



84 Cents an Hour For A.B.'s Makes Agreement Insult

A Sermon for Seamen by T-BONE SLIM

It is doubtful whether the maritime job-trusts can win the recognition of the bosses, or so safeguard their age-old custom of exploiting the American seamen at this time. Their weakness lies in the fact that they have not protected their membership and have not been able to serve them. My point is that \$62.50 is not a figure to justify the signing of an agreement. What is the fifty cents for?

Ah, that is so the boatowners can say with a clear conscience: "We are paying our A.B.'s more than two dollars a day." (and fifteen cents worth of rotten garbage.)

How interesting, two bucks a day! So that's what you signed for—and Roger Babson says, "Business Is Now Normal."

A month divides itself into 31 days and 31 nights—counting the days and nights, we get, by a strange coincidence, 62. But what is the fifty cents for?

Now since the seamen work both night and day, they get a dollar for each night, and a dollar for each day—plus almost a penny for each night and day.

The job trust must have been working real hard when they got that extra penny in the agreement.

The agreement tied the workers down for a year, and in the course of that year several strikes broke out for reason, and created a condition wherein the job trust was in a position that very much resembled scabbing on itself. So they call that unionism? Mmh! They surprise me!

Dollar a day, dollar a night, and "Business Is Now Normal."

I suppose though, the dry shoe leaders will profoundly discourse on "per cent" in the coming conference, a per cent tacked on to the dollar seamen already get. Won't that be scrumptious to get say, a dollar ten for a watch and a half. Absolutely the lowest paid job in the country. (Lumberjacks get \$4.80 low on the west coast.) Signing of an agreement is out of the question, even if you get one.

I see no solution for the seamen except that they join the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union No. 510 of the I. W. W., set the wages up where they belong, and make it stick without benefit of contractual glue.

Under present layout seamen cannot get more than that dollar, on Dollar lines or any other lines. And if the I.W.W. pulls a strike . . . ?

Don't we get anything for the hazards of wind and wave? And the hazards of the blackpan? (Seamen eat out of dishpan—that's as near as getting slopped as seamen get, and they sign an agreement to that effect. . . On Ohio River years ago, they ate off the deck, sucotash.)

Don't we get anything for the dangers of the sea? Rickety old bottoms? Leaking at every rivet? Every blow of the inspectors' hammer made it so. Every visit of the board of health made the stench worse. So what? It's two miles to the bottom, and the ship is overloaded, plus contraband, illy and hurriedly stowed. The pump telescopes a piston—and there you are.

You are tied down with a contract, further shackled with ships articles which says you will make a round trip even if you have to walk ashore. "God help the sailor at sea on a night like this." The darkness is so complete he cannot see his own interest. Join the M.T.W.

The harbor boatmen are not doing much better. They get \$50 a month. Board subtracted from that leaves 70 to 72 dollars clear. They too work at all hours, night and day, and get about \$1.20 per shift, plus board. Ten cents an hour. Whoops! They are also organized in job trusts and want recognition. Dime recognition—and contract to sign. Doesn't sound so good, does it? I didn't think it would.

Join the I.W.W., a go-getter organization.

The boss won't like it? Of course not. He wants you to work for nothing—on call time.

Every hour the barge captain spends aboard his tub is ten cents an hour in his favor. Every hour the deap sea A.B. spends on shipboard is eight and one quarter cents. Quick, Watson, bring the agreement!

Multiplicity of unionism brought this low wage for harbor boatmen. The I.S.U. is doing it for seamen.

Why not join the union that cannot be bought — the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union—and be all one? True enough, me hearties, the eight and one quarter cents mounts up quite high considering there are 24 hours in a standard day—\$2.01 if you don't get logged. Now since the boatowners absolutely will not pay us any money, we have a right to expect them to pay us the respect of doing a song and dance in our honor . . . "No Agreement" is my motto.

And here, fellow seamen, pay no attention to bellwethers. They're getting theirs. Our interest and their interest are two separate things.

"Are you poor, forlorn and hungry?" Regarding Work Peoples College

Some thinkers take the precaution to be dead before they open up. That explains why intelligent parents slash down so much birch in teaching boys and girls to read and write: so that they can read what the dead write, and write what the living read. (That's getting 'em coming and going.)

The Work Peoples College in suburban Duluth is an institution that does much to keep thought up to date, and thinkers healthy—a rare combination. I know of no better way to spend the Indian Summer and the clear, crisp winter, safely above the slush of thaws, revelling in the breath of crystal snow.

Get away from the carbon-monoxide atmosphere. Give yourself a chance to think. Grow brains.

Thoughts are man's best and truest comparisons. When sweethearts fail, when dogs turn on you, when mothers renounce you, when heavens crash, when earth quakes, when ships sink, waters engulf you, and you are ALONE, you are not deserted—you have Thought.

Cultivate thinking power then, so that you can never be thoughtless. Work Peoples College, Morgan Park, Duluth, Minn.—all the genius past and present is there . . . and . . . pst . . . they've got a good cook.—T-bs.