

below filled, flicking the slide down again, and then on to the next-trap door. A butcher's boy with a heavy basket on his arm scrambled down Main Street, crossed the track, and galloped with shuffling feet along the platform to the diner. The conductor drew his watch, examined it critically, raised his hand, and the fresh engine started noisily for its relief at the next divisional point, Swift Current.

Any morning that the Inspector was on duty the arrival of the Calgary express produced a similar scene in and out of the Police barracks—except a few of the trimmings indicative of mental irritation; any *Monday* morning you would find trimmings and all.

Yet throughout the tangle of that summer's special Police task Inspector Barker's mind reverted in his moments of leisure to the passing of an innocent daily train.

He was lowering his eyes reluctantly to the completion of his weekly irritation, when the desk telephone rang sharply, peremptorily. He jerked it to him.

"Yes, yes!"

"I'm sorry, sir, to have to report——"

"Drop the palaver, Faircloth!" snapped the Inspector. "I take that for granted."

"A murder was——"

"Hold on, hold on! Hold the line a minute!"