

SHORE LYNCHING MAY DECIDE THE NEXT PRESIDENT

That Governor Albert T. Ritchie is sitting quietly on a political munitions heap and that the lynching of Matthew Williams on December 5 may be a big factor in deciding who the next President of the United States will be is the observation of Tom Petty, Chicago Tribune staff writer, who has just made an investigation into Lynchland, Md.

Pointing out that the whole Eastern Shore is not only in sympathy with the mob which brutally lynched and burned the body of Williams, but is ready for another lynching if the opportunity permits, the Tribune writer declares that another such affair would seriously handicap the Maryland's governor's Democratic presidential aspirations. There is a possibility, he says, of the Williams lynching "blowing over."

Law Machinery Clogged

According to Petty, justice on the Eastern Shore is deaf, blind and dumb. Neither Governor Ritchie nor W. Preston Lane, Jr., Attorney General of Maryland, will say anything which can be printed behind quotation marks. The reason, he says, why they have nothing to say is that their investigation has made little headway in pinning the Salisbury lynching on individuals.

Governor Ritchie has done all that he is called upon under the law, but that has not been enough, says the Chicago writer, who seems of the opinion that the Governor is worried more about what effect the affair is going to have on his political fate than in actually punishing the lynchers.

Is In Dilemma

That the Governor is in a dilemma, is plainly evident. He is handicapped by a lack of power to remove elected county officials and by the fact that he has no real state police force. The seventy-five state policemen being nothing more than traffic guardians without punitive power in an individual county unless especially deputized. While the Governor and his friends hope that there will be enough evidence upon which to send some names to the grand jury, he does not expect to obtain an indictment.

Fears South

Some of Governor Ritchie's friends, if not himself, fear the effect any real effort to bring the lynchers to justice would have on his political support in the South where, in some states, lynchings are condoned. On the other hand some of the Democrats in Pennsylvania have rapped him for his lack of action. West Virginia is pointing with pride at the fact that two men alleged to have taken part in her recent lynching are in jail.

The Governor has also been criticized for keeping a political engagement in Chicago just a day or so after the lynching when he should have been on the trail of the lynchers while it was hot.