

# Slum Is Dissatisfied With His Looks

By T-BONE SLIM

I am in the habit of getting parasites on my papers free of charge in the subway trains where they are discarded by good and willing workers — not that to their various employers — they that I am not too tight to buy them for I am not and even as it is (getting them without cost) I feel that I am losing money. Early in the game I discovered discarded papers were more plentiful during the morning rush hour and I could select any paper I thought would appease my craving for knowledge. But, I also discovered that later on in the morning the same crowded trains neglected to supply me with the crust to take my papers away from the passengers; consoling myself — there is no justice.

This condition irked my complacency and caused me to wonder why the early birds who so liberally with their property and finally came to the conclusion they were afraid to carry these papers into temptation might get the best of their caution and the boss would catch them glancing at them in their idle moments.

Shame on me! To all intents and purposes I am making it appear freedom is crippled and lies bleeding on the Broadway Express and that those cowardly slaves respect, that they hope and fear their boss more than they do God—shame on me.

To once again to those workers dissident have a newspaper in their possession in front of the boss is to say an I. W. W. hasn't got the guts to read T-bone Slim's ravings to J. P. Morgan or Johnny Raha-feller — which they have of course. I'm in this accusing misjudged those men and that there is a deeper more respectable reason for their derision of "the last issue" for my benefit — that my very looks stamped mob into relinquishing their papers in hopes of dispelling some of my outstanding ignorance; that their action was purely altruistic; that noble creatures; and that those tight-wads, on those later trains who retained possession of their disgraceful sheets, were selfish to the core and did not belong, as we thought, to the leisure class—the bosses.

My ignorance is so outstandingly comprehensive that people take pity on me even on the streets, hand me tomes and pamphlets and I've had to practice on . . . and I've had it happen a man rushed clear across the street and shoved a salvation army "War Cry" under my arm encouraging me: "Here buddy, you need it more than I do—". 'Twas useless for me to protest that I've got lots of cigarette papers; he

thought, I was only dressing my ignorance with words—so unsophisticated and innocent is the appearance with which my well-meaning parents cursed me. There is no justice—I've got to pack these dumb looks the "all of my life"—which I hope is a short one—and, if the people ever find out I know anything, they'll accuse me of betraying them. Where's the justice in such a condition? If the I. W. W. had any sense at all they'd send me to a beauty specialist, to be rebuilt.

Now that my ignorance is established as far as appearance goes I feel perfectly safe in discussing our over-production — which goes to show, whatever frailties I am heir to, I am a brave man.

What is over-production?

A country produces 1-3 bushels of apples per each man, woman and child and one man (myself) fails, for some reason or other, to eat but one-third of a bushel; that extra bushel is called over-production, and if you call it under-consumption you shall be thrown in jail for forty years for trying to undermine the productive prestige of a fertile region. Makes no difference the country failed to finance me sufficiently to carry that 1-3 bushel, my share; makes no difference my compatriots and countrymen failed to consume that extra bushel; over-production and over-production it stays until the specks eat it up or rote away and, if you call it under-consumption, in the housework you go for belittling the people's daily board.

There are many kinds of over-production. Sometimes the people afford to carry their shekels, forget their inalienable rights and privileges to eat pork chops and compromise by dining out of the garbage cans — this creates an over-production in pork chops, you'll have to agree. At times the people read their bank-notes carefully and decide "in view of the soft winter" to buy no over-coats—overcoats stacked up, are called over-production and the needle-trades hit the soup-line.

People decide to sleep in the open air, under bridges, in dry goods boxes, in police stations (for moral support) all of which is very healthy, and right away there are too many dwellings in the land and landlords are being sold out for taxes.

Who would have the crust to call those unused places anything but over-production?

Lives there a man with the unmitigated temerity to hint the poor didn't get enough money to rent or buy those places and are forced to sleep under the viaduct—

one word in that direction and I'll call the cops.

We have an over-production of humblity, of sighs, whines and tears and but the most ignorant would call it lack of grit and chicken-feed—

Money itself is an over-production and billions and billions of it is stacked away in private lockers. Dare you then get up and deal are there is a shortage of money in the country and that the people are under-nourished with the vitamins and calories contained therein.

Over-production takes so many forms, the people are so erratic in their purchases, that the speculators are puzzled at times as to what particular commodity will develop an aggravated case of over-production.

Now they are buying liver and onions, now eggs, now rolled oats, now stale eggs, now fresh ones, now mackerel, now pickled, now carp and bull-heads — so it goes — and when they eat from garbage dumps and stop-buckets the over-production shows in all foodlines.

Over-production does not "merely happen" like Topsy in Uncle Tom's Cabin. It must have a purpose, a cause.

A few years ago (before the big muck) in the good old days when the miners had a penance for pulling strikes in the springtime, there was an over-production of coal strung alone the railroad tracks. Why was this coal unloaded in these storage yards and reloaded into cars at great expense and deterioration of the product?

Why? Wouldn't it have been more sensible to stop the miners pick? Surely there must be a reason for creating that over-supply.

Are we at liberty to think "the interests" took that method to beat the miners in their age old demand for fair wages?

If so, what are we to think of the over-supply of wheat? Laying aside the means "how it was created," are we to think it is passed on from year to year and held over the heads of the farmers like the coalside over the miners? I'm so dumb I can't figure it out.

Once we admit that, we must also admit this surplus of wheat, of which the people were cheated, was in hands of scoundrels — speculators — and that they carried things too far and almost starved the farmers like unto the way the miners were starved before them — I mean, if a man can not afford to take in a show, he is starved. If we admit this much it explains why the government took over the surplus.

The speculators were unreliable in so far as they had a habit selling farmers were getting ready to sell, the surplus at high prices just as the breaking the farmers' market and buying his wheat at greatly reduced rates to repeat year after year. That was carrying things too far. That was killing the goose.

The government stepped in and took over the so-called surplus and now it will be interesting to see if it will go through with its program. The logical thing for the government to do is sell the surplus at the top of the market and buy new wheat at the same figure — but will it do it?

In so far as the aiding of the farmers (to the extent of preventing the barefaced robbing of them) is a controversial matter and in so far as speculators too must live it is difficult to decipher what the government will do. One-quarter of the government will weep for the farmers but denounce the uplift on the grounds of paternalism; another quarter will also splash forth dripping tears but denying the farmers pleas on the grounds. Uncle Sam has no business in being in business; a third quarter will wade into the pool of tears, sniffing for poor farmers but can't bear the onus of making Sam a speculator; the fourth quarter let's go a shower of tears because he can't see any way to help the farmer without helping him — that seems to make it unanimous and in this conflict of ideals, this pulling and hauling, if the farmer gets away with his "britches" he is lucky.

Thus it is I am unable to prognosticate precisely what the government will do. It may decide that its members get paid for keeping the government pure and keep on sprinkling deodorant on anything ill-mellling. Then again it may decide its wages represent the obligation to make all the people prosperous and consequently happy.

It is not our purpose to make it appear the wielding of a modest surplus of commodities adversely to the interest of the producer is the establishment of a certain modified form of peonage, not so much in the form of compulsory labor as in the form of compulsory acceptance of any or all wages — any of wage — any old price. This practice is condemned with antipodes for that or any of evil . . .

What will be the government's next move?

I do not know — but I'm betting the government will throw up its hands and say "boys, it can't be done—" and the farmers will believe it.

But that does not explain how come the speculators succeeded in doing it to the tune of reverse music; makes it appear the thing works only one way.

Yes, we have over-productions this and that, and it may be the very commodities we produce is held in surplus as a club over our heads — for, verily, if a coalside can be used as a club a stack of shirts or a tank of oil can be used the same way.

Among the things that are in over-production are many inalienable ones such as shacks full of kids, want, misery and suffering.

I can think of only one thing, that is not over-produced — that is unionism.

Maybe that is "the cause of it all."

—T-b. S.

P. S. — Upon second thought, I. W. W. need not send me to a beauty specialist — my ignorance is more than skin-deep.

—T-b. S.