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EDITORIAL COMMENT

RITCHIE AND THE LYNCHING

(From the Philadelphia Inquirer.)

The lynching and burning at the stake of a confessed negro slayer at Salisbury, Maryland, threatens to become a serious issue and be a vital factor in the movement to wipe out the lynching stain upon our boasted civilization. The city and county authorities have promised a sweeping probe of the affair; but it is said that Governor Ritchie is keenly interested in the matter and has promised to make his own investigation. He has ordered the Attorney General to see that a vigorous prosecution be instituted. This is understood to include, not only the leaders, but the members of the mob.

It so happens that the Maryland incident comes almost on the heels of the report made by the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching. This body not only assembled a mass of facts concerning lynchings, but also discussed what such things mean to the communities and to the Nation. The obvious results include "the crucifixion of law and government, the barbaric and depraved behavior of the lynchers and the untimely death of unconvicted people."

The report declares that indirect losses are really the greatest. The worst of these is "the unfavorable publicity given, not only to the immediate community involved, but to the whole section. The press of other countries gives much space to these incidents. The United States, and especially the Southern States, are known throughout the world as the only ones that indulge in the dreadful practice." For this reason, and for many others, it becomes the solemn duty of the Maryland officials to sift this matter to the bottom and to see that the guilty are punished.