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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM AMEMBASSY, HABANA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

1055

December 28, 1951

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

Air Pouch

REF
SUBJECT Anti-Discrimination Bill passed by Cuban House of Representatives

JAN - 1 1952

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During the final days of the recent session of Congress, the House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate a bill which would make more effective those parts of the Cuban constitution which prohibit racial discrimination. This would be in addition to the recent presidential decree (see despatch 793 of November 14, 1951) which deals with discrimination in employment practices only.

The bill is significant in that it not only provides stiff penalties for violation but also undertakes the eradication of prejudice and discrimination through a broad educational program. A Cuban Institute of Inter-Racial Cooperation would be created with nine members representing the following organizations: Economic Society of Friends of the Country, Cuban Historical Academy, Spanish-Cuban Institution of Culture, Fraternal Union of Habana, Academy of Physical and Natural Sciences of Cuba, Society of Afro-Cubano Studies and the National Federation of Cuban Societies. The last organization would be represented by two delegates.

The Inter-Racial Cooperation Institute would be financed by an annual government grant of 30,000 pesos, half of which would be devoted to propaganda and education projects and the other half to pay for personnel and office expenses. The Institute would be an autonomous organization attached to the Ministry of Education and have the following activities: (1) an intensive propaganda campaign to expose the falseness of the idea that one race is superior to another; (2) a joint campaign with the National Council of Education and the public and private schools throughout the Republic to combat racial prejudice, emphasizing the fact that both negroes and whites fought side by side for Cuban independence and that they must work together in peace as one indestructible family of Cubans.

The measure singles out the three classes of the population who are responsible for making the law work: (1) private citizens; (2) public servants; and (3) corporations and business concerns. Fines and imprisonment are penalties for violation.

Following are the forms of discrimination spelled out on the bill: (1) prohibiting use of parks, streets and public places; (2) refusal to rent houses or buildings; (3) refusal to permit use of dance halls, theaters and other commercial enterprises; (4) refusal to give employment; and (5) spreading of propaganda and ideas

ISLippe:rc

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of racial inferiority, etc.

Presumably, the proposal will be considered by the Senate when Congress reconvenes in March 1952.

For the Ambassador:

Irvin S. Lippe
Irvin S. Lippe
Attaché

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