

# FROM FOSTER IN JAIL

(Undated, but mailed at Spokane Friday, Jan. 14.)

The members of the I. W. W. confined in the city jail have organized themselves in to a temporary organization, and hold regular meetings twice a week. There is much enthusiasm displayed at these meetings and the jail is filled with the inspiring strains of the "Red Flag" and other revolutionary songs. Monday night is devoted to propaganda work, and that this is not without effect is evidenced by the large number of non-I. W. W. prisoners who have declared their intention of joining the organization on securing their release. Wednesday night is business night, and it certainly is surprising the amount of business we have to transact. We have established 10:30 p. m. as the time when "lights out" shall sound, have elected a secretary and a propaganda committee that has charge of the Sunday programs; decided by a unanimous vote to utterly ignore the Salvation Army freaks when they inflict their weekly torture upon us, and have needlessly appointed sergeants-at-arms to see that this is enforced. There are dozens of other rules and regulations that we have established, and the result is the customary I. W. W. discipline so remarkably in evidence in this Spokane fight. So successful have our meetings been, and so firmly have our men refused to compromise with the police that the inevitable has occurred, and some bright genius has now arrived at the conclusion that there are some "leaders" in the bunch, and as a result of this conclusion and a little work by stool pigeons, two members have been sorted out and placed in the "strong box," a series of cells devoted to all kinds of desperate criminals (at present it contains four highwaymen, three forgers, several thieves, and pimps galore). These are Fellow-Workers Wm. Jones of Los Angeles (better known as "Volcanic Sulphur Smoke"), and Wm. E. Foster of Seattle. Strange to say, this grabbing and isolating of the Sunday evening speaker and chairman has simply served to stimulate the rest of the bunch to greater efforts, and once more the Spokane police have failed to grab the mysterious and elusive "leaders," who seem to show their fine Italian hand every time there are two or more I. W. W.'s confined together.

A week ago for some mysterious reason the police took thirteen of the boys and put them on bread and water. This naturally incensed the remainder, but suspecting a police ruse calculated to break their organization spirit, they did nothing further than to await developments. After four days of starvation the bread and water brigade precipitated matters by going upon a hunger strike. Four hours after it was declared Sullivan and Burns hastened down to inquire into it. The last hunger strike was such a terrible affair that the police have a horror of precipitating another, and it was this fear that fetched Sullivan and Burns down post haste. Sullivan stalked in and demanded: "What do you men want?" The boys presented their ultimatum, which was: "We want to go to work; we want water in which to boil our clothes (they were alive with vermin); we want something to eat, and their demands were instantly granted. This was deservedly looked on by us as quite a victory, as the police have been consistently stubborn all through this fight, and have yielded nothing to the I. W. W. unless absolutely forced to do so. They know the members of the I. W. W. are game to carry out a hunger strike and starve themselves for a week if necessary, and rather than face the possibly fatal consequences of such a strike the police gracefully yielded while they could easily do so.

WM. Z. FOSTER (Unsigned).