



PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE

ALBANY BUFFALO NEW YORK

GREENSBORO (N. C.) DAILY NEWS

Sunday, December 6, 1931

107

MR. RITCHIE'S THEORY GETS A TEST.

Had the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynchings waited only a few weeks longer for compilation of the survey intrusted to its representatives it could have added a gruesome chapter from the free state of Maryland to its general findings.

But the conditions under which outbursts of mobbery occurred in the instances which did come under the commission's consideration were but duplicated in the bestial flaunting of the law at Salisbury, Md., early Friday night; inadequate protection and a sheriff who claims that he was overpowered by the mob, although he made no apparent effort to come to the victim's rescue until the lynching had already taken place and the mobsters were about to cut the body down and drag it to a funeral pyre in the negro section of the city. The usual lack of precaution is indicated. On the basis of early dispatches, a heavy guard had previously been thrown around the negro when crowds gathered and feeling mounted high while he was under questioning by the district attorney. Yet when the mob advanced upon him only a police officer and a deputy sheriff stood in its way and the door through which its members finally gained entrance had no obstruction whatever.

As for sheer savagery, the commission will have to go far and search long before encountering an exhibition which tops the Maryland entry. Matthew Williams, negro, after killing a prominent Salisbury citizen, turned the gun upon himself and was in the hospital, seriously injured, when the mob seized him, yanking him from his bed, putting a rope around his bandage-swathed neck, then cutting down his body and dragging it to the negro settlement where it was cremated as several thousand people, a substantial portion of Salisbury's population, shouted and cavorted about in what must have been ghoulish glee. Such a demonstration from Maryland, in the shadow of liberal Baltimore and the outspoken denunciation of all forms of mobbery by the Sun papers, is highly discouraging.

Governor Ritchie during his long public career, and especially of late, has much to say about the sanctity, the rights and the powers of the individual states. How his theories fare, when they clash with the practicality of a lynching, coming on the heels of serious threats of two others about which nothing in particular was done, will be awaited with intense interest. The free state of Maryland has a blot upon its 'scutcheon which its chief executive and presidential favorite is likely to experience great difficulty in erasing, especially since it involves maintenance of the very issue upon which he has taken his political stand.

WHY NOT