

Kelly Miller Says—

Hon. Arthur W. Mitchell, the only Race member of Congress, introduced a Bill to establish a Federal Commission on Race affairs. Proposals to this effect have been suggested and engaged public thought and discussion for the past thirty years. None of them, however, have gotten beyond the stage of being introduced in Congress and hearings before appropriate committees.

Mr. Mitchell, however, is thoroughly convinced that his proposed measure will shortly be enacted into law and put into practical effect. Judging by the esteem in which Congressman Mitchell is held by his colleagues and the widespread favor with which this bill is received, in and out of Congress, there seems to be good reason for believing that the hopes of the author will be realized.

The hearing was held on this bill by the House Judiciary committee on Tuesday, June 18. Congressman Sommers of Texas, chairman, and practically the full committee were in attendance and gave most considerate attention. Several members of Congress, from both the North and South, expressed their interest in the measure. Dr. R. R. Moton of Tuskegee, Hon. Perry W. Howard, J. E. Mitchell, editor of the Argus, St. Louis, Mo., Atty. Scipio Jones of Little Rock, Ark., Dr. Alain Locke and Dean Kelly Miller of Howard university appeared in behalf of the bill.

NAAACP ON OPPOSITION

The N.A.A.C.P., through its attorney, Charles Houston, telegraphed requesting the privilege of filing with the committee its opposition to the proposed measure. Mr. Mitchell advises that this is the only semblance of opposition yet developed.

Although Mr. Houston did not indicate the nature of the brief requested to be filed with the committee, yet it is easy to divine that it must be of the nature of opposition to what seems to smack of class legislation. During the entire life of the N.A.A.C.P. similar proposals have been before Congress and the public, but if I mistake not, it is the first time that this organization has registered itself in the opposition.

Several proponents of the bill anticipated the objection based upon the appearance of class legislation. The writer of this release addressed himself mainly to this point. In principle the federal government is opposed to all forms of class legislation.

It is sought to keep the statute books free from the stain of race or class discrimination and yet, as Dr. Moton pointed out, we are confronted with a condition and not a theory. The federal government recognizes race distinction but not race discrimination in sundry federal provisions.

The separate schools of Washington, the establishment and maintenance of Freedmen's hospital and of the Veterans hospital at Tuskegee, Ala., the authorized appropriations for Howard university, Race regiments in the United States army and sundry like provisions are based clearly upon race distinction. Differentiated treatment on account of race or color is contrary to the spirit and genius of democratic institutions and especially repugnant to the sensibilities of the race.

WILL BENEFIT THE RACE

Wherever there are set up distinctions on account of race, they are always on the expressed or understood basis that there must be equal, even though separate, accommodations. The grants to Howard university represent, I believe, the only instance in federal legislation where race discrimination is clearly avowed. But this discrimination is in favor of the Race, no other institution enjoys similar congressional favor.

But as the Race suffers the heavy brunt of discrimination in the administration of law, though not in the legislation itself, the special favor enjoyed by Howard university is only to offset partly for the Race's many disadvantages. After all none of us can be logical in dealing with the race question. Race prejudice frustrates all the formulas of logic. Under existing circumstances and conditions a commission such as Congressman Mitchell proposed will be a most desirable instrument in promoting the interest of the race and the welfare of the nation.

There is one interesting feature in the Mitchell bill which was not to be found in any of the similar measures which preceded it. It proposes to take steps against subversive propaganda calculated to lead the Race away from the ideals of American citizenship.

SHOULD SUPPORT REP. MITCHELL

The demagogue and promoters of wild propaganda are ever prone to seize upon the grievances of the

race as a means of inducing them to join the ranks of the restless and dissatisfied trouble makers. The Red, the Communist, the Fascist, the Nazist have nothing to offer the Race but would beguile him into a sea of trouble by which he would be engulfed.

The Race today is faced by a situation which is more serious than any which has confronted him since the emancipation. Here is a practical constructive proposal which offers immediate help in the midst of present troubles. All members of the Race of whatever school of thought or shade of opinion should uphold Mr. Mitchell's hand in putting over this Race commission.

It was interesting to see the Hon. Perry W. Howard, the arch Race Republican, working hand in glove with Congressman Mitchell, his Democratic antitype, in promoting this proposition for general racial good. I urge members of the Race from all parts of the country to deluge Congressmen and Senators with telegrams and letters for the support of Mitchell's commission on Race affairs.