

Mr. Ritchie and the Negroes

ALBERT C. RITCHIE, Governor of Maryland, is a possible Democratic candidate for the Presidential nomination in 1932. It is a political misfortune for him that his flat refusal of protection to a Baltimore Negro lawyer, counsel for a Negro accused of murder in the Eastern Shore area, is followed by a lynching of another accused colored man in the same area, a lynching that in its cold barbarity compels a nation's attention.

In a row over wages a Negro was said to have shot a wellknown lumberman dead. What preceded the shooting, what the provocation was, may never be known. The shooter tried to kill himself. He put a bullet through his own chest. Then the lumberman's son fired on him and the shot made the Negro entirely blind. In this condition he was taken to a hospital. A mob of 2,000 took him out, his head completely swathed in bandages, his chest wound bleeding, hanged him to a lamppost, and then burned the body. He never saw his murderers.

Naturally the Association for the Advancement of Colored People sends a telegram to Governor Ritchie denouncing the mob-murder and saying:

We see a dispatch quoting a speech of yours in which you appeal for full faith in American institutions, and in the American idea of democracy. We appeal to you not only as Governor of Maryland but as a leading exponent of the American system to practice what you preach.

However, nobody has the remotest expectation of any action by the Governor that will lead to the punishment of the lynchers. The Negroes cannot help or hinder Governor Ritchie's Presidential nomination. But, if he were to be nominated, they might use their marginal vote to lose him New York, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, even in a Democratic year. In these States the Negro vote is both cast and counted.