## LEGISLATION

The Association has never relaxed its interest in the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, despite the check the Bill received after passage by the House of Representatives in 1922, when the Senate filibuster prevented even discussion of the measure and forced its withdrawal. The Bill was reintroduced by Representative L. C. Dyer on the opening day of the 70th Congress.

During the year the Association several times called to the attention of President Coolidge atrocious lynchings and the failure of states to prosecute the lynchers. In his message to Congress President Coolidge said concerning the Negro:

"... They have especially been made the target of the foul crime of lynching. For several years these acts of unlawful violence had been diminishing. Every principle of order and law and liberty is opposed to this crime. The Congress should enact any legislation it can under the Constitution to provide for its elimination."

A form of legislation the Association has steadily and relentlessly opposed is Anti-Intermarriage Legislation sponsored in northern states by the Ku Klux Klan and allied forces. The branches, warned and backed by the National Office, which took action against anti-intermarriage bills introduced in certain states are as follows:

Connecticut: Through the activity of the Connecticut branches an anti-intermarriage bill introduced in that state received an unfavorable committee report, the unfavorable report being adopted by the Legislature without comment or vote.

Maine: An anti-intermarriage bill was introduced in the Maine Legislature in February. Representatives of the Maine branches of the N.A.A.C.P. called upon members of the Legislature in regard to the measure and the National Office sent letters of protest to the chief newspapers of the State. The bill was not even voted upon in the Judiciary Committee. The order was passed that it "ought not to pass" and it was promptly dropped.

Massachusetts: Under the leadership of Mr. Butler R. Wilson, President of the Boston Branch, cooperation of all the Massachusetts branches of the N.A.A.C.P., and twelve other organizations, was secured in the fight against the anti-intermarriage bill introduced in the Massachusetts Legislature on January 18. On March 2 the

Committee on Legal Affairs reported "leave to withdraw" on the bill. This meant the end of the measure. The argument made by Mr. Wilson so comprehensively states the objections to it that it is here given in full:

- 1. The opposition to the bill is in no sense a plea for intermarriage. The two races are in substantial accord that white folk marry white folk and colored folk marry colored folk and the record of marriage shows this to be the practice.
- 2. Such a law would be in direct conflict with the letter and the spirit of the whole body of laws of Massachusetts as those laws guarantee the rights of all races and would overturn the established policy in Massachusetts of prohibiting all racial discrimination.

More than two-thirds of a century ago the General Court by Chapter 4 of the Acts of 1843 expressly repealed such a law which had been enacted in Chapter 3, Section 7 of the General Laws of 1786 and reappearing in an amended form in Chapter 75, Section 5 of the Revised Statutes of 1836.

- 3. There is no demand for such a law. The question of intermarriage has been left to the common sense of the people of the Commonwealth of all races and the records show that intermarriage is a negligible transaction. And it is common knowledge that such laws in States where they exist do not prevent an intermingling of the races but are a menace to the institution of matrimony leading to concubinage, bastardy and the degradation of colored women.
- 4. Such a law has been proposed in the Federal Congress many times in the last 30 years and has uniformly failed on the ground that it would be vicious class legislation. It has recently been proposed in the legislatures of Rhode Island, Ohio, Iowa and Michigan and has failed. The reasons in each case urged against it being:
  - a. Marriage is a contract of individual choice and not a proper subject for legislative making and may safely be left to the judgment of the people.
  - b. That such a law sweeps away the protection, legal recourse and remedy for violation of womanhood from colored women while leaving them intact for the protection of white women and therefore bears unequally upon the two races composing citizenship.
  - c. That such a law does not stop inter-mixture but puts the stamp of approval upon concubinage, bastardy and the degradation of colored women.
- 5. Such a law is not only a source of great danger to colored women but it would show a distrust of white women by white men who compose the legislature and would be an insult to white women in that the imputation will be inescapable that legislation is necessary to prevent white women from marrying colored men and white men from marrying colored women.