



Phone (v)

Heard at the phone.

'Phone has been disconnected for years.

Modest Commissary Company talking.

Time: 1923. Place: Chicago.

A bunch of young men, unsigned, listening:

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"Hello, 3-17-0-2, please.

Hello, Hello—Is this the California Produce Co.? This is Modest Commissary speaking—yes—say—have you sent out our order for Hicks Spur? Naw, not Hicksburg; Hicks Spur, S-P-U-R. What's that—you haven't sent it? Ye gods! When will you people wake up? I want that shipment out this afternoon, and I want you to send out six bunches of bananas with it.—Naw, hell no—we don't want 'em dead ripe. We want them to ripen in the camp (by the time the old ones are used up). Get that? Yes, that's the idea. Now in regards to them cantaloups—our cooks have been kicking on your last shipment. Another shipment like that will be sent right back—we want it understood, get me? No. Nothing but ripe ones—to be used up as we get them—yes, ten dozen, twice a week. Last week you sent up a lot of small apples—can't use 'em—the men won't eat 'em—you'll get 'em back. If you'll look up that order it called for Grade No. 1 Winesaps. What's that—no, not by a damsite—we're running a first-class outfit. We can't use 'em at any price. We want the best. Now, another thing: What in hell do you people mean by sending one tub of oleomargarine with those five tubs of creamery butter you sent out last week? What do you mean, anyway? Are you trying to ruin our reputation. Understand, one more break like that and our business will go where it is appreciated. "Mistake, Hell! Tell that to Sweeney. Yes certainly get 'em out this afternoon. I'm sending a bunch of men out there and I want this stuff to go out on the same train. And say, came near forgetting it, if you have some nice sweet potatoes send out a few bushels. Yes—Oh, hell, it makes no difference, we know they're high. Yes, about five—yes—Good-bye."

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The "Belly Burglar" hung up the receiver with a great show of impatience and turned to the now anxious bunch of young extra-gang mechanics, his face aglow with christlike innocence. But, unfortunately for the gullible workers, the telephone had no connection with the busy world outside. Yeh, even so; the ring of 'phone was accounted for by dilapidated alarm clock hidden in the perfidious bosom of the cabinet. And true it is—the Modest Commissary had never seen a cantaloupe, ripe or firm.

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Now the telephone.

It occurs to me how entirely similar the workers are in their dealings with the boss. They are disconnected. They have no organization (except "that old alarm clock" in the cabinet). And it occurs to me that it would be a good idea to connect ourselves with the boss through a one big union. How can we expect a belly burglar to connect his phone when our own phone is disconnected?

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We can howl about the chuck, complain about the pay and cuss the conditions, but unless we organize in the I. W. W., we will always be howlers, complainers and cussers—just like the Belly Burglar putting in orders that nobody hears.

No kidding, fellow working men. Line up with us. Use our radio to send the boss a message. No need for committees; no need for petitions; just a red card.

Every other man you meet is a Wobbly. A few more and we will connect Mr. Belly Burglar to some reliable produce concern. A little pep now will bring the biscuits.

By the way: The shark got his men all right. Each man, his mouth watering for the juicy fruit that wasn't there, and wouldn't be there, signed their names and were shipped out into the wilderness of sourdough, dogs, pressed beef butts, etc., to return, broke, cold and starved.

Why not organize.

T-BONE SLIM.