

# Our Screwloose Railroads Want Higher Rates

By T-BONE SLIM



The hell of it is, boys and girls, our diplomatic relations have got acid condition and they are talking of putting congressmen under minimum wage and 40-hour week. Why not? Aren't we all suckers? I think that's better than having them fondle a shovel in WPA, or going on relief.

Railroads are hollering for increased freight rates and think "Congress just crazy enough to let 'em mave it." It will be remembered the railroads were so bankrupt they had to build streamlined trains of stainless steel and have Lily Pons baptize them—it being figured that a locomotive in a wrapper makes better time than one that is bare.

When they equal the speed of the naked "two-wheelers" of 50 years ago I will let you know by air mail. Yes, by God! I'll outrun them with a cowcatcherless switch engine, and I ain't much of an engineer. Just give me a couple of round wheels and keep the kids off the track; and give me a good fireman, one of the two-steaks variety. Corn flakes? Pooh, pooh, I won't pull out. We're talking about chu-chu trains, not streamline firemen. They'll put an overcoat on Charley Paddock yet, and on Weismuller.

The evidence is right here and now is the time to put the railroads in a padded cell and, if congress gives them a raise, stick them in too. We can't afford to let crazy people roam around at large, screwloose, in these hard times, hollering for largesse. I'll spill the beans . . . Tut, tut, Slim.

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Courts jump small-fry loan sharks. (Good.)

They don't jump big-time financiers. (Not so hot.)

Small fry doesn't seem to stand in with courts. (That's bad.)

Big-time financiers have fastened themselves to railroads and are sucking the very life blood out of them, keeping them always poor, always inefficient, always hollering for help. Mind you, railroads have always cashed in on each successive improvement before the tax collector got to 'em.

Why write a book about it? It can be put in one sentence: IF THE RAILROADS DON'T GET HELP SOON THE BANKERS WILL STARVE.

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## Cross Examination

BOSS: Who did you work for last?

WORKER: I hate to brag of my past.

BOSS: We must know, or you can't get a job.

WORKER: (He's all bent from years of toil; callouses on his hands up to his elbows.) Well, I'll tell you the truth. I've never done a tap of work for anybody in my whole life. The thought just struck me a little while ago that I ought to help keep the ball rolling. So I rushed right up here in hopes of starting a record of honorable toil, so I could tell the next employer all about the great deeds I performed in your service. And now you tell me I've got to have a record or I can't start one? How would an imaginary record do to start with, and then I can keep cutting it out as I grow a new one?

BOSS: Won't do at all! You're lying like hell! We know all about you.

WORKER: Well, if you know all about me, why did you ask me? Just to hear my melodious voice or your own beautiful baritone?

BOSS: Get out! I'll never give you a job.

WORKER: I hope you live forever.

BOSS: Get out.

WORKER: I'll be seeing you tomorrow morning.

BOSS: Get out.

WORKER: Just in case you have a change of heart.

BOSS: Come back here! What was it you wanted?

WORKER: A job.

BOSS: You're hired.

WORKER: Thanks.

Is pay so high and work so sweet  
It pays to kiss the boss' feet?  
To cry, to plead, to squirm and sob,

To get a toe-hold on a job?