

# WITH THE FUNNY MEN



**Plain People.**  
 "Now," said the mistress, "tell me about people you have worked for."  
 "I don't believe you'd be interested in hearing about them, ma'am," said the newly engaged cook. "All the people I've worked for owned flivvers and led a beautiful home life. Somehow scandals and flivvers don't go together."

**The Judge's Little Joke.**  
 "Your honor, my husband neglects me shamefully and loses all his money betting on horse races and playing the market."

"What is your husband's profession other than gambling?"  
 "He's a high diver, your honor."  
 "Ah, I see. Your diver is a plunger."

**Too Valuable.**  
 "What has become of the clerk with the big diamonds?"  
 "Had to let him go," replied the landlord. "He got to be too valuable. The guests began to take offense because he suspected everybody who wanted to talk to him of being a burglar or a kidnaper."

**It Was Both.**  
 "What do you think of Uncle Peter leaving all his money for a grand mausoleum over his remains?" said one needy relative.  
 "Awful," said the other; "it's just a willful waste."  
 "Huh! I call it a wasteful will."

**A Limit Reached.**  
 "Does your wife give you any suggestions about how to vote?"  
 "No," replied Mr. Meekton, "Henrietta says she's beginning to think she's got enough authority without trying to be a political boss."

**Domestic T. N. T.**  
 "You must not let your wife get so excited."  
 "Goodness gracious, doctor, if I tried to stop her from getting excited she'd get so excited she'd raise the roof."



**SWEET INNOCENCE**  
 Mrs. Youngbride—I'll take a few of those beets if they are live ones.  
 Clerk—Lives ones, ma'am?  
 O yes, I must have live ones. I heard my husband say he has no use for dead beets.

**Did You Wake?**  
 A wind crept home in his stocking foot  
 When the hour was late and wee,  
 But though he wanted to be discreet  
 He slipped on a squeaky tree.

**The Main Thing.**  
 "Do you suppose your grateful constituents will erect a monument to your memory after you are gone?"  
 "I don't know," said Senator Snorts-worth thoughtfully, "but I would be willing to dispense with a monument if my grateful constituents would guarantee that when I die I'd have a congressional funeral."

**An Approval.**  
 "Do you approve of the classics?"  
 "I do," replied Senator Sorghum. "The classics should be studied, the same as campaign platforms. They have their improving influences, even if you don't manage to remember much of what was in 'em."

**Headwork.**  
 "Did you say my head was sold ivory?"  
 "Maybe I did," replied Mr. Erastas Pinkley, "but don't you make no more reaches like you had a razor, unless you want to get it in a museum as carved ivory."

**Mean Allusion.**  
 "What were the prehistoric times?"  
 "They were the times, my child, when Miss Pringle and her friends fainted gracefully away every time anybody needed their help."

**His Stellar Role.**  
 Young Thing (gushingly)—And are there any other stars in your company?  
 Ham Actor (grandly)—Stars, dear lady? We are all stars. But there is only one Betelgeuse.

**Curious.**  
 Jones—I saw a lot of ladies waiting by the church on the son front.  
 James—Oh, what were they waiting for?  
 "To see the tied go out!"

**Looks and Lucre.**  
 Rich Wife—I got my good looks from my mother.  
 Her husband (who gets small allowance)—Then your stinginess is evidently inherited.

# AND PLAN TO GET RATES DOWN

Propose to Reduce Wages and Return All the Saving by Reduction in Charges.

## ALL TEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

Statement by Thomas DeWitt Cuyler, Chairman of the Association of Railway Executives on the Situation.

Following a meeting in Chicago, October 14, 1921, of the presidents of nearly all the leading railroads in the country, Mr. Thomas DeWitt Cuyler, chairman of the Association of Railway Executives, made the following statement:

At a meeting of the Association of Railway Executives today it was determined by the railroads of the United States to seek to bring about a reduction in rates. And as a means to that end to seek a reduction in the present railroad wages which have compelled maintenance of the present rates.

An application will be made immediately to the United States Railroad Labor Board for a reduction in wages of train service employees sufficient to remove the remainder of the increases made by the labor board's decision of July 20, 1920 (which would involve a further reduction of approximately 10 per cent) and for a reduction in the wages of all other classes of railroad labor to the going rate for such labor in several territories where the carriers operate.

**To Reduce Rates as Wages Go Down.**  
 The foregoing action is upon the understanding that concurrently with such reduction in wages the benefit of the reduction thus obtained shall, with the concurrence of the Interstate Commerce Commission, be passed on to the public in the reduction of existing railroad rates, except in so far as this reduction shall have been made in the meantime. The managements have decided upon this course in view of their realization of the fact that the wheels of industrial activity have been closed down to a point which brings depression and distress to the entire public and that something must be done to start them again in operation.

The situation which confronts the railroads is extremely critical. The railroads in 1920 realized a net railway operating income of about \$62,000,000 upon a property investment of over \$19,000,000,000 and even this amount of \$62,000,000 included back pay for prior years received from the government of approximately \$64,000,000, thus showing, when the operations of that year alone are considered, an actual deficit before making any allowance for either interest or dividends.

The year ended in serious depression in all branches of industry and in marked reduction of the market demand for and the prices of basic commodities, resulting in a very serious falling off in the volume of traffic. Roads forced to defer maintenance. In this situation, a policy of the most rigid economy and of postponing and cutting to the bone of the upkeep of the properties was adopted by the railroads. This was at the price of neglecting and for the time deferring work which must hereafter and in the near future be done and paid for. This is illustrated by the fact that, as of September 15, 1921, over 16 per cent, or 374,431 in number, of the freight cars of the carriers were in bad order and needing repairs, as against a normal of bad order of not more than 160,000 as is further illustrated by the deferred and inadequate maintenance of other equipment and of roadway and structures.

Even under those conditions, and with this large bill charged up against the future—which must soon be provided for and paid if the carriers are to perform successfully their transportation duties—the result of operations for the first eight months of this year, the latest available figures, has been at a rate of net railway operating income, before providing for interest or dividend amounting to only 2.6 per cent per annum on the valuation of the carrier properties made by the Interstate Commerce Commission in the recent rate case, an amount not sufficient to pay the interest on their outstanding bonds.

**Roads Earning Far Below Reasonable Returns.**

It is manifest, from this showing, that the rate of return of 5 1/2 per cent for the first two years after March 1, 1920, fixed in the Transportation Act as a minimum reasonable return upon railroad investment, has not been even approximated, much less reached; and that the present high rates accordingly are not due to any statutory guarantee of earnings, for there is no such guarantee.

In addition the expenses which have largely brought about this situation, it becomes evident that by far the largest contributing cause is the labor cost.

Today the railroads pay out to labor approximately 60 cents on the dollar they receive for transportation services whereas in 1916, 40 cents on the dollar went to labor. On the first day of January, 1917,

the railroads paid out to labor approximately 40 cents on the dollar they received for transportation services. The increase in labor cost of the railroads was about 3,658,000,000 annually, or, if continued through the year instead of for the eight months during which the wage increases were in effect, the labor cost, on an annual basis, would have been largely in excess of \$3,900,000,000—an increase, since the government took charge of railroad wages in the Adamson Act, of approximately \$2,450,000,000 annually.

In the light of these figures, it is manifest that the recent reduction of wages authorized by the Labor Board, estimated at from 10 to 12 per cent, in no sense meets or solves the problem of labor costs, and in no way makes it possible for the railroads to afford a reduction of their revenues.

Thousands of Rates Already Reduced. Indeed, during the past year there have been between four and five thousand individual reductions in freight rates. On some railroads the reductions in rates have amounted to more than the reductions in wages so far made, and on many other railroads the reductions in wages allowed no net return on operations, but merely provided against the further accumulation of a deficit.

The point is often made that agriculture and other industries are also suffering the same immediate difficulties as the railroads, why, therefore, do not the railroads take their medicine like anybody else? The answer lies in several facts:

1. The railroads were not permitted, as were other industries, to make charges during the years of prosperity, making possible the accumulation of a surplus to tide them over the present extreme adversity. According to the reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the rate of return in property investment of the railroads of the United States for the past several years has been as follows:

Year	Per cent
1912	5.15
1913	4.44
1914	4.17
1915	4.20
1916 (fiscal year)	5.90
1917	5.26
1918	3.15
1919	2.45
1920	0.32
1916 (calendar year)	6.16

It will thus be noted that during the years when other industries were making very large profits, when the prices of farm products and the wages of labor were soaring to unheard-of heights, the earnings upon railroad investment in the United States were held within very narrow limits and that they have during the past four years progressively declined. Roads handicapped More Than Other Business.

2. The railroads are responsible to the public for providing adequate transportation. Their charges are limited by public authority, and they are in very large respect (notably for labor) compelled to spend money on a basis fixed by public authority. The margin within which they are permitted to earn a return upon their investment or to offer inducements to attract new capital for extensions and betterments is extremely limited. However much the railroads might desire, therefore, to reduce their charges in times of depression, it will be perceived that the limitations surrounding their action do not permit them to give effect to broad and elastic policies which might very properly govern other lines of business not thus restricted.

It has been urged upon the railroads that a reduction in rates will stimulate traffic and that increased traffic will protect the carriers from the loss incident to a reduction in rates. The railroad managements cannot disguise from themselves that this suggestion is merely conjectural and that an adverse result of the experiment would be disastrous, not only to the railroads, but to the public whose supreme need is adequate transportation.

Consequently the railroad managements cannot feel justified in placing these instrumentalities, so essential to the public welfare, at the hazard of such an experiment based solely upon such conjecture.

**Farmers Especially Need Lower Rates.**

It is evident, however, that existing transportation charges bear in many cases a disproportionate relationship to the prices at which commodities can be sold in the market and that existing labor and other costs of transportation thus impose upon industry and agriculture generally a burden greater than they should bear. This is especially true of agriculture. The railroad managements are feeling sensitive to and sympathetic with the distressing situation and desire to do everything to assist in relieving it that is compatible with their duty to furnish transportation which the public must have.

At the moment railroads in many cases are paying 40 cents an hour for unskilled labor when similar labor is working alongside the railroad and can easily be obtained by them at 20 cents an hour. The railroads of the country paid in 1920 a total of considerably over \$1,300,000,000 to unskilled labor alone. However desirable it may be to pay this or that schedule of wages, it is obvious that it cannot be paid out of the railroad earnings, unless the industries which use the railroads are capable of meeting such charges.

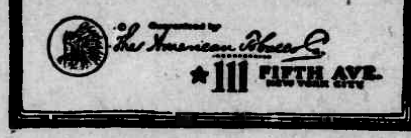
The railroads, and through them the people generally are also hampered in their efforts to economize by a schedule of working rules and conditions now in force as a heritage from the period of Federal control and upheld by the railroad labor board. These conditions are expensive, uneconomic and unnecessary from the point of view of railroad operation and extremely burdensome upon the public which pays the bill. The schedule of wages and of working conditions prevents the railroads from dealing equitably with their labor and costs in accordance with rapidly changing conditions and the great variety of local considerations which ought to control wages in different parts of the country. The railroads are seeking to have these rules and working conditions abrogated.

The railroads will seek a reduction in wages and propose to do this by requesting the sanction of the railroad labor board. The railroads will proceed with all possible dispatch, and as soon as the railroad labor board shall have given its consent to the reduction in wages, the general reduction in rates will be put into effect.



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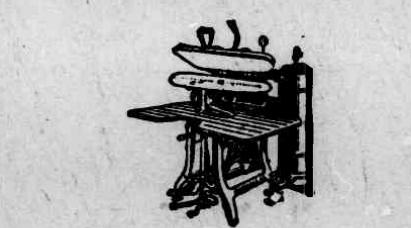
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