

**DADDY HOW MUCH IS**

**80 MILLION**

**DOLLARS?**



It was young Penny chirping again, and I groaned. It had been a tough day at the office. Then Kitty and I held a hot meeting of the budget committee while we rushed through the dinner dishes. As usual, we couldn't strike a balance and payday was still a week off.

So I was grumbling as I settled down with the evening paper and in no mood to talk high finance with my favorite seven year old.

But I've come to know that it does no good to ignore Penny when she's got something on her mind. Like a bad penny, she keeps coming back till she gets an answer. So, with a deep sigh, I said smartly, "80 million dollars is a lot of money!"

"Aw, daddy," she squealed in obvious disgust, "I know it's a lot of money, but how much is it?"

With my mind still on the newspaper, I tried answering her question with a question: "Why are you fussin' around with big numbers like that anyway?"

"Because of that man, daddy," she said quickly. "That bad one, in the black suit."

Puzzled, I looked up to find the young lady wide-eyed over another of those television thrillers.

"See," she continued excitedly, "he's got that old man tied up and he's gonna kidnap that little boy and girl."

"But what's that got to do with 80 million dollars?" I asked.

"You haven't been listening!" she protested. "The old man, he's the kids' grandpa and he's got a secret invention. The bad man says he's gonna take it and I think he said he'll get 80 million dollars for it from some bad country. Must be a lot of money to make him do so many bad things!"

"Honey," I said, "it's a lot of money alright; I guess even enough to settle your mother's financial problems. But let's have a try at spelling it out."

"O.K. pop, I'm listening", she replied.

"You know those big new streetcars, like the

ones that run on State Street? Green Hornets, you call 'em."

"Uh huh," she nodded.

"Well," I continued, "CTA bought 600 of them. And when we take those Sunday afternoon subway rides, you always like to sit in the front seat of the new rapid transit cars?"

"That's right," she agreed.

"There are 204 of those on the 'L'-Subway lines. And CTA also has 1451 modern motor buses and 560 trolley buses. Altogether, since 1945, CTA bought 2,815 new buses and cars. And now they've ordered 300 more propane buses and they're going to make new 'L' cars out of 150 streamlined streetcars. Know what they all cost?"

"Uh, uh", Penny shook her head.

"It adds up to about 70 million dollars!" Now I was really beginning to roll. "I'm sure you remember that big bus depot you saw up near Kedzie and Foster Avenues last summer. There's another new one like that down on the south side at 103rd Street. Those big depots, plus a lot of new tools and some rebuilt shops all over the city, cost CTA another 10 million dollars."

"Oh," said Penny.

"And there you have it," I continued triumphantly. "That's how much 80 million dollars is. You see it is a lot of money if it can buy all of those big, important buses and cars and buildings. Does that answer your question?"

"Uh huh, but . . . Daddy?"

"Yes?", I replied.

"Mary Jane Smith said today her daddy just raised her allowance from 25c to 50c a week. How about me? I could use that extra money for popcorn at the movies on Saturday."

"Watch your television program," I growled, and went back to my newspaper.

Sincerely,

Bill Saver

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