



The Big Sea Hazard Is The Ship Owners

By T-BONE SLIM

The west coast M.T.W. is a good deal stronger than the ax-grinders are ready to admit, and it is therefore surprising to see the long-shore and maritime workers despairing of their own potentialities in the face of this marvelous support.

Too often the marine workers have found themselves at loggerheads with one another, and too often the boat-owners have taken a rake-off on this.

Unquestionably the seafaring workers should belong to one union, but if the differences are insurmountable, it is imperative that they work together regardless of any and all separation or marooning. Any gains that are had, no matter where they may fall, are of benefit to the working class; any loss is a loss to all hands.

Thus it is that a full measure of support is imperative and should be volunteered.

Losses, of course, are impossible, because the conditions in the marine industry are a perfect disgrace; only gains are possible.

I have only to point out that shipowners were the very last of employers to install safety devices; and those installed were very rudimentary—and are so today. "Pull and haul"—and still the seamen are wondering will they ever work. Tankers burned. Steering frozen. Life boats jammed—a list too long to recite here.

All these improvements were made under protest by the owners, and would not be present today were it not for the direct attack by west coast seamen. The Atlantic seaboard is very backward in these things, and seamen have, in addition to fighting the dangers of the sea, to fight the dangers of the boat owners.

Be it noted: The boat owners are the big danger for the seamen and the traveling public. They must be forced to observe safety laws. Captain Fried cannot do it. Sirovich cannot do it. So what? We are dickering with ship owners—that is, the officials of the various unions are dickering, and how they can dicker, after a full year of spasmodic strikes!

The strike was ripe last week in September, and here it is December.

At all times it is the steam of the workers that wins the things desired, but putting off the showdown to a less advantageous time makes the job more difficult. But even so, even if we are maneuvered into this position, let us have it out with them—lively is the watchword.

We cannot lose! What can we lose? We have nothing.

Marine work is such that it was deemed necessary to give the seamen shore leave after each trip, so that they could recuperate. And so it was provided for in ships' articles, service was to end at the expiration of the trip. Now we are working a big part of each twenty-four hours, and if we were to put into effect the shore leave reasoned in the ships articles, we should get twice the pay that we are getting—\$125.00 a month and board.

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But not the kind of board that we are getting. Present day board is not board—in fact if the ship owners find themselves involved in a strike, they can lay it to the galley. Better garbage is dumped on Ricker's Island. Rotten chuck causes more strikes than rotten pay. The \$125.000 per month is well reasoned (as from nothing

to something)—it is not unreasonable. In fact the Plimsol line has already brought the boat owners enough manna to warrant the payment of that sum, and, when they talk of five and ten pay increase, they are masking their grins. Pay no attention to tied up vessels, they are a sign of shipowner mismanagement, and, not being needed, they are proof conclusive that the shipowner can afford to pay.

Whenever shipowners can afford to throw away good ships and build new ones, it is a sign that they can afford to put something other than slumgullion into the crews' pan, with rust-proof knives and forks, and whiter spoons.

Ocean going ships now have the championship for bad feeding, but I'm afraid that the last passed hash will rise to haunt the skyscraper commodores.

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And the Sitting Bulls and the Stuck-in-the-Muds of the Guild of Worthy Labor Brokers cannot hear or see that the hands are rank and file, but the voice is I.W.W.

Once again in the seamen's strike the I.W.W. has demonstrated its power.

Once again the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union No. 510 has demonstrated its loyalty to the workers, and exposed the mushiness of leadership. I commend these also to the I.L.A. . . . "Don't look now, but I think that guy is going to scribble on the wall."

The whole scandal is in my mitt . . . Lest we forget.