

T-BONE SLIM



RISING IN THE WORLD

I see they're still at it.

They're still miss-in-forming, and mal-advising the young—telling them there's "always room on top" First thing they'll know, they'll have the place so crowded we won't have room to turn around—to say nothing about doing any work—with all those kids getting in the way. Editor, I want you to put in a kick against such bare-faced miss-representation and naked prevarication, in your columns—call a halt to all such miss-leadership playing upon the trustfulness of our youth; those in the first and second childhood, editor—call them liars, and tell 'em I told you to. The very ideah! A bunch of too by for purrfessors, a raft of cub reporters and twenty-four-dollars-a-week cartoonists gets up and tells aforesaid children about the "open spaces" on top—can you imagine! Tell 'em to sit down and shut up.

When did they visit the top? Ask 'em, editor—since they seem to know so much about the elbow room. Go ahead, editor, the logic is with us—their talk is pure hearsay. The nearest they've ever been to the top was "upstairs, in the basement," as Joe Crow would say. They know absolutely nothing about the top, never have and never will—you tell 'em.

Why, they're worse than streetcar conductors—"Step up in front," with the car packed—I'm telling you, editor, the place is full up—sleeping on the floor—has been all winter and some lumberjacks are beginning to talk of "staying down below" next winter and yield the floor to first and second childhoods—yes, they are—thousands of 'em. — If there were more of 'em I would mention it, yes I would. But it's bad enough as it is.

I'd like to see 'em all on top again, next winter . . . where'd we leave that car—that streetcar?—Oh yes, "full up in front."

I've seen signs in cars urging, "to eliminate congestion; step up in front" and I've seen steady streams of sensible-looking people drop their contribution into the box, step up in front and be crowded out at the next stop—minus seven cents, watch, six teeth and one hat—and I've heard them utter the most beautiful language. I've stood spell-bound by their eloquence for hours and hours, only taking time now and again to watch other prospective passengers, full of hope—or dope—making a mad dash to get action on their seven cents.

And I've said to myself, the pay-as-you-enter is the clear catsnip—on a busy day, on a busy corner, a car could take up a goodly collection without turning a wheel. The citizens would rush up to the rear, roll out at the front—some of them would repeat in hopes of throwing out an anchor inside, and, thus, staying the onward rush of the advancing human avalanche.

And I've said to myself, "Slim," says I, "what's the matter with plugging up the front end, so they can't fall off?"

Slim was thoughtful—a moment.

"That would cut into the company's profits too much," says he.

"But Slim," says I, "that would solve the congestion."

"How would it?" questioned Slim.

"Simple. After the car got full, no more could get on until somebody fought his way out."

"That wouldn't solve the congestion, it would aggravate it," opines Slim.

"The hell it would," says I, out of patience, "economic determinism would then bear on the question—the company wouldn't hold its cars still while somebody was fighting his way out, nothing coming in—nor would it carry them all to the end of the line, or all day around the

loop. It would see the desirability of filling its cars just so full only—comfortably full—it would pass by extra passengers in favor of room to let one off"

Slim, of course, wouldn't admit I was right (he hates to praise me to my face, fearing I'd get the swelled head) but he did say, "Kid, you've got your Karl Marx down pat," and I could see he was deeply chagrined.

The same applies to "always room on top."

T-Bone Slim.

P. S.—Once upon a time when I was "shacking up" in a piece-maker shack at Kettle River—one morning (as I was, cooking cornmeal mush) I was visited by a bear. The door was open. "How 'oof ar'r'r' you," greeted the bear.

I happened to think of, of—"always room on top." Suiting action to words, I jumped up, grabbed the crosspiece overhead and shot feet-first through the sky-light. More room up there.—But when the bear strolled, leisurely, to the back of the shack and started shinning up, the "maneuvering chance" on the ground appealed to me so strongly that I jumped down and got my gun. We had bear steak for breakfast.

MORAL: If the bear had stayed on the ground it could have had our mush and welcome—we would have had no breakfast—mebbe wouldn't need any!