



Natural Selection

The reader has been wondering why it is that T-B-S always writes about food. He may have got the idea into his head that Slim must have gotten a good starving-out at one time and that Slim, as his name denotes, hasn't got over it yet. They don't seem to have confidence in Slim.

The same reader has been wondering why the camp board is so darn rotten; and he argues that good food would give the company more than enough (products) to offset the increased food cost. He argues like a true philosopher.

The crew would stick and grow stronger and stronger, as the pork chops rolled in. More profits would flow in to the company from the strenuous oscillations of this imaginary gang of contented slaves. Yes, that's how he reasons.

Now let us reason: Is it to the interest of the company to half-starve its workers—for true it is, the board is insufficient. We must face facts. The board is rotten, and when we say, "Board bad, but sentiment good," we mean the sentiment is good for bad board. If the board is bad there must be a reason for it so being. Cheapness of inferior foods is not a reason, because our philosopher has already shown us that increased production would more than offset the increased cost of pure foods.

It could be argued that the company doesn't know this—that the company is being imposed upon by unscrupulous merchants, etc.—that the company is not to blame for the wickedness of the butchers sending in bull-beef instead of female-veal; mountain goat instead of prairie lamb and oleomargarine, axle grease, cottonseed salve, instead of jersey butter. It could be argued that the company is an innocent victim of poor cooks, etc. But we would be far in the wrong.

Yet there must be a very good reason for all this rotten garbage being served in (all) camps and in (all) company boarding houses. Can it be the men themselves want bad food? Can it be the sentiment for bad board is good? It begins to look that way.

Now let us examine of what use bad board is to the company. Since it exists, it must be for some purpose. Here's where natural selection steps in: the *poor fish* selects the crew for the boss.

Men are shipped into a camp (say 20 of them). They are given a meal. Eleven get insulted by its odors and mope off; nine remain over night and three go to work. (T-B-S, one of them). Thus, you see, 17 kickers have been prevented voicing their doctrines of "pure foods and pure beds," and the three that remain are guaranteed to stand unhitched. As I said before, the food selects its eaters.

So—if the board is bad in any camp, you can bet the crew is waiting for some one to come and kick for them—waiting for the kickers that never come. A mule does his own kicking. Just like that—(T-Bone Slim.)