

# Senate Committee Hears Johnson Urge Passage of Anti-Lynching Law

At a meeting of a sub-committee, appointed by the Committee on the Judiciary of the U. S. Senate to hold a hearing on the McKinley-Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, in the National Capitol last Tuesday, James Weldon Johnson, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, presented arguments for the enactment of the measure into law.

Mr. Johnson presented "Thirty Years of Lynching," with supplements to date, the first and only authoritative compilation on the subject in this country, published by the N. A. A. C. P. Mr. Johnson cited a number of atrocities which took place in 1925, including the lynching of an insane man in Georgia; the burning alive of two men, and the lynching of Lindsey Coleman in Mississippi immediately after a jury had acquitted him of the charge of murder.

"The McKinley-Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill is not a force bill," said Mr. Johnson, "not nearly as much so as the prohibition enactments. It is rather a Federal penal measure, which would operate only where States are unable or unwilling to act.

"The nation surely cannot deem itself powerless to protect its citizens within its own borders. Lynching is not limited to Negroes. In fact, of the total of 3,550 persons lynched since 1889 no less than 722 were white.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that rape had never been first among the crimes alleged as provoking lynchings, and that less than one-fifth of the lynching victims had even been accused of rape, in addition to the fact that 90 women have been lynched.

Declaring that the honor and safety of the United States were at stake, Mr. Johnson said: "The United States is the only civilized or uncivilized spot on earth where a human being may be burned alive with immunity. I think it sound to say that lynching is not simple murder. It is murder plus revolution and anarchy. It is murder plus the flouting and overthrow and trampling underfoot of the prerogatives of the courts."

Mr. Johnson asserted that Section I of the 14th Amendment, assuring "equal protection of the laws" to all citizens, was the basis for the proposed law: "It appears that this Amendment was adopted for the specific purpose of meeting just such a contingency as this measure proposes to remedy, the securing to Negroes of the equal protection of the laws. And no one would contend for a moment that the victims of lynch law receive equal protection of the laws."