

# Bills Aimed at NAACP Stir Va. Assembly Fight

By a Staff Reporter

RICHMOND, Sept. 10—An official for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said tonight his organization will contest the legality of a batch of bills aimed at it in the Virginia General Assembly.

Oliver W. Hill, counsel for the NAACP in Virginia, said at a public hearing: "You can pass all the legislation you want to and all you are doing is compounding ways Virginians can be enmeshed in the law."

Two Fairfax County citizens also testified against the measures which are endorsed by Gov. Thomas B. Stanley. C. Edward Behre, of the Religious Society of Friends, called the legislation "dangerous and hastily conceived."

Asked David H. Scull, Annandale business man: "If an individual is so ignorant, poor or alone, is it right that it becomes unlawful for someone to step in and say, 'I am with you.?'"

Delegate Harrison Mann of Arlington, who introduced the legislation in the house, told the Assembly's Courts of Justice Committees that the proposed legislation "deprives no citizen of rights, privileges, or freedoms he does not now have."

The hearing was a quiet one. There have been indications that some assembly members, who do not have the NAACP close to their hearts, nevertheless believe the measures are too far-reaching in their effect.

Mann and State Sen. Charles R. Fenwick of Arlington feel the bills will tend to stifle "stirred-up" litigation on the school desegregation issue, and thus pave the way for the possible solution to the problem.

These proposals are House bills numbered 50 through 65—but it is House Bill 60 which is the center of most discussion.

This would require the following persons or groups to register their financial status and membership annually with

the State Corporation Commission:

- Those engaging "in promoting or opposing in any manner the passage of legislation by the General Assembly on behalf of any race or color."

- Those "influencing or attempting to influence public opinion in behalf of any race or color."

- Those "raising or expending funds for the employment of council or payment of costs in connection with litigation in behalf of any race or color."

Persons violating provisions of the bill would be guilty of misdemeanor and guilty corporations could be fined up to \$10,000.

A person expressing his own opinion on his own behalf would be exempted, as would the press, radio and television media.

Criticism of House Bill 60 comes from some legislators who feel the measure has no place in Virginia with its fundamental tradition and law protecting free speech. They also point out that such groups as parent-teacher organizations might come under such a law.

Mann has defended the bill on the grounds it would tend to keep "harmonious relations between the races."

Denying it was any sort of "thought control," Mann said that neither P-TAs nor ministers would be affected, unless "they become part of an organized effort to influence public opinion on this issue."

House Bill 50 prohibits anyone from soliciting funds to engage in litigation without first filing a list of members and source of contributions with the State Corporation Commission. Guilty individuals would be fined \$100 to \$1000, and jailed for 10 days to a year; guilty corporations would be fined up to \$10,000.

The other bills in the package—House Bills 61, 63 and 64—deal with definitions of "stirring up and litigation and unethical procedures among attorneys."

The seventh bill aimed at the NAACP is House Bill 65, sponsored by Delegate James M. Thompson of Alexandria and copied after a Georgia resolution.

It would set up a legislative committee of four delegates and three senators which would have subpoena powers to call witnesses. Thomson will amend the bill to have the committee composed of 10 legislators, one from each congressional district.

One function would be to investigate all groups seeking "to influence public opinion or encourage or promote litigation in this state, or would seek to influence the operation of the Virginia public school system or the placing of pupils or teachers.

Although aimed primarily at the NAACP, it would also affect, as would the Mann legislation, the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, White Citizens councils and other groups.