



Erlendar blaðaúrklippur, vegna fráfalls
Bjarna, Sigríðar og Benedikts,
10. júlí 1970, 3. hluti

Bjarni Benediktsson – Sigríður Björnsdóttir – Benedikt Vilmondarson – Fjölskyldan – Erlendar
blaðaúrklippur

Tekið af vef Borgarskjalasafnsins

bjarnibenediktsson.is

Einkaskjalasafn nr. 360
Fjölskyldan
Askja 3-12, Örsk 1

©Borgarskjalasafn Reykjavíkur

Alter-Zeitung, Gifhorn (21.4)

5450

Islands Regierungschef verbrannt

Unglücksfall im Sommerhaus / Schwierigkeiten für den Nachfolger

Von unserem Korrespondenten

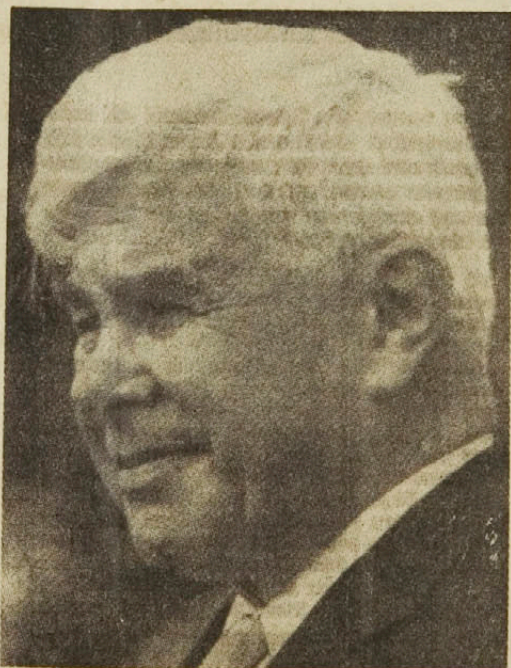
gg. Stockholm, 10. Juli

Der isländische Ministerpräsident Bjarni Benediktsson ist im Alter von 62 Jahren mit seiner Frau und einer vierjährigen Enkeltochter ums Leben gekommen. Alle drei verbrannten in einem Sommerhaus der Regierung 60 Kilometer außerhalb von Reykjavik. Wie das Feuer entstand, ist noch nicht geklärt. Als die Polizei eine Stunde nach Ausbruch des Brandes an der Unglücksstelle eintraf, war das Holzhaus bis auf die Grundmauern abgebrannt.

Benediktsson befand sich auf einer politischen Vortragsreise. Island wählt im nächsten Jahr ein neues Parlament, und angesichts der katastrophalen Wirtschaftslage des Landes mit einer zweimaligen Abwertung der Krone innerhalb von 15 Monaten und einem Rückgang der Devisenreserven um über 80 Prozent muß die Selbstständigkeitspartei des bisherigen Regierungschefs bereits jetzt versuchen, zu retten, was zu retten ist. Sie teilt sich die Regierungsverantwortung mit der kleinen sozialdemokratischen Partei, die neun Mandate zu den 23 der Selbstständigkeitspartei ins Parlament mitbringt. Diese zusammen 32 Sitze reichen bei einer gesamten Mandatszahl von 60 aus, um regieren zu können.

Doch das Regieren ist immer schwieriger geworden. Die Fischfänge sind enorm zurückgegangen, und der Hering, der sonst griffbereit vor der Haustür schwamm, hat sich verzogen. Hinzu kommt, daß die Preise für Fische und Fischereizugnisse auf dem internationalen Markt erheblich gesunken sind. Da die 200 000 Isländer bei einem hohen Lebensstandard nicht bereit waren, angesichts der verschlechterten Wirtschaftslage den Riemen enger zu schnallen, hat die isländische Währung wie keine andere in Nordeuropa an Wert verloren.

Der Tod Benediktssons hätte angesichts der schweren Wirtschaftszeiten nicht zu einem ungünstigeren Zeitpunkt kommen können. Dieser energische Politiker, der seit 20 Jahren ein Ministeramt bekleidet, verstand es, seinem Lande innerhalb der skandinavischen Völkerfamilie einen gebührenden Platz zu verschaffen. Nachfolger Benediktssons als Partei- und Regierungschef wird höchstwahrscheinlich der bisherige Justiz- und Industrieminister Johann Hafstein. Er wird



Bjarni Benediktsson

es sehr schwer haben, sich bis zu den Wahlen als ein Retter der Landesfinanzen zu präsentieren. Einen solchen Mann braucht aber heute Island.

Hannoversche Presse
(Auf! G 141,0)

Kurzurlaub endete tragisch Ministerpräsident verbrannte

5450

Nachrichtendienste der PRESSE
REYKJAVIK

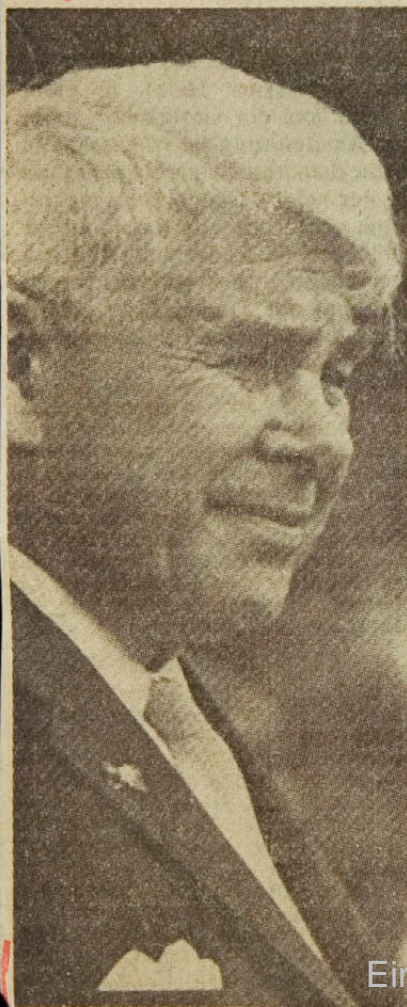
Der isländische Ministerpräsident Bjarni Benediktsson ist in der Nacht zum Freitag beim Brand eines Sommerhauses ums Leben gekommen. Mit ihm verbrannten seine Frau Sigridur und ein zweijähriger Enkel.

Das Feuer in dem Holzhaus bei Thingvellir, rund 50 km nordöstlich der isländischen Hauptstadt, war von einem in der Nähe wohnenden Geistlichen zuerst bemerkt worden. Als die von ihm alarmierten ersten Helfer eintrafen, stand das am Thingvalla-See gelegene Haus schon in hellen Flammen. Der Ministerpräsident, seine Frau und sein Enkelsohn waren tot.

Das Haus gehört der Regierung und wird von den Kabinettsmitgliedern häufig für Kurzurlaube benutzt. Benediktsson war erst am Donnerstagnachmittag dort eingetroffen und hatte nur ein paar Tage bleiben wollen.

Der 62jährige Dr. Benediktsson, der schon mit 24 Jahren Professor der Rechte an der Universität in Reykjavik war, begann seine politische Laufbahn 1940 als Oberbürgermeister der Hauptstadt. 1942 wurde er ins Parlament gewählt, von 1947 bis 1953 war er Außenminister, von 1959 an Justizminister. Im November 1963 trat er die Nachfolge von Olafur Thors als Regierungschef des Inselstaates am nördlichen Polarkreis an. Er war Vorsitzender der Unabhängigkeitspartei, die mit den Sozialdemokraten die Regierungskoalition bildet.

Anfang der sechziger Jahre machte Benediktsson Schlagzeilen, als er mit dem Londoner Kabinett über die Fischereirechte vor Island in heftigen Streit geriet.



Bjarni Benediktsson



Sigridur Benediktsson

Vierneimer Tageblatt (3,1/66)

5450
Islands Regierungschef in Sommerhaus verbrannt

Frau und Enkel kamen mit ums Leben - Brandursache defekte Ölheizung?

Kopenhagen/Reykjavik (dpa). Der isländische Ministerpräsident Bjarni Benediktsson ist in der Nacht zum Freitag

beim Brand eines Sommerhauses ums Leben gekommen. Mit ihm verbrannte seine Frau und ein zweijähriger Enkel. Das Sommerhaus, das etwa 60 Kilometer von Reykjavik entfernt lag, wurde von Mitgliedern der Regierung zu Ferienaufenthalten benutzt.

Der Brand wurde von einem Pastor entdeckt, der sich im benachbarten Thingvallahof aufhielt. Er alarmierte sofort die Feuerwehr von Reykjavik. Als sie eintraf, war das Haus jedoch schon völlig niedergebrannt. In den Trümmern fand man die drei Leichen, die am Morgen nach Reykjavik gebracht wurden. Die Ursache des Brandes könnte nach Ansicht der Polizei eine undichte Stelle der Ölheizung sein.

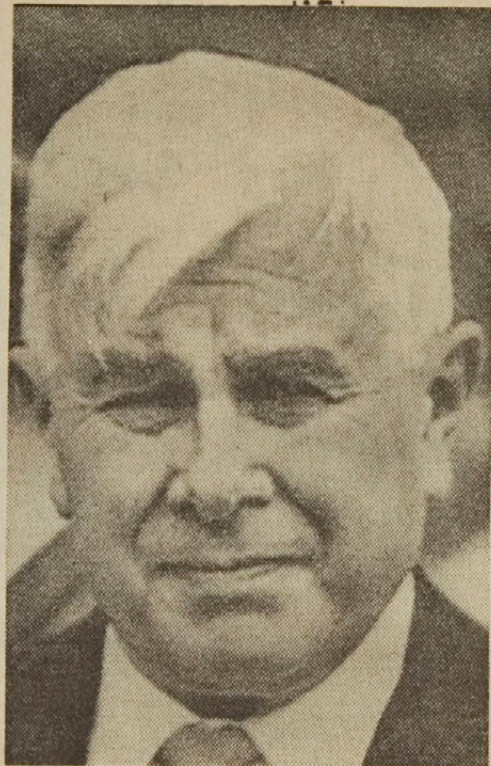
Benediktsson wurde 1963 Ministerpräsident. Zuvor hatte er jahrelang mit kurzen Unterbrechungen verschiedene Ministerien geleitet. 1947 bis 1953 war er Außen- und Justizminister. Während seiner Amtszeit trat Island der NATO bei. Schlagzeilen machte Benediktsson als er Anfang der 60er Jahre als damaliger Minister für Fischereigrenzen mit London eine heftige Kontroverse über die Fischereigrenzen vor Island ausfocht.



Einkaskjalasafn Bjarna Benediktssonar

RACINE, WISC.
JOURNAL-TIMES
E - 38,807
BULLETIN
S - 38,729

JUL 10 1970



DIE IN FIRE — Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, 50, along with their grandson, 4, died in a fire that swept their wooden, government-owned summer home near Reykjavik Thursday night. Benediktsson had been prime minister since November 1963 and a law professor previously. Johann Hasstein, minister of justice and industry, took over as acting prime minister.

BRATTLEBORO, VT.
REFORMER

E - 7,201

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's Premier Killed

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, 30 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.

RUTLAND, VT.
HERALD

M - 21,834

JUL 11 1970

Mysterious Fire Kills Iceland Prime Minister

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time

they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. the house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.

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BAY CITY, MICH.

TIMES

JUL 10 1970

E - 46,521

S - 56,221

Iceland Prime Minister Dies in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

MONROE, MICH.

NEWS

JUL 10 1970

E - 24,732

Iceland Premier Is Killed 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 last night.

A priest living nearby discovered the fire in the wooden cottage at Ghingveille, 30 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.

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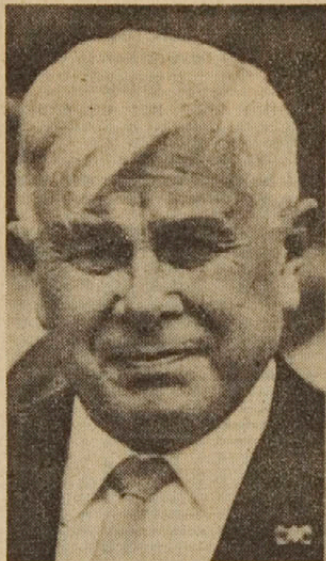
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SHEBOYGAN, WISC.
PRESS

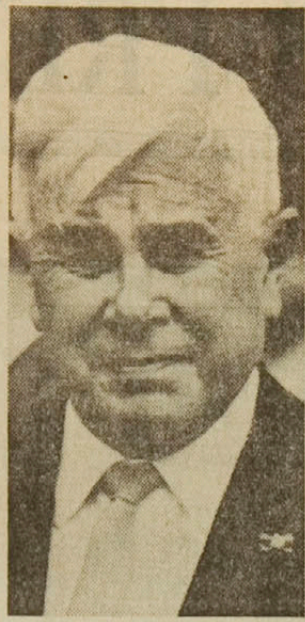
E - 30,317

JUL 10 1970



ICELANDERS DIE IN FIRE — Bjarni Benediktsson, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, along with their grandson, died in a fire that swept their summer home Thursday night. The cottage was located at Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. —(AP Wirephoto)

SANTA BARBARA, CAL.
NEWS-PRESS
JUL 10 1970
E - 38,949
S - 40,976



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife and grandson died in a fire that swept their summer home last night. The wooden house was located 30 miles from Reykjavik.
—AP Photofax

Iceland's Leader Perishes in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik, burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

BODIES FOUND

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own conservative Independence Party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

AIDE

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

Benediktsson's death came as a shock to Icelanders, who heard the news on the morning news broadcast from Radio Iceland.

Flags were flown at half-staff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

The government issued a brief statement:

"The prime minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife, Sigridur Bjoernsdottir, and their year-old grandson perished in a fire at the government summer house at Thingvellir early this morning. The fire was discovered about 3 a.m. An announcement regarding the acting prime minister will be made in a few hours."

The grandson was Benedikt Gylfason, the son of the prime minister's daughter, Valgerdur Bjarnadottir, and her husband, Vilmunder Gylfason. The parents were in Reykjavik at the time.

QUIET ARRIVAL

Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived last night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktsson's were in the house.

Firemen later found the bodies.

The fire was discovered by a group of Dutch students on their way to the nearby Valhal Hotel. They saw flames through the windows and ran up to the house and knocked on doors and windows. But they said they saw nobody in the burning house.

LONGVIEW, TEX.
JOURNAL

M - 14,798

JUL 11 1970

Icelandic Minister Dies In Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson were killed in a fire early Friday that destroyed their summer house and plunged this nation into deep mourning.

The bodies of Benediktsson, 62, his wife Sigridu, 60, and the couple's grandson, Benedikt Gylfason, were found in the ashes of the four-room wooden house at Thingvellir 31 miles from Reykjavik.

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

The house was razed before the fire brigade from Reykjavik arrived.

The government said the cause of the fire was still unclear.

GALVESTON, TEX.
NEWS

M - 21,744

S - 23,356

JUL 11 1970

Iceland's PM Killed In Blaze

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

MASON CITY, IOWA
GLOBE-GAZETTE

E - 25,827

JUL 10 1970

Premier of Iceland dies in house 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, 30 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.

ABILENE, TEX.
REPORTER NEWS

M - 42,342
S - 53,505

JUL 11 1970

Firemen Search Ravaged Remains Of Iceland Home

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johnson Hasstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik on April 30, 1908. He studied law at the University of Iceland and later in Berlin and

Copenhagen. In 1932, he became a professor at the University of Iceland and stayed in that post until 1940. That year he became mayor of Reykjavik and stayed on until 1947 when he was named minister of justice and foreign affairs. In that capacity he was one of the signers of the Atlantic Treaty in Washington in 1949.

Benediktsson was editor of the Reykjavik newspaper Morgunbladid and held other ministerial posts until he became prime minister in 1963.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. the house was built in 1934 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the legislature.

SAN ANGELO, TEX.
STANDARD-TIMES

M - 40,016

S - 42,315

JUL 11 1970

Iceland Leader's Death Is Probed

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chiefs who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johnson Hasstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

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Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik on April 30, 1908. He studied law at the University of Iceland and later in Berlin and Copenhagen. In 1932, he became a professor at the University of Iceland and stayed in that post until 1940. That year he became mayor of Reykjavik and stayed on until 1947 when he was named minister of justice and foreign affairs. In that capacity he was one of the signers of the Atlantic Treaty in Washington in 1949.

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NEWPORT BEACH, CAL.
PILOT

E - 37,128

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's Prime Minister Dies as Fire Sweeps Home

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from

Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence Party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

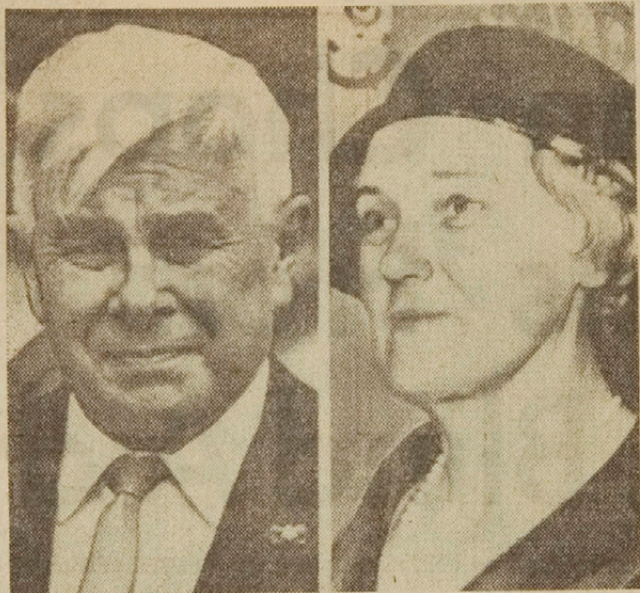
MODESTO, CAL.
BEE

E - 45,178

S - 47,770

JUL 10 1970

Premier, Wife Are Killed



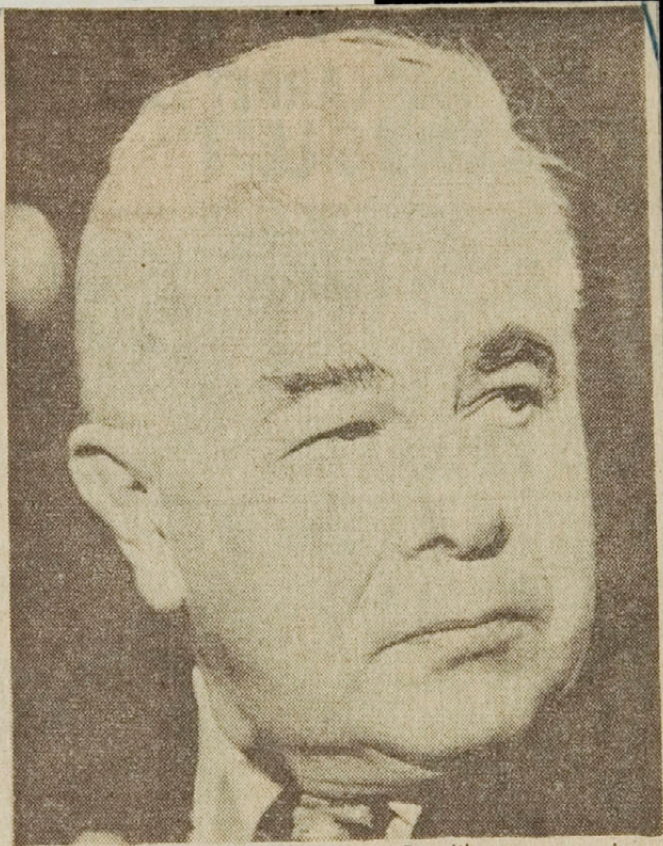
Iceland Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their 2-year-old grandson were killed last night in a fire that destroyed the couple's summer home 31 miles outside Reykjavik. Cause of the fire was not disclosed. Benediktsson has been premier since 1963.

SANTA ANA, CAL.
REGISTER

E - 90,087

S - 129,439

JUL 10 1970



ICELAND PREMIER DIES—Bjarne Benediktsson, premier of Iceland, his wife and one of their grandchildren died late Thursday in a fire that razed the premier's official summer residence 31 miles outside of Reykjavik. The government called an emergency session to pick a successor. (UPI Telephoto)

Premier Of Iceland Dies In Home Fire

(Continued From Page 1)

minister's daughter, Valgerdur Bjarnadottir, and her husband, Vilundur Gylfason. The parents were in Reykjavik at the time.

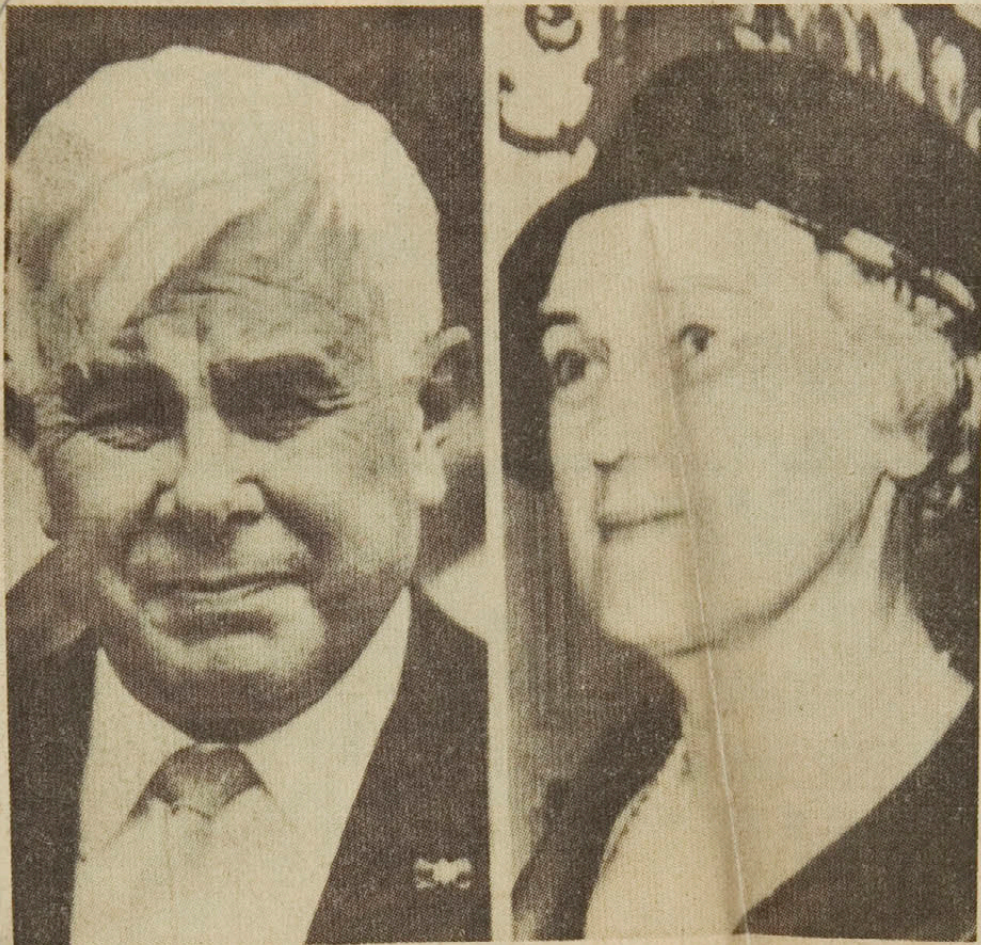
Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived Thursday night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktsson's were in the house.

Firemen later found the bodies.

The fire was discovered by a group of Dutch students on their way to the nearby Valhal Hotel. They saw flames through the windows and ran up to the house and knocked on doors and windows. But they said they saw nobody in the burning house.

"Then there was a small explosion inside and we ran up to the hotel and sounded the alarm," Uta Heichenberg of Leiden, Holland, told a UPI reporter at the scene.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known but government officials said it could have started in a kerosene heater used in the small four-room house.



VICTIMS — Bjarni Benediktsson, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, along with their grandson, died in a fire that swept their summer home at Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. (AP Wirephoto)

Fire Kills Iceland's Premier

Grandson And Wife Perish

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

Benediktsson's death came as a shock to Icelanders, who heard the news on the morning news broadcast from Radio Iceland.

Flags were flown at halfstaff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

The government issued a brief statement:

"The prime minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife Sigridur Bjoernsdottir and their four-year-old grandson perished in a fire at the government summer house at Thingvellir early this morning. The fire was discovered about 3 a.m. An announcement regarding the acting prime minister will be made in a few hours."

The grandson was Benedikt Gylfason, the son of the prime minister. (Please See Page 3, Column 3)

E - 18,302

JUL 10 1970

Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson Killed in Fire 20

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) —Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

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Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

TORRANCE, CAL.
SOUTH BAY BREEZE

E - 44,836
S - 45,821

JUL 10 1970

Iceland Premier And Family Die

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Flags were flown at halfstaff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

The government issued a brief statement:

"The prime minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife, Sigridur Bjornsdottir and their 4 year old grandson perished in a fire at the government summer house at Thingvellir early this morning. The fire was discovered about 3 a.m. An announcement regarding the acting prime minister will be made in a few hours."

The grandson was Benedikt Gylfason, the son of the prime minister's daughter, Valgerdur Bjarnadottir and her husband, Vilmundur Gylfason. The parents were in Reykjavik at the time.

Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived Thursday night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktsson's were in the house.

Firemen later found the bodies.

SANTA ROSA, CAL.
PRESS DEMOCRAT

E - 45,504

S - 47,241

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's Leader Dies In Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)
—Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The

Iceland's Leader Dies In Fire

(Continued from Page 1)

bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

JUL 11 1970

Icelanders In Mourning For Leader

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Icelanders today mourned the death of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, killed in a fire, while Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry, temporarily took the reins of government in the Arctic Circle nation.

Flags were at half staff and police and firemen sifted the ruins of the summer cottage in which Benediktsson, 62, his wife and a grandson burned to death Thursday night.

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.

E - 44,520

JUL 10 1970

Fire kills premier, wife, child

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) —Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their 2-year-old grandson were killed Thursday night in a fire that destroyed the premier's summer home.

An official government spokesman, announcing the deaths, said the cause of the fire at Thingvellir residence, 31 miles outside the capital, had not been disclosed.

"This is an immense tragedy for our country," the spokesman said in a shaky voice. "But the shock is so severe that many of us cannot believe it is true."

Most of Iceland's 200,000 residents first heard of the tragedy on morning radio newscasts. Flags were lowered to half-staff.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives near the government residence, said he discovered the fire shortly after midnight and sounded the alarm. The house was destroyed before the fire engines arrived from the capital.

Benediktsson, 62, was appointed prime minister in 1963 and was leading a coalition government of his own Independence party and the Social Democratic party.

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

CALLER

M - 68,322

CALLER-TIMES

S - 82,638

JUL 11 1970

Iceland Official Killed As Fire Sweeps Cottage

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johnson Hasstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the

charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigrídur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to

New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilundur Gíslason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gíslason.

Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik on April 30, 1908. He studied law at the University of Iceland and later in Berlin and Copenhagen. In 1932, he became a professor at the University of Iceland and stayed in that post until 1940. That year he became mayor of Reykjavik and stayed on until 1947 when he was named minister of justice and foreign affairs. In that capacity he was one of the signers of the Atlantic Treaty in Washington in 1949.

Benediktsson was editor of the Reykjavik newspaper Morgunblaðið and held other ministerial posts until he became prime minister in 1963.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. The house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the legislature.

safn Bjarna Benediktssonar © B

SAN PEDRO, CAL.

NEWS-PILOT

JUL 10 1970

E - 15,158

Iceland prime minister, family killed in fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summerhouse early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

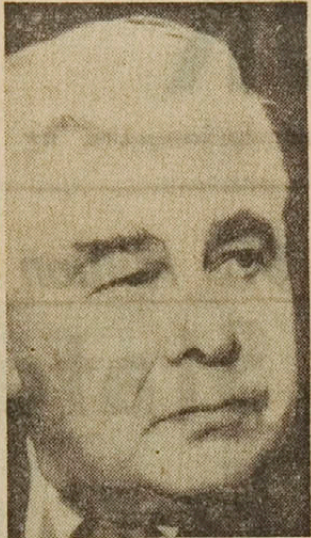
Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

JUL 10 1970



BJARNE BENEDIKTSSON

Fire Kills Iceland's Chief, 2 Kin

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik, burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

JUL 10 1970

Premier of Iceland Dies in House Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) —Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

Cabinet Emergency

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

Shock

Benediktsson's death came as a shock to Icelanders, who

heard the news on the morning news broadcast from Radio Iceland.

Flags were flown at halfstaff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

The government issued a brief statement:

"The prime minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife Sigríður Þjórnisdóttir and their four-year-old grandson perished in a fire at the government summer house at Thingvellir early this morning. The fire was discovered about 3 a.m. An announcement regarding the acting prime minister will be made in a few hours."

The grandson was Benedikt Gylfason, the son of the prime minister's daughter, Valgerður Bjarnadóttir, and her husband, Vílmundur Gylfason. The parents were in Reykjavik at the time.

Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived Thursday night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktssons were in the house.

Firemen later found the bodies.

The fire was discovered by a group of Dutch students on their way to the nearby Valhall Hotel. They saw flames through the windows and ran up to the house and knocked on doors and windows. But they said they saw nobody in the burning house.

STOCKTON, CAL.
RECORD

E - 66,769

JUL 10 1970

Iceland Head Dies in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their 2-year-old grandson were killed Thursday night in a fire that destroyed the premier's summer home.

An official government spokesman, announcing the deaths, said the cause of the fire at Thingvellir residence, 31 miles outside the capital, had not been disclosed.

"This is an immense tragedy for our country," the spokesman said in a shaky voice.

"But the shock is so severe that many of us cannot believe it is true."

Most of Iceland's 200,000 residents first heard of the tragedy on morning radio newscasts. Flags were lowered to half-staff.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives near the government residence, said he discovered the fire and sounded the alarm.

The house was destroyed before the fire engines arrived from the capital, 31 miles away.

The premier and his wife and grandson arrived Thursday.

STOCKTON, CAL.
RECORD

E - 66,769

JUL 10 1970

Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson Perish in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's

summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik, burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

OGDEN, UTAH
STANDARD-EXAMINER
JUL 10 1970

E - 41,208

S - 41,661

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Fire Kills Iceland Premier

FATAL FIRE: Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their 2-year-old grandson were killed Thursday night in a fire in Reykjavik, Iceland, that destroyed the premier's summer home.

An official government spokesman, announcing the deaths, said the cause of the fire at Thingvellir residence, 31 miles outside the capital, had not been disclosed.

"This is an immense tragedy for our country," the spokesman said in a shaky voice. "But the shock is so severe that many of us cannot believe it is true."

Most of Iceland's 200,000 residents first heard of the

tragedy on morning radio newscasts. Flags were lowered to half-staff.

The Rev. **Eirikur Eriksson**, who lives near the government residence, said he discovered the fire at 12:40 a.m. (8:40 p.m. EDT) and sounded the alarm. The house was destroyed before the fire engines arrived from the capital, 31 miles away.

CANDIDATE: Earl D. Craig Jr., a Negro teacher at the University of Minnesota, is running against former Vice President **Hubert H. Humphrey** for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate in Minnesota.

Craig, a critic of the Viet-

nam war, filed his nominating papers Thursday in St. Paul. The party primary will be held Sept. 10.

Humphrey received endorsement of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor convention last month. Craig polled 20 per cent of the vote.

The Republican nominee for the seat being vacated by the retirement of Democrat **Eugene McCarthy** is Rep. **Clark McGregor**.

BIRTHDAY: Edward Heath, Britain's new prime minister, held a cocktail party Thursday at his official residence, No. 10 Downing St., to mark his 54th birthday.

PASEDENA, CAL.
STAR-NEWS

E - 35,420
S - 55,864

JUL 10 1970

Fire Kills Premier Of Iceland, Family

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.

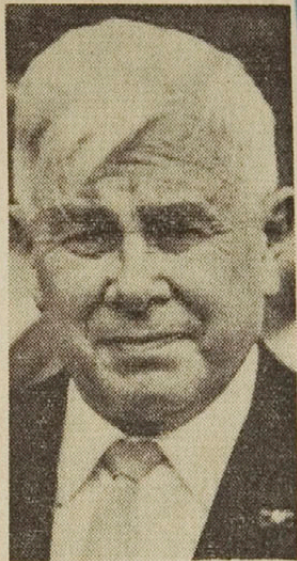
A priest living nearby discovered the fire in the wooden cottage at Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik. He raised the alarm, but when firemen reached the house, they found the three bodies.

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.

Mr. Sigridur Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4.



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON

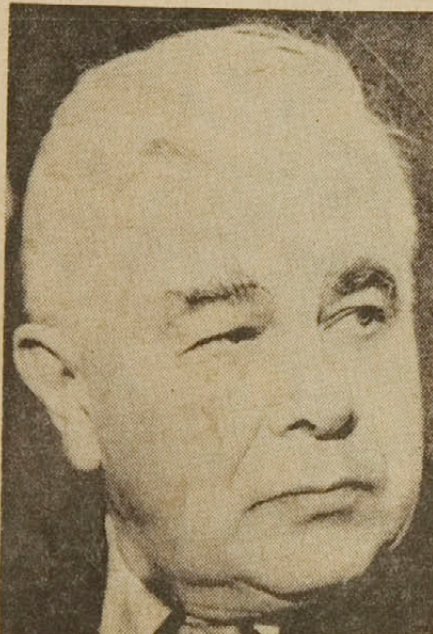
... dies in fire

© Borgarskjalasafn Reykjavíkur

RIVERSIDE, CAL.
PRESS
E - 34,764
PRESS-ENTERPRISE
S - 78,343

JUL 10 1970

Premier and two relatives perish in Iceland flames



(UPI Cablephoto)
BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (Reuters) — Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and grandson died tragically early today in a fire that destroyed the premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, 38 miles outside Reykjavik.

Benediktsson headed a coalition government of his own Independent party and the Social Democrats.

THERE WAS NO immediate announcement on who would take over as head of government. Iceland has been an independent republic with an elected president since it severed its links with the Danish crown in 1944.

The country went into a state of mourning. After meeting members of the government, President Kirstjan Eldjarn asked Justice Minister Johann Hafstein, vice president of Benediktsson's Independent party to take over the premiership and form a new government.

Police recovered the three charred bodies from the smoking ruin of the small, timber structure this morning and said their position indicated the 62-year-old premier and his wife tried to escape but got only a few steps before being overtaken by flames.

The prime minister, his wife Sigrídur and their daughter's 2-year-old son Benedikt Wilmundarsson, arrived yesterday to spend a few quiet hours at the summer residence, built to house King Frederick of Denmark when he visited Iceland.

It was a favorite haunt of the prime minister's where he went to relax from official duties.

THEY ARRIVED without even servants and settled down on what was a bitterly cold night with a strong northerly wind whipping snow around nearby mountain peaks.

About 1:30 this morning some Dutch campers whose tents were blown down in the wind noticed a fire in what they first took to be an empty house.

They told the porter of a nearby hotel who realized the prime minister's family was in residence and raised the alarm.

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

the fire and apparently contributed to the fierceness of the blaze.

Benediktsson, who headed the coalition government since November, 1963, was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after World War II.

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 the capital 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 (legislature) in 1959, he became minister of justice and industries, and in November 1963 was chosen as prime minister.

PARSONS, KAN.
SUN

E - 9,211

JUL 10 1970



A.P. PHOTOFAX

DIE IN FIRE — Bjarni Benediktsson, premier of Iceland, and his wife, above, along with a grandson, died Thursday night in a fire that swept their summer home.

Fire Is Fatal For Premier

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

M - 219,462
S - 268,338
JUL 11 1970

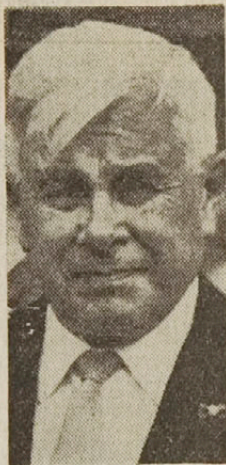
Cottage Flames Fatal To Iceland's Top Leader

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, July 10. — (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62 year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hasten, minister of justice and industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes lat-



Bjarni Benediktsson

er, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik on April 30, 1908. He studied law at the University

of Iceland and later in Berlin and Copenhagen. In 1932, he became a professor at the University of Iceland and stayed in that post until 1940.

That year he became mayor of Reykjavik and stayed on until 1947 when he was named

minister of justice and foreign affairs. In that capacity he was one of the signers of the Atlantic Treaty in Washington in 1949.

The summer residence of ngvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament dated back to 930 A.D.

LYNN, MASS.

ITEM

JUL 10 1970

E - 33,800

Fire Kills Premier Of Iceland

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — (UPI) — Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife, and their 2-year-old grandson were killed Thursday night in a fire that destroyed the premier's summer home.

An official government spokesman, announcing the deaths, said the cause of the fire at Thingvellir residence, 31 miles outside the capital, had not been disclosed.

"This is an immense tragedy for our country," the spokesman said in a shaky voice. "But the shock is so severe that many of us cannot believe it is true."

FLAGS LOWERED

Most of Iceland's 200,000 residents first heard of the tragedy on morning radio newscasts. Flags were lowered to half-staff.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives near the government residence, said he discovered the fire at 12:40 a.m. (8:40 p.m. EDT) and sounded the alarm. The house was destroyed before the fire engines arrived from the capital, 31 miles away.

The premier and his wife and grandson arrived Thursday and

Benediktsson was to have made a speech today in a village on Iceland's northern coast.

Benediktsson was appointed prime minister in 1963 and was leading a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democratic Party.

MEDFORD, ORE.

MAIL TRIBUNE

JUL 10 1970

E - 20,835

S - 22,164

Prime Minister Of Iceland, Wife Die As House Destroyed

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today, the government said.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62-year-old prime minister, his 60-year-old wife and their grandson in the rubble. The bodies were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

Emergency Session

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor.

Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats, was expected to get the job, government sources said.

Hafstein has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party for some time.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics although he was an influential prime minister in this tiny island nation of 200,000 inhabitants.

Elections to the Althing (parliament) will have to be called before June next year. Hafstein was expected to head the cabinet until the elections.

Benediktsson's death came as a shock to Icelanders, who heard the news on the morning news broadcast from Radio Iceland.

Flags were flown at half-staff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

The government issued a brief statement:

"The prime minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife Sigridur Bjoernsdottir and their four-year-old grandson perished in a fire at the government summer house at Thingvellir early this morning. The fire was discovered about 3 a.m. An announcement regarding the acting prime minister will be made in a few hours."

Neighbors Unaware

The grandson was Benedikt Gylfason, the son of the prime minister's daughter, Valgerdur Bjarnadottir, and her husband, Vilundur Gylfason. The parents were in Reykjavik at the time.

Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived Thursday night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktsson's were in the house.

Firemen later found the bodies.

The fire was discovered by a group of Dutch students on their way to the nearby Valhal Hotel. They saw flames through the windows and ran up to the house and knocked on doors and windows. But they said they saw nobody in the burning house.

EUGENE, ORE.
REGISTER-GUARD

JUL 10 1970
E - 52,246
S - 53,046

Iceland's premier, wife, grandson die in cottage blaze

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 Tingvellir, 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, 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.

BILLINGS, MONT.
GAZETTE

M - 42,441

S - 54,232

JUL 11 1970

Iceland's Premier, Wife Killed 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 Tingvellir, 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 for-

eign minister under Thors.

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

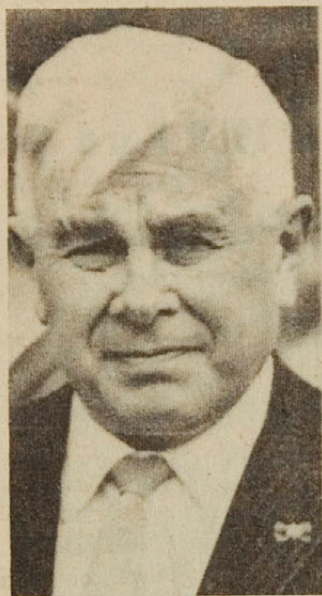
Mrs. Sigridue Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4.

Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

LAWRENCE, KAM.
JOURNAL-WORLD

E - 14,836

JUL 10 1970



DIE IN FIRE — Bjarni Benediktason, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, along with their grandson, died in a fire that swept their summer home Thursday night. The wooden cottage was located at Chingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. (AP Wirephoto)

MISSOULA, MONT.

MISSOULIAN

JUL 11 1970

M - 24,801

S - 25,002

Iceland's Premier, Family Die in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. The house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the legislature.



Mr. and Mrs. Benediktsson

Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

E - 9, 179

JUL 11 1970

Icelanders In Mourning For Leader

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Icelanders today mourned the death of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, killed in a fire, while Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry, temporarily took the reins of government in the Arctic Circle nation.

Flags were at half staff and police and firemen sifted the ruins of the summer cottage in which Benediktsson, 62, his wife and a grandson burned to death Thursday night.

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.

M - 39,848

S - 46,788

JUL 11 1970

Icelander's Premier, Wife Die in Fire, Blast

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night. Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a power-

ful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw

the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundur Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. the house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.

SAN GABRIEL, CAL.

TRIBUNE

JUL 10 1970

E - 80,041

S - 82,094

Iceland's Premier, Kin Die 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, 30 miles from Reykjavik. He raised the alarm, but when firemen reached the house, they found the three bodies.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
EXAMINER
E - 208,023
EXAMINER & CHRONICLE
S - 648,231
JUL 10 1970

Page 12—S.F. Examiner ☆☆☆ Fri., July 10, 1970

Iceland Chief Dies in Fire

REYKJAVIK — (UPI) — Iceland's prime minister, Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their four year old grandson died when a fire razed the government's summer house early today.

The small wooden house at Thingvellir, 31 miles outside Reykjavik, burned down before the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik.

Firemen found the bodies of the 62 year old prime minister, his 60 year old wife and their grandson in the rubble.

The government met in emergency session and chose as acting successor Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry who has been Benediktsson's deputy in the government and the Independence Party.

Benediktsson's death was not expected to change Icelandic politics but elections to the Althing (Parliament) will have to be called before next June.

A former law professor and mayor of Reykjavik, Dr.



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON
Perishes in fire

Benediktsson 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.

E - 10,534

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's premier dies in house 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, 30 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.

Fire Kills

Iceland's

Minister

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) —Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson were killed in a fire early Friday that destroyed their summer house and plunged this nation into deep mourning.

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 wooden house at Thingvellir 31 miles from Reykjavik.

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

A few hours after the incident, the cabinet met in emergency session and named Johann Hafstein, the Minister of Justice and Industries, as acting Prime Minister to guide this NATO ally of the United States pending new elections.

The house was razed 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.

President Kristjan Eldjarn announced the appointment of Hafstein, 54, "to assume the duties of Prime Minister temporarily in addition to his duties as Minister of Justice and Industries."

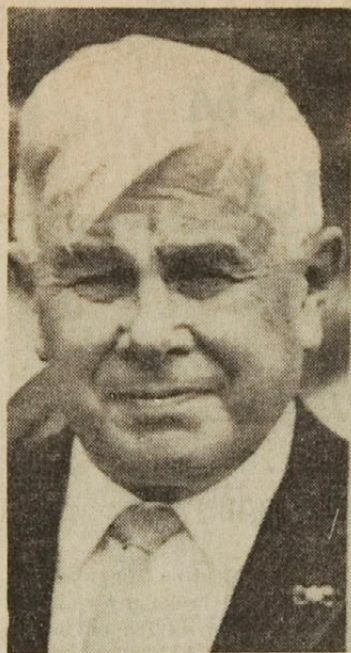
Political observers said it was unclear how long Hafstein would lead the coalition government of Benediktsson's conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats. He could stay on until the elections to the Althing (Parliament) which have to be called before next June.

JACKSON, TENN.
SUN

E - 21,783

S - 21,534

JUL 10 1970



Die In Fire

Bjarni Benediktsson, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, along with their grandson, died in a fire that swept their summer home Thursday night. The wooden cottage, owned by the government and used by members of the cabinet, was located at Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. 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. Sigríður Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4. Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

ANDERSON, IND.
HERALD

M - 19,818

S - 21,768

JUL 11 1970

Icelandic Leader Dies In Blast

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened

to the scene, but by the time they reached the houses, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. the house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.

MANKATO, MINN.
FREE PRESS

E - 22,500

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's premier is killed 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 Tingvellir, 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. Sigridue Benediktosson was 50; their grandson was 4.

Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

PINE BLUFF, ARK.

COMMERCIAL

JUL 10 1970

E - 22,029

S - 22,145

Iceland Premier

Killed in Blaze

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

A priest living nearby discovered the fire in the wooden cottage at Ghinveille, 30 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 major of Reykjavik, 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 justice minister and then foreign minister under Thors.

MUNCIE, IND.
STAR

M - 30,810

S - 34,270

JUL 11 1970

Iceland Fire Kills Prime Minister

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw

the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A PARTY of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gyfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. The house was built in 1930 to mark the 6,000 anniversary of the legislature.

TACOMA, WASH.
NEWS-TRIBUNE
E - 100,016
TRIBUNE & LEDGER
S - 97,838
JUL 10 1970

Wife, Grandson Also Perish

Fire Kills Iceland Premier

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.

Running to investigate, a priest found the government residence at Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, blazing fiercely. A few minutes later a violent explosion from within the house lifted off the roof, he said.

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

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

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. Sirgidue Benediktsson

was 50; their grandson was 4.

Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

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

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

At the time of the tragedy, the boys' 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 halfstaff, the state-owned radio was broadcasting only solemn music, and people throughout the country were openly displaying grief.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
EXAMINER

E - 208,023

EXAMINER & CHRONICLE

S - 648,231

JUL 11 1970

Iceland Mourns Fire Death of Prime Minister

REYKJAVIK (Iceland) — (AP) — Icelanders today mourned the death of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, killed in a fire, while Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry, temporarily took the reins of government.

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

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.
OKLAHOMAN

M - 176,403

S - 270,486

JUL 1 '0 1970

Premier of Iceland Perishes in Flames

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.

A priest living nearby discovered the bodies in the wooden cottage at Tingvellir, about 10 miles from Reykjavik. He raised the alarm but when firemen reached the cottage 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

(See PREMIER—Page 2)

GARY, IND.

POST-TRIBUNE

JUL 10 1970

E - 70,425

S - 70,863

Premier of Iceland 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 Tingvellir, 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, 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.

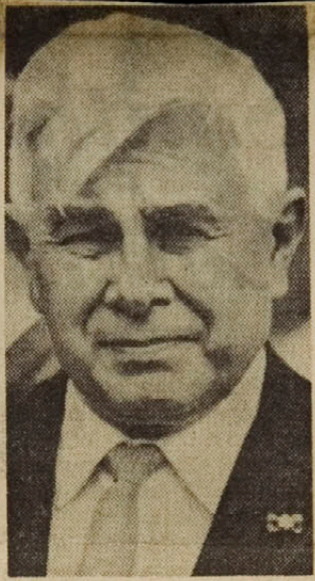
A party of Danish tourists also saw the blaze, raised the alarm but added that by the time they reached the scene the building was an inferno and they could do nothing.

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



Enkaskjalasafn Bjarna Benediktssonar © Borgarskjalasafn Reykjavíkur

BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON



Bjarni Benediktsson

Premier

Continued From Page One
been minister of justice and then foreign minister under Thors.

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

Mrs. Sigrídur 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 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 construction.

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

JUL 10 1970

Premier of Iceland, Wife Perish 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 Tingnellir, 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.

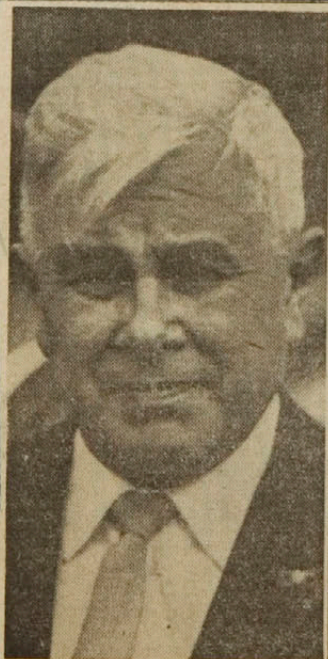
Johann Hasstein, minister of justice and industry, took over as acting prime minister.

★ ★ ★

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.



—Associated Press Wirephoto
Bjarni Benediktsson, prime minister of Iceland, and his wife, along with their grandson, died in a fire that swept their summer home last night. The wooden cottage was located at Tingvellir, 30 miles from Reykjavik.

Borgarskjalasafn Reykjavíkur

DECATUR, ILL.

HERALD

M - 35,332

HERALD-REVIEW

S - 55,024

JUL 11 1970

Iceland's Chief 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 Chingveille, 30 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.

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.

M - 20,909

JUL 11 1970

Premier Of Iceland Dies In Blaze

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson were killed in a fire early Friday that destroyed their summer house and plunged this nation into deep mourning.

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 wooden house at Thingvellir 31 miles from Reykjavik.

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

A few hours after the incident, the cabinet met in emergency session and named Johann Hafstein, the Minister of Justice and Industries, as acting Prime Minister to guide this NATO ally of the United States pending new elections.

The house was razed 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.

NATCHEZ, MISS.
DEMOCRAT

M - 9,238

S - 9,854

JUL 11 1970

Iceland's Prime Minister Killed In Reykjavik Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni

Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 59-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. the house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.

BILOXI, MISS.

HERALD

JUL 11 1970

E & S - 36,563



Fire Victim . . .

Benedik Gislason, four-year-old grandson of Prime Minister and Mrs. Bjarni Benediktsson, perished with his grandparents in a fire at a summer cottage at Tingvellir, Iceland, Friday.

(AP Wirephoto by radio from Reykjavik)

LAWRENCE, MASS.
EAGLE-TRIBUNE

E - 44,094

JUL 10 1970



PREMIER BENEDIKTSSON



MRS. BENEDIKTSSON

Iceland's Premier And Wife Killed

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Iceland's premier, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson were killed in a fire at the premier's summer home last night. A priest living nearby discovered the fire in the wooden cottage at Ghingveille, 30 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.

DETROIT, MICH.
NEWS

E - 592,616

S - 827,086

JUL 10 1970



-AP Wirephotos

ICELAND TRAGEDY — Iceland's premier, Bjarni Benediktsson and his wife (above) and two-year-old grandson perished in a fire that swept their summer home last night. The wooden cottage was at Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik, capital of Iceland. Dr. Benediktsson, 62, became chairman of the Independence Party and premier in November, 1963, when Premier Olafur Thors resigned because of his health. Benediktsson, as foreign minister, was responsible for taking his country into NATO after World War II.

PITTSFIELD, MASS.
BERKSHIRE EAGLE

E - 30,051

JUL 11 1970

Fatal Fire's Cause Sought In Icelandic Tragedy

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage Friday seeking the cause of fire and explosion which killed Iceland's prime minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson during the night.

Flags were flown at half staff throughout Iceland in mourning for the 62-year-old government chief who had wielded a powerful influence on the politics of this northern island nation. Johann Hafstein, minister of Justice and Industry, took over as acting prime minister.

A priest who lived nearby saw the flames coming from the cottage Thursday night in Tingvellir, 40 miles from Reykjavik, and turned in the alarm.

A party of Danish tourists also saw the fire and hastened to the scene, but by the time

they reached the house, it was an inferno. A few minutes later, an explosion lifted off the roof.

When a fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik an hour later, they found only ruins and the charred remains of the prime minister, his 50-year-old wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D. The house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.