



"OVER 45"

Just at this time (after a cup of powerful but muddy coffee) I don't give a damn what anybody else thinks—I'm in favor of doles for us old Jiggers on the scrap-pile. They can hand mine to me right now and I'll sit right here on the scrap-pile and make people peel their bonnets by warbling, "Star Spangled Banner Forever."—What do I care if the parasites "ways and means committee" is weeping bitter tears over their misdeed of placing me on the retired list—it's their funeral not mine. Mismanagement like theirs will not pass for mustard in an up-and-going country like this here, now, our United States—not by a damsite, and I expect to see that committee in the soup-line next winter.

Who's gonna put 'em there?

Excuse my blushes, I shall do that myself.

I most solemnly swear to cook up a mess of real, genuine, thin soup, from the purest of waters; soup that will wash down all the deviltry in their system and leave them clean as a lily in the dell . . .

Yes, I'm in favor of the dole—but, a lot of good that's gonna do me or anybody else to be in favor of it! I can starve to death in favor of it—so can everybody else. Favoring ain't gonna make it come. Wishing ain't gonna make it come. Sucking my thumbs ain't gonna make it come. No. Quite right, Slim—all those moves are too ethereal for the dole-wishers to understand.

Ask and you shall not receive.

Demand and they'll laugh at you.

Demand till you're blue in the face—you will not get it.

Organize and it's yours!

Us old codgers, of course, are entitled to receive a dole—any way you look at it: The money has been produced by us who have had a most full working life, and it is in the lockers of the few who did not produce it . . . We are entitled to receive this last insult, if for no other reason then because we have failed to organize in the past to the end of guiding those dollars into our own coffers . . .

I'm not alone on the scrap-pile:

Thousand of workers have reached the age when industrial overlords have autocratically condemned them, discriminated against them, openly, bare-faced, contrary to all law of reason or decency; absolution in its final power; a deed so ill-conceived, illogical, unethical that I tremble in anticipation of its consequences; condemnation to death to all intents and purposes of all those workers that have reached the age of 45 years.

Illogical, because the rule won't hold—are we to understand (in following that rule) that a machine, factory, industry, government, nation shall be scrapped at the ripe old age of 45 years?

Which is the goat, which the sucker?

Flesh? Fish?

Allright.

Our overlords, the magnates, have overstept all boundaries this time, as usual, and have freed too many workers from all opportunity to produce a living for themselves; constituted themselves extra legal judge and jury over the life of all those guilty of the age of 45 years—were led

on and on believing those men will not organize to defend their lives against such outrageous attack, going over the hill (A. W. O. L.) with a man's bread and butter.

And they call those magnates intelligent!

Half-baked, is a better description.

(They have been poorly advised and should fire their advisors without notice).

They are grinding somebody's axe—and a hard bit it is, too . . .

I am trying to save them from their own indiscretion.

Thousands of workers of that age have given up the struggle, reconciled themselves to the misery laid before them: "It's no use," they say. "I cannot compete with the youngsters."

Nobody expects you to compete—you ain't a racehorse, are you?

—But I see you are not a union man.

How come?

Are you too old to be a union man? Do you think that only the young should be active in union matters?

Let me tell you, no age limit is placed against the youngsters—the bosses take them out of the cradle, pull them away from their mother's breast and drive them till they are 45 . . .

It is you and me on the scrap-pile that needs a union the worst way . . .

You've done your bit? So, you have Well, you're bit wasn't enough,