

T-BONE SLIM DISCUSSES

WHERE WE AIM

OR Another Job Gone to Hell

United States is having labor-troubles. North Dakota is having labor-troubles. Turtle-Lake is having labor (and blanket) troubles. Farmers are having labor-troubles. Threshers are having labor-troubles—I, T-B S., am having labor-troubles. ('Tis an old malady with me) I've had it since I was twelve or ten—I'm a shining example of child-labor carried to its glorious premise—labor-trouble.

Labor-trouble is very Ketchy, and twice as itchy. It ketches a man when he least itches for it. It breaks out all over a man (or county) like rash over a scalded cat.

But what gets me is: employers and parasites have more labor-troubles than the rest of us. Men who never went near labor suddenly break out with the darndest dose of labor-troubles.

I can't understand it.

Workers who come in contact with labor every day hardly show a trace of labor-troubles.

I can't understand it! 'Sposed to be contagious, too! Labor-troubles doesn't affect all alike.

In a farmer, for instance, it deadens the mathematical nerve, as the following conversation will show:

Applicant For Fork: "How many hours you work?"

John: "Wa'al we aim—we aim—aim—that is to—we aim to—to work—that is we aim . . ."

App. F. Fork: "Do you ever hit the mark?"

John: "We—we aim to aim—that is work—that is we aim . . ."

App. F. Fork: "Spit'er out John, we can stand it. How many hours?"

John: "Wa'al, we always aim—but sometimes we have to finish up—we aim—that is to work—we aim to start in the morning, so as to get through—that is we aim to . . ."

App. F. Fork: "You tell 'em John, don't be bashful—there's nothing to be ashamed of—how many hours did you say?"

John: "We aim—that is we have an hour off for dinner—we aim—and—we allu' quit in the evening—our aim allus is . . ."

App. F. Fork: "How many hours John, for Croix Sake—To hell with your aim! How many hours do you work? Eight, ten, twelve or fourteen?"

John: "I dun know—but we aim."

App. F. Fork: "Do you work ten hours?"

John: "Wa'al yes—we aim . . ."

App. F. Fork: "Do you work eleven hours?"

John: "I reckon we do—that is, we aim . . ."

App. F. Fork: "For Croix Sake John, put away that gun—don't be aiming so much—tell us how many hours you work. Do you work twelve hours?"

John: "I guess so, but we aim . . ."

App. F. Fork: "Do you work thirteen?"

John: "Hell no, that's unlucky."

App. F. Fork: "How many hours do you work?"

John: "I dun know, but we . . ."

App. F. Fork: "And this makes how 'falls' you have thrashed, John?"

John: "This makes 29 'falls' if we can get a crew an' I allus got crew before 'cept the wet year 18 years ago, then we was a man short and thrashed 31,609 bushels of wheat, 28,107 bu. of oats, 3,008 bushels of rye and 5,903 flax and a little barley, two patches, 875 bushels in one, 436 in the other—the first barley 875 bushels we put through in 3 hours and 22 minutes; we didn't do as well on the other, it took 1 hour and 46 minutes for that. And . . ."

App. F. Fork: "And how many hours did you work that fall?"

John: "I don't know."

App. F. Fork: "What! You've thrashed 28 falls and you haven't found out yet how many hours you work? Don't you ever look at your

watch?"

John: "I believe you fellers ain't looking for work." (Exit John).

Another job gone to hell!
Labor-troubles!—S tough!

But labor-troubles do not affect the farmer adversely in other things. His "discernment" remains unimpaired—a harvest hand in clean clothes swings on the pavement—That's the man John wants. He knows the man has just "boiled up"—hot water, you know, is a powerful antiseptic—(now, be honest about it, you didn't know that, did you? You thought it was a disinfectant—so did I, but three reliable paid-up members tell me "different") the farmer wants a clean man. He won't have a man with dirty hands, face and clothes sleeping in his brand new pig-pen—or hay-mow, for that matter—he must be owner of a suitcase.

And on the other hand, John is exceedingly bright "in running short handed" so as to keep a surplus of hands on the curb. . . In shocking time, you will notice, John's neighbor will not hire a man from town, he lets the grain lay until you are through at John's place, and hires You—go's to keep a surplus on the curb. . . (my rule, in such a case, is to let daylight shine between jobs.) During threshing one or two "20 day runs" are left untasked until two or three "short runs" are finished—(personal 1924 knowledge on three such maneuvers—and I saw very little.) the object of "holding-up" said runs is clear: So as to keep a surplus on the curb.

If this be untrue, it would seem that I am putting them "wise" to a "weapon." Unfortunately, it is true, all too true, as the poet would say—and it is getting to be common knowledge, else I wouldn't know of it. I'm not giving them a weapon, I am telling all and sundry what they've been hit with—not that it makes any difference.

The question is, is there a struggle between John and Man? Over what? And, finally, does John attempt to set the wages before he "finds out" what he can get for Man's production? How do they do it? It's like finding a verdict before trial. Let me assure you there is a struggle between John and his Helper—and if said Helper expects victory to perch (roost) in his henhouse, he must not only organize with the I. W. W., he must organize tactics to combat tactics. . .

Red Card Complacency Will Never Put Chicken Breast On Your Platter.
Curbstone class-struggle is still

worse—in that case, John and prospective victim sneak behind "cream-office" to do the hiring, plight their troth. (Just like in days of bottled-goods.) And more it generates a "world of ill-feeling arguments," insinuations, "blows" . . . dearth of "tactics ganized," is the cause—curb-strug is not a tactic; never was and can't ever be.

But—about three questions should be asked John, in hiring out:

First, How far out?

Second, How much?

Third, Ten hours?

An ordinary man can determine from the "answers" whether he wants to go out or not. Pleading and a guing with him is not the organizing way of doing things. It is more, less individual-action, or clique-action—our organization needs no justifying . . . adjusters . . . much talk . . . big powwow . . .

Above, which I will call a criticism (to forestall the calling of such by insincere tongues), should not be considered a reflection on I. W. W., its officials or members, insofar as conditions only now are ripe and crying for tactics simple and effective.

We all are pained to hear that a few "delegates" have turned in—it will be a great relief for old man Capital, insignificant as it may seem to those of our fellow workers, who lay off temporarily. Feeling kind of "bossy," let me remind them that this is a "three-shift fight"—and interesting. Credentials should never be turned in, they should be worn out.

All men are not organizers any more than they are all baritones—they ain't. And when we need "organization" and "tactics" they can't accommodate us by turning in. That's flat—and critical!—Critical is right. This is a critical time—a critical age.

But my aim is not to criticize. Such is not our aim. We aim to merely discuss things, politely if possible, by discuss—not being an organizer of aim doesn't hit the mark often enough to prevent "cutting remarks" being made about out falling "lamps" and trembling tentacles. Overwork is the answer . . . superinduced by insufficient organization.

Darn those Scissors!

Ditto, Wicks!

"Tailswags" the fellow worker said it.

*Thirteen (the hoodoo number) attains considerable prestige when it is remembered that Christ and his disciples numbered an even "baker's dozen."