

MOB LAW

If Governor Ritchie possessed a coiner of happy political phrases, the opportunity presented by the lynching in Salisbury last week would give him a magnificent opportunity for exercising his talent, and the reverberations of it from all parts of the United States might have as salient an effect on his political future as did the policemen's strike in Massachusetts on Ex-President Calvin Collidge.

We have no fault to find, however, with his present denunciation, and his determination to see that law was upheld and lynch law condemned. As one of the ministers of the Gospel on the Shore in a sermon last Sunday well said that while the colored man, Williams, murdered a man, the mob murdered law and civilization, a far worse crime in its effect on the body politic. There was absolutely no excuse for this act, as Maryland has a high reputation among all the States of the Union for the prompt administration of justice, and the defense on the part of the mob leaders, or the Editors of the papers on the Eastern Shore, that they were disgusted with the handling of the various difficulties on the Shore recently, has absolutely no basis in fact, and is no justification for the outrageous conduct of the citizens of that section of Maryland.

We do think, however, that the intervention of Mr. Ades, lawyer and representative of a socialistic and communistic organization, served to start smouldering fires, and was a source of extraordinary irritation, not only to the people of the Eastern Shore, but to the best thinkers of the State of Maryland. The Court had appointed Mr. Leonard Wales, former President of the Maryland Bar Association, and one of the ablest attorneys in Maryland, as the Counsel for Orphan Jones, and Mr. Ades could only have done his client, if client he is, a grave injustice in attempting to substitute himself. We really consider this the crux of the whole matter, and we feel that the whole trouble can be indirectly charged to this organization, and we would warn the colored people throughout the State against heeding the suggestions of this organization. It has been harmful to the nine colored men under sentence of death in the South, and we feel is merely established for the purpose of agitation, and not with any real intention for good toward the colored man.

Mob psychology is a peculiar state of mind. It is created out of nothing but prejudice and ignorance, but can be extraordinarily dangerous when in action. It is blind, thoughtless, cruel and ruthless, as illustrated in the death of Williams in Salisbury, for the most benighted jungle tribe of Africa could never have perpetrated on one of its enemies such outrageous torture and barbaric treatment as did the Salisbury mob last week.

Fortunately we have seen little of this in Harford, and we believe that such a spirit is as well suppressed here as in any part of the Union, but there have been times when but a little spark would have started action. The people will recall the outraged feelings of many in the death of young Wenger and of Bungori by Prohibition agents some years ago, and it would have taken but little to have created a mob spirit.

We feel that when doubt arises, however, as to the safety of a criminal, the Court should resolve that doubt in favor of safety at all hazards, and send the case to a jurisdiction where there is not the least danger of the mob exercising its privileges, and where a trial can safely be carried out.