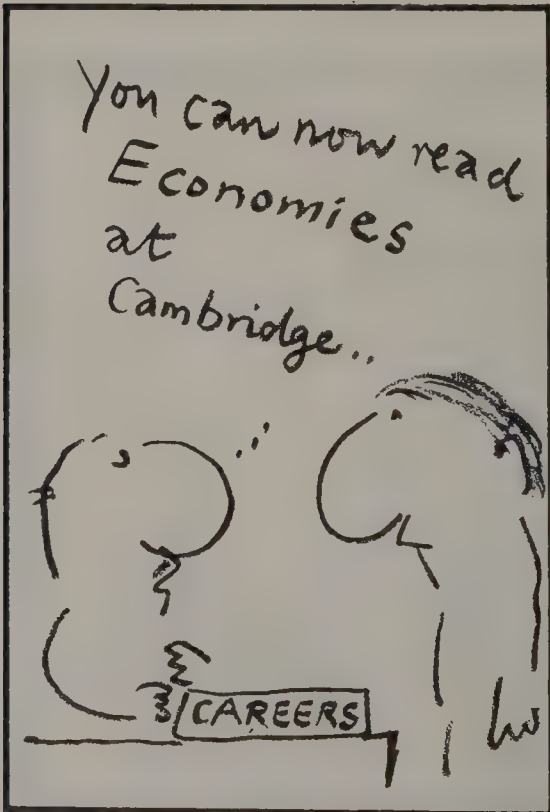
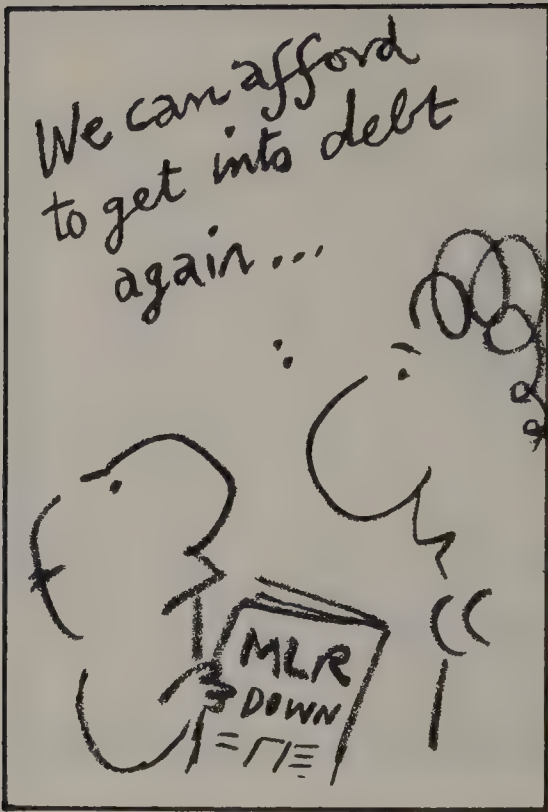
A pound by any
other name will
buy as
little ...

EURO-
MONEY.



Next time
I'm buying
an Ark ...





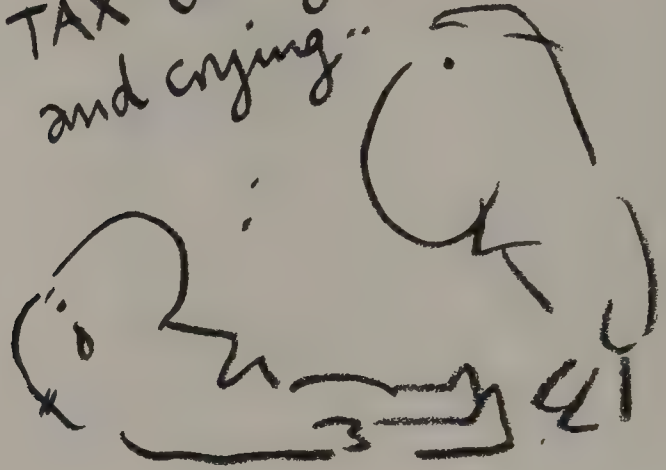
Doctor - I've got
'Price-Watcher's
Neck'



It's a great BUDGET
if you don't want to
enjoy living..



I've discovered there's no
TAX on lying down
and crying..

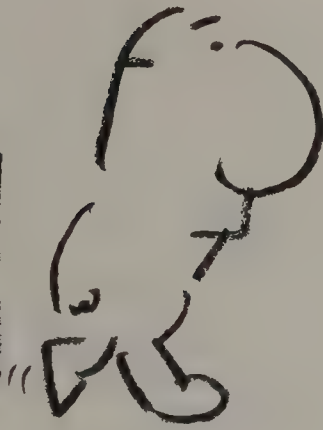


By tomorrow
these will be the
good old days..

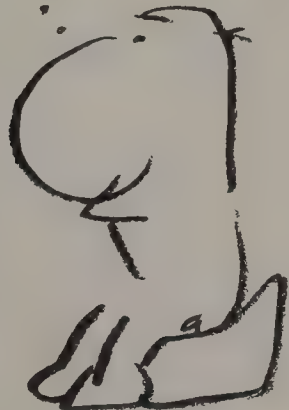
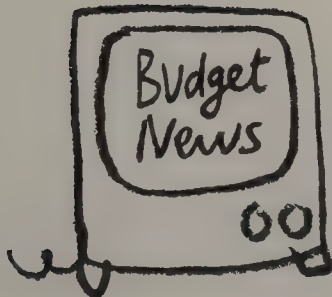


Not mine..

SPIRITS
UP!



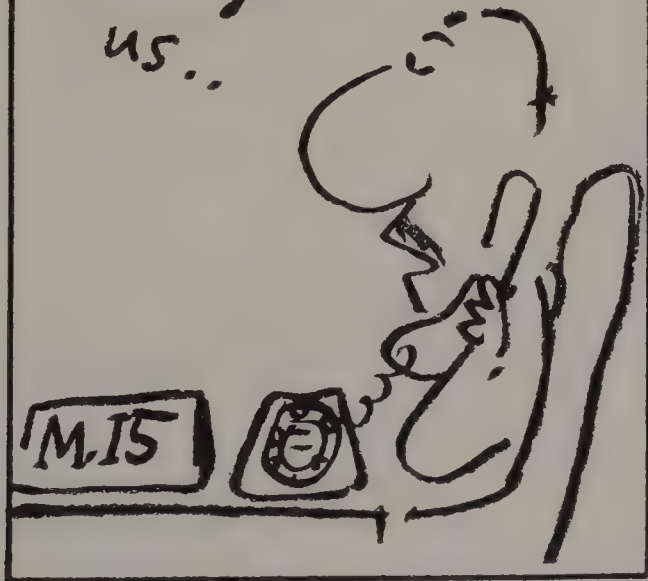
The Clichés are bang
on target..



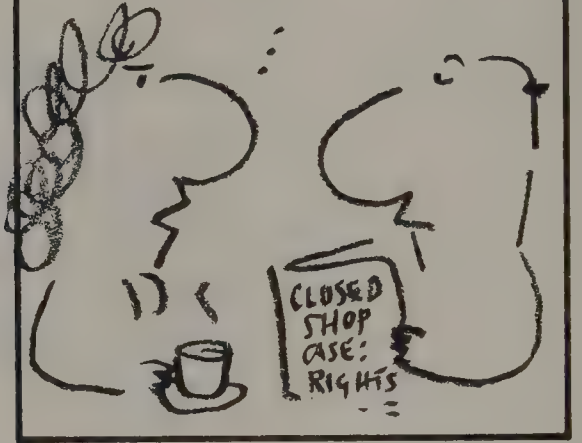
But, dear boy-
we were counting
on you betraying
us..



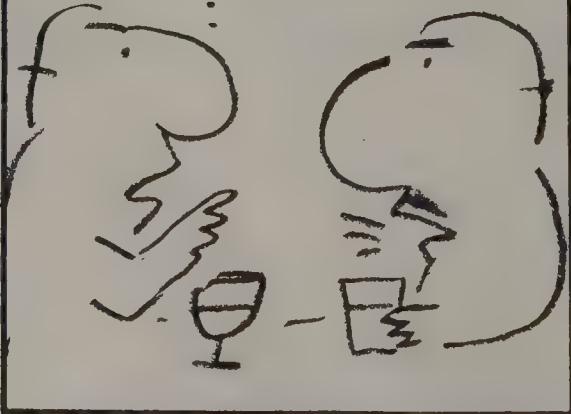
Don't worry, Prime
Minister - the head
of the K.G.B
works for
us..



I want the HUMAN
Right to NOT
listen to cricket
Scores...

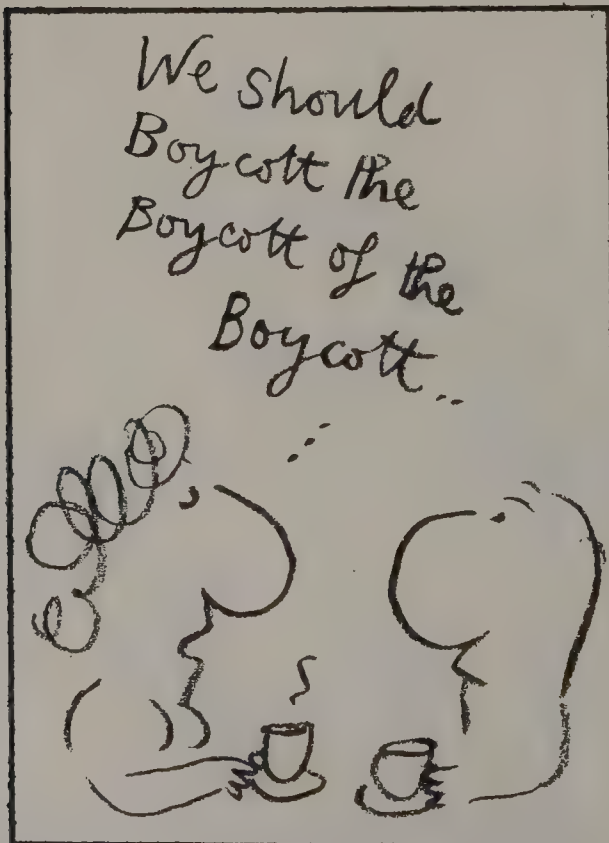
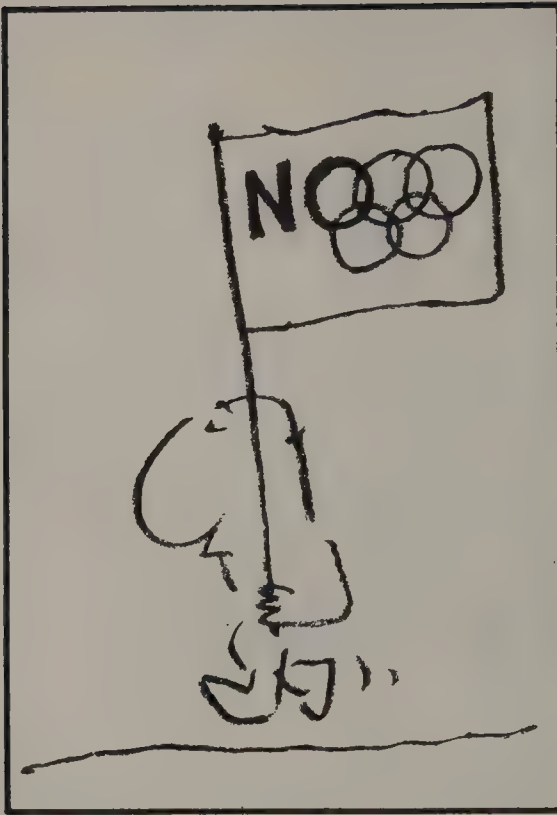


Don't you
MCENROE
me!

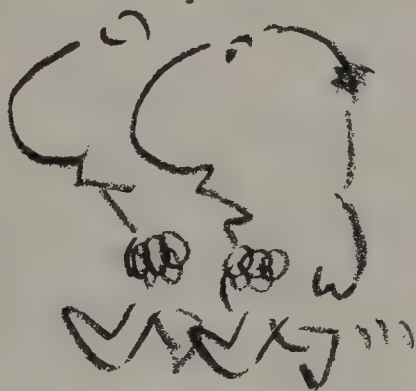


They must be
bad winners..





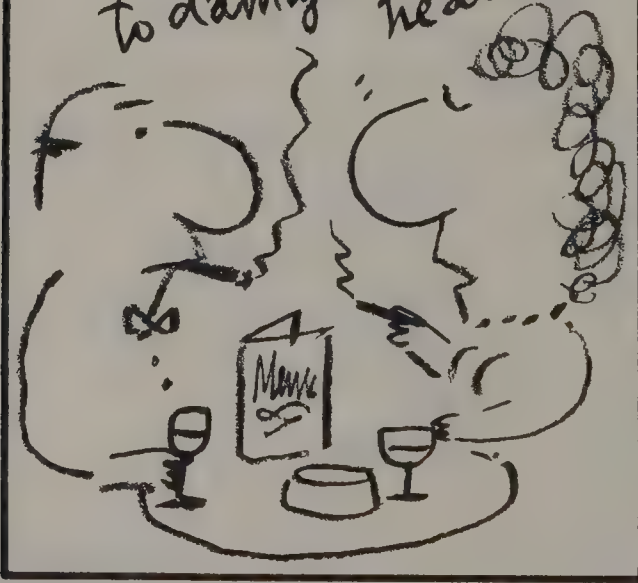
Who's sponsoring
your boycott?



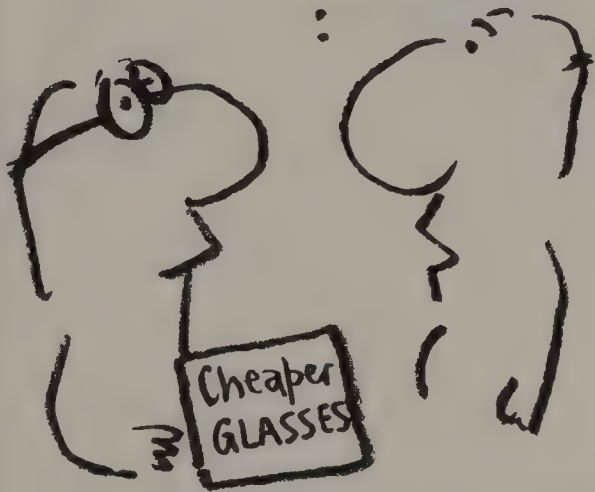
If there's no GAMES-
what will we do
for boredom in
the evenings?



What are things
coming to when one
can no longer afford
to damage one's
health?



I badly need
a pair of
rose-coloured
spectacles..



NO NO!

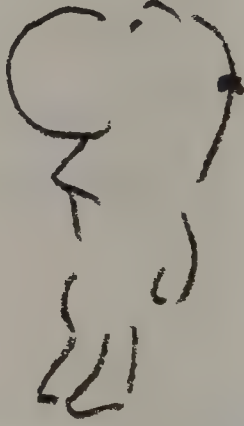
IM LEFT!

NO-
YOU'RE
RIGHT!

IM LEFT
OF LEFT!!

YOU'RE
TOO SELF-
CENTRED
TO BE
LEFT!

I feel
left out..



Can I join now
while you still
like people?



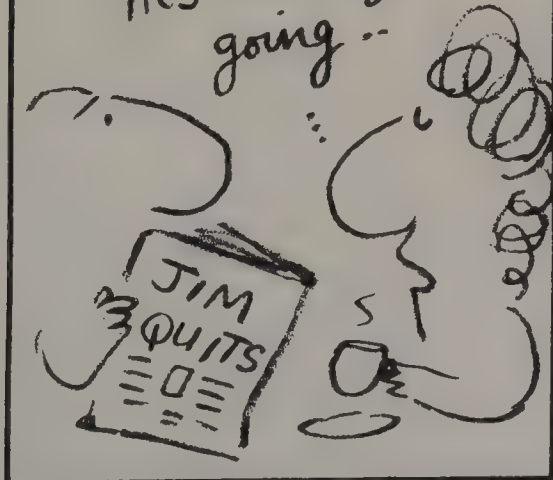
I'd be a Liberal-
if I could remember
what they stood
for..



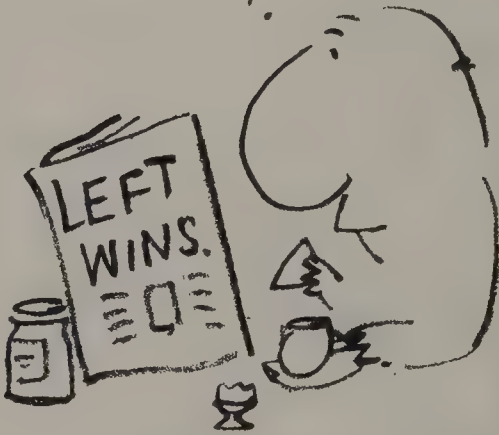
Will that stop the
speeches being
full of HOT air?



At last!
A politician who
knows whether
he's coming or
going ..



What kind of
Labour Party allows
that to happen?

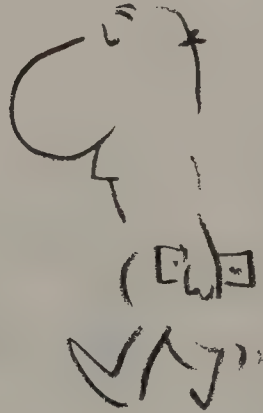


I can't vote
LABOUR now
it's gone Left...



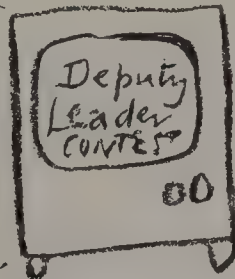
How moderately
exciting!

MODERATE
ALLIANCE
GOES
AHEAD!

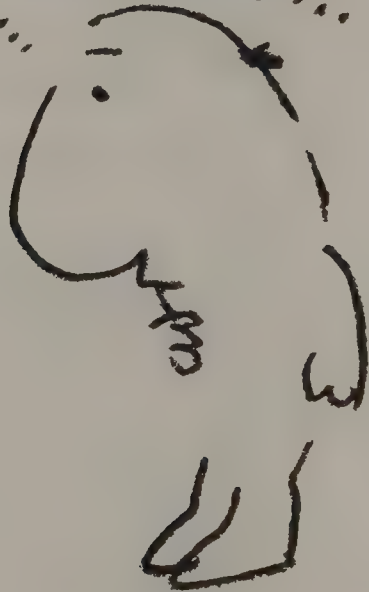


I find all this
intellectual
theorising rather
highbrow..

SUCKS!
YAH!!
YAROO!!



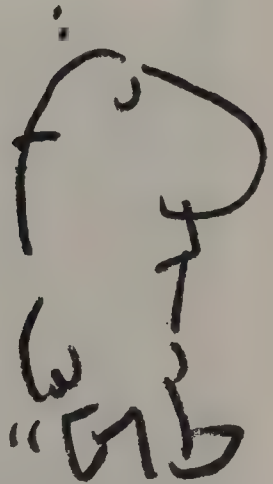
I felt fine until
he said that...



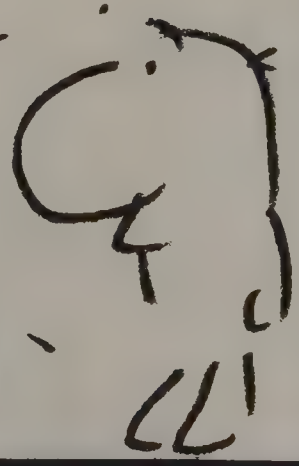
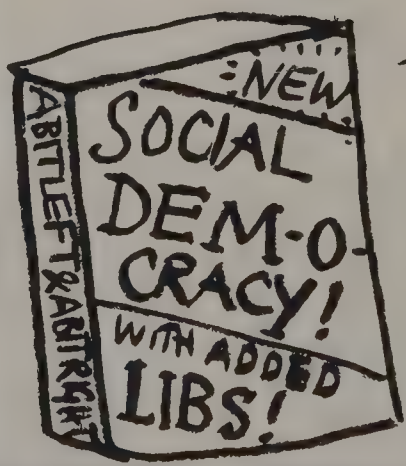
"DON'T
PANIC!"
-HEALEY

Typical
carelessness..

LAB.
LOSE
SEAT!

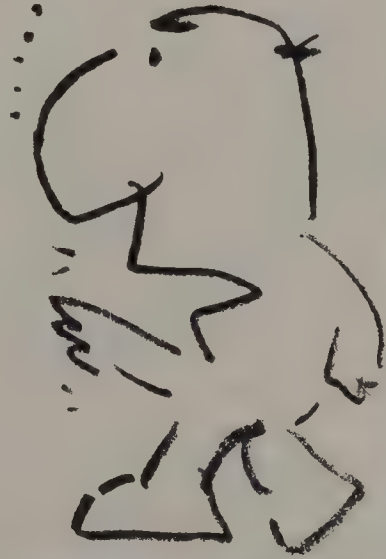
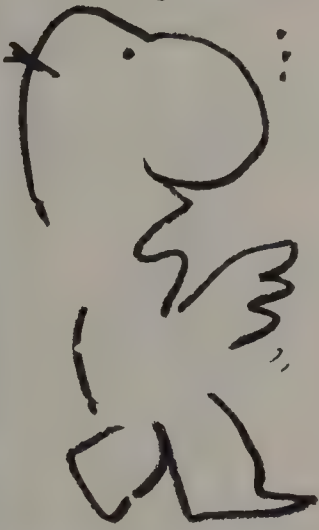


But will it
wash **TORIES**
out of my hair?



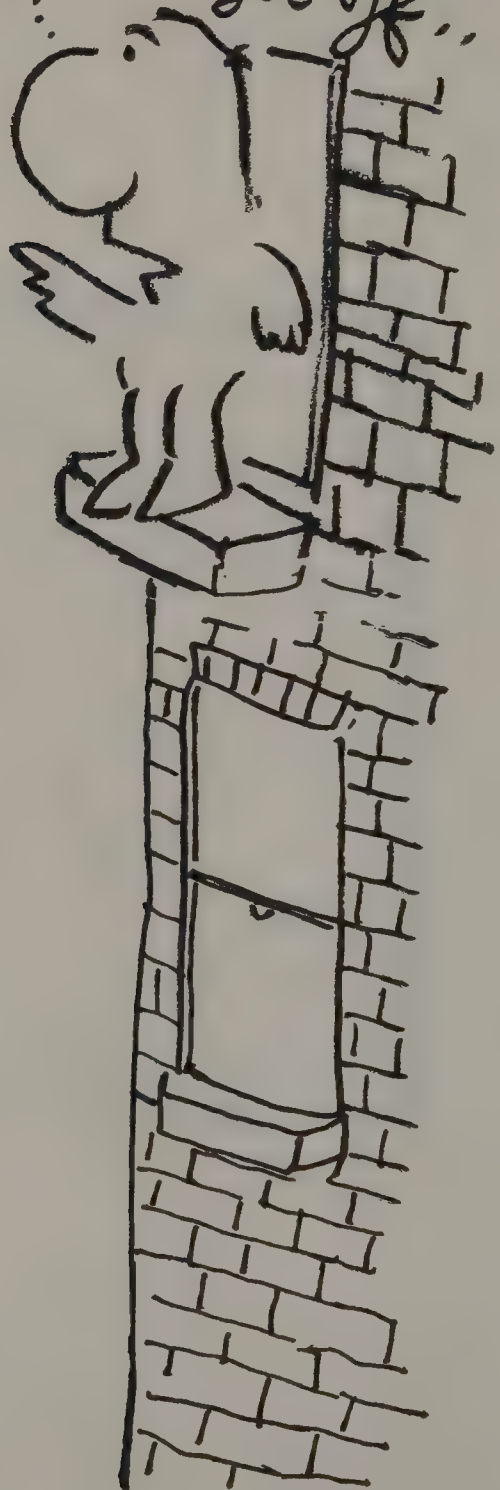
Hooligan!

POLITICIAN!



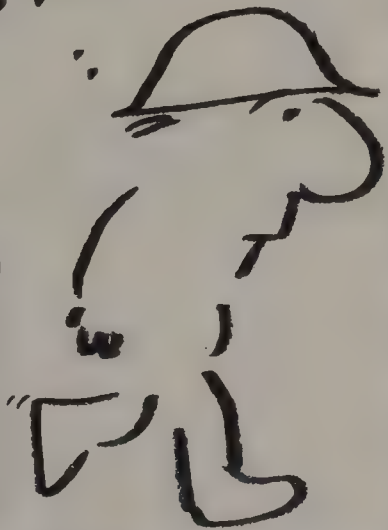
STOP the economic
recovery - I want to

get off..



At least he only
used WORDS..

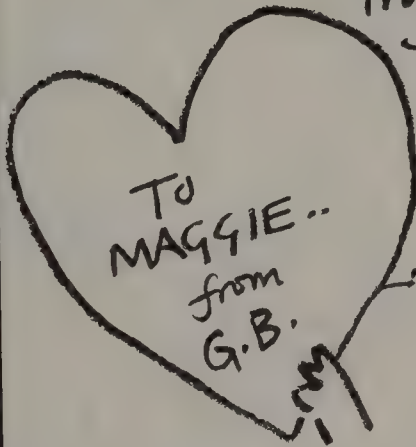
HEATH
ATTACKS
MAGGIE



If someone hit
MAGGIE with a
steel chair, the
chair would
collapse..



To be honest -
my heart's
not
in it..



WLL

I like MAGGIE -
She knows my
own mind ..



it's a lovely NEW
day - and MASSIE
has tightened your
belt another
notch..



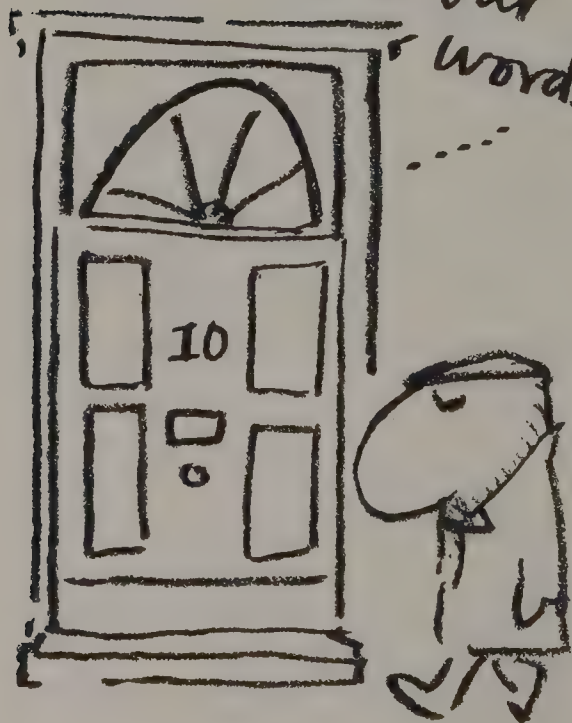
Does she ever
go anywhere
to LISTEN?

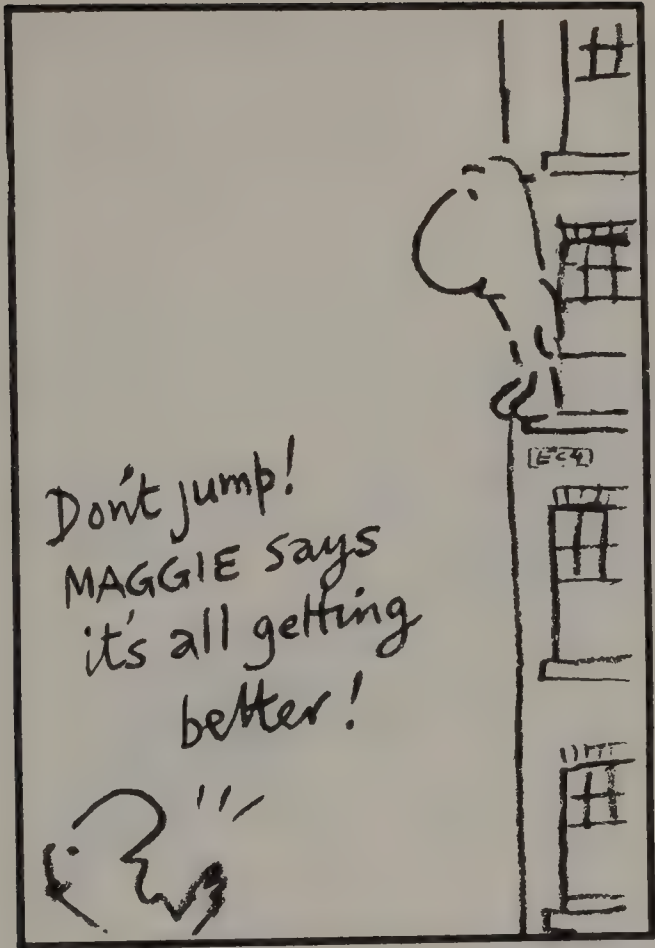


We're all
WETS today..

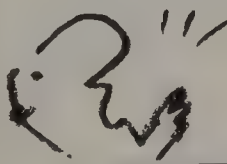


Let them
eat our
words...





Don't jump!
MAGGIE says
it's all getting
better!







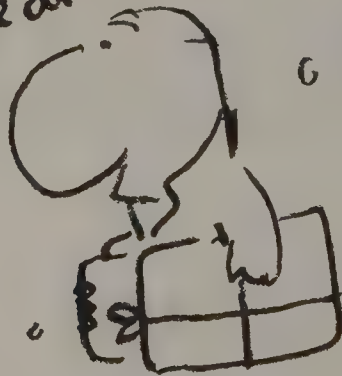
No dear - I am NOT
still at the
office party ...



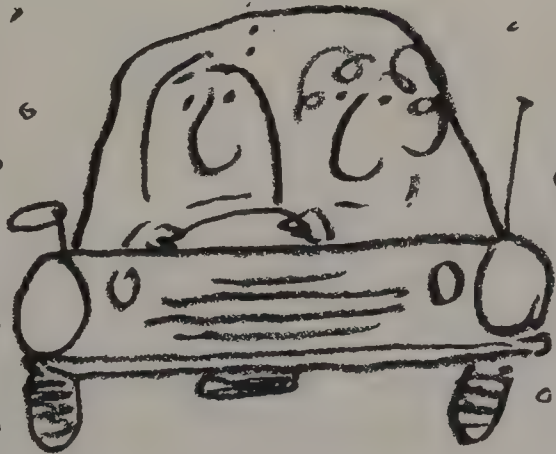
I'd like to buy
some SUN
in the SALES..



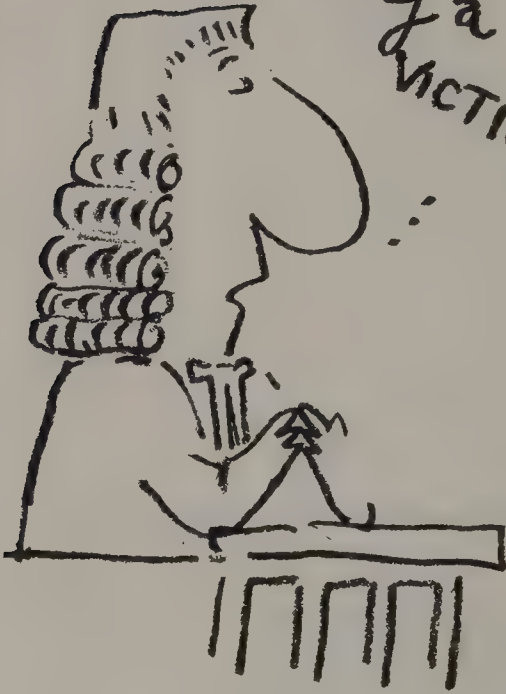
ought to get
danger money
for shopping
this year..



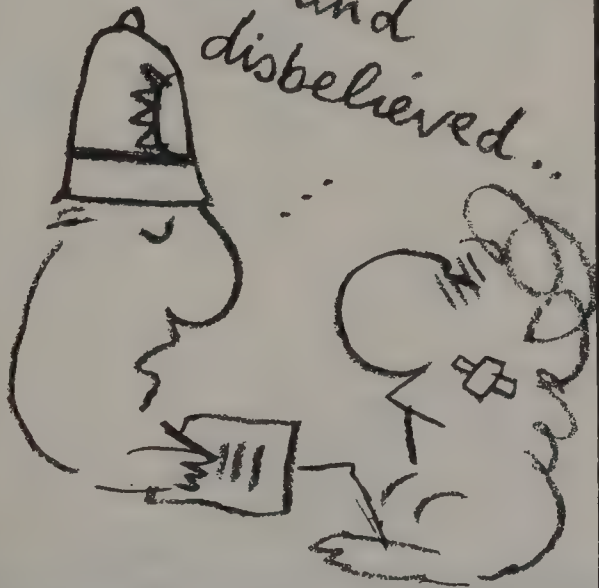
"It's so foggy
I can't see the
SNOW WARNING
signs..



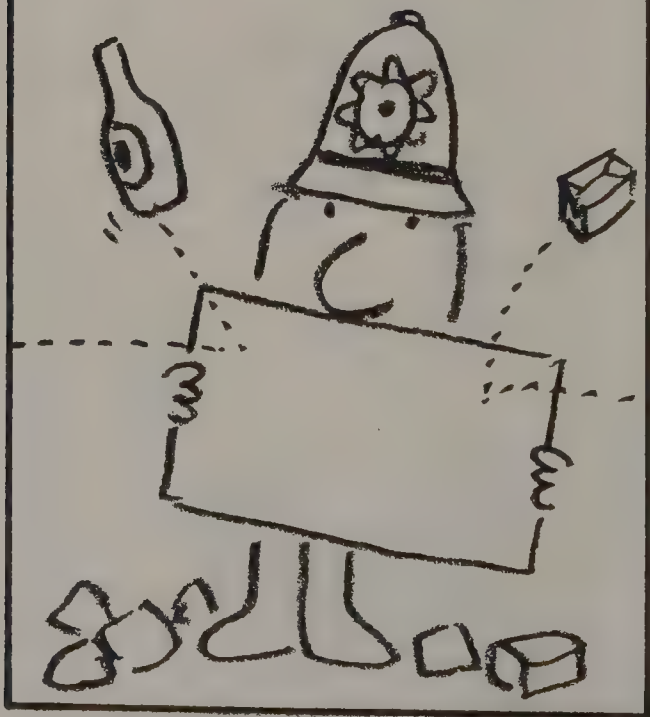
I find you guilty
of being a
VICTIM...



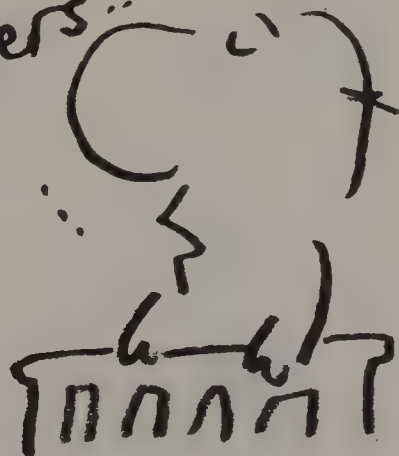
Anything you say
may be taken
down and
disbelieved..



Evening all!



QUILTY - but
open to newspaper
offers..



The
SCARMAN
Report

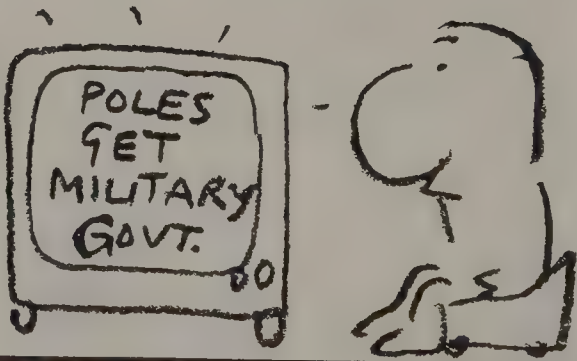


And then, your Honour,
I tripped over
some insufficient
evidence..



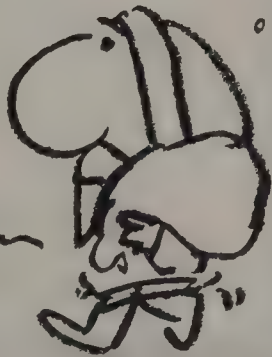
What a terrible
present for
Xmas...

⋮



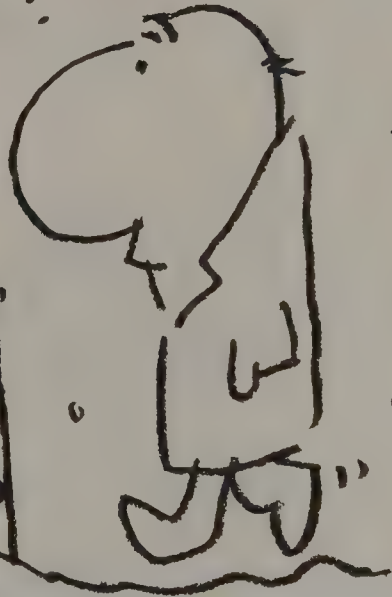
I tried to go
to POLAND -
but it was
closed..

HAPPY
XMAS



Thank GOD we only
have weather...

RUSSIAN
CLIMATE
IN
POLAND

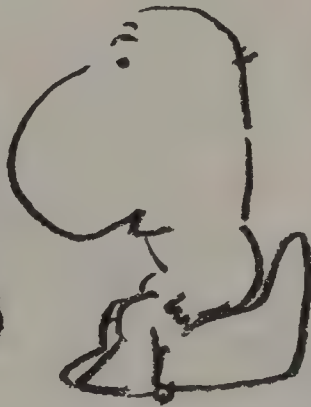
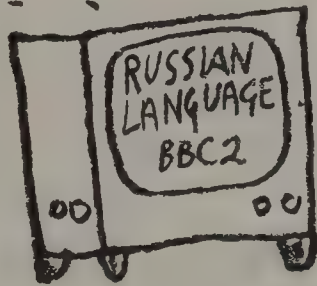




The question is-
Will they invade
or will they only
intervene?



There is, of course,
no Russian word
for
'INVASION'

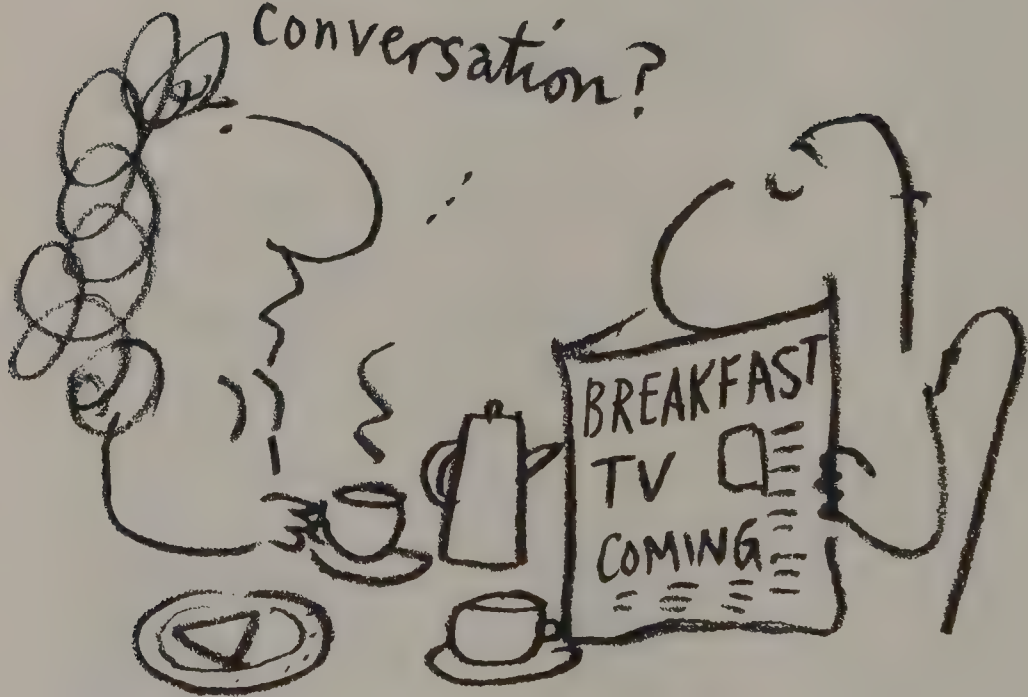




Is this a subsidy
I no longer see
before me?



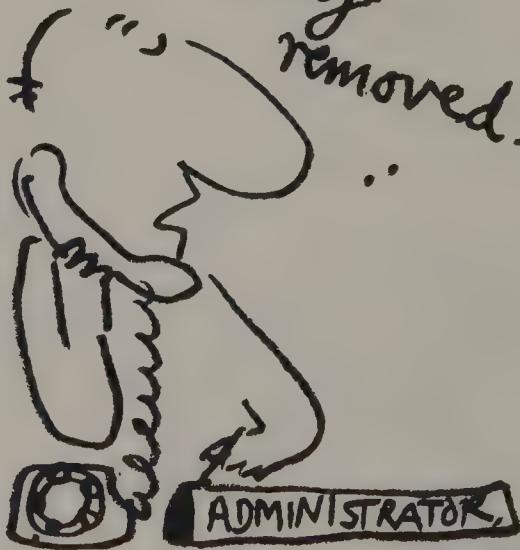
Do you think it will
replace
conversation?

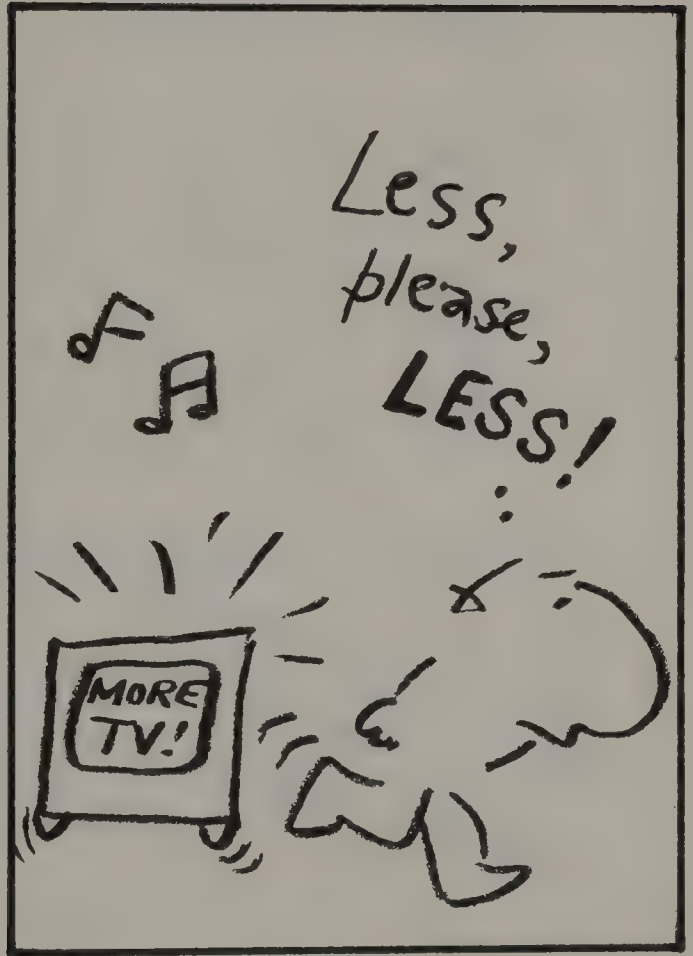


The only pleasures
left are the ones
I'm too old for..

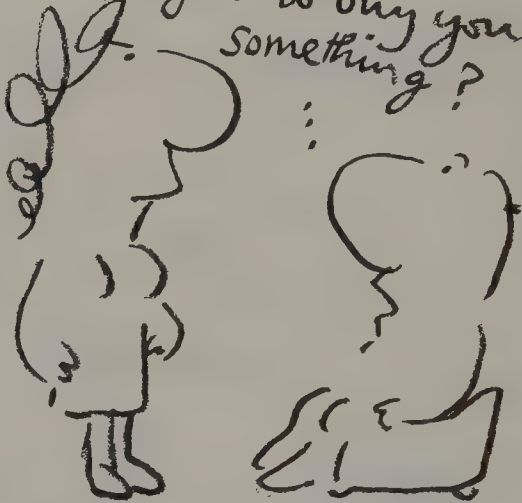


My colleague is
away - having his
bureaucracy
removed..

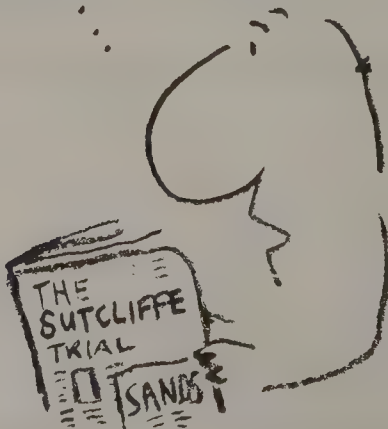




Are there only
2 shopping days
left for me to
forget to buy you
something?



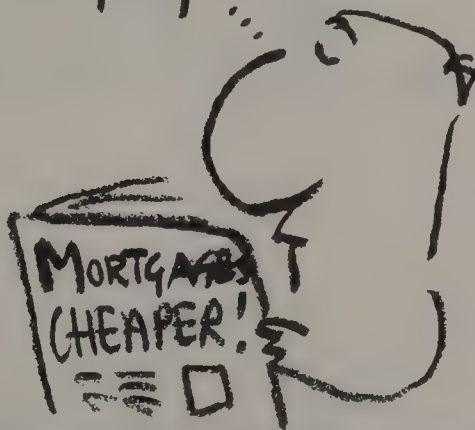
Tell me
something cheerful -
even if it's about
Barbara Cartland..



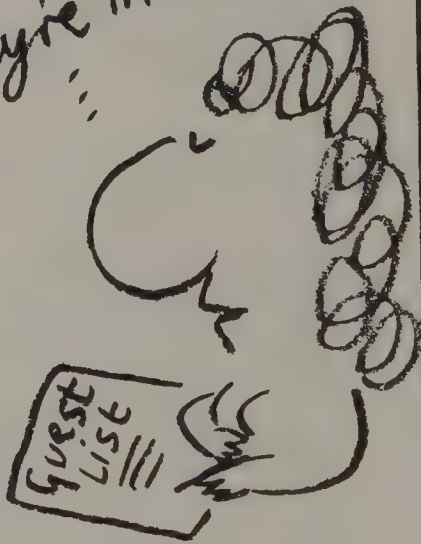
Will you be able to
support a second wife in
the style to which your
first wife is
accustomed?



I could now BUY
a house - if I wasn't
BUYING a missile..

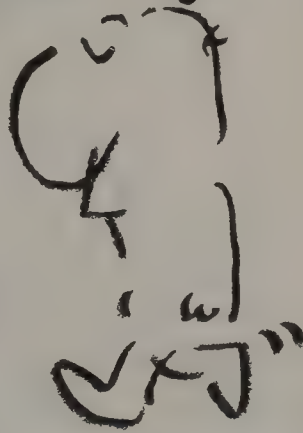


We'd better give
the FORSYTHES
separate rooms -
they're married ..



That's one way to
get this country back
on its feet again..

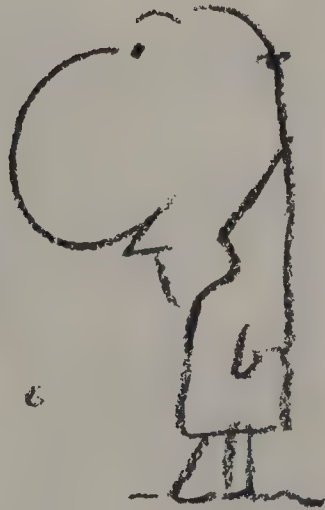
NO
TRAINS.



I'll buy the dinner
if you treat me
to the parking
fine...



What buses?



Cheer up-
we've made the
Best British
Torpedo in the
world.

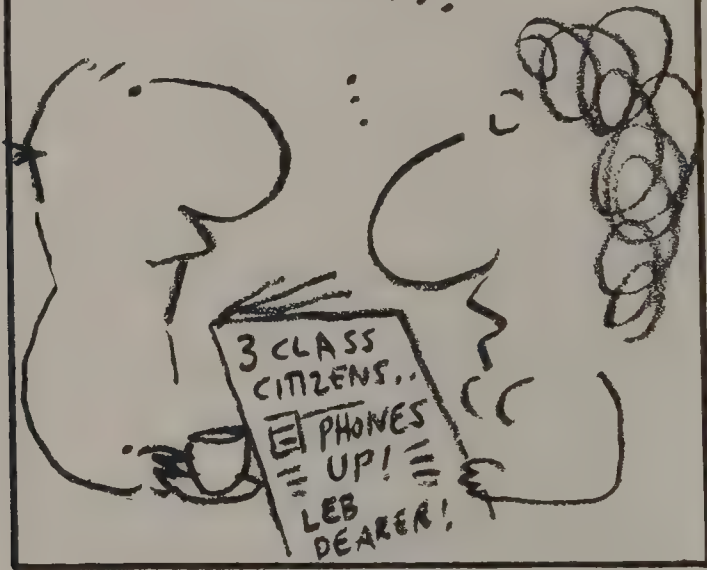


How can it be
News - if it's
always the
same?

⋮

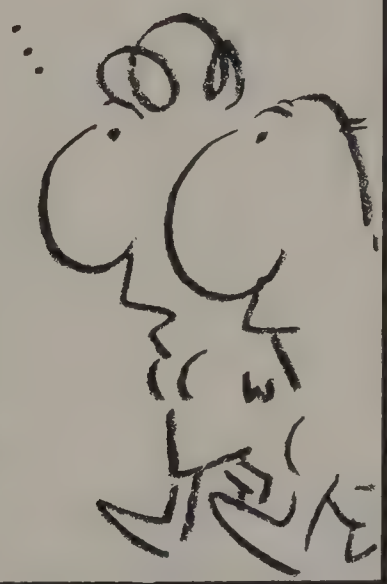


I suppose 1st. Class
CITIZENS will be
allowed to live
abroad...



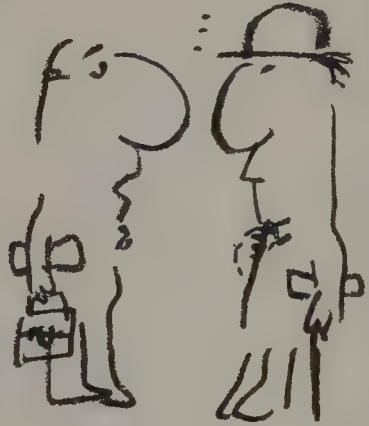
Bet it's the
same old food..

NEW
British
PLANE.



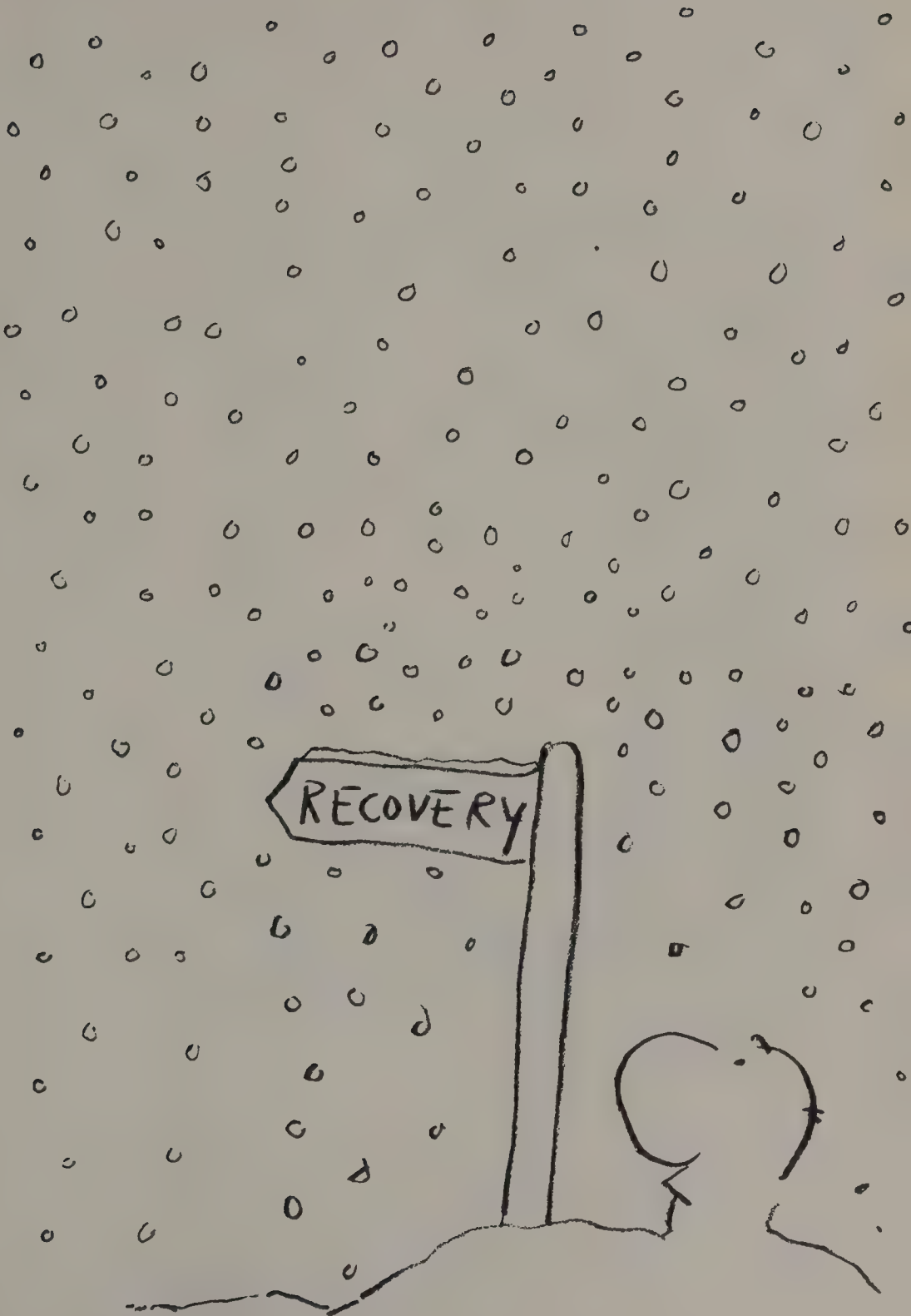
Nice to see
everything WORKING
normally again..

2DAY
RAIL
STRIKE

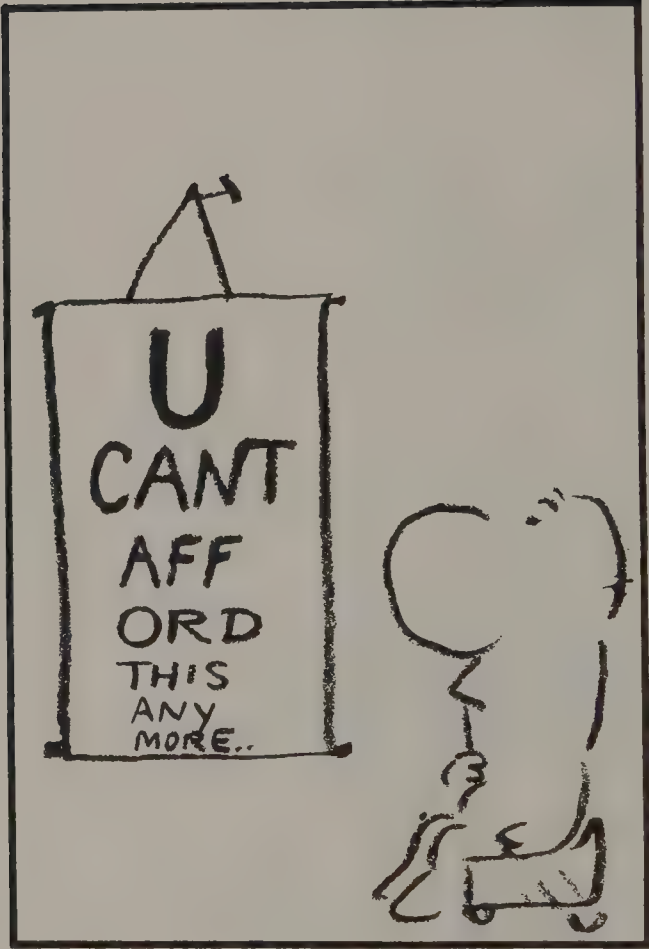


The train due
on PLATFORM 3
is running
ten years late..

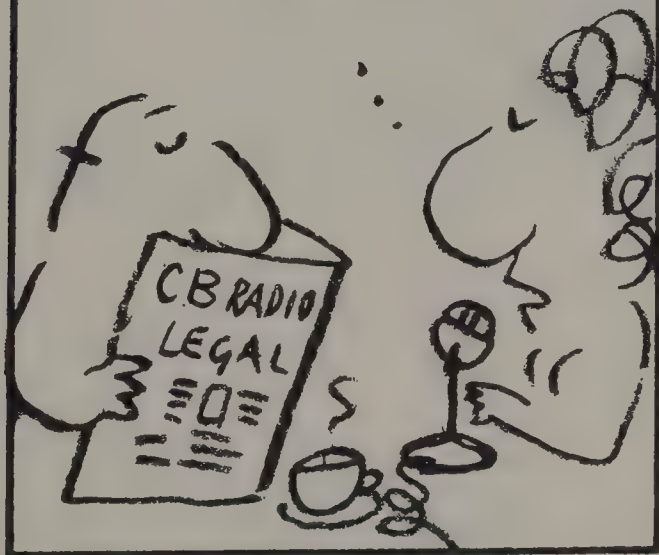




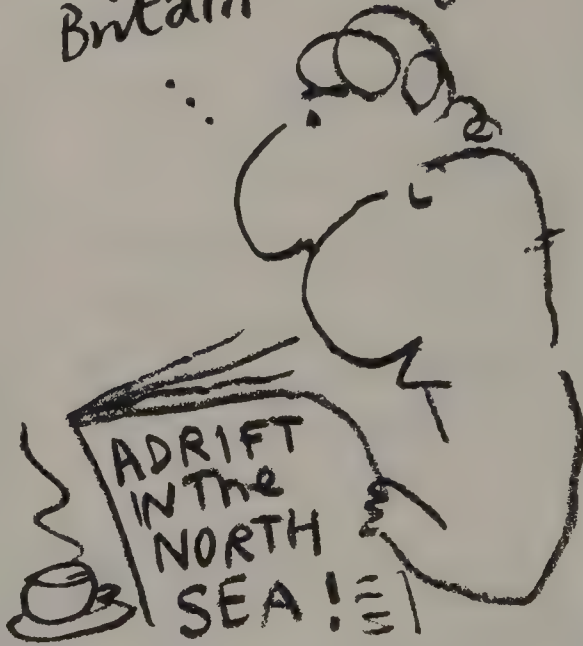
RECOVERY



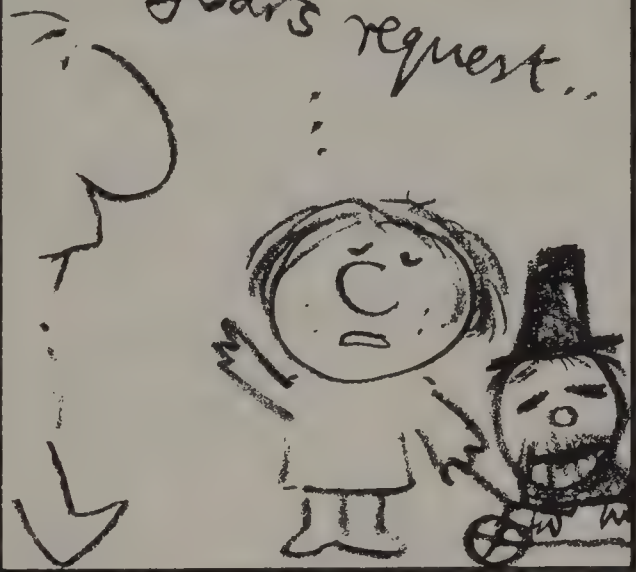
Hi BIG DADDY-
This is TIRED MOMMA-
are you receiving
me?



It's HARSH - but
it sums up
Britain today...



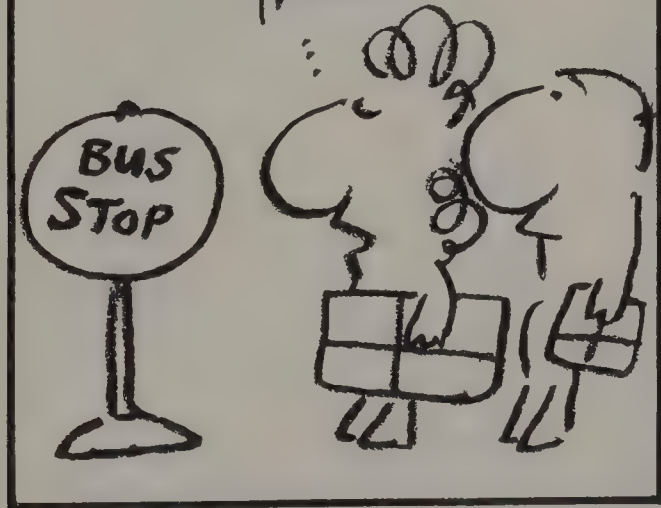
Spare 50p. for
the guy - only
3.8% up on last
year's request..



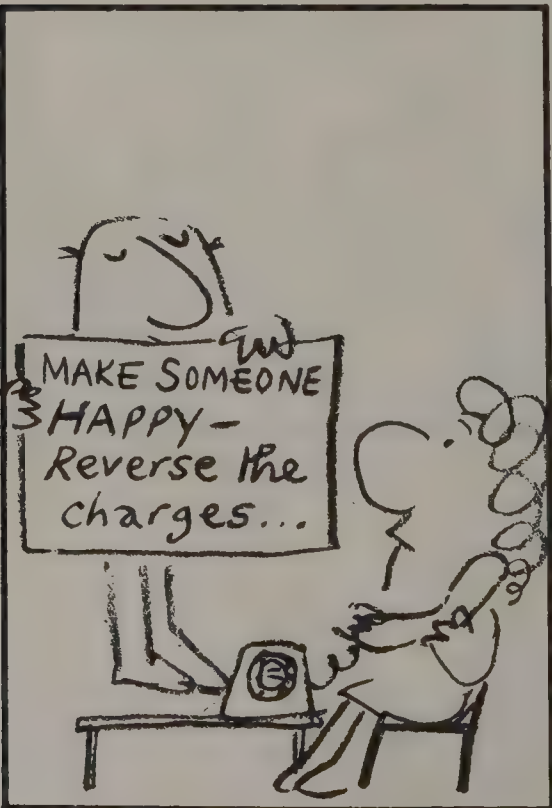
I've heard of
RATES -
but what are
BUSES?

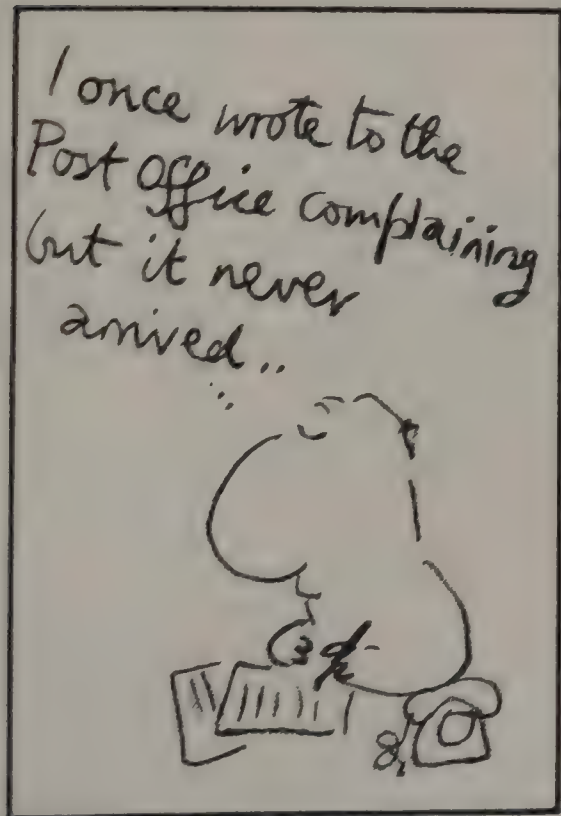
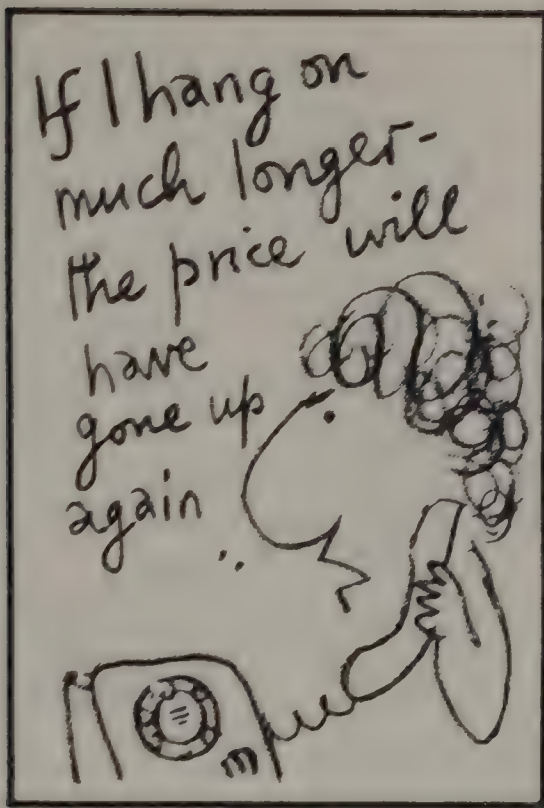


They could
subsidize the low
fares by FINING
people for paying
them..



And give me
an estimate
for a
stamp,
please..

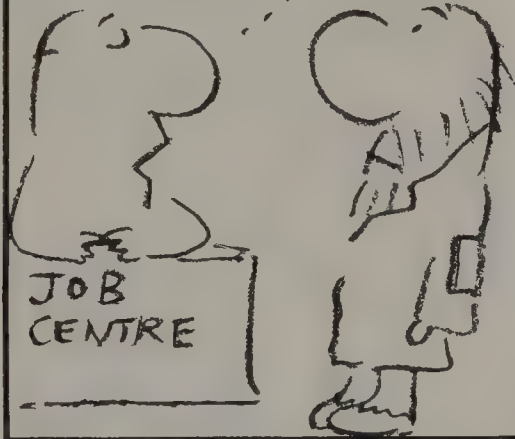




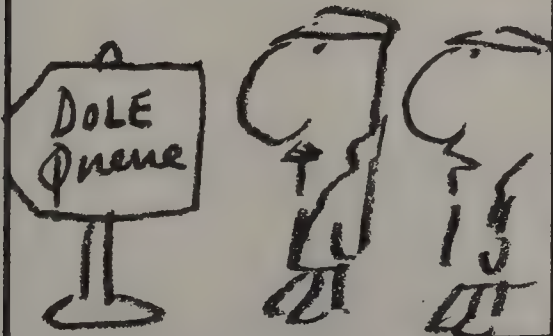
Where else can
a masochist go
for Christmas?



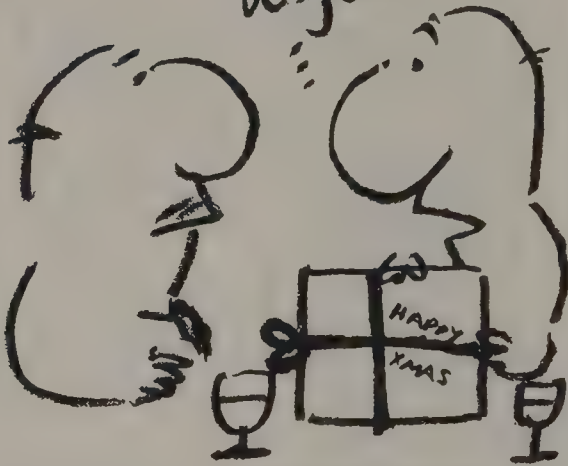
No-one is going
to give you a JOB
while you look
like a politician..



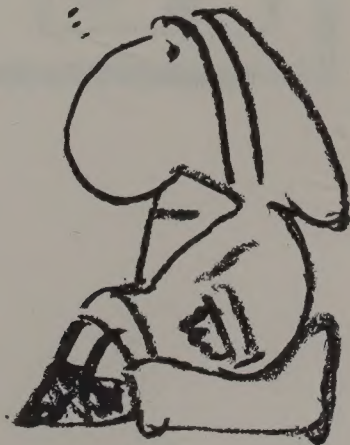
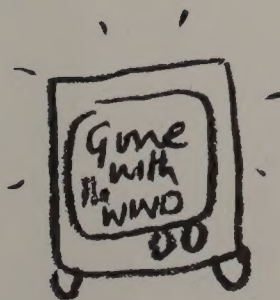
I hear the
Economy is
moving in the
Right direction..



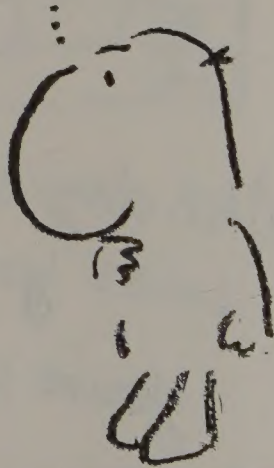
By the time
I'd found this
present, I'd forgotten
who I was buying
it for...



One day everyone
LOVES you - the next
you're unemployed..



If it's from the
people who gave us
1982 - I'll send it
back...



“The problem for a cartoonist today is that he must read the news and still be able to laugh,”

says **Calman** in the introduction to this collection of his newspaper cartoons.

Somehow **Calman** does manage to laugh at the follies of the world – and his readers are grateful for it.

Also by **Calman**:

But it's my turn to leave you . . .

‘he is . . . reporting from the battlefield, he has been mentioned in despatches. Seven years in analysis might provide the same insights, but might not make you laugh as much as this book and would certainly be more expensive.’

The Times Literary Supplement

How about a little quarrel before bed?

‘Some of Calman’s dialogue could have come straight from Samuel Beckett or R.D. Laing, those *petits maîtres* of the language of despair. His drawings look like doodles, but their innocence is subverted by quips and brisk exchanges that are loaded with knowingness.’

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