



Ræða flutt í heimsókn Mr. and Mrs. Thorn frá Luxembourg til Íslands, ódagsett.

Bjarni Benediktsson – Stjórnmal – Ræður - Heimsókn – Mr & Mrs Thorn – Luxembourg

Tekið af vef Borgarskjalasafnsins

bjarnibenediktsson.is

Einkaskjalasafn nr. 360

Ræður

Askja 4-5, Örk 9

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Mr. Prime Minister and Madame Werner,
Mr. Foreign Minister and Madame Thorn,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sækjast sér um líkir, as we say
in Icelandic ^{when we} and mean approximately
the same as: Birds of a feather flock
together. The paths of the Luxembourgers
and the Icelanders have often
crossed at international conferences
during the last quarter century, and
they have, automatically, become
friendly towards each other. Yet
some of the most important aspects
of the life and history of the two
nations are quite unlike. [Luxembourg
is located in the middle of the
European Continent at the crossroads

of different nationalities that have often been at odds. Iceland is an island far out in a vast ocean, and ~~was~~ for a long time, far away from the main stream of traffic across the Atlantic. Iceland has never been the scene of strife as to the nationality of the people inhabiting the country.

Both nations are relatively few in number. The population of Luxembourg is ~~about~~ ^{almost} twice as large as that of Iceland, yet this difference is actually so small, compared with others, that they are still in a special class at most international conferences due to the smallness of their populations. This fact ~~alone~~ has helped to foster friendly relations between delegates of both nations at

many international meetings.

But there are other similarities, too. Both nations enjoyed, centuries ago, independence as far as that went at the time, losing it later, but having since regained it. The Luxembourgers did, however, regain their independence considerably earlier than the Icelanders. Neither nation has had the strength to defend its country by its own might, and both, therefore, sought temporary shelter in declarations of neutrality. Both made the same experience that this was useless in time of direst need. Because of this both Luxembourg and Iceland became partners in the defence alliance of the Western Democracies, and they think that they have thus solved a grave problem in a realistic manner, in view of present circumstances.

In both countries the basis of industry and economy has proved too narrow, even though it has been much broader and stronger in Luxembourg than in Iceland. But because of this both countries have sought cooperation with others to safeguard their economies. The people of Luxembourg have gone even farther than the Icelanders, as they have been from the beginning members of the European Economic Community (EEC), whereas the Icelanders are so late as now investigating if they can join the other more loosely knit organization, The European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

But although these countries have gone their different ways in these matters, their paths have also been parallel in some respects. The landing rights that

Icelandic Airlines, Loftleiðir, have enjoyed in Luxembourg are an important reason for the company's prosperity. It is, as you are all aware, one of Iceland's biggest business enterprises. The cooperation that has thus been started between our two nations is therefore valuable to the Icelanders. We value it highly from an economic standpoint. But it becomes even more important to our mind because we are aware, that attempts have been made to influence the Government of Luxembourg to deprive the airline of this right. These attempts have been in vain as the government has not been swayed in its determination to express its friendship to us in a more substantial way than with words alone.

Considering what I have said already you, our honoured guests, can rest assured

that you are indeed welcome visitors to our shores. But most of all we appreciate that your nation has for centuries been able to preserve its characteristics and its love of independence in constantly changing surroundings.

We do hereby wish you cordially welcome to Iceland as the representatives of a nation that has both proved to be a firm friend to us indeed, and has, also, for a long time been an example to all for its love of freedom and invincible will to independence.

Ladies and gentlemen. I propose a toast to the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, the Government and the People of Luxembourg.