



T-Bone Slim

A little Hearsay:

The rake-off of fellow worker Grace of Lackawanna Steel last year was only 3,000,000 dollars. It's a wonder he hasn't put in a kick about "bad health" and jumped out of a sky-scraper window. That's the usual performance of great men when their income drops down to less than 10,000 dollars a day—raise the window and lean out too far for to get a breath of fresh air or mistake the atmosphere for a "promenade" and step right into a hollow spot. Yeah, and plaster themselves against the pavement for street-cleaning department to rake off . . .

Grace has inaugurated some charity and meries in his "works" in Buffalo and it is expected his rake-off this sorry year will be something short of 10,000 dollars—a lousy 30,000 dollars a day—which all goes to show true worth and application to industry finds not in this world compensation anymore, **no more**, a man might just as well parade out of the ozone and forget to hitch himself to a radiator. Among his charities is the noble act of providing employment in this era of far reaching depresion. But, of course, it being charitable work, he felt he couldn't pay the same wages as he paid for work that wasn't so confounded charitable, only half-pay. Charity sticks out all over it. Yeah. So when the boys showed up for to accept of his meries, Grace gracefully put them to work on "production"—keeping his word in every last detail—2 bucks and a half for work that before charity got the best of him paid five bucks—could a charitable deed go farther—?

Nothing half-way about Grace, his sympathies stretch and extend and extend and stretch out and in every direction and back—to himself.

Supposing our hard-boiled congress suddenly ran into a charitable streak and overflowing with kindness placed a million dollar tax on Grace; that's one-third of his last year's income (there is precedent for this in the gracious act of a "land-owner" taking one-third of a "renter's" crap). I put this question to a bunch of ex-bankers, ex-brokers, exdoctors, ex-lawyers, ex-wobblers and, possibly, ex-convicts riding a box car. Up jumps an ex-musician*who was sleeping on shavings; shaking the sawdust from his ears, he snaps: "Twouldn't be fair; if a man is smart enough to get 3 millions he should be allowed to keep it. —"Yes," butts-in a mere lad, "and if another man is smart enough to tax him out of it he should be allowed to do it."—

(What are you going to do with a bunch like that? That put a premium on smartness and none at all on ivory?) or gravy) "S'posing," groans the ex-Mozart, "s'posing the man has only one million, would you tax him out of it and make him hit the back doors—I tell you it wouldn't be fair."

"Of course, it isn't fair," snaps the sassy kid, "but it's done; the City of Chicago grabbed my uncle's house for taxes and made him sleep in an alley; so I figure the taking of a man's last million is just as fair as taking a man's home, if not fairer." (What this younger generation is coming to, editor; when I was young I couldn't hold my footing that well in an argument.)

"Yes," chips in an ex-steel worker, "right here in Buffalo if a man owns a house and goes after 'relief' he can't get it (because he has a roof over his head; a home he put together by scraping and scratching and thirty years of hard labor) but after he loses his house because he can't pay taxes he is perfectly eligible to get 'relief', such as it is."

Death and taxes are slow but sure.

According to that logic, if an industrialist gets "naughty" and refuses to pay his tax, one million as the case may be, depending on the "emptiness" of the treasury at that particular time, the government has the right and power to take his "plant" without apology—and if the industrialist squawks, he is not a patriot, is un-American and is trying to overthrow the government by denying it spending money. Yeah.

"Well, is there no way the industrialist can protect himself and keep his plant?"

"Yes, there is," says the ex-lawyer, "all he has to do is have a bunch of dummy stockholders and shed a few tears for the small investor—many plants are already protected that way—Henry Ford is about the only one that is taking a terrible chance—if the government ever took a notion to slap Henry with a 200,000,000 dollar tax and Hank renigged he'd lose the whole works—and people would have to learn to walk all over again.

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