



## Tonsorial Work



Let us not be unmindful of that sterling logger, the swamper; that nobleman that shingle-bobs, massages and manicures the logs. He is somebody too. A very important personage—but his wages are small. His wages are the smallest of all the crew.

I've often wondered why "this" was so—and on different occasions I have undertaken the job of swamping in order to study it from a personal angle, almost got cock-eyed studying it—without arriving at a reason for the emaciated wages.

The work is hard (and soft) and highly technical—technical to the extent that anybody can do it; even like all other technical work, for not a man has departed this life that was not instantly replaced—John L. Sullivan, Edgar A. Poe, Spearshakes William, Big Ole of Moorhead, Pauline Hall and all other and numerous technicians have been replaced without special effort. (That stands with the possible exception of Poe—give us time).

All this does not explain the cause of the low wages.

In the course of swamping I find the gyppo sawyer is not displacing swampers, so, that cannot be the cause. . . . Gyppo-sawing and swamping must be re-swamped because gyppo, not being a surveyor, has laid the road where the stumps are—re-swamping is harder than "hot" swamping. Poor kicking is not the cause for I find the swamper is an excellent kicker. Of course, some would say lack of organization is the cause—and it may be—I admit the lack—that raises the question: With the same lack of organization why are the wages of top-loaders higher? Ah, a hot trail! No better kickers than the swampers yet their wages are twice as high. My God—can it be—can it be their work is twice as technical? So I went loading.

The answer wasn't there.

I was almost deranged, hysterical, over the question—had a half a mind to hit the hootch and forget it all when, just then, it occurred to me that maybe the higher wages are a bribe; maybe the top man is an agitator in disguise and the company uses higher wages to plug his mouth and curb his inspirational out-pourings. Eureka! I have found it—I thought all that out myself—after a fellow worker told it to me—there's something in my head besides a cold. Eureka! It sounds reasonable—but it isn't so, the swamper is a good agitator. . . .

Maybe the thing has a compound cause? Let's see. The topman is a highly respected citizen. Now, is he respected or is it his job that is respected? (That's a compound fracture, nobody knows). But his word is law with the crew. Ah, but his word is law!

Then it is the respect of the crew for the job or man that keeps his wages up and cripples him in the use of his "word."

Darn it, he's a potential agitator hobbled with wages! Ain't I smart?—No better agitator than the swamper, but the crew worship him or his job, with the result that companies, after many a bitter experience, have grown gentle and sympathetic in the treatment of the top-man—they know that if the top-man was getting \$35 per month he would organize a strike first thing in the morning before tightening the corner binds—that's organization. Potential organization.

But if the crew could learn to respect the swamper or his job and give ear unto his words of wisdom, the companies would learn to love the swamper like a brother—a twin brother—they would say "what's mine, is yours," 50-50, we'll split even—for the potentialities of a strike would be there.

That, in turn, would pre-suppose organization. Now we're getting along. Let's quit.