Exit gnomes, stage left

By CHARLES DEMITZ

Early one morning last week we were rodding about campus in our Pierce-Arrow when a long procession of hazy figures in the road ahead caused us to stop. Hundreds of gray misty forms marched in single file past the washstand turn and out across the steaming grass that surrounds the stadium launching apron.

A low murmur arose from the column, punctuated with occasional sobs and sniffles. As we looked more closely, we could see that the figures were grayclad men, most of them burdened with shovels, mops, buckets, and other implements.

Carrying Coils

A number carried great black coils of garden hose over their shoulders. Each one carried a shining sprinkler spigot hooked to his belt. Somewhere a dog barked.

Doffing our I.T.S. clubstripe golf cap, thoughtfully purchased at Knockknee’s in the Village, we clambered out of our Super Stanley and hailed one of the marchers. He took it badly and pelted us back even harder.

Throwing Furs

We protested that we had only meant to summon him.

“Ees not funny weeth pieces of ice, senor,” he retorted. We answered that throwing furs was not amusing either, at which he subsided.

Breaking out our kodak to capture forever this memorable scene, we questioned the grayliner further. “Thees my people. We are leaving thees, our ancient homeland, for a new life. Adios, place of the eternal sprinkling and land of eleven hundred bogs.”

This was it. We tried to keep our hand from trembling as we lit up an Oval and asked why the gray legion, the pride of gnomedom, were leaving.

High Pay

Returning to his comrades, he said over his shoulder: “Ees because we are paid so much, Senor Simple. $1.15 for every hour, eet ees too much.”

“Olly, olly, Woopoo!” we cried; and our kodak, which had been playfully suffering stragglers, began to wade through the column of refugees in earnest.

After five minutes, not a gnome remained on campus. We lured Woopoo back into his trailer with a ripe halibut and roared off, our Mr. Softee bell ringing meerily. It’s a full life, if one doesn’t weaken.