



## Blaðaúrklippur, vegna fráfalls Bjarna, Sigríðar og Benedikts, 10. júlí 1970

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Bjarni Benediktsson – Sigríður Björnsdóttir – Benedikt Vilmondarson – Fjölskyldan – Blaðaúklippur –  
Iceland Review – Norðanfari – Verzlunartíðindi – Stefnir

## Tekið af vef Borgarskjalasafnsins

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[bjarnibenediktsson.is](http://bjarnibenediktsson.is)

Einkaskjalasafn nr. 360

Fjölskyldan

Askja 3-12

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Einkaskjalasafn Bjarna Benediktssonar © Borgarskýptasafn Reykjavíkur





Premier and Mrs.  
Benediktsson

★

## Iceland's Premier Dies in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Iceland's premier, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson were killed in a fire at the premier's summer home Thursday night.

A priest living nearby discovered the fire in the wooden cottage at Ghingveille, 40 miles from Reykjavik. He raised the alarm, but when firemen reached the house, they found the three bodies.

THE COTTAGE was owned by the government and was used by members of the cabinet.

A former law professor and mayor of Reykjavik, Dr. Benediktsson was 62. He became chairman of the Independence party and premier in November 1963, when Premier Olafur Thors resigned because of his health. Benediktsson had been minister of justice and then foreign minister under Thors.

Johann Hasstein, minister of justice and industry, took over as acting prime minister.

Mrs. Sigridur Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4. Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

A PARTY of Danish tourists also saw the blaze, raised the alarm but added that by the time they reached the scene the building was an inferno and they could do nothing

Running to investigate, they found the government residence blazing fiercely. A few minutes later a violent explosion from within the house lifted off the roof, they said.

By the time the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, there was virtually nothing left of the wood and iron structure.

Police said the bodies, recovered from the ruins this morning, were burned almost beyond recognition.

Four-year-old Benedikt Vilmundarson was the son of the prime minister's daughter Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways.

Her husband, Vilmundur Gislason, is the son of the minister of culture, Dr. Gylfi Gislason.

AT THE TIME of the tragedy, the boy's mother was on a flight to New York on an Icelandic Airways passenger liner.

Although no official state of mourning was declared immediately, all flags in Reykjavik were flying at half staff, the state-owned radio was broadcasting only solemn music, and people throughout the country were openly displaying grief.

Dr. Benediktsson was a powerful leader and a strong influence on the politics of this far-north island state.

The Benediktssons are survived by four children, three daughters and a son, who is now studying law in Reykjavik.

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1932, staying on until 1940. That year, at 32, he became the youngest mayor of Reykjavik, and held the post until 1947.

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Minneapolis Star. Sat. July 11, 1970

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President Kristjan Eldjarn, after meeting with members of the cabinet Friday, asked Hafstein to take over as acting prime minister of the coalition government of Benediktsson's Independent Party and the Social Democrats.

Witnesses who saw the flames shooting from the summer house of the prime minister in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, said the blaze was punctuated by an explosion that tore off the roof. The cause of the fire was not known.

After the blaze was controlled, firemen found the charred remains of Benediktsson, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of the prime minister's daughter, Vala, a hostess on Icelandic Airways. She was aboard a flight to New York when the tragedy occurred.





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Matthias Johannessen,  
Editor,  
Morgunbladið,  
REYKJAVIK, Iceland.



**ICELANDAIR**

FLUGFÉLAG ÍSLANDS H.F.

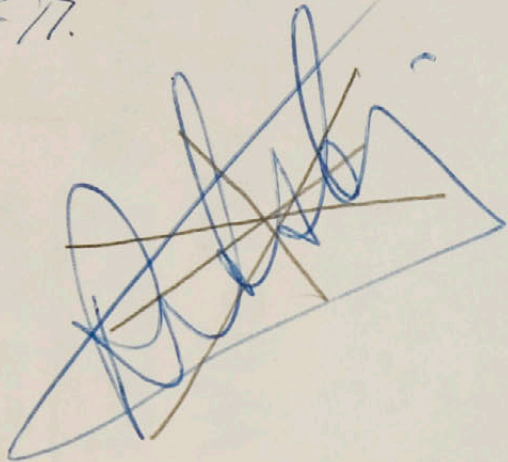
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FIRST MAN ON THE MOON



FIRST MAN ON THE MOON

Morgunblaðið  
Stalstrati 6  
Reykjavík  
Ísland.

M. Jón

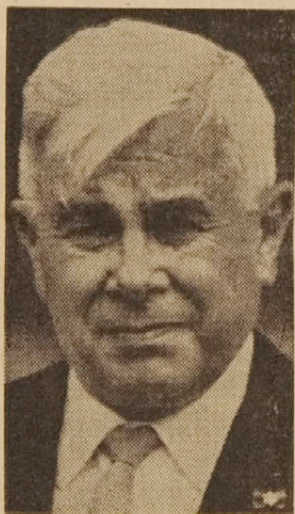


## House Blaze

# Iceland Premier, Wife Die in Fire

### Reykjavik

Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson died early yesterday in a fire that destroyed their summer house. The bodies of Benediktsson, 62, his wife Sigridur, 60, and the couple's grandson, Benedikt Gylfason, were found in the ashes of the four-room house at Thingvellir, 31 miles from Reykjavik.



AP Wirephoto

**BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON**  
Grandson also killed

The little boy was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Valgerdur.

A few hours after the fire, the cabinet met in emergency session and named Johann Hafstein, the minister of justice and industries, as acting prime minister pending new elections.

The house was destroyed before the fire brigade from Reykjavik arrived. Neighbors said they had believed the house was empty.

Government officials said that only after they found the prime minister's Reykjavik home vacant did they realize Benediktsson and his family had been killed in the fire.

The government said the cause of the fire was still unclear. But officials said a paraffin heater could have touched off the blaze.

It was discovered by a group of students on their way to a nearby hotel at 3 a.m. yesterday.



# ICELAND

## TOURIST INFORMATION BUREAU

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28th July, 1970.

Matthias Johannessen,  
Editor,  
Morgunbladid,  
REYKJAVIK, Iceland.

Dear

*Matthias,*

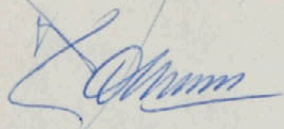
In addition to the cuttings I sent you about the tragic death of our Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, I enclose cuttings which I have now received from the various English newspapers. The tragedy was felt very deeply in this country and this is doubly confirmed by the number of newspapers covering the incident.

I was told by a very good friend of mine, Mr. Gazarine, who is European Director of United Arab Airlines, that a leading Cairo paper had published a big article about the accident, using two photographs, one of the house before the fire and one after.

I realise these cuttings are too late for your article, but I felt you might wish to keep them on file.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,



Johann Sigurdsson



11 JUL 1970

# Death in fire of Iceland Premier

From Our Correspondent

4933 Reykjavik, July 10  
Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, aged 62, the Prime Minister of Iceland, his wife Sigridur, aged 51, and their four-year-old grandson Benedikt Wilmundarsson, were burnt to death early today in a fire which destroyed the Government summer residence at Thingvellir.

They had gone there yesterday to relax before the Prime Minister set off on a political tour of the western part of the country, which was to have started today.

Last night there were high winds and rain. It is presumed that the oil-fired central heating in the house was switched on, but whether that or a short circuit in the electricity system caused the fire has yet to be determined. The building, a timber structure built in 1907 to accommodate the King of Denmark during visits to Iceland, then part of his domain, was reduced to ashes in little more than 15 minutes.

The fire was first seen by some Dutch campers whose tents were blown down by the wind. They thought that the house was deserted but raised the alarm at a neighbouring hotel. A policeman tried to force his way into the house but was driven back by the flames, fanned by a strong northerly wind. The three charred bodies were recovered from the ruins this morning, and taken to Reykjavik.

Mr. Johann Hafstein, the Justice Minister, has taken over as Prime Minister pending the formation of a new Government.

Obituary, page 16



Benedikt Wilmundarsson, the grandson of Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, the Icelandic Prime Minister, who died in a fire, at the age of four, with his



11 JUL 1970

## OBITUARY

### DR B. BENEDIKTSSON

1933

### Prime Minister of Iceland

Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, who died when fire destroyed a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, early yesterday, had been Prime Minister of Iceland since 1963. He was 62. His wife, Sigrigur Bjoernsdottir, aged 60, and a four years old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson, who were with him, also lost their lives.

Dr. Benediktsson, lawyer and politician, was the Minister responsible for taking Iceland into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after the Second World War, negotiating a special position for his country in the alliance which permitted the United States to use the Reykjavik air base.

Born in 1908, he was educated at the universities of Iceland and Berlin, and became a professor of law at the University of Iceland at the age of 24. He entered politics in 1940, when he was first elected mayor of Reykjavik for the Independence Party; he was re-elected in 1942 and 1945. In 1946 he was chosen as his country's delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. The following year he became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice, holding these offices until 1953, when he was appointed Minister of Justice and Education.

In 1956, when his party lost the election, he became chief editor of the daily newspaper Morgunbladid



until 1959, when he was made President of the Althing, followed in the same year by his appointment as Minister of Justice and Industries. These posts, which he held until 1963, were interrupted by a short term as Prime Minister from September to December, 1961. He became Prime Minister again in November, 1963, heading a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats. He had served as a member of the central committee of the party since 1936, and was elected its president in 1961.

Dr. Benediktsson leaves a son and three daughters.



10 JUL 1970

# **Iceland P.M., wife, grandson, die in summer house blaze**

4933  
**I**CELAND'S Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying, at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down early today.

They had gone to the summer house for the night. A neighbour saw the house in flames and raised the alarm. But by the time firemen arrived the wooden summer house was in ashes

Mr. Benediktsson was 62 and had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963. He was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after World War Two.

This island nation just below the Arctic Circle went into a state of mourning today as news of the tragedy was circulated. Flags flew at half mast and the radio played solemn music.

Thingvalla is 38 miles from the capital. The Prime Minister's family arrived there yesterday to spend a few days at the summer house, which is owned by the state.

In the early hours of this morning, a neighbour saw the house in flames and raised the alarm.

## **NATO**

The Prime Minister was to attend a political meeting in Reykjavik during the weekend.

Mr. Benediktsson, born in 1908, made his mark in politics as post-war Foreign Minister, when he was responsible for taking Iceland in the NATO alliance.

Before going into politics in 1940 as Reykjavik's Mayor, he was professor of Jurisprudence at Reykjavik University.

He became Prime Minister in November, 1963, heading a coalition government of his own Independent Party and the Social Democrats.

Iceland has been an independent republic, with an elected president, since it severed its links with the Danish crown in 1944.

## **Lawyer**

Mr. Benediktsson was a distinguished lawyer with a long record of public service.

Educated at the Universities of Iceland and Berlin, he became a law professor in 1932, but moved into politics and in 1940 was elected Mayor of Reykjavik.

He was chosen as his country's delegate to the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, and became Foreign Affairs and Justice Minister the following year.

He remained prominent in government life, apart from the period 1956 to 1959 when he was chief editor of the daily newspaper Morgunbladid.

After a spell as President of the Althing (Icelandic Parliament) in 1959, he became Minister of Justice and Industries, and in November 1963 was chosen as Prime Minister.



11 JUL 1970

# FIRE KILLS A PREMIER



## WIFE AND GRANDSON

SKETCH FOREIGN DESK

**T**HE Prime Minister of one European country died in a fire yesterday—and last night the ex-Premier of another was missing at sea.

**IN ICELAND**, 62-year-old Bjarni Benediktsson—Premier since 1963—was trapped in his blazing official summer home 35 miles from Reykjavik during the night.

With him died his wife Sigridur, aged 51, and their four-year-old grandson Benedikt.

They were spending the night alone at the house before going to a political meeting.

The wooden home was destroyed in 15 minutes. A central heating oil tank exploded, and by the time firemen arrived from Reykjavik the house was in ashes.

**IN FRANCE**, helicopters joined a search off the Brittany coast for 50-year-old yachtsman Felix Gaillard, Premier of France for five months in 1957-58.

He was sailing back from Jersey to Binic, near St. Malo, where he was on holiday.

His wife reported him missing at midnight. "He has never been so late before," she said.



Extract from  
Morning Star, London

11 JUL 1970

# *Iceland's Premier dies in blaze*

4933  
ICELAND'S Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and grandson died early yesterday in a fire that completely destroyed his summer residence at Thingvalla.

Police recovered the charred bodies from the smoking ruin of the small timber structure yesterday morning.

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur and their daughter's four-year-old son were alone in the house on what was a bitterly cold night with a strong northerly wind whipping snow around nearby mountain peaks.

About 1.30 a.m., some Dutch campers, whose tents were blown down, noticed a fire and told the porter of a nearby hotel, who realised the Prime Minister was in residence and raised the alarm.

## REDUCED TO ASHES

But the timber structure was reduced to ashes before the fire brigade arrived. A police officer who tried to enter the building at the height of the blaze was driven back by the flames.

As Iceland's postwar Foreign Minister, Mr. Benediktsson was responsible for taking his country into NATO.

He became Premier in 1963, heading a coalition of his own Independent Party and the Social Democrats.

Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over last night as Iceland's new Premier.—Reuter.



13 JUL 1970

THE real Count Dracula was guilty of many crimes, but apparently vampirism was not among them: for that the blame must fall on the female of the species, once again deadlier than the male.

This shattering revelation comes from a colleague of mine, Gabriel Ronay, a Hungarian sub-editor on The Times. Having himself done research in the British Museum—like Bram Stoker, author of the 1897 best-seller *Dracula*—he has traced the Dracula of Transylvanian folk-myth back to Vlad the Fifth of Wallachia (1456-76), called Vlad the Impaler.

Although Dracul happens to be the Rumanian word for the devil, Vlad acquired the title from the military Order of the Dragon, a Church decoration awarded to an



Ingrid Pitt in traditional Hammer make-up for *The Vampire Lovers*.

ancestor for defending Christendom against the Turks. Vlad's exploits included impaling on stakes such varied offenders as lazy women, disrespectful diplomats and monks who insincerely praised his deeds (as recorded in Sebastian Munster's *Cosmographia* of 1554).

But Vlad was evidently a straight sadist, though the stake motif might have helped to give Stoker the idea of amalgamating him with the vampire myth, which was a popular feature of Victorian horror.

Ronay believes this originally derives from the even more gruesome

## THE TIMES DIARY

### Dracula found not guilty • Mrs Castle fills gap

historical figure of Countess Báthori, who one day hit a chambermaid so hard that blood from the girl's nose spurted onto her mistress's face. "When she washed the blood off and looked in the mirror, her face appeared more beautiful and her skin whiter."

She then began to bathe regularly in virgin's blood and is credited with the murder of over 600 peasant girls for cosmetic purposes.

When the Countess was arrested in 1610, three girls who had been cruelly tortured and drained of blood were found in the dungeons of her husband's castle. Three accomplices were executed and the countess herself died in the same dungeons.

Ronay has sold the rights in his research to his fellow Hungarians, producer Alexander Paal and director Peter Sasdy, who are going to film the story fairly straight for Hammer Films with Ingrid Pitt as *Countess Dracula*—though it has too much blood for even Hammer's taste. But Hammer are not, of course, going to drive a stake through the heart of their profitable *Dracula*, bisexual hybrid though he be.

### Fiery saga

FOR 200,000 Icelanders, imbued almost from birth with the country's heroic sagas, there is a remarkable precedent for the tragic death of their Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, who perished with his wife and grandson when their wooden summerhouse was engulfed by fire.

In the greatest classic prose saga, *Njal's Saga*, the central character Njal Thorgeirsson, his wife Bergthora and their grandson Thord, are burnt to death when their wooden house is set on fire by a confederacy of enemies led by a chieftain named Flosi.

The police believe that the cause of last Friday's fire was nothing more sinister than a faulty stove. But this strange coincidence has

the sort of impact which we might expect if a British Prime Minister drowned in a butt of malmsey.

*Njal's Saga* was written by an unknown author around 1280 and is broadly based on authenticated historical events that had taken place three hundred years before.

There is a further association between the two tragedies. The house where the prime minister died was at Tingvellir, the famous lava plain 30 miles east of Reykjavik, which was the site of Iceland's 1,040-year-old open air parliament, the Althing. This was the scene of the clash between Njal and Flosi which immediately preceded Njal's fiery death.

### Castle's move

BARBARA CASTLE'S appearance as main Opposition speaker in today's Commons debate on the social services does not mean that the unpopularity she engendered with her efforts to replace industrial strife has finally overtaken her. It simply reflects a sudden dearth of Labour front-benchers with experience of the social services.

Richard Crossman, the former Secretary of State, prefers New Statesmanship to shadow ministry. David Ennals and Dr. John Dunwoody, who served in the department under Crossman, have both been unseated.

So Mrs. Castle gets a chance to show a bit of steely glitter against Sir Keith Joseph, who will also be on unfamiliar ground. Friends are advising Mrs. Castle to stick to her industrial relations brief for at least another year, during which time the Tory Bill to reform the unions will have emerged. Only then may Mrs. Castle be seeking a move to another field.

### Beetle music

A COCKROACH and gorilla sing a duet in a new symphony for animals written as therapeutic

music by a bearded London composer, Basil Kirchin. Among his other performers are a robin and blackbird, recorded at nearly five in the morning on Hampstead Heath, and lions and apes from London Zoo.

The animals and insects are combined with conventional instruments, and their contributions are slowed, vastly amplified and otherwise distorted to the composer's requirements until they are scarcely identifiable. For good measure, Kirchin insists that his symphony must be played as loudly as the human ear can take it.

At its first public performance in London this weekend it sounded in some of its crescendo passages not unlike an air raid; and while it is early days to judge its therapeutic value, a migraine sufferer present did claim that it had cured his headache.

Kirchin, 42, afterwards explained how to make a cockroach sing—"scratch its back, and it makes a sort of khaah sound". Which lore, he says, came originally from an entomologist at the insect house at the zoo. "Slowed down", he adds, "it sounds like a dinosaur".

Kirchin's taped symphony runs for about 20 minutes. He is most enthusiastic about his breakthrough—"it's not often that Britain produces a first. Therapeutic music is a chunk of human life. It contains truth, breathing space and terror."

### Cookery kink

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is publishing too many books on cookery, catholicism, and masochism, according to Rude Pravo, the Communist Party newspaper, which produces this curious evidence of deviationism in order to call for the restoration of full state control over publishing.

Tibbits like this can be found in a new quarterly called ABSEES which starts publication today. It is produced by Glasgow University's Institute of Soviet and East European Studies and contains abstracts

in English from about 200 Soviet and east European newspapers and periodicals—compiled from the contributions of 58 scholars.

"We are fortunate to have the cooperation of leading British experts, mostly from the academic community", says Vladimir Kusun the editor. He believes that such a wide-ranging service is unique, and although the journal's readership is primarily academic, he feels the public and particular professions may also find it useful.

### Perfect lady

"ISABELLA BIRD was in every respect the perfect Victorian lady," says Pat Barr of the heroine of her latest book who was one of the most remarkable of the remarkable band of Victorian women travellers. "She always behaved correctly."

Isabella Bird was brought up in a genteel middle class Edinburgh background, and her travels did not really start until she was 40. But when she did finally break away from her strait-laced surroundings she travelled thousands of miles, often on mule, yak or elephant, (despite a spinal complaint) through China, Tibet, Korea, Persia, Japan, Malaya and the Rocky Mountains (where she briefly fell in love with a rakish character named Rocky Mountain Jim.)

Mrs. Barr, who with her American husband, writer John Barr, divides her time between Blackheath and the Hebridean island of Coll, stumbled across Isabella when she was researching during a three year stay in Japan into her two previous books, *The Coming of the Barbarians* and *The Deer Cry Pavilion*, both of which dealt with Western activities there. Her book on Isabella Bird—*A Curious Life for a Lady* is published jointly by Macmillan and John Murray this week.

"It was the apparent split in her personality—the ordinary middle-class woman and the fearless adventurer—that first attracted my interest. She was also a tremendous journalist and wrote a number of best sellers about her travels."

PHS



Extract from  
Daily Mail, London

11 JUL 1970

# Premier dies 4733 in blaze

REYKJAVIK: Iceland's 62-year-old Prime Minister, Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, died yesterday when fire swept his official summer residence.

His 51-year-old wife and grandson, aged four, were killed with him. The wooden house was reduced to ashes in 15 minutes.



11 JUL 1970

## MINISTER 4933 SUCCEEDS ICELAND'S PREMIER

THE JUSTICE Minister, Mr. Johann Hafstein, took over last night as Iceland's new Premier after the Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, strongman of Icelandic politics, died in a blazing summer-house early yesterday.

Mr. Benediktsson, aged 62, died in the fire along with his wife, Sigridur, aged 51, and their four-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thinkvalla, former seat of Parliament, when the fire broke out.

The timber building was destroyed in little more than 15 minutes. By the time the nearest fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik, 35 miles away, the fire was over.

Police said the position of the bodies indicated that both the Premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape, but made only a few steps from their bed before being overtaken by the flames.

An oil tank exploded in the house during the fire, apparently contributing to the fierceness of the blaze.

Yesterday afternoon, after meeting members of the Cabinet, President Kristjan Eldjarn asked Mr. Hafstein, who is also vice-chairman of the Independence Party, to take over the premiership and form a new Government.

Mr. Benediktsson had headed a coalition Government of his Independence Party and the Social Democrats.

Police probing the burnt-out ruins said they had no clue to the cause of the blaze. It was a favourite haunt of the Prime Minister's, where he liked to get away from official duties and relax with his family.

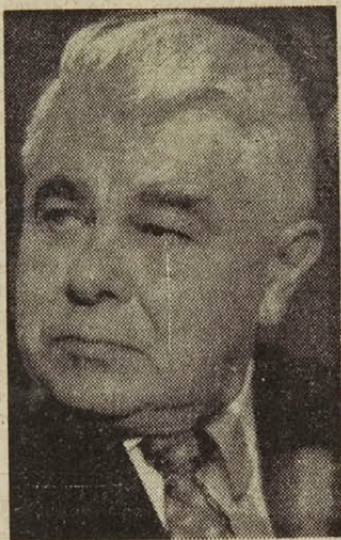
Officials said the Prime Minister and his wife arrived unannounced on Thursday night with their daughter's young son to spend a few quiet hours before a political meeting in western Iceland yesterday.

The first to notice the fire were some Dutch campers: they raised the alarm at a nearby hotel, but by the time the first help arrived the building was well alight. A policeman tried to force his way into the house, but was driven back by the flames.

Mr. Hafstein, aged 54, came up through the ranks of the party organisation and has been Justice and Industrial Developments Minister since the last Government was formed in 1963.

Mr. Benediktsson, born in 1908, made his mark in politics as post-war Foreign Minister, when he was responsible for taking Iceland into the NATO alliance.

Before going into politics in 1940 as Reykjavik's mayor, he was Professor of Jurisprudence at Reykjavik University. He is survived by a son and a daughter.— (Reuter.)



*The Prime Minister of Iceland, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, who died in a fire in his summer home yesterday.*



11 JUL 1970

# Icelandic Premier dies in fire

4933

**T**HE Minister of Justice, Mr Johann Hafstein, took over last night as Iceland's new Premier after the death early yesterday in a blazing summer house of Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, strongman of Icelandic politics.

Mr Benediktsson (62), died in the fire along with his wife Sigridur (51) and their four-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, when fire broke out early yesterday. The timber structure, built in 1907 to house the Danish king during visits to Iceland, then part of the Danish kingdom, was reduced to ashes in little more than 15 minutes, with the Premier and his family trapped inside.

By the time the nearest fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik, 35 miles away, it was all over.

Police said that from the

position of the charred bodies recovered from the smoking ruins, it appeared that both the Premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape but had got only a few steps from their bed before being overtaken by the flames.

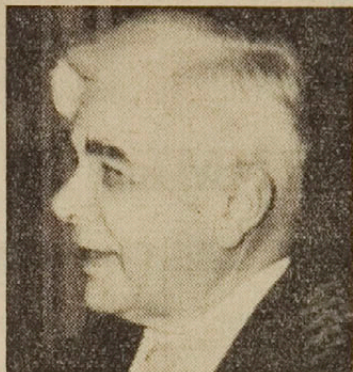
An oil tank exploded in the house during the fire, apparently contributing to the fierceness of the blaze.

The nation was shocked by the tragedy and went into a state of mourning. Flags flew at half-mast, the radio played solemn music, and people walked the streets shaking their heads in disbelief.

Mr Benediktsson, Premier since 1963, had influenced his country's political decisions over the past 30 years. As post-war Foreign Minister, he took Iceland into Nato, and last spring he pushed Iceland into the European Free Trade Association.

Police said they had no clue as to the cause of the blaze.

According to officials, Mr Benediktsson and his wife



Mr Benediktsson

arrived unannounced on Thursday night with their daughter's young son to spend a few quiet hours before the Premier was off to a political meeting in Western Iceland.

It was a cold night with a strong northerly wind bringing down snow and sleet from the mountain peaks around Thingvalla when the fire broke out at about 1 a.m.

The first people to notice the fire were some Dutch campers whose tents were blown down by the wind. They thought it was a camper's fire, then realised that what they had taken to be an empty house was ablaze.—Reuter.



# Yorkshire Post

LEEDS

Date ...11... JUL 1970

## New leader in Iceland after fire deaths

REYKJAVIK, Friday  
THE JUSTICE Minister, Mr. Johann Hafstein, took over tonight as Iceland's new Premier after the Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, died in his blazing summer residence early today.

Mr. Benediktsson's wife, Sigridur, 51, and their four-year-old grandson, Benedikt

Wilmundarsson, died with him.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalta, the former seat of parliament, when the fire broke out.

The timber building was destroyed in little more than 15 minutes before the nearest fire brigade could arrive from Reykjavik, 35 miles away.

### OIL TANK BLAST

Police said that the position of the charred bodies indicated that both the Premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape, but made only a few steps from their bed.

An oil tank exploded in the house, apparently contributing to the fierceness of the blaze.

Police probing the ruins said that they had no clue to the cause of the outbreak.

The Prime Minister and his wife arrived last night with their daughter's young son to spend a few quiet hours before the Premier attended a political meeting in Western Iceland today.

This afternoon, after meeting members of the Cabinet, President Kristjan Eldjarn asked Mr. Hafstein, who is also vice-chairman of the Independence Party, to take over as Premier and form a new Government.

### FROM THE RANKS

Mr. Benediktsson had headed a coalition Government of his Independence party and the Social Democrats.

Mr. Hafstein, 54, came up through the ranks of the party organisation and has been Justice and Industrial Developments Minister since the last Government was formed in 1963.

He is married to the sister of a former Premier, Mr. Olafur Thors. — Reuter.



EXTRACT FROM THE

# LIVERPOOL ECHO

DATE

10 JUL 1970

## Iceland's Premier and wife die in fire

4933



Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and two-years-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down last night, the Danish news agency Ritzau Bureau reported.

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

A neighbour saw the house in flames and raised the alarm. But by the time firemen arrived the wooden summer house was in ashes.

Mr. Benediktsson was in his early 60's and had been premier since November, 1963.

asafn Reykjavíkur

EXTRACT FROM THE  
**Yorkshire Evening Post**

**LEEDS**

Largest circulation in the largest county

Date ..... **10 JUL 1970**

**Iceland  
Premier  
dies in  
blaze**

4933

REYKJAVIK, Friday. — Iceland's Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and one of their grandchildren died when a fire destroyed the Prime Minister's official summer residence, a government spokesman announced today.

Radio Iceland reported that the 62-year-old Prime Minister, his wife and one of their grandchildren, a boy aged two, died when the summer residence, Thingvellir, burned down late last night.

The residence is 31 miles from Reykjavik. The spokesman said nothing had been announced about the cause of the fire.

**COALITION**

Benediktsson led a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats. He was appointed Prime Minister in 1963.

He entered the Government in 1947 as Foreign and Justice Minister and stayed in that post until 1953. During this time as Foreign Minister, Iceland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.



Extract from  
Reading Evening Post

10 JUL 1970

\* \* \* \* \*  
PM KILLED: Iceland's Prime Minister,  
Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and one  
of their grandchildren killed when fire  
destroyed official summer residence  
30 miles from Reykjavik. 4933  
Borgarskjalasali Bjarne Benediktssonar © Borgarskjalasali Reykjavikur



111 JUL 1970

## Premier and wife die in house blaze

REYKJAVIK, Friday.

Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over tonight as Iceland's new Premier after Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, strongman of Icelandic politics, died in a blazing summer house early today.

Mr Benediktsson, aged 62, died in the fire with his wife Sigríður, 51, and their four-year-old grandson Benedikt Wilmundarsson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, former seat of Parliament, when the fire broke out.

Police said the position of the charred bodies indicated that both the Premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape but made only a few steps from their bed before being overtaken by the flames.

This afternoon, after meeting members of the cabinet, President Kristjan Eldjarn asked Mr Hafstein, to take over the premiership and form a new government.

Mr Benediktsson had headed a coalition government of his Independence Party and the Social Democrats.

## Ex-Premier missing

In Binic, France, a rescue plane and a helicopter today searched off the Brittany coast for former Prime Minister Felix Gaillard, missing aboard his yacht since last night.

M a d a m e Gaillard told reporters that her husband left yesterday for Jersey aboard his yacht and was due to return in the evening. He radioed his arrival in Jersey and set off for the return trip but nothing more was heard from him and she raised the alarm when he had not returned by midnight. — Reuter.



Extract from  
South Wales Evening Post, Swansea

10 JUL 1910

# Premier, wife and grandson die in blaze

4933  
ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death early today along with his wife and a grandson.

The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reyjavik.

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur Bjornsdottir and his two-year-old grandson Benedikt Wilmundarsson had gone there to spend the night.

Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

Police recovered the charred bodies from the smoking ruin this morning and said their position indicated that both the premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape but got only a few steps before being overtaken by the flames.

10 JUL 1970

# Premier dies in blaze

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ICELAND'S Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and one of their grandchildren died when a fire wrecked his official summer residence, a government spokesman said today.

Radio Iceland reported that the 62-year-old Prime Minister, his wife and one of their grandchildren, a girl aged four or five, died when the summer residence, called Thingvellir, burned down late last night.

The residence is about thirty miles from Reykjavik.

The spokesman said nothing had been announced about the cause of the fire.

Benediktsson led a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats.

He was appointed Prime Minister in 1963.

He began his career as a lawyer and later served as professor of law at the University of Reykjavik.

He entered the government in 1947 as Foreign and Justice Minister and stayed in that post until 1953.

During his time as Foreign Minister, Iceland joined NATO.



10 JUL 1970



4533 Mr. Benediktsson and his wife.

## ICELAND'S PM, WIFE AND A CHILD DIE IN BLAZING HOUSE

ICELAND'S Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarne Benediktsson, aged 62, his wife, aged 60, and one of their grandchildren have died in a fire which destroyed the Prime Minister's official Summer Residence. The child was a boy aged two.

The house, called Thingvellir, which burned down late last night, is 31 miles from Reykjavik, the capital.

Cabinet Members took their holidays there on a rota, and the Prime Minister and his family arrived yesterday to start their holiday.

The house was built in 1907 for the visit of King Frederik VIII of Denmark

### 'Like a torch'

Witnesses said the fire was first seen from a nearby hotel, but before the fire brigade arrived the house was burning like a torch and was destroyed in less than an hour.

A Government spokesman said: "This is an immense tragedy for our country," he said. "Many of us cannot believe it is true."

Mr. Benediktsson led a Coalition Government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats. He was appointed Prime Minister in 1963.

He began his career as a lawyer, and later was professor of law at the University of Reykjavik. He entered the Government in 1947 as Foreign and Justice Minister, and stayed in that post until 1953. During his time as Foreign Minister, Iceland joined NATO.

In 1956 he left the Government and became editor of Iceland's most influential newspaper, Morgubladid, but he re-entered the Government in 1959 as Minister of Justice and Industry, working primarily on fishery problems.

Mr. Benediktsson was married to the former Sigrid Tormodisdottir. They were married in 1943 and had three daughters and one son.

10 JUL 1970

# Iceland

4933  
PM

## dies in house blaze

Iceland's 62-year-old Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death early today along with his wife and a grandson.

The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik.

The Prime Minister, his wife and his two-year-old grandson had gone there to spend a few days. The house is owned by the State.

### Reduced to ashes

A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames, and firemen rushed to the scene, but the wooden building had by then been reduced to ashes.

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963, and was the Minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after the 1939-45 war.

The island went into a state of mourning today as news of the tragedy was circulated. Flags flew at half mast and the radio played solemn music.



11 JUL 1970

## 4933 Minister takes over in Iceland

Iceland's Justice Minister, Johann Hafstein, took over last night as the country's new Premier after Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, strong-man of Icelandic politics, died in his blazing summer home early yesterday.

Mr. Benediktsson, 62, died in the fire along with his wife, Sigridur, 51, and their four-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, former seat of Parliament, when the fire broke out. By the time the nearest fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik, 35 miles away, it was all over.

Police said the position of the charred bodies indicated that both the Premier and his wife had awakened and tried to escape but made only a few steps from their bed before being overtaken by the flames.

Extract from  
Eastern Daily Press, Norwich

11 JUL 1970

49  
33

## *Takes over in Iceland*

Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over last night as Iceland's new Premier after the Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, strong man of Icelandic politics, died in his blazing summer house early yesterday.

Mr. Benediktsson, 62, died in the fire along with his wife Sigridur, 51, and their four-year-old grandson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvall. The timber building was destroyed in little more than 15 minutes.



# Yorkshire Post

LEEDS

Date ..... 14 JUL 1970

## Link in the chain

6935

A SMALL but potentially vital link in the chain of Western European defence has been weakened by the tragic death in a fire of Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, the Prime Minister of Iceland. It was he more than anyone else who brought Iceland into NATO, not long after the end of a Second World War in which the country's strategic importance for the main Western democracies had been conclusively proved. A few months ago, he brought Iceland into EFTA. Had he lived, he would no doubt have associated his country with the EEC once Britain and the Scandinavian countries successfully completed their approaches to Brussels. Although his successors may well seek to carry on his policy, it remains to be seen whether they will have the sort of foresight and determination which enabled Dr. Benediktsson to weather internal and external storms with such success. It must be remembered that Iceland, one of the cradles of Western democracy, has long had a vocal Communist party with representation in its ancient parliament. Also, there has been plenty of friction over the years between Iceland and countries like Britain and the United States.

There has been considerable domestic opposition in Iceland in

past years to the stationing of United States forces there under the North Atlantic Treaty. The acrimonious dispute over fishing limits some 12 years ago soured relations between London and Reykjavik for a considerable time. As Prime Minister during part of 1961 and from 1963 until his death, Dr. Benediktsson worked steadily to expand international ties and interests for Iceland, and events showed how wise he was. A world-wide drop in the price of fish products some three years ago led to drastic difficulties in Iceland, which has long relied far too heavily upon its fishing industry as an economic mainstay.

If a new form of Western European defence is to be formed, based more upon self-help than in the past, Iceland will have to play its part. Unfortunately, the number of NATO veterans who could furnish advice and experience for the task seems to be rapidly diminishing. Dr. Benediktsson was one. Mr. Halvard Lange, the former Norwegian Foreign Minister and "founding father" of NATO, who also died recently, was another. It remains to be seen whether the new generation of democrats in the smaller European democracies will show as much strength and foresight as their predecessors did in the different world of 20 years ago.

Extract from  
Daily Telegraph, London

15 JUL 1970

PRIME MINISTER OF  
4933 ICELAND

Because of the tragic death of the Prime Minister of Iceland, Dr Bjarni Benediktsson, and his wife and grandson, the Icelandic Embassy would like it to be known that there will be a book of condolence open for signature at 1, Eaton Terrace, London, S.W.1, tomorrow and on July 17, 20 and 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Extract from  
Northampton Chronicle & Echo

10 JUL 1970

# Premier and

4933

# wife killed

Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down last night, the Danish news agency Ritzaus Bureau reported. They had gone to the summer house for the night. — Reuter.

Extract from  
Evening News, London

10 JUL 1970

4933

**ICELAND'S  
PREMIER  
DIES IN FIRE**

REYKJAVICK, ICELAND.  
ICELAND'S Prime Minister  
Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife,  
and one of their grand-  
children died when a fire gutted  
the Prime Minister's official  
summer residence.



Extract from

# The Birmingham Post

Date ..... 11 JUL 1970 .....

(SEE INFORMATION OVERLEAF)

## Minister of Justice takes <sup>4933</sup> over in Iceland

The Justice Minister, Mr. Johann Hafstein, took over last night as Iceland's new Premier after the Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, strongman of Icelandic politics, had died in a blazing summer house early yesterday. Mr. Benediktsson, aged 62, died in the fire along with his wife Sigridur, aged 51, and their four-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson.

The three were alone in the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, former seat of Parliament, when the fire broke out. The timber building was destroyed in little more than 15 minutes.—Reuter.

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Extract from  
Dorset Evening Echo, Weymouth

10 JUL 1970

## **Iceland's Premier 1933 dies in fire**

ICELAND'S 62 - year - old  
Prime Minister, Bjarni  
Benediktsson, was burned  
to death early today along  
with his wife and a two-  
year-old grandson.

The tragedy occurred in  
a blaze at a summer house  
at Thingvalla, near Rey-  
kjavik. A neighbour raised  
the alarm.



Extract from  
Cambridge News

10 JUL 1970

# Iceland's <sup>4933</sup> Premier dies in fire

Iceland's 62-year-old Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death last night along with his wife and a grandson.

The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik.

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur Bjornsdottir and his two-year-old grandson Benedikt Wilmundarsson had gone there to spend the night.

Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised, but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes. A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

Extract from  
Jersey Evening Post, Jersey C.I.

10 JUL 1970

4933  
**Iceland's P.M.  
dies in fire**

Reykjavik.

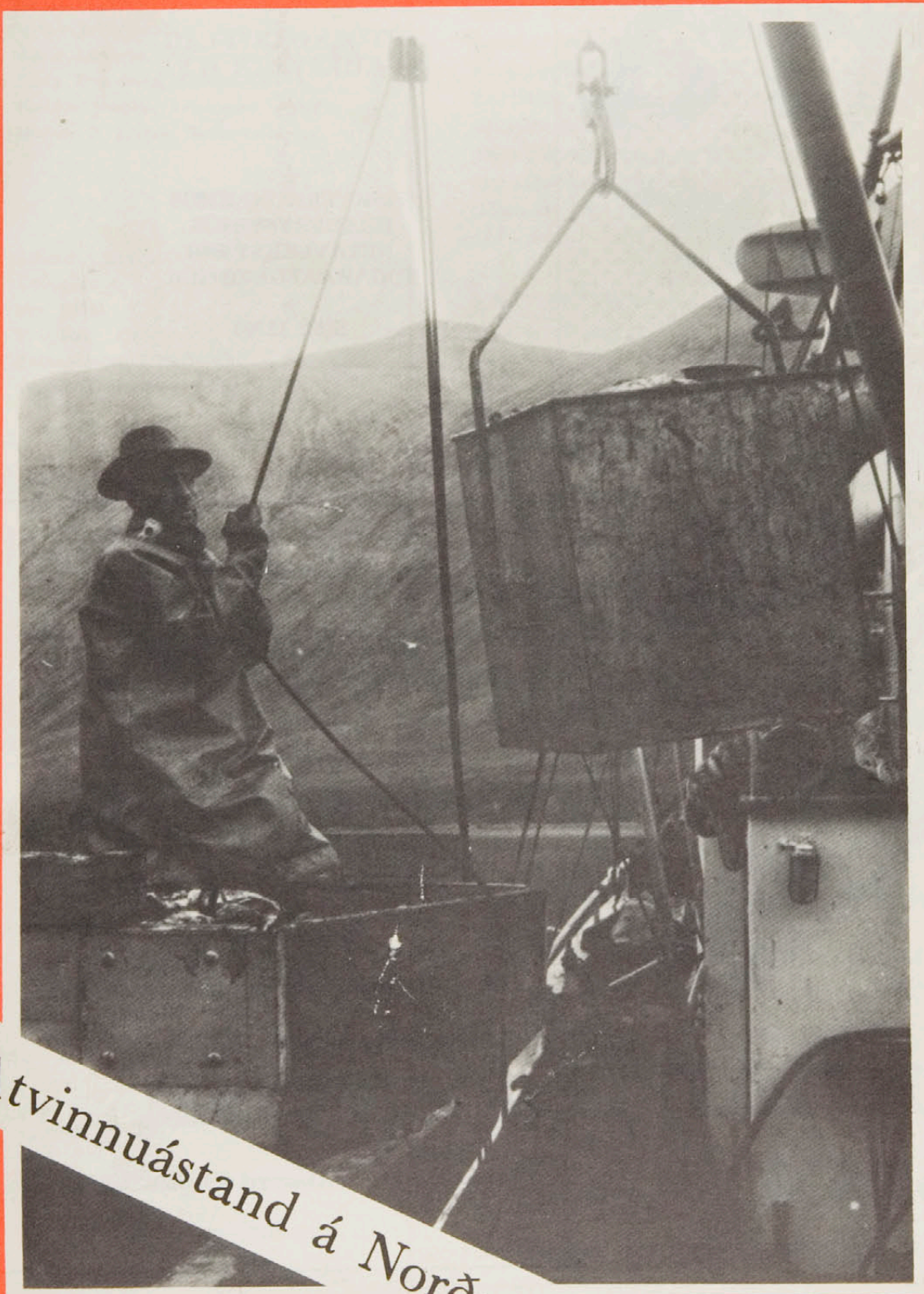
● Iceland's 62-year-old Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death last night along with his wife and a grandson. The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik.

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur Bjoernsdottir and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson, had gone there to spend the night.

Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised but the wooden building was reduced to ashes.



# NORÐANFARI



Atvinnuástand á Norðurlandi

7 1970



# FORUSTUGREIN

## FRÁFALL BJARNA BENEDIKTSSONAR

TRAUÐLA hefur nokkur fregn í tíð núlifandi manna snert þjóðina dýpra en þau hörmulegu sorgartíðindi, er henni bærust frá Þingvöllum að morgni föstudagsins 10. júlí s.l., þegar þar létu lífið í eldsvoða forsætisráðherrahjónin, dr. Bjarni Benediktsson og frú Sigríður Björnsdóttir ásamt barnungum dóttursyni þeirra, Benedikt Vilmundarsyni.

Það voru ekki aðeins flokkssystkin Bjarna Benediktssonar og samherjar í stjórn málum, sem fundu, að með fráfalli hans hafði þjóðin misst mikilhæfasta forystumann sinn. Þetta fundu landsmenn allir, hvar í flokki sem þeir standa. Því varð þjóðarharmur á Íslandi, þegar hin válegu tíðindi spurðust. Og nú er skarð fyrir skildi, og það skarð er vissulega vandfyllt. Sakir yfirburða gáfna, þekkingar og stjórnvitzku stóð Bjarni Benediktsson öðrum íslenskum stjórnámálönnum frammar í samtíð sinni, og er úr engum öðrum lítið gert né á hann hallað með þeim orðum.

Óþarft er að reyna að draga dul á það, að okkur Sjálfstæðismönnum er nú mikill vandi á höndum að ráða til lykta málum flokks okkar. Svo hefði hverjum orðið, eftir að hafa misst sinn mesta mann. En svo bezt heiðrum við Sjálfstæðismenn okkar fallna foringja og minningu hans, að við stöndum nú þétt saman um þær ákvarðanir, sem teknar verða. Við skulum minnst þess, að samheldni og einhugur okkar Sjálfstæðismanna hefur gert flokk okkar að því afli í íslenskum stjórn málum, sem hann er, ekki síður en hin þjóðlega og víðsýna stefna flokksins.

## VANDI BÆNDA — VANDI ALÞJÓÐAR

ÞEGAR þetta er ritað, er kominn miður ágúst. Nú sígur á seinni hluta heyskapartímans, og hvaðanæva að berast þær fréttir, að heyskapur verði með langrýrasta móti að magni til og víða sáraltill. Þótt eitt-hvað kunni úr að rætast með heyskaparhorfur á þeim jörðum, þar sem land er óskemmt, er þess vart að vænta, þar sem tún eru kalin til stórskemmda eða ónýtis og útjörð illa sprottin sakir kulda í tíðarfari, og hvorki mannafli né búnaður fyrir hendi til þess að nýta engjar og flóa svo sem áður var. Ekki er því annað sýna en margir bændur verði í haust að farga bústofni sínum í verulegum mæli, og hætt er við, að ýmsir þeir bændur, sem búið hafa við kal og grasleysi ár eftir ár, sjái sér ekki annan kost búinn en að ganga frá jörðum sínum. Fyrir það verður þeim ekki borið dugleysi á brýn. Á Íslandi verður ekki búið nema nægur heyforði sé í hlöðum á haustnóttum.

Það er að vísu gott til þess að vita, að þjóðin í heild er svo efnum búin, að hægt er með opinberri aðstoð að veita þeim stuðning, sem við erfiðleika eiga að etja. En hvorttveggja er, að þreytandi er að lifa á „bónbjörgum“ til lengdar og að litlu gagni kemur aðstoð hins opinbera til heykaupa, ef svo fer, að fáir verða aflögufærir.

Sjálf sagt er orsaka kalsins fyrst og fremst að leita til kólnandi tíðarfars, en fleira mun þar til koma. Svo virðist a.m.k. þegar lítið er dauðkallið tún, en við hlið-

ina á því skemmda og velsprotna útjörð. Mestur greiði væri nú bændum gerður, með því, ef hægt væri að rekja orsakir kalsins til hlítar. Til þess má ekki spara fé, tíma og þekkingu.

Vera má, að þeir séu til með þjóðinni, sem telja það litlu skipta, þótt landbúnaðurinn dragist saman og þeim fækki enn til stórra muna, sem stunda þennan elzta atvinnuveg okkar. Þá hina sömu, sem þannig hugsa, vil ég minna á orð Bjarna heitins Benediktssonar, sem hann mælti í þingræðu fyrir nokkrum árum, en honum fór-ust þannig orð:

„Það er alveg óhugsanlegt, að án íslenzks landbúnaðar, heldur íslenzk þjóð ekki eðli sínu og glatar mörgu af því bezta, sem í henni er, og við getum með vissu efazt um, hvort hún haldi áfram að vera til sem sjálfstæð þjóð, ef íslenzkur landbúnaður væri lagður niður.“

## AÐ BRJÓTA NIÐUR — EÐA BYGGJA UPP

FLESTUM þjóðum frammar erum við Íslendingar háðir duttlungum veðra og veiða og náttúruöflunum, sem við fáum ekki við ráðið, og er skemmst að minnast óskufallsins í vor, sem olli mörgum bændum stórtjóni, og er það tjón þó ekki enn að fullu séð. Af þessum sökum höfum við lengst af orðið að byggja lífsafkomu okkar á næsta óvissum og oftast erfiðum grundvelli. Hina gömlu atvinnuvegi okkar verðum við að efla og tryggja eftir því sem kostur er á, og ekki aðeins það! Stofna þarf til nýrra atvinnugreina og nýta í ríkara mæli auðlindir lands okkar, svo sem vatnsafl og jarðhita. Á þessu hefur núverandi ríkisstjórn og stuðningsflokkar hennar haft ríkan skilning, og í þessum efnun hefur margt verið gert á undanförunum fjórum árum og mikið hefur áunnizt. En fram þarf að halda á þessari braut. Þegar saga Bjarna Benediktssonar forsætisráðherra verður rituð, þá verður þess minnzt, að hann átti mestan og beztan hlut að því að móta þá framfarastefnu, sem fylgt hefur verið í þjóðmálum á undanförunum árum.

En þessi framfarastefna getur beðið hnekki, ekki aðeins fyrir það sem okkur er óviðráðanlegt, svo sem óbliða veðráttu, veiðiskort og náttúruhamfarir, heldur ekki síður fyrir það, sem er á færi okkar sjálfra að forðast. Síðustu stjórn málaafskipti Bjarna Benediktssonar voru að reyna að koma á viðræðum milli launþegasamtaka, atvinnurekenda og ríkisstjórnar til þess að leita ráða gegn vaxandi verðbólgu og koma í veg fyrir, að fengnar kjarabætur yrðu ekki aðeins látnar í annan vasann og teknar úr hinum, eins og svo oft hefur gerzt á undanförunum árum og áratugum. Það hefði mátt ætla, að við Íslendingar værum búnir að læra þá lexíu, sem hið sífellda kapphlaup milli kaupgjalds og verðlags hefur lagt fyrir okkur.

Svo virðist enn ekki vera.

Að liðnum erfiðleikaárunum væri okkur nú sæmst að taka á móti og fagna batnandi hag með því að kasta fyrir róða ímynduðum eiginhagsmunum, sundurlyndi og stjórn málaundirhyggju, öllum þeim leiðu og illu öflum, sem vísust eru til þess að brjóta það niður, sem upp hefur verið byggt.

G. G.

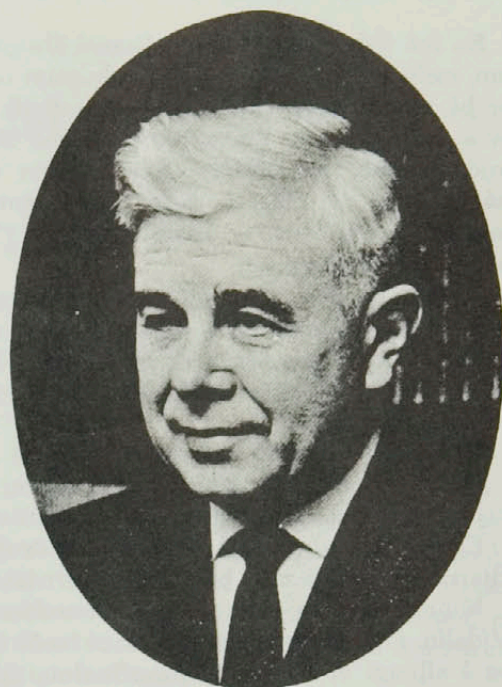




**Sigríður Björnsdóttir**  
F. 1. nóv 1919 - D. 10. júlí 1970



**Benedikt Vilmundarson**  
F. 14. apríl 1966 - D. 10. júlí 1970



**Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson**  
F. 30. apríl 1908 - D. 10. júlí 1970

MARGVÍSLEG eru oss mönnum ætluð örlög hér í heimi, er oss er eigi auðið að sjá fyrirfram. Svo mun fólk eða þjóð vor hafa hugsað við lát Bjarna Benediktssonar forsætisráðherra, konu hans Sigríðar Björnsdóttur og dóttursonar Benedikts Vilmundarsonar.

Mörgum fannst sjónarsviftir að, er hin reisulegu tvö Engeyjarhús brunnu niður fyrir eigi allfáum árum, er báru sig vel yfir eyjarsund er Reykvíkingar horfðu til Esju sinnar. Það voru síðustu minningar þess kynstofns er allt frá 1690 hafði tekið sér bólfestu í Engey. Höfðu þá ættmenn haft í fullu tré um athafnalíf við útvegsbændur í Reykjavík um fiskiföng og skipasmíðar allt fram á síðustu öld og eru allir komnir í land.

Margur hefur þaðan komið er hefur átt dugnað feðra sinna og mæðra, er á hólma þessum höfðu starfað á landi og sjó og flestir heilir af hafi komið. Á fólk þetta mikla skapfestu og eigi síður konurnar er máttu stjórna heimilum sínum í fjarveru manna sinna vikum saman. Hefur margur meðal þeirra ættmanna er í land eru komnir getið sér góðan orðstír meðal vor. Má þar óefað telja Bjarna Benediktsson, er var sonur Guðrúnar Pétursdóttur frá Engey og Benedikts Sveinssonar frá Húsavík. Höfðu þar tengst góðir ættstofnar saman.

Benedikt Sveinsson var úr því héraði Þingeyjarþings er þjóðleg menning hófst með miklum blóma. Og

var sem arfsögn feðra þeirra um fagurt mál, í bundnu og óbundnu máli og ást á Íslendingasögum væri þeim lífsorka til baráttu í þjóðmálum. En í kjölfar slíkra hugsana kom baráttu fyrir verzlunarfrelsi er varð aflvaki samvinnufélaganna í landi voru. Óvenju margt var þar mikilhæfra manna er sköruðu framúr í íslenzku þjóðlífi. Einn þeirra var Benedikt Sveinsson, er varð ungur þingmaður í hinni gunnhreifu kosningu 1907.

Bjarni Benediktsson var alinn upp á heimili er var í þjóðbraut íslenzkra stjórn mála og mennta, er var og nátengt athafnalífi manna, því margt hans ættmanna voru skipsstjórar og útvegsmenn.

Eigi var auður í hans föðurgarði, en móðir hans var skörungskona er átti stjórnsemi og hagsýni ættar sinnar og fullan metnað að halda til jafns við aðra.

Bjarna Benediktssyni svipaði mjög til móðurættar sinnar um útlit og skaphöfn. Hann var dökkur yfir litum og svipmikill, bar það svipmót er svo oft kemur fram meðal þeirra Engeyjarmanna. Samfara þeirri skapgerð sem er algeng meðal þeirra og margur hefur hlotið í vöggugjöf og jafnan sker sig úr sínu umhverfi hvar á landshorni sem þeir búa. Er það mikil tryggð og festa, sterk skaphöfn, þrautseigja þó á móti blási og hyggindi um framgöngu sína. Eru þá oft höfð fá orð um hlutina, í fáeinum meitluðum setningum, er margur hefur langar ræður um.



En frá föður sínum hlaut Bjarni áhuga á stjórn-  
málum, ræðusnilld, samfara snjallri hugsun og skýru máli,  
er þá var oft með ívafi dæma og mynda um þau efni  
er á dagskrá voru. Var rökfimi Bjarna Benediktssonar  
mjög rómuð. Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson var yfirburða  
námsmaður og féllu í skaut þær sæmdir að hljóta  
margvísleg embætti er hann rækti vel. Var það gert  
af atorku og mannviti.

Þá var og hitt að í stjórnmalum var hann kjörinn  
maður sökum hæfileika og lagaþekkingar, en stjórn-  
lagafræði var hans kjörsvið. Hafði því mikill lærdómur  
og þjálfuð þekking á þjóðmálasviðinu gjört hann vel  
til forystu fallinn.

Það mun oft orka tvímælis, hvað sé rétt eða bezt  
í þessum málum til að stjórnarskútunni megi farnast  
vel og sigla fram hjá skerjum og boðum stjórnmalanna.

Eru menn nú mjög á því máli að örugg var forysta  
Bjarna og áræði nóg, þótt óviss væri landtakan.

Minnir þetta á hinn mikilhæfa mann Pál lögmann  
Vidalín, er margar sviftingar hlaut bæði heima í héraði  
og á alþingi er hafði að kjörorði sínu, „það skal fram,  
sem fram horfir, meðan rétt horfir.“

Þrátt fyrir mikil umsvif og margan vegsauka á hefð-  
artindi, glataði Bjarni Benediktsson eigi sínu jafnvægi  
í þjóðlífinu. Hann var hinn sami og jafni eftir sínum  
ættararfi.

Fannst mér stundum er ég leit Bjarna Benediktsson  
á heimili sínu í stjórnarráðinu sem þar færi gildur út-  
vegsbóndi er liti eftir iðju manna á hinu stóra heimili  
vökulum augum, þéttur á velli og þéttur í lund.

Eins var um dagfar hans, er um suma hluti var í hin-  
um gamla tíma, er hann gekk ofan úr Öskjuhlíð, niður  
á Arnarhól til vinnu sinnar. Þótti og mörgum að af  
mætti ráða tryggð hans og vináttu, er hann sýndi í önn  
og striti daganna, er hann reit minningargreinar um  
vini sína, en fyrimenn þjóðar vorrar hafa lítið gert  
af slíku á vorum dögum. En einkenni slíkra skrifa  
Bjarna hvað þau voru gagnorð og laus við mælgí og  
mærð, heldur voru glögg mynd af liðinni mannsæfi í  
fáum orðum, samfara hlýleika.

Bjarni Benediktsson var hamingjumaður um marga  
hluti, lífið hafði gefið honum mikið brautargengi og  
fjölda sigra.

En um skeið mæddu á honum döpur forlög, er hann  
eftir stutt hjónaband missti unga konu sína, Valgerði  
Tómasdóttur, gáfukonu mikla og samstúdent Ragnhild-  
ar systur hans. Mun Bjarni hafa fundið til nokkurrar  
einmanakenndar unz hann kvæntist í annað sinn, Sig-  
ríði Björnsdóttur frá Ánanaustum í Reykjavík, hinni  
gömlu verstöð Reykvíkinga. Mátti um þá mikilhæfu  
konu segja, að hún væri runnin af líkum stofni og  
Bjarni Benediktsson. Enda urðu samvistir þeirra þeim  
báðum til farsældar og vegsauka. Og mun Bjarni hafa  
fundið að nú var hann hamingjumaður að nýju í hjú-

skapnum. Kona hans fylgdi honum sem hún mátti ut-  
anlands og innan. Var honum það beinn og óbeinn  
styrkur, hvort heldur hann var í siklingsölum eða á  
honum dundi hregg.

Það fór eigi fram hjá mér, er síðast bar fundum okk-  
ar Bjarna Benediktssonar saman á Blönduósi á þingi  
ungra Sjálfstæðismanna s.l. haust, hve honum var létt  
að blanda geði við hið unga fólk og dveljast með því.  
Það hafa þótt einkenni meðal ættmanna Bjarna, að  
þótt margir þeirra væru sjókaldir og harðir undir brún,  
að þeir hafa átt barnslega viðkvæmni með sér hið innra  
og þann eiginleika að geta laðað hvert barn að sér.  
Enda dvöldu með þeim hjónum oft barnabörn þeirra,  
þar á meðal nú, Benedikt Vilmundarson, er bar beinin  
með þeim.

Sízt brá mér í grun er við sátum þar saman á Blöndu-  
ósi að það myndi í síðasta sinn er við sæumst.

Ég er minnugur þess, að fyrir áratugum flutti Bene-  
dikt Sveinsson tölu á Lögbergi, er var söguleg lýsing  
á Þingvöllum. Var hann þá á góðum aldri, manna  
glæstastur, rómurinn sterkur og mál hans fagurt. Sagði  
hann það meðal annars. Hér stóð Hvamms-Sturla og  
flutti mál sitt, faðir hinna frægu sona, Þórðar, Sig-  
hvarar og Snorra.

Að lokinni ræðu Benedikts sté Ólafur Thors upp á  
klettinn, léttur upp á fótinn, reistur og hvellróma. Og  
meðal annarra orða, er hann þakkaði Benedikt ræð-  
una og brýndi flokk sinn til dáða að um Benedikt  
Sveinsson mætti segja, að væri faðir hinna þjóðkunn-  
bræðra, Péturs, Sveins og Bjarna. Þingvellir eru staða  
fegurstir í landi voru, er sól er á lofti, heiður er him-  
inn og blá eru fjöll, vatnið lyngt og grænn gróður klæð-  
ir mold og kletta.

Svo var 29. júní 1907 er Bjarni Jónsson frá Vogu  
flutti ræðu sína um löghelgun fánans á Lögbergi og  
ræðu um áhrif þau er þessi helgidómur hefur á oss Ís-  
lendinga. Er hann segir, „því ég hefi séð ótvíræðan og  
grátþrunginn sorgarsvip yfir vellinum og ég hefi séð  
unaðslegt sólbros yfir honum eins og nú.“ En svo var  
þá, er Benedikt Sveinsson í flokki ungra manna bar á  
lofti hinn bláhvíta fána til Lögbergs, er Guðrún Pét-  
ursdóttir hafði saumað. Þetta var einn af hinum björtu  
dögum í sögu þjóðar vorrar, sem hlekkur í langri sögu  
þess.

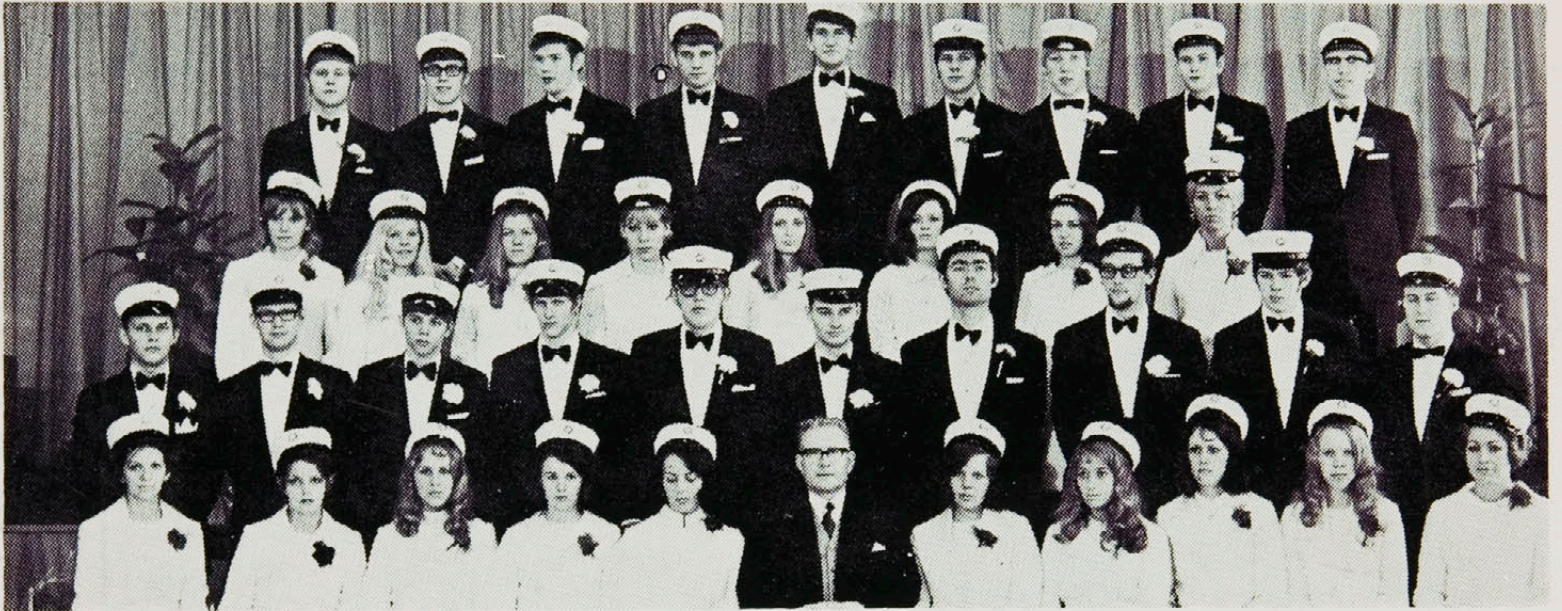
Er nú sköpum skift meðal þeirra ættmanna. Er á  
drungalegri óveðursnótt, en þá eru Þingvellir ömur-  
legir, þá regnský hranna himinhvolfið, hamraveggirnir  
eru svartir og fjöllin dimm er bjarma sló yfir af bálfor  
allsherjar goða nútímans og hans fólks þessa júlínótt.

Guð blessi minningu þeirra.

Pétur Þ. Ingjaldsson.



# VERZLUNAR TÍÐINDI



## 26. stúdenta-árgangurinn frá Verzlunarskóla Íslands

Lærdómsdeild Verzlunarskóla Íslands var sagt upp í hátíðasal skólans mánudaginn 15. júní og brautskráðir 34 stúdentar. Þetta er í 26. skipti, sem Verzlunarskóli Íslands útskrifar stúdentar, og er fjöldi þeirra orðinn 563. Skólastjórinn, dr. Jón Gíslason, lét þess getið að nú væri aldarfjórðungur liðinn frá því fyrstu stúdentarnir brautskráðust frá skólanum. Bauð hann fulltrúa þessa fyrsta árgangs sérstaklega velkomna til skólauppsagnarinnar. Er skólastjóri hafði afhent einkunnir flutti formaður Verzlunarskálds Íslands, Haraldur Sveinsson, ávarp. Þá voru afhent verðlaun fyrir góðan námsárangur. Að lokinni afhendingu verðlauna, flutti skólastjóri ræðu, kvaddi nýstúdentar og sagði skólanum slitið í 65. skipti.





Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson forsætisráðherra er látinn. Hann fórst ásamt konu sinni, frú Sigríði Björnsdóttur og döttursyni þeirra, Benedikt Vilmundarsyni, fjögurra ára, í eldsvoða á Þingvöllum. Ný og ný bylgja harms og saknaðar fellur yfir þjóðarsálina meðan hún er að átta sig á því, að þessir voðaatburðir séu raunverulegir. Með dr. Bjarna Benediktssyni sjáum vér á bak okkar stórbrotnasta og fjölhæfasta stjórnámálamanni, kjarkmiklum, þrautseigum baráttumanni, sem kom efldur úr hverri raun, vér sjáum á bak vitrum og sanngjörnum ráðgjafa og mannasætti. Kynni mín af dr. Bjarna Benediktssyni voru ekki mjög mikil, en þó nóg til þess að finna hve velviljaður, djúpsær og lítillátur hann var og nógu mikil til þess að skilja ennþá betur hve hörmulegt það er að missa slíkan foringja um aldur fram. Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson var óbilandi málsvari einstaklingsframtaks, athafnafrelsis og verzlunarfrelsis. Íslensk verzlunarstétt vottar honum virðingu sína og þökk. — Kaupmannasamtök Íslands votta ástvinum forsætisráðherrahjónanna og döttursonar þeirra dýpstu samúð.

Hjörtur Jónsson.



# STEFNIR

*Tímarit um þjóðmál og menningarmál*

*Útgefandi: Samband ungra Sjálfstæðismanna*

*Afmælisblað — Júní 1970*







# AFMÆLISBLAÐ

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*Að morgni föstudagsins 10. júlí s.l. barst sú harmafregn, að þá um nóttina hefði konungshúsið á Þingvöllum brunnið til kaldra kola og í eldinum hefðu farizt dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, forsætisráðherra, kona hans frú Sigríður Björnsdóttir og dóttursonur þeirra, Benedikt Vilmondarson.*

*Útgáfa þessa blaðs hafði dregið lengur en til stöð, en blaðið er dagsett í júní og gefið út í tilefni 40 ára afmælis S.U.S. Burðarás blaðsins átti að vera grein eftir dr. Bjarna Benediktsson, sem hann nefndi „Þættir úr fjörutíu ára stjórnmalasögu“.*

*Horfið er frá birtingu þeirrar greinar að svo stöddu, en blaðið kemur óbreytt út að öðru leyti.*

*Ungir Sjálfstæðismenn munu minnast formanns síns í næsta blaði, en votta aðstandendum hinna látnu innilegustu samúð sína í djúpri sorg okkar allra.*

## STEFNIR

21. árgangur. 4. tölublað.

Tímarit um þjóðmál og menningarmál. Útgefandi: Samband ungra Sjálfstæðismanna.

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## SUS

Stjórn Sambands ungra Sjálfstæðismanna skipa: Ellert B. Schram, form., Herbert Guðmundsson, 1. varaform., Sveinn Guðbjartsson, 2. varaform., Skúli Möller, ritari, Jón Steinar Gunnlaugsson, gjaldkeri, Ásmundur Einarsson, Björgólfur Guðmundsson, Björn Bjarnason, Garðar Halldórsson, Jón Atli Kristjánsson, Jón Pétursson, Páll Elisson, Pétur Sveinbjarnarson, Ragnar Tómasson, Sigmundur Stefánsson, Sigurður Jónsson, Steinþór Júlíusson, Sturla Böðvarsson, Þorleifur Jónsson, Þorvaldur Búason, Þór Hagalín.

Framkv.stj.: Páll Stefánsson.

Aðsetur: Valhöll v/Suðurgötu,  
Reykjavík. Sími 17103.

## RUSUS

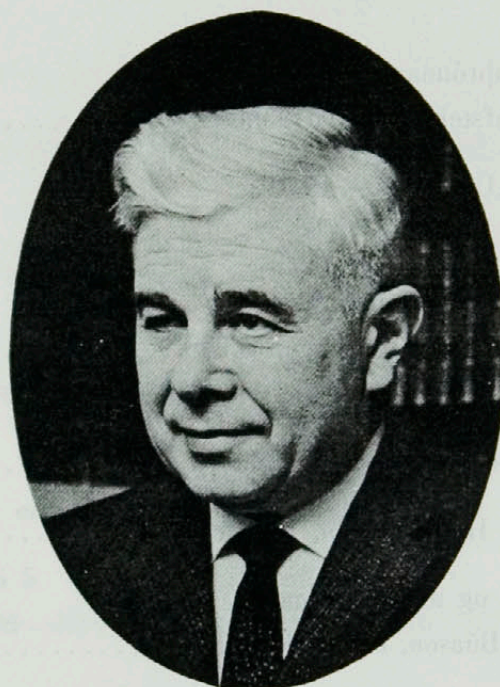
er rannsókn- og upplýsingastofnun ungra Sjálfstæðismanna. Hlutverk hennar er gagnasöfnun og gagnauðvinnsla um þjóðfélagsmál. Störf stofnunarinnar eru unnin af tilkveðdum sérfræðingum og áhugamönnum. Starfið liggur m. a. til grundvallar stefnumótun á vegum ungra Sjálfstæðismanna. Stjórnina skipa: Garðar Halldórsson, form., Eggert Hauksson, Júlíus S. Ólafsson, Konráð Adolphsson, Ragnar Tómasson, Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson, Þorvaldur Búason.



# IN MEMORIAM



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# Atlantica & Iceland Review

General News, Industry, Trade and Tourism

**SUPPLEMENT** No. 3 1970

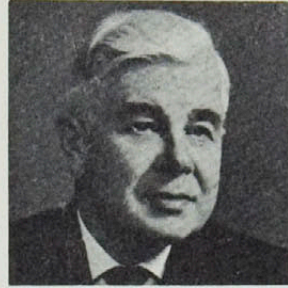
## Closer Ties with Europe

As has been reported earlier, Iceland joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in March this year, as a result of which trade with the other members has already started to increase. Iceland has now formally notified the European Common Market (ECM) that she would like discussions at an opportune moment with that organization so as to safeguard her interests, should countries like Britain, Denmark and Norway (who are at present EFTA members) later also accede to the ECM. The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Dr. Lujo Toncic-Sorinj, who visited Reykjavik this summer, said that his organization would welcome more active participation of Iceland in it, pointing out at the same time that Iceland occupied an important geographical position with regard to European security generally. Statistics released recently show that Iceland's balance of trade

for the first half of 1970 has been favourable, whereas over the same period last year it was unfavourable. Exports have been rising and certain types of imports falling.

### Artistic Loaves

Visitors to Reykjavik are often intrigued by an outdoor exhibition of modern sculptures and other works of art that show considerable ingenuity and are sometimes extremely bizarre. One such object created by a young Icelander out of loaves of wholemeal bread caused quite a sensation, as it had to be removed on orders from the City Medical Officer on the grounds that it was causing a danger to the health of the local inhabitants.



The late Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson and his wife.



## Tragedy at Thingvellir

A most tragic event occurred early in July, when the Premier of Iceland, Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, together with his wife and young grandson, perished in a fire that spread rapidly and burned to the ground in a few minutes the official summer residence of the Government at Thingvellir during a violent night storm.

They were spending only one night there before going on a tour of the Snaefellsnes peninsula.

This was a great blow to the Icelandic nation, for Dr. Benediktsson had for many years been its most prominent leader both in national and international affairs. The cause of the conflagration has not been discovered. First persons to observe the blaze were five Dutch students camping in the vicinity, but they arrived too late to be of any assistance.

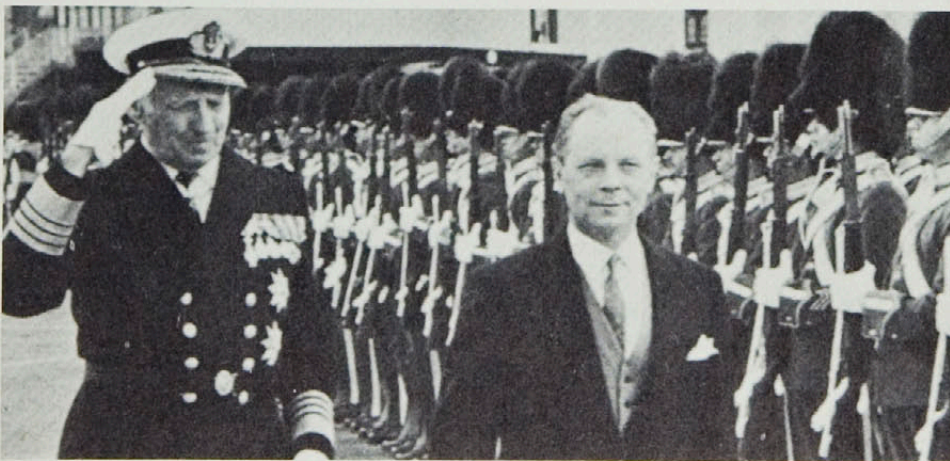
The residence was originally built specially for the visit of King Frederik VIII of Denmark in 1907 and was situated close to the beautiful lake at this historic site. Dr. Benediktsson, who was 62 years of age when he died, was one of Iceland's best known politicians and had a distinguished and varied career, including a lectureship in law at the University of Iceland, the

mayoralty of Reykjavik and the editorship of the leading daily newspaper "Morgunblaðið". He had been Minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice for many years before becoming Prime Minister, and it was he who signed the agreement providing for Iceland's entry into NATO in 1949. He was a Chairman of the Independence Party (*Sjálfstæðisflokkur*).

Messages of sympathy reached the Icelandic Government from all quarters of the globe, and several countries sent important representatives to the funeral service, a simple ceremony that took place in the Lutheran Cathedral in Reykjavik. Mr. Jóhann Hafstein, previously Minister of Justice and Industry, has been provisionally appointed Premier, but the death of Dr. Benediktsson is likely to have far-reaching consequences in domestic politics.

### President in Denmark

The Icelandic President, Dr. Kristján Eldjárn, and his wife were the official guests of the Danish Royal Family early in September, when they stayed at Fredensborg Palace near Copenhagen for three days. The programme included a visit to the old Viking ship at Roskilde, an inspection of shipbuilding yards in Odense, a tour of the Copenhagen television studios, a reception at the City Hall, a banquet at the Lange Linje restaurant, and a party for Icelanders resident in Denmark.



President Kristján Eldjárn with the Danish King, Frederik IX, inspects the guard of honour on arrival in Copenhagen.