



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 3-13, Umslag: Blaðaúrklippur

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MEADVILLE, PA.
TRIBUNE

M - 17,185

JUL 11 1970

Iceland's Prime Minister, Wife and Grandson Die In Cottage 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 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.

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

WAYNESBORO, PA.

RECORD HERALD

JUL 10 1970

E - 9,243

Iceland official 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 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.

CHESTER, PA.
DELAWARE CO. TIMES

E - 46,689

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's ruler 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.

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TARENTUM, PA.
VALLEY NEWS-DISPATCH

E - CIRC. N-A

JUL 10 1970

Iceland 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.

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OCEANSIDE, CAL.
BLADE-TRIBUNE

E - 10,779

S - 10,847

JUL 10 1970

Iceland's Leader Wife, Child Die

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.

8

CHEYENNE, WYO.

TRIBUNE

E - 10,487

TRIBUNE-EAGLE

S - CIRC. N-A

JUL 16 1970

Blount, Allott, McGee Attend Iceland Funeral

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Postmaster Gen. Winton Blount will represent the President at the funeral service of Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson of Iceland, the White House announced Wednesday.

The funeral service for the late prime minister, killed with his wife and a grandchild in a fire at their summer home last weekend, was planned today in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Blount, who left Wednesday night is accompanied by Sens. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., and Sen. Gale McGee.

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SHARON, PA.
HERALD

E - 25,368

JUL 16 1970

Blount to attend funeral in Iceland

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.

MITCHELL, S.D.
REPUBLIC

E - 17,277

JUL 10 1970

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 Tigvellir 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.

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.
GAZETTE-TELEGRAPH

E - 43,075

S - 44,030

JUL 12 1970

Iceland Mourns Fire Death of Its Premier

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP)

Icelanders Saturday 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.

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

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

Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik 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 remained in that post until 1940.

He entered politics with his election as mayor of Reykjavik in 1940, serving until 1947, when he was named minister of justice and foreign affairs. 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.

REDWOOD CITY, CAL.
TRIBUNE

E - 21,923

JUL 10 1970

Iceland 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.

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.

SACRAMENTO, CAL.
UNION

M - 82,122

S - 80,531

JUL 11 1970

Cottage Fire Kills Minister 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 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, Benefikt, 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,

See Page 2, Col. 1

Fire Kills Iceland's Minister

Continued from Page 1

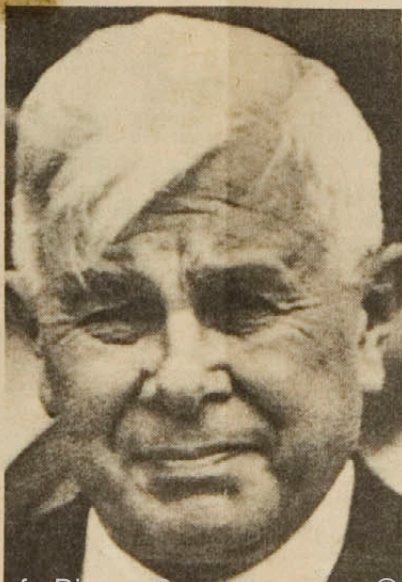
Vilmundur Gislason, is the son of the culture minister, Gylfi Gislason.

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 ca-

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. the house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the legislature.



Benediktsson



Mrs. Benediktsson

Extrait de :

Geknipt uit : **GRENZ ECHO**

Date :

EUPEN

Datum :

10. 7. 1970

Isländischer Ministerpräsident bei Brand ums Leben gekommen

Kopenhagen, 10. Der isländische Ministerpräsident, Bjarni Benediktsson, ist in der vergangenen Nacht zusammen mit seiner Frau und einem Enkelkind bei einem Brand ums Leben gekommen. Dies wurde in Kopenhagen bekannt.

Seit 1963 Regierungschef

Der am 30. April 1909 in Reykjavik geborene Jurist war 1963 Regierungschef Islands geworden. Bereits seit 1942 gehörte er dem isländischen Parlament als Mitglied der konservativen Unabhängigkeitspartei an. In den

Jahren 1947 bis 1953 war Benediktsson gleichzeitig Aussen- und Justizminister. In späteren Jahren hatte er dann auch die Ressorts Erziehung, Industrie und das Ministerium für Fischereiregionen geleitet.

Feuer im Sommerhaus

Das Ehepaar Benediktsson und der etwa zweijährige Sohn einer Tochter verbrannten bei einem Feuer in ihrem Sommerhaus. Die Unglücksstätte liegt etwa 60 km von Reykjavik entfernt.

Sommerhaus gehörte der Regierung

Die Brandursache war am heutigen Vormittag noch unbekannt. Das Sommerhaus war ein altes Holzhaus, das dem isländischen Staat gehörte. Es wurde von Mitgliedern der Regierung zu Wochenend- und Ferienaufenthalten benutzt.

Ministerpräsident Benediktsson und seine Frau Sigridur waren am Donnerstag in das Sommerhaus gereist, wo sie einige Tage bleiben wollten. Der Brand wurde von einem naheliegenden Hotel aus entdeckt.

Einkaskjalasafn Bjarna

Flugzeug auf See

DES MOINES, IOWA
TRIBUNE

E - 113,781
JUL 10 1970

Blaze Kills Premier of Iceland

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND (AP) — Iceland's premier, Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, his wife and a grandson died in a fire at the premier's summer home Thursday night.

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

A priest living nearby and a party of Danish tourists saw the fire in the wooden cottage at Tingvellir, about 40 miles from Reykjavik, but were not able to do anything to save the three.

By the time the fire brigade arrived from Reykjavik, there was virtually nothing left of the cottage.

Since 1963

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

Benediktsson's wife, Sigridur, was 50; their grandson was 4.

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

The night was described as cold. Police said an oil tank exploded in the house during the fire and apparently contributed to its intensity.

Air Hostess

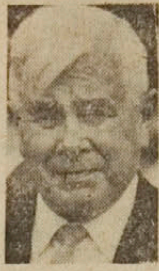
The grandson, Benedikt Vilmundarson, was the son of the prime minister's daughter, Vala, an air hostess with Icelandic Airways.

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

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

The Benediktssons are survived by two other daughters and a son, who is studying law in Reykjavik.

The summer residence at Tingvellir, on the site of the world's first parliament, dating back to 930 A.D., was built to mark the thousandth anniversary in 1930. Originally intended to house the visiting Danish



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON



SIGRIDUR BENEDIKTSSON

king and queen that year, it later became a retreat for prime ministers and other Cabinet members.



Benediktsson was the foreign minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after World War II.

In February, 1947, he indignantly protested against a proposal made in the U.S. House of Representatives that Iceland should be invited to join the United States as the forty-ninth state.

Icelandic newspapers at the time treated the proposal, by a Republican congressman, as ridiculous and below consideration.

CHARLESTON, W. VA.
MAILJUL 10 1970
E - 57,285

Iceland Chief, 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 Tingevillir, 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.

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 boy's mother was on a flight to New York on an Icelandic Airways passenger liner.

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Iceland PM

dies

in

blaze

ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister

Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death early today along with his wife and a grandson at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik.

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

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

A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

Mr Benediktsson had been Iceland's prime minister since 1963, and was the minister responsible for taking his country into NATO after World War II.

This island nation, just below the Arctic Circle, went into a state of mourning today as news of the tragedy was circulated.

Flags flew at half mast and the radio played solemn music.

Thingvalla is 33 miles from the capital and is owned by the state.

ALARM

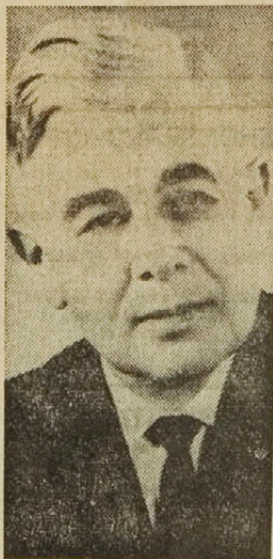
In the early hours of this morning, a neighbour saw the house in flames and raised the alarm. But it was too late.

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

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

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

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



BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON

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

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

orgarskjalasafn Reykjavíkur

10 JUL 1970

4100 112

Premier and wife die in blaze

Standard Foreign News Desk

ICELAND'S Prime Minister, Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, his wife Sigrigur, 60, and their grandson, Benedikt, aged four, died early today when fire gutted the Government's country residence at Thingvellir, 31 miles from the capital Reykjavik.

A spokesman for the Prime Minister's Office in Reykjavik said: "Dr. Benediktsson drove with his wife and grandson to Thingvellir yesterday afternoon for an overnight stay.

"They were alone in the house. At about 3 a.m. today, it was reported that fire had completely destroyed the house. The Prime Minister, his wife and grandson, were killed."

Iceland Radio reported that three Dutchmen saw the blaze first and alerted police and firemen.

The radio said the Dutchmen told police that shortly afterwards the roof of the wooden house was blown off.

A local policeman tried to enter the burning building in a rescue attempt but was driven back by the flames.

Later, a spokesman for the British Embassy in Reykjavik said their information was that the cause of the blaze had been traced to the oil heating system.

Last night was extremely cold with snow falling on nearby mountains.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives near the house, said the fire engines had to drive from Reykjavik, and before they arrived the house was razed to the ground.

The bodies of the Prime Minister and his wife were found in the rubble.



BJARNE BENEDIKTSSON

NEWS
40 GOLF : 7
BBC-2

and PM killed

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Minister, his wife and their grandson were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

Thingvellir was used as summer residence for all Cabinet members, who rotated their holidays there. It was built in 1907 for the visit of King Frederik VIII of Denmark.

Flags flew at half mast in Reykjavik and other Icelandic communities. Radio Iceland changed its programme and played solemn music.

An official spokesman said an emergency Cabinet meeting would be held later today to decide who should take over as acting Prime Minister.

The spokesman added: "It is likely that Mr. Johann Hafstein, the Deputy Chairman of the Independence Party, will become acting Prime Minister."

Dr. Benediktsson, chairman of the Independence Party, became coalition Prime Minister in 1963. He had previously served as Minister of Justice and Foreign Minister. He was responsible for taking Iceland into NATO.

Dr. Benediktsson became a



**MRS. SIGRIGUR
BENEDIKTSSON**

Professor of Law at the University of Iceland at the age of 24. He served for some years as Mayor of Reykjavik. He leaves a son and three daughters.

Iceland, with a population of 200,000, has been an independent republic with an elected President since it severed its links with the Danish Crown in 1944.

11 JUL 1970

N1007



Dr Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, Prime Minister of Iceland, and his wife, Sigríður, 50, who died early yesterday when fire destroyed their summer home at Thingvellir. Their grandson, Benedikt, 4, was also killed.

Obituary

Iceland's Prime Minister

MR BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON, Prime Minister of Iceland since 1963, has died aged 62.

After gaining law degrees at the Universities of Iceland and Berlin, Mr Benediktsson became Professor of Law at Iceland University in 1932, a post he held until 1940, when he became Mayor of Reykjavik and entered national politics. He was re-elected as mayor in 1942 and was elected to the Iceland legislative assembly, the Althing.

From 1947 to 1953 he was Minister of Foreign Affairs after a year as Iceland's representative at the United Nations. He was successively Minister of Justice and Education, President of the Althing and Minister of Justice and Industry.

He was Prime Minister for the last four months of 1961 and leader of the Independence party.

Coalition government

In the following year he was Minister of Justice and Industry before returning as Prime Minister in 1963. His Independence party was in coalition with the Social-Democratic party.

For three years until 1959 Mr Benediktsson was chief editor of *Morgunblaðid*. His first wife Valgerður died in 1936. In 1943 he married Sigríður Björnsdóttir and they had one son and three daughters.

Mr Benediktsson's distinguished political career, which spanned two crises in Iceland's history, the 1939-45 War and the declaration of complete independence from Denmark, earned him important decorations from many European countries, including the King's Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom, bestowed by King George VI.

11 JUL 1970

Premier of Iceland is killed in blazing house

By GEORGE FALLOWS

THE people of Iceland, were horror-stricken yesterday at the tragic death of their Prime Minister, his wife and grandchild in a blaze which destroyed his summer home.

Their remains were found in the smoking ruins at Thingvalla by firemen who arrived too late from Reykjavik, 35 miles away.

Investigators said that the three victims — Premier Bjarne Benediktsson, 62, his wife Sigridur, 51, and their four-year-old grandson Benedikt — had been suffocated by smoke soon after the fire began.

From the positions of the bodies it seemed that they had awakened and tried to escape, but got only a few steps away from their beds.

The fire, which is thought to have been caused by an electrical fault, was first seen at 1.30 a.m. by Dutch tourists camping nearby.

Fierce

They raised the alarm at a hotel but by the time the first help arrived the 40-year-old timber building was well alight. A policeman tried to force his way into the house, but was driven back by the fierce flames.

Then an oil tank exploded inside the house. The roof was blasted off, walls collapsed and the house was reduced to ashes in fifteen minutes.

Mr. Benediktsson, a law professor, had been Prime Minister since 1963. Yesterday's Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over as the new Premier.

11 JUL 1970



Iceland P.M. dies in fire

REYKJAVIK. — Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and grandson died tragically early yesterday in a fire that destroyed the Premier's official summer residence at Thingvalla, 38 miles from 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 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, 51, and their daughter's four-year-old son, Benedikt Wilmundarsson, arrived on Thursday to spend a few quiet hours at the summer residence, built in 1907 to house King Frederick, of Denmark, when he visited Iceland, then part of the Danish Kingdom.

It was a favourite haunt of the Prime Minister's when he would relax away from official

duties and play the family man.

They arrived without 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. yesterday 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 be-

fore the brigade arrived, the timber structure had been reduced to ashes.

While this island nation near the Arctic circle went into a state of mourning, the President, Dr Kristjan Eldjarn, was meeting members of the Government to discuss a successor to Mr Benediktsson, who had headed a coalition Government of his own Independent Party and the Social Democrats since November, 1963.

The Justice Minister, Mr Johann Hofstein, was later appointed Prime Minister.—NZPA-Reuters.

11 JUL 1970



Iceland fire tragedy

PM, wife and grandson die

NZPA-Reuter—Copyright

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.

QUIET HOURS

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 this morning ing some Dutch campers whose tent 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.

Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over tonight as Iceland's new Premier.

11 JUL 1970

Iceland's Premier Dies In Blaze

REYKJAVIK

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.

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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 1.30am 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.

While this island nation near the Arctic Circle went into a state of mourning today, the president, Dr Kristjan Eldjarn,

was meeting members of the government to discuss a successor to Mr Benediktsson. He had headed a coalition government of his own independent party and the Social Democrats since November, 1963. — NZPA-Reuter Copyright.

Wairarapa Times-Age

(MASTERTON)

Wellington Province

Circulation approx 7,200

11 JUL 1970



ICELAND'S PM DIES TRAGICALLY

(N.Z.P.A.-Reuter. Copyright)

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 Reykjavig.

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.

While this island nation near the Arctic Circle went into a state of mourning today, the President, Dr Kristjan Eldjarn, was meeting members of the Government to discuss a successor to Mr Benediktsson. He had headed a Coalition Government of his own Independent Party and the Social Democrats since November, 1963.

Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over tonight as Iceland's new Premier.

11 JUL 1970



Iceland's P.M., wife & grandson die in fire

REYKJAVIK, July 10 (NZPA-Reuter) —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 1967, to house King Frederick of Denmark when he visited Iceland.

It was a favourite haunt of the Prime Minister, 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 o'clock 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.

While this island nation near the Arctic circle went into a state of mourning today, the President, Dr Kristjan Eldjarn, was meeting members of the Government to discuss a successor to Mr Benediktsson. He had headed a coalition Government of his own Independent Party and the Social Democrats since November, 1962.

The Southland Times

(INVERCARGILL)

Southland Province

Circulation approx. 20,200

11 JUL 1970



THE CUTTING BOARD

Premier Dies In Blaze

COPENHAGEN

Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife, and a two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down last night.

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

kur

11 JUL 1970

PM OF ICELAND DIES IN BLAZE

(NZPA-Reuter Copyright)

REYKJAVIK, July 10.—The Justice Minister, Mr Hafstein, took over tonight as Iceland's new Premier after the death in a blazing summer house of the Prime Minister, Mr Benediktsson, strongman of Icelandic politics.

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

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

The timber structure, built in 1907 to house the Danish King during visits to Iceland, then part of the Danish kingdom, was reduced to ashes in little more than 15 minutes, with the Prime Minister and his family trapped inside.

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

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

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

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

Mr Benediktsson, Premier since 1963, has long been regarded as the strongest man in Icelandic politics who had influenced his country's political decisions over the past 30 years.

As post-war Foreign Minister he took Iceland into the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance and only last spring he pushed Iceland into the European Free Trade Association as the ninth member of Efta.

This afternoon, after meeting members of the Cabinet, President Eldjarn asked Mr Hafstein, 54, the Justice Minister and vice-chairman of the Independence Party, to take over the Premiership and form a new Government.

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

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

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

11 JUL 1970

Iceland's premier dies in fire

REYKJAVIK. — Iceland's Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and grandson died tragically early yesterday 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 yesterday 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 on Thursday 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.

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.

MOURNING

While the island nation near the Arctic circle went into a state of mourning yesterday, the President, Dr Kristjan Eldjarn, was meeting members of the government to discuss a successor to Mr Benediktsson. He had headed a coalition government of his own independent party and the Social Democrats since November, 1963. — (N.Z.P.A.-Reuter).

11 JUL 1970

OBITUARY

W1007

DR B. BENEDIKTSSON

Prime Minister of Iceland

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

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

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

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



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

Dr. Benediktsson leaves a son and three daughters.

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Premier in triple death blaze horror

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

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur Bjornsdottir, and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundars-son, had gone there to spend the night. Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives in Thingvallagaarden near the government residence, said he discovered the fire 40 minutes after midnight and sounded the alarm. But the fire engines had to come all the way from the capital, Reykjavik, and before they arrived the house was razed.

SOLEMN

The bodies of the prime minister, his wife and their grandson were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

Flags flew at half mast in Reykjavik and other Icelandic communities. Radio Iceland changed its programmes and played solemn music. Officials said Mr. Benediktsson had only planned to spend one night in the wooden house. He was to speak in a small town north of the capital today.

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's prime minister since 1963 and was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after world war two.

LYNCHBURG, VA.
NEWS

M - 19,563
S - 30,788

JUL 11 1970

Iceland Mourns 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 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.

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

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

Benediktsson was born in Reykjavik 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 remained in that post until 1940.

He entered politics with his election as mayor of Reykjavik in 1940, serving until 1947, when he was named minister of justice and foreign affairs. 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. in the days of the Vikings who settled on Iceland. The house was built in 1930 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the legislature.

ARLINGTON, VA.
NORTHERN VA. SUN

E - 15,432

JUL 11 1970

Prime Minister Of Iceland Dies 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, 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.

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

ICELAND'S PREMIER AND WIFE DIE IN FIRE

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

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

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

The Premier, his wife, Sigridur, and grandson, Bendikt Wilmundarsson, had gone to the summer house for one night before the Prime Minister went away at the week-end to attend a political meeting.

101 JUL 1970

Death in fire of Iceland Premier

From Our Correspondent

Reykjavik, July 10

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

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

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

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

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



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

BIRMINGHAM POST

Daily

(Circ. 73,125)

.11 JUL 1970

N10071F

Minister of Justice takes over in Iceland

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

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

10 JUL 1970

Iceland's Premier and wife die in fire

N1007/M



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

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

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

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Daily (Circ. 1,378,860)

15 JUL 1970

PRIME MINISTER OF n1007/ICELAND

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

10 JUL 1970

Iceland's Premier and wife killed in house fire

W1007/H

ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, was burned to death today with his wife and a grandson in a blaze in a summer house.

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

The house, Thingvellir, was used as summer residence for all Cabinet members.

The Prime Minister and his family arrived yesterday to start their holiday in the house, which was built in 1907 for the visit of King Frederik VIII of Denmark.

Witnesses said the fire was discovered from the Hotel Valhal nearby. But before the fire brigade arrived the house was burning like a torch. It was razed in less than an hour, the witnesses said.

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 fierceness of the blaze.

The Government spokesman reporting the fire spoke with shaky voice and was obviously moved.

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

LAW

Mr. Benediktsson led a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats and became Prime Minister in 1963.

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

He entered the Government in 1947 as Foreign Justice Minister and stayed in that post until 1953. During his time as Foreign Minister Iceland joined NATO.

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, Morgubladid.

Mr. Benediktsson re-entered the Government in 1959 as Minister of Justice and Industry, working primarily with fishery problems.

He took over as Prime Minister from Olavur Thors.

WAY

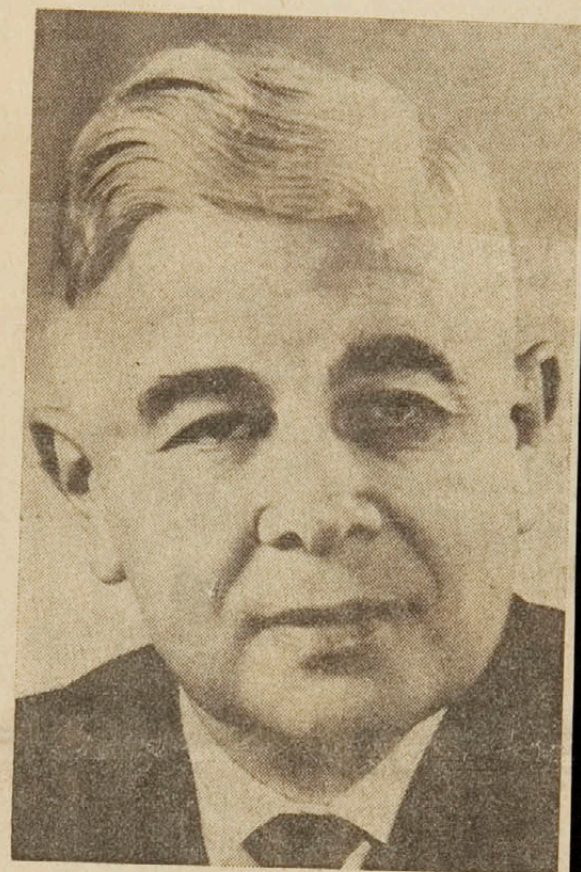
"This is a tragedy for Iceland and, indeed, for the whole of the Western nations," said Mr. William McKeag, the Icelandic Consul in Newcastle.

"The Icelandic Government was one which was respected very much indeed in diplomatic circles and the Prime Minister was well on the way to creating for himself a niche in the history of Iceland.

"All this has now so catastrophically been brought to an end. I can only deeply regret what has transpired," he added.

Justice Minister Knud Thestrup today said Iceland and the Nordic countries had lost a great son with the death of Mr. Benediktsson.

Iceland's ambassador to Denmark, Gunnar Thoroddson, said: "What a tragedy, it cannot be said. Bjarni was so gentle and wise, one of the very best."



DR. BENEDIKTSSON

CHRONICLE & ECHO (NORTHANTS)

Daily

Circ. 56,197

10 JUL 1970

Premier and wife killed

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

10 JUL 1970

N1007/K

Iceland premier and wife die in holiday fire

ICELAND'S Prime Minister, Bjarne Benediktsson, aged 62, his wife and one of their grandchildren, a boy aged two, died when fire destroyed the Premier's official summer residence last night, a Government spokesman announced today. The residence, Thingvellir, is about 30 miles from Reykjavik. No details were given about the cause of the blaze.

Dr. Benediktsson, who became Prime Minister in 1963, led a coalition government of his own Independence Party and the Social Democrats.

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

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

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, Morgubladid.

Dr. Benediktsson re-entered the government in 1969 as

Minister of Justice and Industry, working primarily with fishery problems. He took over as Prime Minister from Olavur Thors.

Dr. Benediktsson and his wife, who was 60, had three daughters and a son.

Thingvellir was used as summer residence for all cabinet members, who rotated their vacations there.

The prime minister and his family arrived only yesterday to start their holiday.

Witnesses said the fire was seen from a nearby hotel. But before the fire brigade arrived the house was burning fiercely. It was destroyed in less than a hour.

The news reached Iceland's 200,000 inhabitants as they listened to the morning news broadcast. The government spokesman reporting the fire said: "This is an immense tragedy for our country."—U.P.I.

LEICESTER MERCURY

Daily

(Circ. 180,000)

10 JUL 1970

Iceland premier dies in summer house blaze

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

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

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

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

1.0 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Premier, wife and grandson die in fire

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

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

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

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

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

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

NUNEATON EVENING TRIBUNE

Daily

Circ. 17,295

10 JUL 1970

Premier and wife die in fire

Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife and a two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down last night.

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

DUNDEE EVENING TELEGRAPH

Daily

Circ. 65,930

10 JUL 1970

W100.71K

Premier And Wife Die In Blaze

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

They had gone to the
summer house for the night.

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

11 JUL 1970

New leader in Iceland after fire deaths

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

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

Wilmundarsson, died with him.

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

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

OIL TANK BLAST

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

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

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

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

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

FROM THE RANKS

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

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

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



ICELAND'S Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, 62, his wife and their grandchild Benedikt Wilmundarsson who died in a fire.

21007/A

THE TIMES

Daily

(Circ. 299,315)

15 JUL 1970



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,

July 14

Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, on behalf of The Queen, held an Investiture at Buckingham Palace this morning.

CLARENCE HOUSE, July 14

The Lady Jean Rankin has succeeded Ruth, Lady Fermoy as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

KENSINGTON PALACE, July 14

The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, today visited Aylesbury and in the afternoon toured the new Town Centre.

Her Royal Highness later opened the Church Army Elmhurst Youth Centre.

The Hon. Mrs. Wills was in attendance.

The Duchess of Gloucester will attend a performance of the Royal Tournament at Earls Court on July 21.

A book of condolence will be open for signature at the Icelandic Embassy, 1 Eaton Terrace, S.W.1, on July 16, 17, 20 and 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the tragic death of the Prime Minister of Iceland, Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, and his wife and grandson.

Mrs. Peter Cadbury is chairman of the committee for the Life-boat and Mermaid Ball, which will be held at the Dorchester hotel on Tuesday, December 8, 1970.

OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

Daily

(Circ. 46,844)

10 JUL 1970

Iceland's premier dies in fire

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

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

The prime minister, his wife, Sigridur Bjornsdottir, and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundarsson, went there yesterday to spend a few days.

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

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's prime minister since 1963 and was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after the Second World War.

Iceland went into a state of mourning today. Flags flew at half-mast and the radio played solemn music.

LINCOLNSHIRE ECHO

Daily

(Circ. 37,000)

10 JUL 1970

M1007/12

PREMIER DIES IN BLAZE

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

They had gone to the Summer house for the night.

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

EVENING GAZETTE (Middlesbrough)

Daily

Circ. 112,658

10 JUL 1970

NT007/M

Premier killed

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

**BIRMINGHAM
EVENING MAIL**

Daily

Circ. 405,709

10 JUL 1970

N100/M
**ICELAND'S
P.M. DIES
IN BLAZE**

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

The triple tragedy occurred in a blaze at a State-owned summer house at Thingvalla, 38 miles from the capital, Reykjavik.

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

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

A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

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

The island nation, just below the Arctic Circle, went into a state of mourning today as news of the tragedy was circulated.

Flags flew at half-mast and the radio played solemn music.

LANCASHIRE EVENING POST

Daily

(Circ. 143,949)

10 JUL 1970

NT007/M

Iceland's Premier and wife die in fire

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

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

The Premier, his wife Sigridur and grandson Benedict Wilmundarsson had gone to the summer house for one night before the Prime Minister went away at the weekend to attend a political meeting.

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

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

SCARBOROUGH EVENING NEWS

Daily

(Circ. 14,739)

10 JUL 1970

Fire kills premier, wife, and grandson

N100710
Iceland's Prime Minister, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife, and a two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down last night.

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

Mr. Benediktsson was in his early sixties and had been premier since November 1963.

The premier, his wife, Sigrídur, and grandson Benedikt Wilmundarsson, had gone to the summer house for one night before the prime minister went away at the weekend to attend a political meeting.

**DUBLIN
EVENING PRESS**

Daily

(Circ. 150,470)

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Iceland's P.M. dies

Iceland's Prime Minister Bjarne Benediktsson, his wife and one of their grandchildren, a girl aged 4, died when a fire destroyed the Prime Minister's official summer residence, a government spokesman announced today in Reykjavik.

The summer residence, called Thingveller, burned down late last night. It is located 31 miles from Reykjavik.

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

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

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

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Premier in triple death blaze horror

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

The Prime Minister, his wife Sigridur Bjornsdottir, and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundars-son, had gone there to spend the night. Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

The Rev. Eirikur Eriksson, who lives in Thingvallagaarden near the government residence, said he discovered the fire 40 minutes after midnight and sounded the alarm. But the fire engines had to come all the way from the capital, Reykjavik, and before they arrived the house was razed.

SOLEMN

The bodies of the prime minister, his wife and their grandson were taken to a chapel in Reykjavik.

Flags flew at half mast in Reykjavik and other Icelandic communities. Radio Iceland changed its programmes and played solemn music. Officials said Mr. Benediktsson had only planned to spend one night in the wooden house. He was to speak in a small town north of the capital today.

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's prime minister since 1963 and was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after world war two.

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Iceland PM dies in house blaze

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

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

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

Reduced to ashes

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

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

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

HALIFAX EVENING COURIER

Daily

(Circ. 43,276)

10 JUL 1970

NIQ07/M

Premier of Iceland dies in fire

Copenhagen, Friday.

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

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

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

**NORTHERN DAILY
MAIL**

Daily

(Circ. 33,839)

10 JUL 1970

Premier, wife, and grandson die in fire

ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, was burned to death today along with his wife and a grandson. The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvall, 38 miles from Reykjavik.

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

Firemen rushed to the scene

when the alarm was raised, but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

Mr Bendiktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963 and was the minister responsible for taking his country into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after World War II.

The island nation just below the Arctic circle went into a state of mourning today as news of the tragedy was circulated.

Flags flew at half mast and the radio played solemn music.

SCOTTISH
DAILY EXPRESS

Daily

11 JUL 1970

N1007/12

Blaze kills premier

REYKJAVIK, Friday.—Justice Minister Johann Hafstein took over tonight as Iceland's new premier after Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson died in a blazing summer house early today.

Mr. Benediktsson (62) died in the fire along with his wife Sigridur (51) and their four-year-old grandson. The timber building was destroyed in little more than 15 minutes.

NOTTINGHAM
EVENING POST & NEWS

Daily

10 JUL 1970

N1007/H
Iceland's
PM dies
in blaze

ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister Bjarni Benediktsson was burned to death today along with his wife and a grandson. The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingballa, near Reykjavik.

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963 and was the Minister responsible for taking his country into NATO after World War Two.

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

10 JUL 1970

ICELAND'S PM DIES IN BLAZE

N/007/S

THE PRIME Minister of Iceland, 62-year-old Bjarni Benediktsson, was burned to death early today along with his wife and a grandson.

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

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

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

A neighbour gave the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

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

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

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

Before going into politics in 1940 as Reykjavik's Mayor, Mr Benediktsson was Professor of Jurisprudence at Reykjavik University.

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

Daily

10 JUL 1970

Icelandic Premier, N 1007/14 wife and grandson die in house fire

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

The Prime Minister, his wife, Sigridur Bjornsdottir, and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt Wilmundrars-son, had gone there to spend the night. Firemen rushed to the scene when the alarm was raised but the wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

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

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

HEREFORD EVENING NEWS

Daily

(Circ. 42,189)

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

PREMIER AND WIFE DIE IN FIRE

Iceland's Prime Minister,
Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his
wife and a two-year-old
grandson died when a Sum-
mer house in which they were
staying at Thingvalla, near
Reykjavik, burned down to-
day.

They had gone to the Sum-
mer house for the night.

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

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Iceland's Premier, his wife and grandson die in fire

REYKJAVIK. — Iceland's Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, sixty-two, was burned to death early today along with his wife and a grandson.

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

The Prime Minister, his wife, Sigríður Björnsdóttir, and his two-year-old grandson, Benedikt

Wilmundarsson, had gone there for the night.

The wooden building was soon reduced to ashes.

A neighbour raised the alarm when he saw the house in flames.

Mr. Benediktsson had

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

The island went into a state of mourning today as

news of the tragedy was circulated. Flags flew at half-mast and the radio played solemn music.

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

DAILY MAIL

Daily

(Circ. 2,039,402)

99 JUL 1970

N10071K

Premier dies in blaze

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

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

EVENING NEWS

(Bolton)

Daily (Circ. 85,920)

10 JUL 1970

N1007/M

Premier and wife burned to death

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

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

The Premier, Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife Sigríður Björnsdóttir, and his two-years-old grandson Benedikt

GRANDSON, 2, ALSO DIES IN FIRE

Wilmundarsson, had gone there to spend the night.

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

▲ neighbour raised the alarm

when he saw the house in flames.

Mr Benediktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963 and was the minister responsible for taking his country into Nato.

Iceland went into a state of mourning as news of the tragedy was circulated.

Before going into politics in 1940 as Reykjavík's mayor, Mr Benediktsson was professor of jurisprudence at Reykjavik University.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Daily

(Circ. 156,150)

11 JUL 1970

New Premier in Iceland

Justice Minister Hafstein (54) took over as Iceland's new Premier after the death in a blazing summer house at Thingvalla of Prime Minister Benediktsson. The strong man of Icelandic politics (62) died along with his wife (51) and grandson (4). Police have no clue to the cause of the fire.

As post-war Foreign Minister Mr. Benediktsson took Iceland into NATO. Last spring he pushed Iceland into EFTA.

EVENING TIMES
(Glasgow)

Daily

Circ. 194,992

10 JUL 1970

N1007/K.

Iceland Premier dies in blaze

ICELAND'S 62-year-old Prime Minister, Bjarni Benediktsson, was burned to death early to-day along with his wife and grandson. The tragedy occurred in a blaze at a summer house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik.

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

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

Mr Benediktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963, and the country went into mourning to-day as the news of the tragedy was circulated.

Flags flew at half-mast and the national radio played solemn music.

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

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Daily (Circ. 1,378,860)

11 JUL 1970

Parliament's start

N1007

THE house where Bjarni Benediktsson, Iceland's Prime Minister, and his wife and grandchild died tragically in a fire yesterday overlooked the birthplace of the oldest parliament in the world, the historic valley of Thingvellir.

At the 1,000th anniversary of the Icelandic Parliament it was Winston Churchill who said that if Britain had the Mother of Parliaments, Iceland had the grandmother.

The house itself, an official residence, was built at the beginning of this century and was recently extended by Mr Benediktsson.

EXPRESS & ECHO
(Exeter)

Daily

Circ. 38,197

10 JUL 1970

W 10071K
Iceland's
P.M. dies
in summer
house fire

THE Prime Minister of Iceland, Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife, and a two-year-old grandson died when a summer house in which they were staying at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, burned down early today.

They had gone to the summer house for the night.

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

10 JUL 1970

Iceland Premier dies in blaze

11007-2

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ca
p

REYKJAVIK.

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

The Prime Minister, his wife and his two-year-old grandson arrived at the summer holiday house at Thingvalla, near Reykjavik, yesterday.

A neighbour, a priest, raised the alarm when he saw the wooden building in flames, but by the time firemen arrived it had burned to ashes.

As news of the tragedy circulated, Iceland went into a state of mourning. Flags flew at half mast and the radio played solemn music.

A Government spokesman said during a special broadcast: "This is an immense tragedy for our country. But the shock is so severe that many of us cannot believe it's true."

The house was used by all Cabinet members, who rotated their holidays there. It was built in 1907 for the visit of King Frederik VIII of Denmark.

Mr. Benediktsson had been Iceland's Prime Minister since 1963. He visited London in December 1968 to do some last-minute Christmas shopping in the West End.

OUR WORLD
TONIGHT



CAMBRIDGE
EVENING NEWS

Daily

(Circ. 44,005)

10 JUL 1970

N100710
**Premier dies
in fire**

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

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

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

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

DOUGLAS, ARIZ.

DISPATCH

JUL 11 1970

E - 3,745

Iceland

Mourns

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.

11 JUL 1970

A Premier dies, with wife and grandson, in fire

Mr Bjarni Benediktsson, the Prime Minister of Iceland, and his wife and grandson died in a fire early yesterday in a wooden summerhouse at Tingvellir, the famous lava plain, 30 miles east of Reykjavik, which was the site of Iceland's 1040-year-old open-air parliament, the Alting.

The cause of the fire is not yet known, but police think it was due to a fault in a stove in the building, which was known to everyone as "the King's House," because it was an official guesthouse for the King of Denmark before Iceland became independent in 1944.

Mr Benediktsson, who was 62, has for 22 years been the outstanding Icelandic statesman and dominated Iceland's foreign policy. In April, 1949, he was mainly—some would say personally—responsible for Iceland's joining NATO and giving the United States Air Force the lease of Keflavik airport, 20 miles from Reykjavik, which was at that time considered of enormous strategic importance. When the Bill authorising this was passed by 37 votes to 13, stonethrowing demonstrators charged the parliament building in Reykjavik, breaking every window in it, and 60 people were injured before police dispersed crowds with teargas — an unprecedented scene in the history of Iceland,

By MORAY WILLIAMS

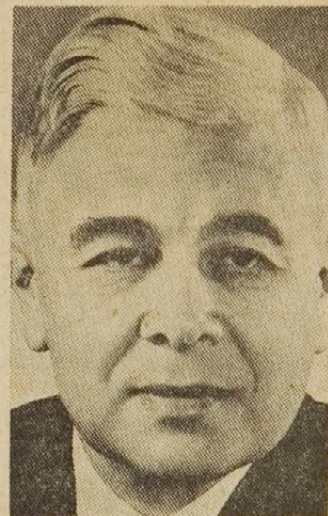
which had never been involved in a war.

"Bjarni Ben," as he was called, had been Premier since 1963, and Foreign Minister from 1947. He had also been editor of the chief Icelandic newspaper "Morgunbladi," chairman of the Conservative Party, and for eight years before the youngest professor at Reykjavik University.

After 1949 he was bitterly attacked by Icelandic left-wingers, especially Halldor Kiljan Laxness, the Nobel

prizewinner, who caricatured him and his friends in a satiric novel, "The Atom Station." Until Soviet Russia invaded Hungary in 1956, many Icelanders thought that he had sold out his country's interests to the Americans for economic reasons, and were afraid it would endanger Iceland's position, but public opinion afterwards mellowed towards him.

For the 200,000 Icelanders his tragic death is a sensation that dwarfs Hekla's recent outburst, not least because of Tingvellir's emotional associations for the Icelandic people with the sagas.



Mr Benediktsson

The Minister of Justice, Mr Johann Hafstein, took over last night as Iceland's new Premier.