

**Georgia Assembly Urged to
Remove "Menace of the Mob"**

Editor Constitution: The people of Georgia are becoming accustomed to wise and courageous leadership from Governor Hugh M. Dorsey, and so they were not surprised when in his message to the general assembly he urged upon that body the importance of taking steps to reduce the evil of mob law in Georgia. The necessity for such a suggestion was made all the more evident because not very long ago a negro woman was lynched because she was alleged to have made "unwise remarks" about the lynching of her husband. In this case the prophecy that the spirit of disregard for law would spread so that mobs would not only lynch men for the unmentionable crime, but for smaller offenses, was fulfilled, though no prophet, perhaps, went so far as to foretell that a Georgia mob would actually murder a woman for talking.

The governor declared that if state governments proved their inability to restrain mobs, that the national government would inevitably intervene—all abstract theories about state rights to the contrary notwithstanding. In fact, the president is already realizing that this is a national problem, and, according to intimations from Washington, is about to issue a solemn appeal to the people that they respect the processes of the law and allow criminals to be punished by the officers of the government.

The lawlessness of our land is even having damaging results in our international relation. The lynching of Praeger at Collinsville, Ill., has actually been made use of by Germany in its propaganda against the United States, in Mexico, South America and Europe. The kaiser's agents are quick to take up anything which can be used to our damage, and nothing suits them any better than instances of bloody lawlessness on the part of American mobs. It is true that they do not represent the spirit of our people as a whole, but it has become our imminent duty to control the lawless at home. We boast of our free institutions, but we should not forget that they are to be judged by the test of our treatment of the individual, and that even the criminal individual should be dealt with by the processes of law. When that is not done the community suffers through the spread of the spirit of anarchy, and law-abiding patriots are made to hang their heads in shame when mobs hang men and even women for trivial offenses.

It becomes increasingly clear that we are going to whip the Hun, though even that result can be impeded by lawlessness back here at home, but there are going to be some great tasks before us after the war. Social and industrial readjustments will have to be made, and the mighty forces of our internal life as a nation will have to be controlled and co-ordinated. It is time now to prepare for this work. The danger of destruction by ruthless Hohenzollern tyranny is growing less, and will disappear; but we should not forget the menace of disintegration as the result of insurgent individualism, which, moved either by resentment because of some heinous crime or by the spirit of reckless revenge, might threaten the very foundations of political and social order. The mob is a menace, and as such should be met by the wisdom of our legislators in the passing of the laws that are needed and by our executives in the courageous utilization of those laws until the reproach of unrestrained lawlessness is removed from our people.

Rev. Remond G. Smith
July 28 1918