

# T-BONE SLIM DISCUSSES

## PURCHASING POWER

I have fallen down in my writing in a most miserable manner, and in a small hoosier town, owing to the fact that I cannot always get Eberhard Faber pencils—although I am perfectly and personally solvent in every direction, fully capable of purchasing any reasonable quantity of literary tools in accordance with the rules of the game laid down by the parasites themselves—so much for this and so much for that—eight cents for a Mongol No. 2, darn the luck, and "here's something just as good." Sic. (I should say I am).

It may have given my readers a pain, or a "turn" for the worse, to see me "hoosiering-up"-on-the capitalists' system; to see me smuggling up to the perfidious "arrangement" in print, like a duck fledgling to an unbusted watermelon.—It must have grieved them sorely to note that I was not hauling the system through the coals; that I was speaking of its damnable performances in a well modulated strain, almost apologetically.

I can see them squirming in their chairs wondering why T-bone Slim don't rake up the system with a string of high-expetives and reson-and throw-verbs; but I'm telling 'em, editor, it can't be done with a cheap lead pencil.

What do I know about them. Nothing. I specialize in lifting power, Low Holts, etc.

But if I was . . . were I an economist tomorrow I would discuss Purchasing Power today:

The consolation press again says that business will improve shortly (any time now) owing to the increased purchasing power of the farmer. Purchasing Power, oh glorious leverage! Oh, true and faithful. . . Oh, ye most truthful liar.—The Press speaks not of the selling power; not of the skinning power. Praise the Saints. (Paul and Louis).—It speaks of purchasing power! "The farmer will soon get money and then BUSINESS will improve" — (and labor power makes all this possible).

Evidently they intend to use the farmer's money to put new life in business.

When I was in Hurley, Wisconsin, business was slack; blind-pigs were

"stretching" their refreshments; charming governesses reduced their rates, and an atmosphere of gloom hung like a pall from North-Western depot to Ironwood bridge—a hundred lumberjacks arrived in town.

The stools and pimps scouted around and reported them as "live ones." Jack rollers rushed hither and thither crying, "Prosperity just went into an alley." Officers of the law shook hands with each other, while blind piggers . . . business men, I beg your pardon—gripped the callouses of the woodsmen . . . then the press came out and assured the worried multitude that business was gradually regaining in strength; prosperity was around the corner (dickering with a squaw) and that tomorrow would usher in the beginning of an era of unexampled NORMALCY, for Hurley. Halt.

**Purchasing Power.** I'm afraid purchasing power, or rather the power-house, is abused. Much of this power is allowed to go to waste—this is 'specially true of the farmer and his P-P. Many of these towns have seven grocers, three butchers, three druggists, etc. Now, I claim it does not require the full time of all these business men to take the edge off the farmer's purchasing power, and therefore I will offer some suggestions to the business men:

**1st:**—If there are seven grocers, I suggest that each store be open one day per week—no two stores to be open on the same day. Arrange the days to suit yourself or take turns on Sundays. . . . **NOTE:**—Six sets of clerks can be put to more lucrative employment — one set of clerks can move from store to store, day by day.

**2d:**—Three Butchers: Open up every third day; two days per week. Remember the Sabbath. Sell no meat on that day—let 'em eat crackers.

**3d:**—Three Druggists: Keep your stores closed seven days a week.—The butcher will sell your coco-cola; the hardware man can handle the Gem safeties, (garage, other safeties), and the grocer will look after your interest in the sale of paregoric, toothbrushes, arch supporters and castor oil—you are free to go to work at whatever your heart desires.

• I've got one set of clerks working a day in each store. We will fire them, and use the seven proprietors — that gives us seven sets of clerks that will become producers of wealth instead of consumers of it.—Oh, if I only "forstayed" economics.

Then three butcher's helpers may as well find other work too — the town ain't big enough for them, besides: we ain't going to have two boss-butchers laying around five days a week—we have to work for a living.

**NOTE:**—The harnessmaker will look after drugs, oils, powders and acids—the druggist has no come-back — canned heat, "sterno," the miniature stoves that men drink — and then draw like a wounded furnace—are no justification for the existence of drugstores — besides, we can't afford to have carpenters working on non-essential buildings when so many are sadly in need of homes.—Boxcars may be all right for the summer months—and, we've got to have them anyway (to haul freight back and forth), not that it makes any difference which way a train starts (western apples go east, and eastern apples go west)—yes, we need the cars but, in addition, we need other homes for winter consumption.

There isn't the slightest excuse for three drugstores, to look after the trade of three doctors. The doctors can "store" their baking soda, vinegar, calomel, ginger and salve in their garages — who ever heard of such nonsense: run a big store, with three clerks and a proprietor, just to accommodate one doctor! I'm astounded! Yes. Close up seven days a week.

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**We have three Banks:** I hardly know what to do with these men. It won't do to have them around cash registers—work, they will not. . . . I wonder if they could preach! I'm in the same fix about the ladies working in the banks—they're too surly and hard-boiled to be used. . . but wait, ship 'em to England for barmaids. Eureka—Hard to stump me.

The station agent can throw his triplicate stuff into the station stove and look after the business of these three banks during lunch hour while he is resting—use the bank buildings as jails for the transcontinental bums to sleep in.

If the farmers want to be skinned of their land, make them hunt up a legitimate bunko man—we're not putting out free board to men just for swindling farmers. Hereafter the agent will cash all checks. . . . No training is required. If the man staggers up to the window, dog-tired, almost dead from work, the check is good and the man is an I. W. W.—No need to make him show his cards.