



Erlendar blaðaúrklippur, vegna fráfalls  
Bjarna, Sigríðar og Benedikts,  
10. júlí 1970, 2. hluti

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

Tekið af vef Borgarskjalasafnsins

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

Einkaskjalasafn nr. 360  
Fjölskyldan  
Askja 3-13, Umslag: Blaðaúrklippur

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11 JUIL. 1970

# Le Premier ministre islandais sa femme et son petit-fils (2 ans) périssent carbonisés <sup>19</sup> dans leur résidence d'été

REYKJAVIK (Islande). — Le Premier ministre islandais, M. Bjarni Benediktsson, 62 ans, sa femme et son petit-fils (2 ans), ont trouvé la mort, dans la nuit de jeudi à vendredi, dans l'incendie de leur résidence d'été à Thingvallsoen, à 60 kilomètres de la capitale, Reykjavik.

Bien que l'alerte ait été donnée immédiatement de l'hôtel proche « Valhal », les pompiers de Reykjavik n'ont trouvé que des cendres à leur arrivée sur les lieux du sinistre. Après quelques recherches, les trois cadavres carbonisés ont été découverts et transférés à la chapelle de Reykjavik.

Selon la police, l'incendie a pu être provoqué par le chauffage central au mazout. On suppose que les trois victimes ont succombé à l'asphyxie avant d'être la proie des flammes qui avalent ravagé à une vitesse surprenante la demeure de bois.

Le Premier ministre, M. Bjarni Benediktsson, était une des figures les plus marquantes de la jeune République islandaise. Il gagna une réputation internationale surtout durant la période pendant laquelle il fut ministre des Affaires étrangères. Il devint Premier ministre en 1963, en remplacement de M. Olafur Thors.

Bjarni — en Islande on utilise seulement le prénom — s'était déjà fait remarquer dès l'âge de 22 ans comme un des meilleurs porte-parole du parti de l'indépendance. En 1932, il devint professeur de droit, mais sa carrière pédagogique ne dura que huit ans.

Le Premier ministre était arrivé avec sa femme Sigridur Bjornsd-Ttir, et le petit Benedikt à leur maison d'été jeudi après-midi pour y passer seulement la nuit.

M. Benediktsson devait prendre la parole ce soir à une réunion politique dans une petite ville au nord de Reykjavik.

Après l'annonce de la nouvelle tragique, la radio islandaise a diffusé hier de la musique funèbre, tandis que les habitants de Reykjavik circulaient silencieusement et que les drapeaux étaient mis en berne.

La maison sinistrée était appelée communément « la Maison royale » parce que le roi Christian X de Danemark y passa la nuit en 1930 pendant les festivités commémorant le millénaire de l'Alting, parlement islandais.

On ignore encore qui prendra la succession de M. Benediktsson, mais on suppose que ce sera l'actuel ministre de la Justice, M. Johann Hafstein, du même parti de l'indépendance que le Premier ministre défunt.

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CANONSBURG, PA.  
NOTES

E - 5,417

JUL 16 1970

**BLOUNT AT FUNERAL**

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Postmaster General Winton M. Blount will represent President Nixon at funeral services today for the late prime minister of Iceland, Bjarni Benediktsson.

Blount will be accompanied by Sens. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., and Gail McGhee, D-Ka. The prime minister, his wife and a grandchild died in a fire last weekend.



MIDI-LIBRE  
12, rue d'Alger  
34 - Montpellier

11 JUIL. 1970

 **SURPRIS PENDANT LEUR SOMMEIL**

# LE PREMIER MINISTRE D'ISLANDE, SA FEMME ET LEUR PETIT-FILS PÉRISSENT CARBONISÉS

79

## dans l'incendie de leur résidence d'été

Reykjavik. — Le Premier ministre d'Islande, M. Bjarni Benediktsson, sa femme et leur petit-fils, âgé de deux ans, ont péri, la nuit dernière, dans l'incendie d'une maison d'été, en bois, à Thingvallasoen, à 60 km de la capitale islandaise, Reykjavik.

Le Premier ministre était arrivé avec sa femme et le petit Benedikt à leur maison d'été, jeudi après-midi, pour y passer seulement la nuit. Un pasteur demeurant à côté s'aperçut qu'un incendie venait d'éclater dans la résidence d'été du Premier ministre, et donna l'alerte immédiatement, mais à leur arrivée, les pompiers ne trouvèrent que des cendres.

Après quelques recherches, les trois cadavres ont été découverts et transférés à la chapelle de Reykjavik.



# **PREMIER ISLANDAIS**

Selon la police, l'incendie a pu être provoqué par le chauffage central au mazout. Les trois corps carbonisés ont été trouvés dans les lits, ce qui laisse supposer que les trois victimes ont succombé à l'intoxication avant d'être la proie des flammes.

Le Premier ministre, M. Bjarni Benediktsson, qui avait soixante-deux ans, était une des figures les plus marquantes de la jeune République islandaise. Il gagna une réputation internationale surtout durant la période pendant laquelle il fut ministre des Affaires étrangères. Il était devenu Premier ministre en 1963, en remplacement de M. Olafur Thors.

Odenwälder Heimatzeitung  
Erbach (3,4/66)

# Isländische Tragödie

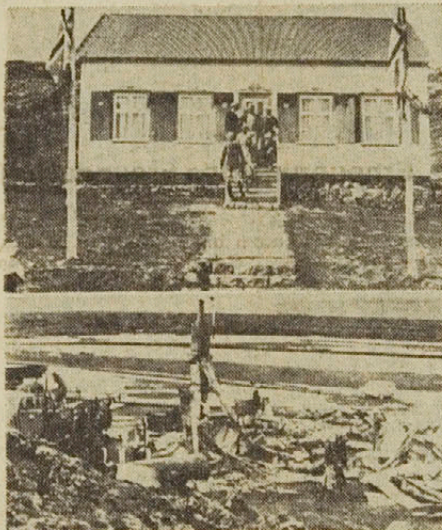
Im Land der Vulkane starb der Regierungschef den Feuertod

Von MARTIN GRILL

REYKJAVIK. Der isländische Ministerpräsident Bjarni Benediktsson, der am vergangenen Freitag beim Brand seines Landsitzes ums Leben kam, ist am Donnerstag in Reykjavik beerdigt worden. Gleichzeitig wurden seine Frau und ein Enkel, die mit ihm in den Flammen umgekommen waren, bestattet. Neben dem Staatspräsidenten Eldjarn, den isländischen Ministern und zahlreichen anderen Vertretern des öffentlichen Lebens waren bei der Trauerfeier auch viele Abordnungen des Auslandes vertreten.

Als in den frühen Morgenstunden des 10. Juli in der isländischen Einöde, vom eiskalten Nordwind gepeinigt, zwei holländische Touristen aus ihrem Zelt krochen, sahen sie weit entfernt gegen den Hintergrund der schneebedeckten Berge ein Haus in hellen Flammen stehen. Ringsum war kein Mensch zu sehen, und keiner von ihnen wußte, daß in diesem alten Holzhaus der Regierungschef Islands, seine Frau Sigridur Björnsdóttir und deren vierjähriger Enkel eben den Tod gefunden hatten. Das vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg für Fredrik VII erbaute „Königshaus“, ganz aus trockenem Holz bestehend, muß innerhalb weniger Sekunden ein flammender Scheiterhaufen gewesen sein, der den drei Menschen nicht die geringste Chance des Entkommens bot.

Bjarni Benediktsson, 1908 geboren, fast vierzig Jahre führende Persönlichkeit der Selbstständigkeitspartei, 1947 zum Außenminister gewählt und seit 1963 Staatsminister, war ohne Zweifel eine große politische Begabung. Schon



Wo einst der dänische König Christian X. unbeschwerte Stunden verlebte (Bild oben), starb der isländische Regierungschef Benediktsson einen qualvollen Feuertod. Das „Königshaus“ wurde innerhalb kürzester Zeit völlig eingäschert (Bild unten).

im Alter von 24 Jahren war er Professor für Rechtswissenschaft an der Universität von Reykjavik. Im Alter von 32 Jahren wurde er Bürgermeister der Hauptstadt. Als die Amerikaner die Insel okkupierten, erlebte Island seine schwersten Jahre in der neueren Zeit, wollte man doch im Kampf der militä-

rischen Giganten am liebsten abseits stehen. Doch die Amerikaner blieben. Island wurde Mitglied der NATO, obwohl es überhaupt kein Militär hatte und nichts zu geben vermochte als den Boden für militärische Stützpunkte.

Benediktsson trat entschieden für diese Mitgliedschaft ein, was ihm die links von der Mitte stehenden Parteien Islands nie ganz verziehen haben. Doch dieser Realpolitiker war der Auffassung, daß die relative Selbständigkeit des Landes überhaupt nur bewahrt werden konnte, wenn man sich an eine der Militärmächte anlehnte, obwohl er im Grunde genommen immer auch an dem Gedanken einer nordischen Gemeinschaft festhielt. Auch der Nachfolger Benediktssons, Johann Hafstein, wird kaum eine andere Politik treiben können.

Tingvallir, das „Königshaus“, 60 Kilometer von Reykjavik gelegen, soll die Stelle kennzeichnen, an der einmal der erste Reichstag der Welt abgehalten worden ist. Island nennt sich ja stolz die älteste parlamentarische Demokratie der Welt! Die Tragödie vom 10. Juli erinnert jedoch auch daran, daß viele der Nationalhelden — und nicht zuletzt auch der einfachen Menschen auf Island — im Feuerstrom der Vulkane einen gewaltsamen Tod gefunden haben. Es gibt sogar seltsame Parallelen in der Geschichte zum Ende Benediktssons, die — wie so vieles auf diesem trügerischen vulkanischen Boden — halb Sage, halb Wirklichkeit sind. (Bjarni Benediktsson, Reykjavik)



# THE TIMES

Daily

(Circ. 299,315)

11 JUL 1970

## Fiery saga

<sup>N1007</sup>  
FOR 200.00) 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.



WASHINGTON, PA.  
OBSERVER-REPORTER

D - 24,531

JUL 11 1970



Associated Press Wirephoto

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

## *Three Die In Iceland 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 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.



**TWO OTHERS DIE—**

# Iceland's Prime Minister Perishes In Cottage 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.

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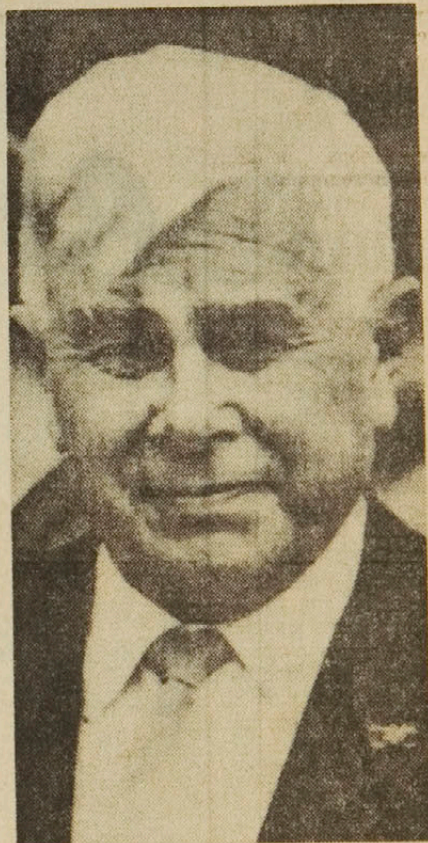
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The child was the son of Benediktsson's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilmundar Gislason, is the son of the culture minister,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

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.



**Benediktsson**

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LANCASTER, PA.

NEW ERA

E - 56,523

NEWS

S - 110,874

JUL 12 1970

## Benediktssons Rites Scheduled

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP) — The government announced Saturday that the state funeral of Prime Minister Dr. Bajarni Benediktsson, his wife Sigridur and their grandson, Benedikt Vilmundarson, will be held here Thursday.

They died when the government summerhouse at Tingvellir, where they were staying, burned down in the early hours of Friday morning.



JK

WILMINGTON, DELA.  
NEWS

M - 44,027

JUL 11 1970

In house fire

# Iceland leader, family killed

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

The bodies of Benedikisun, 62, his wife Sigridur, 60, and the couple's grandson, Benedikt Gylfasun, 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 has 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 paraf-

fin 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.

**FLAGS** flew at half staff over the island and Radio Iceland played solemn music.

Details surrounding the fire were unclear.

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

Officials said the bodies of the victims were found in the remains of their beds, indicating they may have suffocated in the smoke.

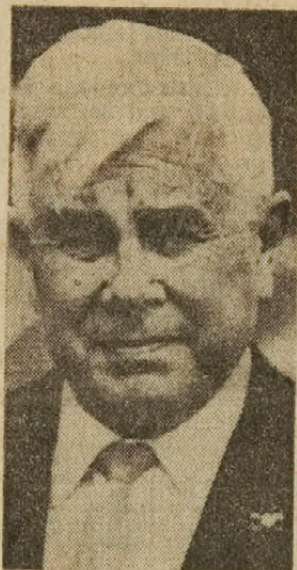
jalasafn Reykjavíkur



SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH  
DESERT NEWS

E - 84,855

JUL 10 1970

Dr. Bjarne Benediktsson  
... at summer homeMrs. Benediktsson  
... tending grandson

## Iceland Leader, Wife, Grandson Die 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 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.

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.

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.

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.

SAN LEANDRO, CAL.  
NEWS

M - 9, 205

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland's Premier, Wife And Grandchild Killed In Summer Home 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.

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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.



ANCHORAGE, ALASKA  
NEWS

M - 11,056

S - 12,970  
JUL 11 1970

# Prime Minister Dies

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.

ST. PAUL, MINN.  
PIONEER PRESS

M - 104,387

S - 223,806

JUL 1 1 1970

## Iceland Mourns 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.

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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, Sigríður, and grandson, Benedikt, 4.

WATERBURY, CONN.  
REPUBLICAN

M - 26,343

S - 55,167

JUL 12 1970

## *Iceland Plans State Funeral*

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP)  
—The government announced Saturday that the state funeral of Prime Minister D. Bajarni Benediktsson, his wife Sigridur and their grandson, Benedikt Vilmundarson, will be held here Thursday.

They died when the government summerhouse at Tingvellir, where they were staying, burned down in the early hours of Friday morning.

The bishop of the Lutheran state church of Iceland, Sigurbjorn Einarsson, said he has directed all priests to pray for the three at church services throughout the country Sunday.



OIL CITY, PA.  
DERRICK

M - 14,890

JUL 1 1970

# Iceland Minister Is Killed

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Please Turn to Page 2, Col. 5

been made that many of the schools, particularly in the Deep South, were set up with the intention of keeping them all-white.

The new policy will be implemented over the "next few months," Thrower said, but he said he doubted all 10,000 could be reviewed by the time school begins in the Fall.

# Free

The bishop then traveled by air-conditioned train to Canton, accompanied by a doctor, a photographer, an interpreter and policemen.

From there he continued on to Hong Kong and crossed into the British colony unannounced at

E - 71,238

S - 62,154

JUL 10 1970

# 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, 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.



BROCKTON, MASS.  
ENTERPRISE & TIMES

E - 52,650

JUL 1 0 1970

# News Roundup

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## *International*

### Iceland Premier Dies in House Fire

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PUEBLO, COLO.  
STAR-JOURNAL

E - 19,198

S - 46,601

JUL 1 1970

## Iceland Premier And Wife Killed In Fire at Home

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.

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NO. ADAMS, MASS.  
TRANSCRIPT

E - 13,370

JUL 1 0 1970

# Iceland's premier, wife die in fire

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TIME

JUL 20 1970

WEEKLY - 5,100,000

## MILESTONES

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**Born.** To André Courrèges, 47, Paris couturier and Coqueline Barrière, 35, whom he married secretly in 1965: their first child, a girl; in Paris.

**Died.** Clinton Rossiter, 52, author and professor of American Institutions at Cornell University; of cardiac arrest; in Ithaca, N.Y. His books included *Seedtime of the Republic* (1953), *The American Presidency* (1956) and *Marxism: The View from America* (1960).

**Died.** Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, Iceland's Premier since 1963, who embraced social welfare at home and friendship for the U.S. in foreign affairs; with his wife and grandson when their summer home outside Reykjavik was destroyed by fire.

**Died.** Barnett Newman, 65, Maximus of the minimal (*see* ART).

**Died.** Robb Sagendorph, 69, editor-publisher of *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, oldest (178 years) continuous periodical in the U.S.; in Peterborough, N.H. A wealthy Bostonian by birth, a New England farmer by inclination, Sagendorph bought the modernized—and ailing—*Almanac* in 1939, restored its time-honored format, offering readers old-fashioned recipes, a listing of odd holidays and dates ("Abe Lincoln, conceived, May 7, 1808"), homey poetry, astronomy tables, a farmer's calendar of crop and other advice, as well as long-range weather predictions, which he insisted were more accurate (78.5%) than those of the U.S. Weather Bureau (65.5%). The old ways obviously struck a responsive chord in readers; circulation grew from 86,000 in 1939 to 1,300,000 today.

**Died.** Marjorie Rambeau, 80, character actress, whose career on stage and screen spanned almost 70 years; in Palm Springs, Calif. A child star at the turn of the century and a romantic lead into the 1920s, she later portrayed the archetypical dowager in scores of plays and films, most notably *Any Number Can Play*, *The View from Pompey's Head* and *A Man Called Peter*.

**Died.** Harold Stirling Vanderbilt, 85, great-grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt, founder of the New York Central Railroad, who won his own fame as an international yachtsman and inventor of the game of contract bridge; of heart disease; in Newport, R.I. Though he was a shrewd and hard-working director of the family empire from 1914 to 1954, when he lost control of the Central in a bitter proxy fight, Vanderbilt became best known for his achievements as an America's Cup yachtsman, and card player. He introduced contract bridge to the world in 1925, saw it become history's most popular parlor game.



WASHINGTON, D.C.  
POST

M - 486,422

S - 637,451

JUL 17 1970

## For the Record

- Britain's opposition Labor Party announced that it would challenge the new Conservative government's policy on arms for South Africa in the House of Commons next week.

- Thousands of Icelanders crowded the streets of Reykjavic, their capital, despite stormy weather for the funeral of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and their four-year-old grandson, killed in a fire last Friday.

QUINCY, MASS.  
PATRIOT LEDGER

E - 65,785

JUL 10 1970

## PREMIER OF ICELAND DIES IN FIRE

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) — Premier Bjarne Bnediktsson, his wife and one of their grandchildren were killed last night in a fire that destroyed the prime minister's official summer residence.

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



SAN PEDRO, CAL.

NEWS-PILOT

JUL 11 1970

E - 15,158

## Iceland leader appointed

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, 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.

ALLENTOWN, PA.  
CALL

M - 90,478

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland's Premier Loses Life 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 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,

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, Vilmundur Gíslason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gíslason.

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.

MADISONVILLE, KY.  
MESSENGER

E - 9,116

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 was located at Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. (AP Wirephoto)



MADISONVILLE, KY.

MESSENGER

JUL 10 1970

E - 9,116

## **Premier Of Iceland Dies In Home 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.

ALAMEDA, CAL.  
TIMES STAR

M - 8,897

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland's Premier, Wife And Grandchild Killed In Summer Home 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 Sigríður, 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 Valgerður.

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.

ASHLAND, KY.  
INDEPENDENT

E - 22,735

S - 23,582

JUL 10 1970

## Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson 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.

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. Sigríður Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4.

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



PERISH IN FLAMES — Bjarni Benediktsson, premier 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 Ghingveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. (AP Wirephoto)



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PECOS, TEX.  
ENTERPRISE

E - 4,150

JUL 10 1970

## Iceland's Premier Dies

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.

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FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.  
OBSERVER

E - 38,082

S - 37,844

JUL 12 1970

# Short Circuit Tied To Fatal Iceland Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI) —An electrical short circuit may have sparked the fire that killed Icelandic Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson, police said Saturday.

Iceland began preparing a state funeral for next Thursday for Benediktsson while police sifted the rubble of Government House where the three died Friday.

Police authorities said the fire left them with a few clues, but that it appeared an electrical failure such as a short circuit —rather than a paraffin stove as they first believed — started the blaze.

The government said the funeral will take place at Reykjavik's cathedral at 2 p.m. Thursday. Icelandic Archbishop Segrudbjorn Einarsson will officiate.

The archbishop ordered prayers read during evening sermon throughout the island today in memory of the victims.

Red and white crossed flags

across the country flew at half staff as condolence telegrams poured in from around the world.

Government officials said President Nixon, Queen Elizabeth of Britain, King Olav V of Norway, King Gustav Adolf V of Sweden and President Urho Kekkonen of Finland were among those who sent messages of sympathy on Benediktsson's death.

Acting Prime Minister Johann Hafstein spent the weekend on his farm outside Reykjavik.

The 50-year-old Hafstein, who also serves as minister of justice and industries, will head the coalition government of the Conservative Independence Party and the Social Democrats until a successor for Benediktsson is elected.

Political sources said Hafstein, Benediktsson's deputy as leader of the Independent party, may stay until general elections to the Althing (Parliament) are called. This must be done before June next year.

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CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.  
TIMES

E - 35,824

JUL 10 1970



## Die in Fire

Iceland's prime minister Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their grandson died in a fire that swept their summer home last night. The wooden cottage was located in Ghingsveille, 30 miles from Reykjavik. A former law professor and mayor of Reykjavik, Benediktsson became chairman of the Independence party and premier of Iceland in November, 1963.

(AP Wirephotos)



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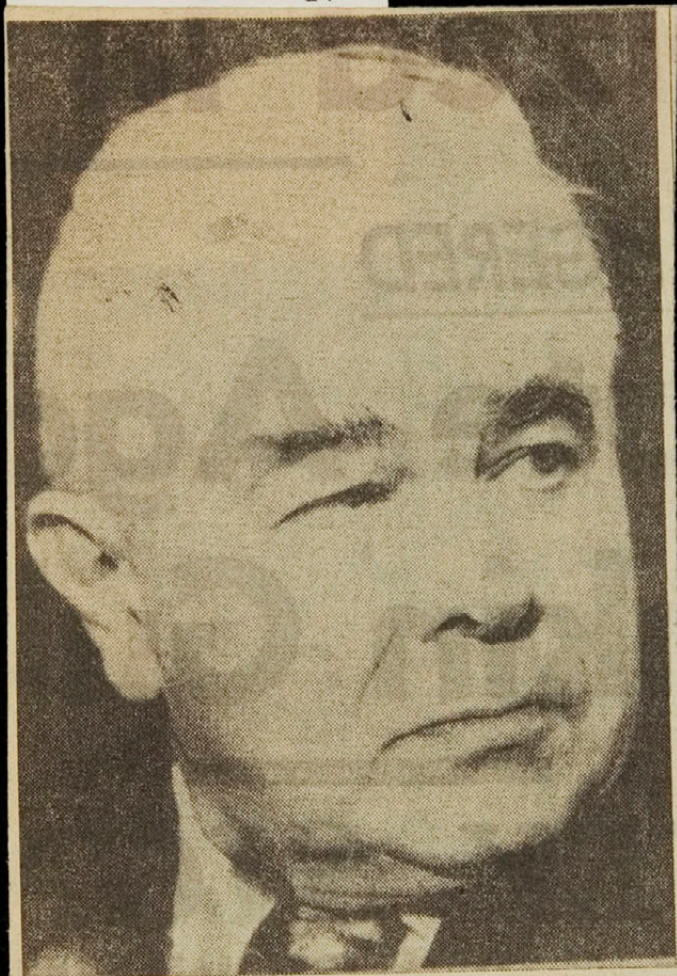
Other  
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*Handwritten initials*

HUNTINGTON PARK, CAL.  
SIGNAL

E - 24,990

JUL 10 1970



**PREMIER** of Iceland, Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and one of their grandchildren were killed Thursday in a fire that destroyed the Prime Minister's official summer residence. Benediktsson, 62, was appointed prime minister in 1963 and was leading a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democratic Party.

—UPI Telephoto

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LOGAN, UTAH  
HERALD JOURNAL

E - 8,185

S - 8,236

JUL 16 1970

## Blount At Rites

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Postmaster General Winton M. Blount will represent President Nixon at funeral services today for the late prime minister of Iceland, Bjarni Benediktsson.

Blount will be accompanied by Sens. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., and Gail McGhee, D-Wyo. The prime minister, his wife and a grandchild died in a fire last weekend.

ROCHESTER, MINN.  
POST-BULLETIN

E - 30,857

JUL 10 1970

# Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson 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 Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4. Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.





FRESNO, CAL.  
BEE

E - 110,294  
S - 142,020

JUL 10 1970

4-A THE FRESNO BEE  
Friday, July 10, 1970

# Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson Perish In Blaze

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

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 later 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.

### No Political Change

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.

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

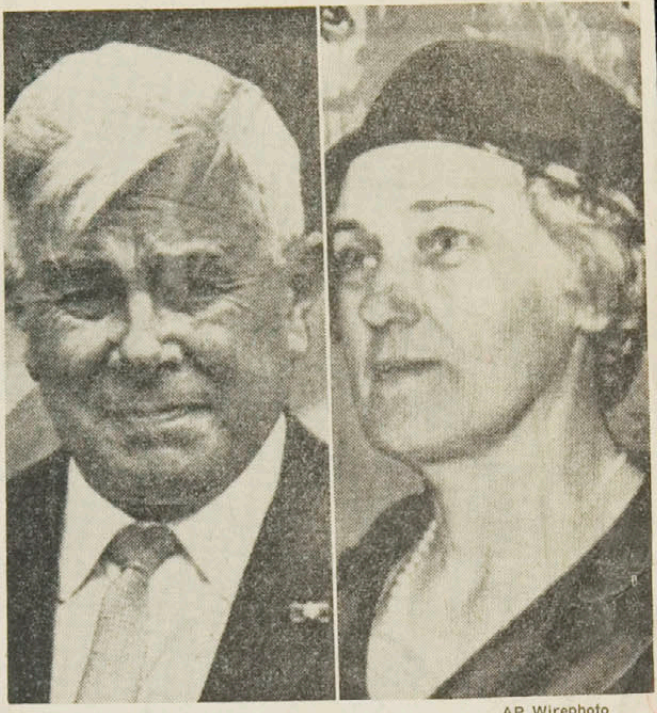
Flags were flown at half-staff. Radio Iceland played only classical music.

### Grandson

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

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.



AP Wirephoto

Dr. and Mrs. Bjarne Benediktsson



10

OAKLAND, CAL.  
TRIBUNE

E - 225,038

S - 251,534

JUL 10 1970

# Iceland's Premier Loses Life 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, Sigrid, and their grandson in the rubble.

The government met in emergency session a few hours after the official announcement of the prime minister's death to pick an acting successor, expected to be Johann Hafstein, minister of justice and industry in Benediktsson's coalition of his own Conservative Independence party and the Social Democrats.

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

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.

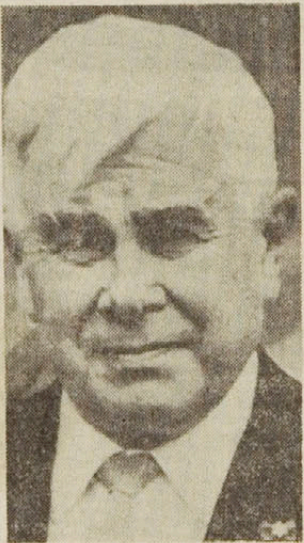
Neighbors did not know the prime minister and his family had arrived last night. Not until officials telephoned the prime minister's house in Reykjavik after the fire did they find out the Benediktssons were in the house.

Benediktsson 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 government service in 1947 as foreign and justice minister.



MRS. SIGRID BENEDIKTSSON  
Prime minister's wife



BJARNE BENEDIKTSSON  
Died in summer cottage

ANCHORAGE, ALAS.  
TIMES

E - 31,354  
JUL 10 1970

8 Anchorage Daily Times Friday, July 10, 1970

World News Digest:

# *Prime Minister Of Iceland Dies In Home Fire*

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP)

— The prime minister of Iceland, Bjarnie Benediktsson, has been killed in a fire at his summer home.

The prime minister's wife and their grandson also died Thursday night in the blaze about 30 miles from Reykjavik. A priest living near the house discovered the fire and raised the alarm, but the three were dead when rescuers reached them.

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.

Police are sifting through the wreckage to determine the cause of the fire.

Iceland's minister of justice and finance-industry, Johann Hasstein, has assumed the post of acting premier.



COLORADO SPGS., COLO.  
SUN

M - 21,533

S - 21,584

JUL 11 1970

# Police Seek Cause Of Explosion Killing Head of Iceland

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 Reykjavie newspaper Morgunbladid and held other ministerial posts until he became prime minister in 1963.

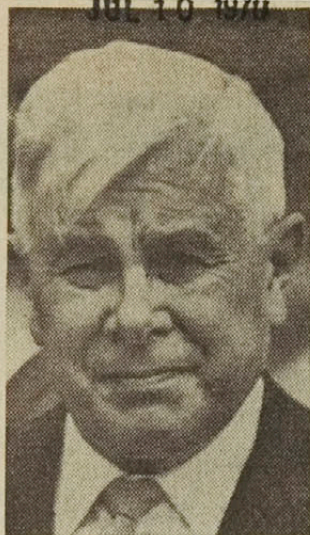
The summer residence at Tingvellir was on the site of the world's first parliament which dated back to 930 A.D.

6

WILMINGTON, DEL.  
JOURNAL

E - 89,875

JUL 10 1970



AP Wirephoto

**Bjarni Benediktsson and his wife**  
*Killed in fire at summer home*

# Iceland Premier, Wife, Grandson 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 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.

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.



Extrait de : **GRENZ ECHO**

Geknipt uit : **EUPEN**

Date :

Datum :

13. 7. 1970



*Der isländische Ministerpräsident Njarni Benediktsson, der Ende vergangener Woche bei einem nächtlichen Brand in seinem Sommerhaus mit seiner Frau und einem Enkelkind den Tod fand*

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t  
e



Extrait de :

Geknipt uit : AACHENER VOLKZEITUNG

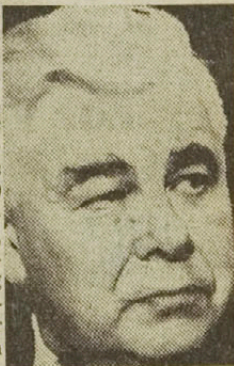
Date : EUPEN

Datum : II/7/70

## **Großfeuer tötete Islands Premier**

### **Frau und Enkel verbrannten mit**

Reykjavik, 10. Juli. — Der isländische Ministerpräsident Bjarni Benediktsson ist in der Nacht zum Freitag beim Brand eines Sommerhauses ums Leben gekommen. Mit ihm verbrannten seine Frau und ein zweijähriger Enkel. Das Holzhaus, 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 be-



**B. Benediktsson**

nachbarten Thingvalla-Hof 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. Benediktsson wurde 1963 Ministerpräsident. Zuvor hatte er jahrelang mit kurzen Unterbrechungen verschiedene Ministerien geleitet. (dpa)

# The Timaru Herald

(TIMARU)

Canterbury Province

Circulation approx. 14,450

18 JUL 1970



Iceland's Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, and his wife, Sigridur Bjornsdottir, who were burnt to death in their summer flat on Thingve Island, 60 kilometres from Reykjavik, Iceland, late last week. A grandson also died in the blaze.

—(A.P. Photo)

# HOKITIKA GUARDIAN

(HOKITIKA)

Westland Province

Circulation approx. 1,300

11 JUL 1970



## Iceland's Premier Dies In Tragic House Fire

REYKJAVIK, July 10.

Iceland's 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.

The blaze gutted the small, timber structure, trapping the 62-year-old Premier and his family inside.

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

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur and their daughter's two-year-old son Benedikt Wilmundarsson, arrived yesterday to spend a few quiet hours at the summer residence, built in 1907 to house King Frederick of Denmark when he visited Iceland.

It was a favourite haunt of the Prime Minister's where he could relax away from official duties and play the family man.

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 a.m. 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 realised the Prime Minister's family were in residence and raised the alarm.

But before the fire brigade arrived the timber 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.

Police investigating the blaze were not immediately able to say how the fire started. But they said an oil tank exploded inside the house during the fire and apparently contributed to the intensity of the blaze.



SHENANDOAH, PA.  
HERALD

E - 8,186

JUL 27 1970

## Iceland's Intriguing

The recent tragic death of Iceland's Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson brings to mind a remotely situated country that is remarkable in a variety of ways. Iceland is, for example, the most literate country in the world. In the capital city of Reykjavik there are more bookshops per capita than in any other city. The 20 Icelandic publishers offer 315 books a year per 100,000 population (in contrast, Sweden prints 50).

There is more to point to in Iceland than its erudition. There is a flourishing artists' colony. In a community near Reykjavik practically the entire town is under glass so that bananas, grapes and tomatoes and flowers can be grown for

commercial purposes. Understandably it is called Hothouse Town.

Iceland is noted for its lack of snobishness or class consciousness. It has no upper classes—and no lower classes, or slums. Though its name indicates the intensity of cold experienced in winter, the city is served by 190-degree water pumped from hot springs. A network of pipes heats houses, open-air swimming pools, saunas and greenhouses.

One last point, of no small interest these soporific days. Even at the height of Iceland's summer, temperatures are pleasantly cool. But then, of course, there's winter . . .

Extrait de :  
Geknipt uit :  
Date :  
Datum :

TORHOUTSE BODE  
TORHOUT

17 7 1970

## IJSLANDSE PREMIER IN BRAND OMGEKOMEN

PC

De IJslandse eerste minister Bjarni Benediktsson, zijn vrouw Sigridur en zijn kleinzoon zijn bij een brand omgekomen.

Het drama gebeurde in een houten zomerhuis te Thingvalisoen op 60 km. van Reykjavik. Het oude huis was staatseigendom en werd door leden van de regering gebruikt als vakantie-huis.

Eerste minister Benediktsson was 62 jaar en een van de opmerkelijkste figuren van de jonge IJslandse republiek. Hij verwierf internationale faam, vooral tijdens de periode dat hij minister van Buitenlandse Zaken was. (IJsland trad toen toe tot de NATO). Hij werd eerste minister in 1963 als opvolger van Olafur Thors.

De 200.000 IJslanders vernamen het nieuws met verstomming.

De regeringswoordvoerder sprak met bevende stem en duidelijk ontroerd : «Dit is een geweldige tragedie voor ons land. De schok is zo erg dat velen van ons niet kunnen geloven dat het waar is.»

De eerste minister was ver-

leden week donderdagmiddag met zijn echtgenote en de kleine Benedikt in zijn zomerresidentie aangekomen, uitsluitend met de bedoeling er de nacht door te brengen. In de loop van het weekeinde zou hij het woord voeren op een politieke bijeenkomst in een stadje ten noorden van Reykjavik. Omwonenden die de brand bemerkten wisten niet dat het huis toen bewoond was. Toen de brandweer uit Reykjavik aankwam, was er geen blussen meer aan.

Volgens de politie kan de brand veroorzaakt zijn door de centrale olieverwarming. De lijken van de drie slachtoffers werden gevonden in hun bed, wat laat veronderstellen, dat zij eerst zijn gestikt alvorens een prooi van de vlammen te worden.

Het getroffen huis werd gewoonlijk «het koninklijk huis» genoemd omdat koning Christiaan van Denemarken er in 1930 de nacht doorbracht tijdens de feestelijkheden ter herdenking van het duizendjarig bestaan van de Alting, het IJslandse parlement



Extrait de :  
Geknipt uit : **TAGEBLATT**  
Date : **ESCH/ALZETTE**  
Datum : **11. 7. 1972**

# Islands Premierminister starb in Feuersbrunst

**Reykjavik.** Der isländische Premierminister Bjarni Benediktsson, seine Frau und sein zweijähriger Enkel sind in der Nacht zum Freitag auf tragische Weise bei einem Brand ums Leben gekommen.

Der Premierminister war am Donnerstagabend mit seiner Gattin und dem zweijährigen Benedikt in einem Landhaus in Thingvallasoen, etwa 60 Kilometer von Reykjavik entfernt, angekommen um dort die Nacht zu verbringen.

## Message de condoléances

A l'occasion du décès tragique du Premier Ministre d'Islande, M. Bjarni Benediktsson, et de son épouse, Monsieur Pierre Werner, Ministre d'Etat, Président du Gouvernement, a adressé un message de condoléances au Gouvernement Islandais.

Il est rappelé que M. Pierre Werner, Ministre d'Etat, Président du Gouvernement, et M. G. Thorn, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, s'étaient rendus en visite officielle en Islande au mois d'août 1969 et à cette occasion ils avaient pu apprécier hautement l'amabilité et l'hospitalité du défunt.

Feu Monsieur Benediktsson devait se rendre à Luxembourg en visite officielle les 11 et 12 juin derniers. Malheureusement cette visite avait dû être annulée en raison de la situation politique intérieure en Islande. (Communiqué)

Das Haus steht den isländischen Regierungsmitgliedern als Urlaubsunterkunft zur Verfügung und gehört dem Staat. Am Freitag — also gestern — sollte der Premier schon weiterfahren, da er übers Wochenende in einer kleinen Ortschaft im Norden der Hauptstadt eine politische Versammlung abhalten wollte.

In der Nacht jedoch brannte das Ferienhaus bis auf die Grundmauern nieder und seine drei Be-

wohner fielen den Flammen zum Opfer.

Die Ursachen des Brandes werden vermutlich wohl niemals geklärt werden, da das Holzgebäude vollkommen abbrannte. Man vermutet jedoch, daß der Brand durch die Oelheizung ausgelöst wurde. Die drei verbrannten Leichen wurden in den Betten gefunden. Es wird nicht ausgeschlossen, daß sie erstickten.

Es ist noch nicht bekannt, wer die Nachfolge des Premierministers antreten wird. Der Name des Justizministers Johann Hafstein, ebenfalls Mitglied der Unabhängigkeitspartei, ist im Gespräch. Ein Hubschrauber der Armee soll den Justizminister in die Hauptstadt bringen. Er befindet sich gegenwärtig in seinem Sommerhaus 100 Kilometer nördlich von Reykjavik.

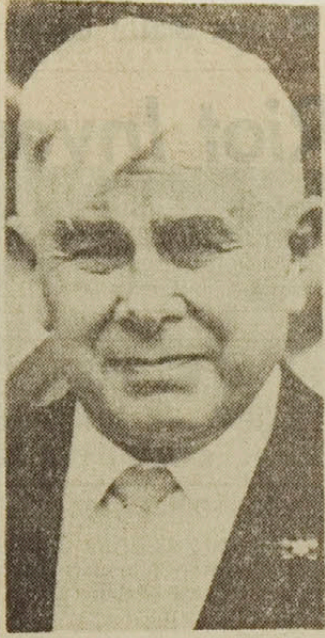


WICHITA FALLS, TEX.  
TIMES

E - 20,773

S - 46,217

JUL 10 1970



—AP Wirephoto

**BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON**

. . . Victim of fire

## Iceland Leader 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. Sigridur Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4.

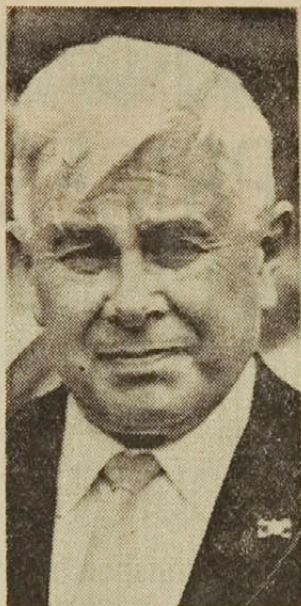
Police sifted through the ruins in search of the cause of the tragedy.

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.

WENATCHEE, WASH.  
WORLD JUL 10 1970

E - 22,650

S - 22,762



**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.—AP Wirephoto.

*Along with wife, grandson*

## Iceland premier dies in summer home 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 Benediktsson was 50; their grandson was 4.

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



15

LEXINGTON, KY.  
HERALD  
M - 52,174  
HERALD-LEADER  
S - 73,977

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland Prime Minister, Wife And Grandson Die As Summer Home Burns

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.

## Thought House Empty

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

parafin 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."

## Length Of Service Unclear

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.

Flags flew at half staff over the island and radio Iceland played solemn music.

Details surrounding the fire were unclear.

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

Officials said the bodies of the victims were found in the remains of their beds, indicating they may have suffocated in the smoke.



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WILLIAMSPORT, PA.  
SUN-GAZETTE

E - 31,182

JUL 16 1970

## Blount Will Represent Nixon at Funeral Rites

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Postmaster General Winton M. Blount will represent President Nixon at funeral services today for the late prime minister of Iceland, Bjarni Benediktsson.

Blount, will be accompanied by Sens. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., and Gail McGhee, D-Wyo. The prime minister, his wife and a grandchild died in a fire last weekend.

ODESSA, TEX.  
AMERICAN

E & S - 35,138

JUL 10 1970

## Premier Dies In Home 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.

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.



POTTSTOWN, PA.

MERCURY

JUL 11 1970

M - 25,483

# Iceland's Prime Minister, Wife, Killed in Explosion

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.

## SAW FLAMES

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.

YORK, PA.  
GAZETTE & DAILY

M - 35,186

JUL 11 1970

# Prime Minister Killed By Blast

Head of Iceland's government, wife, grandson die when summer cottage destroyed.

Reykjavik, Iceland (AP)—Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage yesterday 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 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 ANTONIO, TEX.  
NEWS

E - 61,290

JUL 10 1970

# Iceland 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 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.

BLOOMSBURG, PA.  
PRESS

M - 11,115

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland Prime Minister, Wife Die in Cottage 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.

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 Air-

ways. She was on a flight to New York aboard one of the airliners when the tragedy occurred. Her husband, Vilundur 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 1,000 anniversary of the legislature.



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON



2

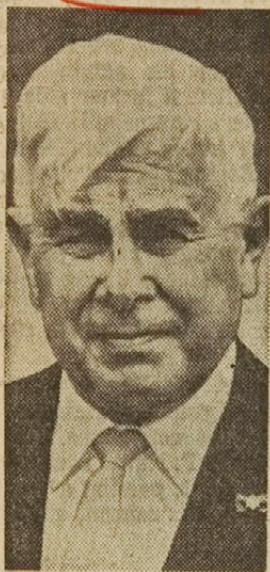
SEATTLE, WASH.  
POST-INTELLIGENCER

M - 206,733

S - 259,237

JUL 11 1940

## Iceland Leader's Death Probed



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON AND WIFE

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage yesterday 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 Havstein, 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.

DENVER, COLO.  
ROCKY MT. NEWS

JUL 11 1970  
M - 192,279  
S - 209,887

—ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS—3  
Sat., July 11, 1970, Denver, Colo.



UPI TELEPHOTO

Iceland Premier Bjarne Benediktsson

## Prime minister and 2 die in Iceland blaze

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and their 4-year-old grandson were killed in a fire 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 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, minister of justice and industries, as acting prime minister to guide this NATO ally of the United States pending new elections.

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



CHEYENNE, WYO.  
EAGLE

M - 9,461

JUL 16 1970

# McGee Flies To Iceland For Funeral

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Sen. Gale W. McGee, D-Wyo., flew to Reykjavik, Iceland Wednesday as a representative of the U.S. government for the the Thursday funeral of former premier Bjarni Benediktsson.

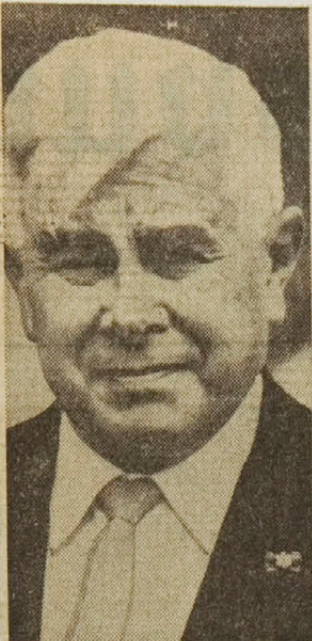
Benediktsson, who was killed last Friday along with his wife and four-year-old grandson in a fire that destroyed the Icelandic government's cottage near the capital, was one of the signers of the Atlantic Charter.

"Premier Benediktsson was a leader in the island nation's independence movement," McGee said. "I consider it a great honor to go to Reykjavik to pay respect to his memory and to convey the President's and this nation's sympathy to the people of Iceland."

PITTSBURGH, PA.  
POST-GAZETTE

M - 243,938

JUL 11 1970



-Associated Press Wirephoto

**BJARNT BENEDIKTSSON**

*Powerful influence.*

**MRS. BENEDIKTSSON**

*Wife also victim.*

## Wife, Grandson Killed

# *Iceland Chief Dies In Fire, Explosion*

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, July 10 (AP) — Police sifted through the ruins of a wooden cottage today seeking the cause of fire and explosion that 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 last 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.

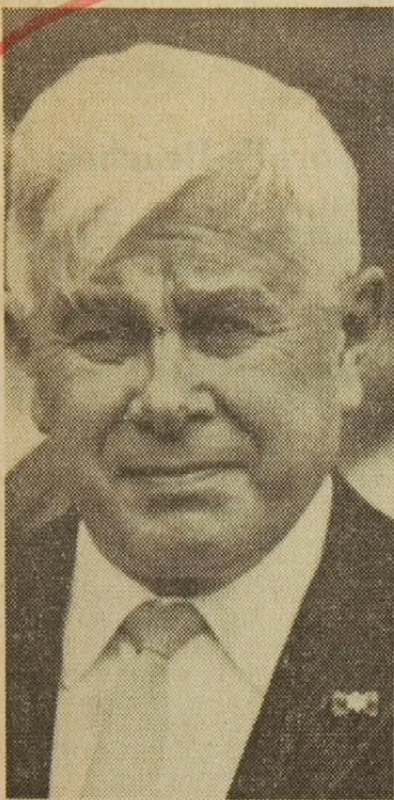


GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.  
PRESS

E - 133,419

S - 138,539

JUL 10 1970



—AP Wirephoto

BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON, prime minister of Iceland, his wife and their grandson died in a fire that swept their summer home Thursday night.

# Premier of Iceland, Kin Perish in Fire

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—Premier Bjarni 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 learned of the tragedy on morn-

ing radio newscasts. Flags were lowered to half-staff.

The Rev. Eirikur Ericksson, who lives near the government residence, said he discovered the fire at 12:40 a.m. (7:40 p.m. EST) 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 Friday in a village on Iceland's northern coast.

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

**THE PREMIER BEGAN** his career as a lawyer and later served as professor of law at the University of Reykjavik. He entered government service in 1947 as foreign and justice minister and remained in that post until 1953.

He then held the post of combined minister of justice and education until 1956 when he left the government and became editor of Iceland's most influential newspaper, Morgunbladid.

Benediktsson re-entered the government in 1959 as minister of justice. He took over as prime minister Nov. 14, 1963, from Olavur Thors.

Benediktsson was married to the former Sigrid Tormodsdottir, 60. They were married in 1943 and had three daughters and one son.



SPRINGFIELD, MASS.  
UNION

H - 77,427

JUL 11 1970

# Prime Minister of Iceland, Wife, Grandson Die 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 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.



BJARNE BENEDIKTSSON SIGRIDUR BENEDIKTSSON

## 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 was located at Thingvellir, 30 miles from Reykjavik.

By Borgarskjalasafn Reykjavikur



WILKES BARRE, PA.  
RECORD

M - 24,810

JUL 11 1970

## Iceland's Prime Minister Is Killed in Cottage 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 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, Vilmundur Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gyfi 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 Reykjavienewspaper Morgunblaðid 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.

RICHMOND, CAL.  
INDEPENDENT

JUL 10 1970

E - 36,170

# Iceland's Premier Is Killed

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 at 12:40 a.m. 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.



CLOVIS, N.M.  
NEWS-JOURNAL

E - 8,412

S - 8,847

JUL 12 1970

# Fire Kills Icelandic Official

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (UPI)—An electrical short circuit may have sparked the fire that killed Icelandic Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a grandson, police said Saturday.

Iceland began preparing a state funeral for next Thursday for Benediktsson while police sifted the rubble of government house where the three died Friday.

Police authorities said the fire left them with a few clues, but that it appeared an electrical failure such as a short circuit—rather than a paraffin stove as they first believed—started the blaze.

The government said the funeral will take place at Reykjavik's Cathedral at 2 p.m. Thursday. Icelandic Archbishop Segrudbjorn Einarsson will officiate.

Government officials said President Nixon, Queen Elizabeth of Britain, King Olav V of Norway, King Gustav Adolf of Sweden and President Urho Kekkonen of Finland were among among those who sent messages of sympathy on Benediktsson's death.

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TAMPA, FLA.  
TIMES

E JUL <sup>32</sup>11 <sup>464</sup>1970

**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 yesterday, asked Hafstein to take over as acting prime minister.



ALLENTOWN, PA.  
CALL

M - 90,478

JUL 11 1970

# Iceland's Premier Loses Life 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 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,

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, Vilmundur Gíslason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gíslason.

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.