

U-2-10 1963
UNITED STATES - Death of President
Kennedy

CONFIDENTIAL

FILE NO. U-2-10

1963

**PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
CANADA**

SUBJECT

UNITED STATES

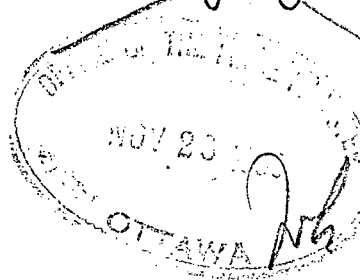
Death of President Kennedy

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE
OTTAWA

November 27th 1983.

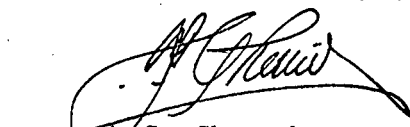


Dear Sir,

With reference to my letter of November 23rd, I attach a further telegram received by the Governor-General from the Lord Chamberlain concerning the flying of flags at half-mast in Great Britain in memory of the late President of the United States, to complete your file on this subject.

PMO
file

Yours sincerely,


A.G. Cherrier
Assistant Secretary to the
Governor-General.

The Secretary to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
East Block,
Ottawa.

A Canadian Pacific

C.D. 1R

TELEGRAM

WORLD WIDE COMMUNICATIONS

"The filing time shown in the date line is LOCAL TIME at place of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at place of destination"

E OCB049 BM571 48/46 VIA CDN

CW BUKINGHAM PALACE LONDON ^{Nov 26} 2621300H '53

ETAT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
OTTAWA 206

FOR INFORMATION ONLY STOP FLAGS WILL BE HALF-MASTED IN GREAT
BRITAIN ON GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND AT FLAG STATIONS ON SUNDAY
FIRST DECEMBER ON OCCASION OF NATIONAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
THE LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA STOP
LORD CHAMBERLAIN

E.O

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

FOR MR. GASKELL:

The attached memorandum
raises the question of what happens here
on the death of our own Head of State
and you might look into this as well.

R.O.R.

November 26, 1963.

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Copy on G-1-10(a) - 8

0-2-10

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GASKELL:

Procedures Book: Material on Events Relating
to the Death of a Head of State

It has become clear in the last two or three days that one thing we should have in the Procedures Book is something to provide at least a minimum of basic information about the things the Government ought to do in the case of the death of a head of state, especially in circumstances such as that of the assassination of President Kennedy. There has been a high state of confusion around here with no one knowing exactly what should be done, what procedures ought to be considered, or who should be responsible. I do not think that we necessarily need to work out all the answers on this at this time. What would, however, be enormously helpful for the future would be to have a section in the book you are working on that indicates what happened in the present instance. That will at least afford a precedent when another case arises.

The kind of thing that has been done this time, of which I am aware, and which ought to be recorded includes the following:

(a) Mourning

Apparently, in Britain, court mourning is automatic or nearly so in the case of the death of a head of state. There may be exceptions to this but I do not know what they are. In the present instance, it is for one week (November 23 to November 29, inclusive) and Government House here is observing a similar period. This does not seem to have too much effect on affairs: normal government functions go on, including social engagements such as the reception for delegations to the Federal-Provincial Conference tomorrow. Apparently, public social engagements are not kept by the Governor General but he is going to proceed with his dinner for the provincial premiers on Wednesday.

. . . 2

- 2 -

I gather that black ties should be worn by the heads of departments, etc., during the mourning period.

(b) Church Services

The initiative in arranging church services apparently lies with the diplomatic representative of the bereaved country. In this particular case, the United States Ambassador got in touch with External Affairs and they in turn made arrangements through the Archbishop's office for a service at the Roman Catholic Basilica. Dress for Cabinet Ministers, I understand, is morning coat but I do not know whether this applies more broadly.

Other denominations have taken an initiative about a service to be held in Christ Church Cathedral at 12:15 on Wednesday. I do not know whether the Protocol Division of External Affairs are involved with that. After this whole affair is over, it might be desirable to check with that division to get more exact information and find out precisely what happened and what the rules are.

The G.G. is to attend both services

(c) Parliament

Parliament adjourned on Friday as soon as the news of President Kennedy's death was received. I doubt if there are any rules as to when Parliament does or should adjourn. You might try to ascertain something about this.

At the opening today, there will be one minute of silence and the question period before the Orders of the Day will be dispensed with.

Parliament is ~~not~~ adjourning this evening at the time of service at the Basilica. The Leader of the Opposition apparently felt strongly that there should be no adjournment as matters of religion and church attendance are personal and should not have any official arrangement with regard to them.

. . . 3

**Now changed - It is to adjourn.*

- 3 -

(d) Flags

Flags, of course, went to half mast on Friday. Do they do this in the case of the death of all heads of state? I doubt it but I do not know what the rule is.

I believe flags are supposed to return to full staff immediately after the funeral but again I am not certain.

(e) Official Representation in the Bereaved Country

While some heads of state are going to Washington, the Governor General is not. I am not certain whether this is because of General Vanier's age and uncertain health or whether it is because the Prime Minister is going. It might be worthwhile trying to determine if there is any rule.

The official representation of Canada will be by the Prime Minister and Mrs. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Ambassador in Washington.

(f) Handling of Arrangements

The handling of most arrangements has been by the Protocol Division of the Department of External Affairs. I assume that this should normally be the case. The main purpose of our having detailed information here is to be able to intelligently answer questions by the Prime Minister, by other Ministers, and by people who look to this office as a place where they can get a certain amount of guidance.

If, in the course of newspaper reports on this matter, there are any items that particularly well summarize the arrangements either here or in Washington, I think it might be useful to have these clipped and kept as attachments to the answer in the book. These could be quite useful for future reference.

R.G.R.

Privy Council Office,
November 25, 1963.

cc: Mr. Yeomans

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
REFERENCE SLIP

SECURITY
UNCLASSIFIED

Ottawa,
November 25, 1963.

To: R.G. Robertson, Esq.,
Secretary to the Cabinet,
East Block,
OTTAWA.

The documents described below are attached for your information:

Text of motion moved in both House of British Parliament
following death of President Kennedy.

Also referred to:

N. A. ROBERTSON

Under-Secretary of State
for External Affairs

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM,
Earnscliffe,
OTTAWA.

25th November, 1963.

Col. H. Lintott, Ph.
Secretary of
Cabinet

Dear Mr Robertson

I have just received from London *Ph. y*
the attached text of a motion which is being *SSEA*
moved in both Houses of the British Parliament *R*
today.

Yours sincerely

H Lintott

(H. Lintott)

N. A. Robertson, Esq.,
Department of External Affairs,
Ottawa.

25.11.63/551

DEATH OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to express to the President of the United States of America the shock and deep sorrow with which this House has learned of the death of President Kennedy and to convey their sense of the loss which this country and the Commonwealth have sustained and their profound sympathy with Mrs. Kennedy and the family of the late President and with the Government and people of the United States of America.

Earnscliffe,
Ottawa.
25th November, 1963

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CONFIDENTIAL

RECORD OF CABINET DECISION

Meeting of November 25th, 1963.

Memorial services for the late President Kennedy

The Cabinet noted that there would be a Requiem High Mass at the Basilica that evening for the late President Kennedy, and that a memorial service would be held in Christ Church Cathedral at noon on Wednesday, November 27th.

L.W.
for A/Supervisor of Cabinet Documents.

Privy Council Office,
November 28th, 1963.

U-2-18
XR G-1-3

Ottawa, November 25th, 1963.

The Honourable Lionel Chevrier, M.P.,
Acting Prime Minister and
Minister of Justice,
Ottawa.

Dear Mr. Chevrier:

In our telephone conversation on
Saturday, I agreed to put down a few sentences
that might be appropriate for you to use if
you follow through with the Prime Minister's
suggestion of having a minute of silence
at the opening of the House today. I
hope that the enclosed might be suitable.

Yours sincerely,

R.G. Robertson.

BGR:aw

Mr. Speaker:

We are about to resume the discharge of our responsibilities for the nation's business which we suspended on Friday after receiving the shocking news of the death of the former President of the United States. Just two hours ago in Washington, the nation that President Kennedy led so brilliantly, joined by the representatives of countries far and near, paid a last formal tribute to him. As a mark of our own respect and sorrow, I would like to suggest that before we turn to the business of the day, the members of this House should stand for one minute in silent tribute.