

Mob Hanging Better Than Judicial Murder Says John M. Slaton

Former Governor Declares There Are Conditions About the Frank Case Which Constitute Tribute to Georgia.

San Francisco, August 17.—In an address today to the San Francisco center of the California Civic league, former Governor John M. Slaton of Georgia, who commuted the death sentence of Leo M. Frank to life imprisonment, declared he would prefer to have Frank lynched by a mob than to have him hanged by judicial mistake, because "one reached the soul of civilization, the other merely reached the body."

Mr. Slaton's address, devoted almost entirely to discussion of the Frank case and the lynching of Frank, was delivered in the presence of a majority of members of the California supreme court and other prominent persons, members of the league.

In his address Mr. Slaton said:

"I would prefer Frank to be lynched by a mob rather than that he be hanged by judicial mistake. One attacks the soul of civilization; the other merely reaches the body. This has been such a lesson to Georgia that I hope it will never occur again in our civilization.

"There are conditions about the Frank case which constitute a tribute to the state of Georgia. No wonder it is difficult to open the ears of Georgians to reason. They forget the identity of the offender in the magnitude of the offense.

"There were many good people—as good as I—who disagreed with me because, they said, I set aside the verdict of a jury and interfered with the functions of a duly exercised court of law. But when these people find out the truth of the Frank case, their general condemnation of me will turn to general approval and they will know that I saved the state from a stain which never could have been eradicated."

"Consummate Outrage."

Mr. Slaton was informed this morning that Frank had been lynched.

"The act was a consummate outrage," said Mr. Slaton, "and every man engaged in the lynching should be hanged, for he is an assassin. Such an act is contrary to the civilization of Georgia, and one which every good citizen will condemn.

"I could use no language too condemnatory. I believe the governor of Georgia will use all the power of the state to punish the malefactors who disgraced the civilization of Georgia.

"Their act was one of cowardice, which belongs alone to the assassin.

Shocked and Horrified.

"I am shocked and horrified beyond expression. Any man who approves of this action of this mob of murderers is unworthy to be a Georgian. Any man or newspaper who condones this offense ought to be driven out of the state. But the conduct of this miserable mob of assassins is the conduct of the same sort of people who shoot people from behind a fence or murder a woman from a cowardly heart."

Mr. and Mrs. Slaton, in about a week, will go to San Diego to visit the Panama-California exposition, and afterwards will return to their home in Georgia.

"Of course I'm not afraid to return to Georgia," he said. "This act of lynching Leo Frank is not that of the good people of my state. It's the act of a few criminals. I'm going to spend the rest of my life in Georgia. I'll be back home by the middle of September."