

Ins and Outs of It—

By T-BONE SLIM

Unemployment is a matter of viewpoint. Sometimes I think it unreal—a mirage—a ghost—a spook.

The other day I'm telling a man how great it is, the terrible amount of work that doesn't exist. Millions of people busily engaged in doing nothing. Thousands of tons of food they ain't eating. Millions of suits of clothes they ain't wearing. Hundreds of thousands beds they ain't sleeping in—it's terrible. Millions of dollars of money they ain't spending. Treasuries chock full of it. Only the other day Mellon tossed \$33,000,000 to the Steel Trust as income taxes he had collected by mistake—the joke of it is the poor innocent, trustful Trust was taken completely by surprise not knowing a thing about it. Such ignorance! Good thing we had a smart man in charge of the treasury, otherwise the place would have been so full that he could not turn around in it . . .

Other treasuries, too, are bursting with money, so much so that industrial "heads" are shipping it to foreign countries cargo after cargo—to build shops "over there".

(We could use a few of those shops right here.)

At the same time billions of dollars are lying idle, its caretakers too damned dumb to put it out as wages, with the result that as many men are idle as are working; thus establishing to all intents and purposes two new major parties—"employees and unemployed"—and no new work to be had—and the old isn't enough. "The hell it isn't", says he, "look at me, I'm working 14 hours a day. Day before yesterday I worked 24 hours and every damn man you see here is a boss, tramping on my tail all the time . . . where do you get that stuff that work is scarce?"

"There's too goddam much of it," he added, "for the money I'm getting."—

I had to agree with him, "you're right, buddy, the average boss would rather be castrated by a potato-digger than part with a banknote. But, seeing as how you ain't a union man, wouldn't it be proper to organize and encourage them to become geldings?"—

"You're right, Slim, your right—they're doing altogether too much, 'prancing around' for dignified old fossils—I'll chip in for the digger."

"Dead on their feet!"

Mrs. Ferguson once said, "Man is not wholly stupid, either."

(The word "either" is quite a concession coming as it does from one of the opposing sex—may no wrinkle disfigure her stockings!)

But what would the madam have said had she known that working-men and women are this instant actually in full possession of the industries but don't know it.

I'm afraid the madam would have forgotten her best manners and delivered herself of a few choice words used exclusively by little Cherry St. girls—words that caused a future boy bandit to chide them, "cut that out, that's rough"—Indeed, the madam probably would have said: The dumbbells are dead on their feet; their isn't a ray of intelligence in the whole caboodle. Working, sweating, producing wealth; shooting it into the office—and nobody there to send it back to its producers. O, wot travesty! standing uneasily on one leg to sign for "bait" money. O Lord! O Lord!

Far better graft than robbing a goose of its golden eggs and tossing it a handful of chaff in loving remembrance.

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